

SCIMITAR

Reunion 2003 Edition No. 146



1921



2003

The journal of the Old Fincunians Association

Editor: Les Sharp, 18 Penwood Heights, Penwood, Burghclere, Newbury,
Berkshire, RG20 9EY

Tel: 01635 253124

E-mail: lsharp8030@aol.com

OUR CHAIRMAN SPEAKS

OLD FINCUNIAN ASSOCIATION

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

TEL: 020 8445 5706 E-MAIL: lionman@btinternet.com

February 2004

Dear Old Fincunian,

The final 'Reunion' in September was, in my view, very special. Over 330 OF's turned up to say good-bye to the old place and a further 91 had been contacted but were unable to attend. This number is amazing when you consider that across the 60+ years of Finchley County School's existence with, on average a 60 pupil per year intake, a total of just over 3,500 passed through the School gates (and many of those of course are no longer with us) – a staggering 13% were contacted and nigh on 10% turned up. I do not believe any other Old Scholars Association anywhere would be able to match that – a testament to the aura of FCS and the strong and lasting friendships that were forged there. There are numerous reports elsewhere of our grand occasion.

I would like to thank Peter Monk for playing and recording the music for the School Song. The stirring rendition of "Away with care....." touched the very soul of all present. Peter is able to produce copies – approx £1.50 – of the music on demand (posted snail mail or shipped over the web). Contact him via Les. I would also like to thank Janine & Colin Luke for overseeing the excellent catering.

Sadly, the School buildings are no more. Demolition began in late November with the Cookery/Woodwork block. The last part of the school to tumble was the Head's study, the masters' staffroom and boys' entrance, but at the time of writing the caretakers house still stands. Reclamation specialists stripped the School of the roof slates, lead guttering and most of the internal wrought iron work. The demolition team have salvaged the 'foundation' stone and one of the '1903 dated' lead rain hoppers. These will be removed to Avenue House to be looked after by The Finchley Society. The developers have allowed me on site to take a number of photos over these last few weeks. These are digital pictures so, once my broadband system is up and running, I will be able to efficiently post to those with e-mail capability. Les has promised to publish as many of these pictures as possible in the Autumn edition of Scimitar.

I have now finalised details of the new war memorial (specifically, I have agreed things with the architects and the developers – I have left the useless Barnet planners out of the loop!). The memorial, bearing the names of Old Scholars who died in the two world wars, the school badge, the inscription 'Live Thou For England: We For England Died' and reference to the plaque being on the site of the former FCS will be etched onto Portland Stone and built into a recessed panel on the south end of the new development boundary wall (to the left of what was the ramp into the boys playground).

The "Battle of Trafalgar" painting was sold at Christies but I had a full size copy made for posterity. Smaller fine art prints (approx. 15"x12") will be available costing £35 each. Please let me know by the end of March if you require a print (plus cheque to Old Fincunians Association for £35) so I can order the required number.

Many of you expressed a wish that reunions should continue. To this end I will endeavour to source a suitable 'Finchley' venue in which we can all once again meet and reminisce.

"To our friends and comrades hail"

Regards

Godfrey Mann

COVER STORY

Anyone who attended the Reunion on 6 September 2003 cannot have failed to notice that the War Memorial in the Old School Hall had changed since the last time we had seen it. What we were seeing was the Memorial virtually as it was in 1920, displaying the names of the Old Fincunians who lost their lives during the 1914 - 1918 War. K A Povah, Headmaster, wrote in *Scimitar* in 1949 :- *'As one looks around the school today, one is hardly likely to be impressed by the spacious layout, the modern well-planned buildings, the fine, secluded position, and the wealth of amenities; but inside, one thing that does command attention is the excellent War Memorial... It was painted in 1920 by Mr W H Howland, the School's first Art Master, and it was unveiled in the Autumn of the same year by Sir Benjamin Gott, then Secretary for Education for Middlesex. The picture, which dominates the memorial, depicts the Battle of Trafalgar, and was painted by Charles Dixon. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy, and was priced at £200 but the school were able to purchase it from the Cooling Galleries at the greatly reduced price of fifty guineas....'*

Once World War II was over, the School had to decide what to do about the Old Fincunians who had served in the Second World War. K A Povah wrote in *The Old Fincunian* September 1950 :- *'....A representative Committee, including members of the past and present Staff, the Governing Body, and Old Fincunians, under the chairmanship of Alderman Langlands, and after his death, of Alderman Wilmot, had several meetings...before deciding that the best solution of the problem of choice lay in having a three-fold Memorial.*

The first item, and the most urgent, was to make a public record of the names of those Old Fincunians who gave their lives. After consultation with Mr Howland,it was arranged to have the name panels on the original Memorial covered with two new panels of the same shape. The names for the 1914 - 18 War have been lettered on the left hand panel, while the new names for the 1939 - 45 War balance on the right hand side. The colour scheme has been matched very skilfully.....

The second item is to be a Book of Remembrance. This will be prepared by a professional scribe and will be hand bound in leather. It will consist of two sections, the first being a list of those who lost their lives, together with details of their Units and service. The second section will be a list of the many Old Fincunians, men and women, who served in the Armed Forces, together with a brief note of their Units and any outstanding points about their service or distinctions.....we hope that any mistakes will be tolerated owing to the complexity of making contact with over three hundred Old Fincunians, many of whom have long since left the district and even the country.....

The third item of the Memorial is the Library Furniture. This choice was madebecause Memorial Library Furniture seems to be appropriate in itself and also

because if there were to be any change of premises the Library Furniture could easily be removed. Those who remember Room B will be able to visualise the room with the stepping for the desks removed, and it is proposed to expend the sum of about £400 on suitably designed shelving, tables and chairs. The Middlesex County Council has consented to make what can only be regarded as a very generous contribution - £200, towards the cost of this item of the Memorial.....'. **By the 1949 Summer Term :-** '...the first item of the War Memorial Committee's programme is completed. The new panels were personally lettered by Mr Gayton, the contractor, and Mr Howland, who did the original stencil work, has expressed his satisfaction with the blending of new and old....We must now turn our attention to the other sections, and it is hoped that money-making activities in the 1949-50 year will enable us to proceed with the Book of Record and Library furniture, which are to complete our War Memorial..'

In The Fincunian magazine, Summer 1951 it was reported :- 'There is news about each of the three parts of our War Memorial. The mural panels with the names were dedicated on 11 November, 1950, at a special service attended by many parents and relatives of the Fallen, together with representatives of the Governors, including the Mayor and Mayoress, the Old Fincunians' Association, and the present school. The service was conducted by the Rev Roy Deasy (1937/42), an Old Fincunian who as an Infantry Officer had taken part in the D-day landing, and all members of the congregation must be grateful to him for the memory of a beautiful and dignified ceremony. Mr Vivian and Mr Fred Holbrook (1927/32) read the Lessons, and the ensigns covering the panels were released by Derek Batten (1942/47), Army and Alan Humberstone (1942/49) of the Air Force, while Lt G Thorpe, RNVR, also an Old Fincunian, laid the wreath of poppies.....

Early in 1951 the completed book arrived.The binding is in black leather, with the single word "Remembrance" in gilt. The pages are vellum, and the whole book is practically indestructible in ordinary use. The names of the Roll of Honour make brilliant pages of scarlet and black, while the second section in plainer style records the names, ranks and units of all Old Fincunians who are known to have served in HM Forces, 1939-45. Spaces have been allowed for the addition of other names should information be forthcoming. The book, both in its conception and in execution, has been much admired.....

Eventually the Book of Remembrance will be housed in the Memorial Library, in Room B. The County Council agreed to contribute to our funds an amount not exceeding the normal expenditure that was due for the standard furnishing of a library, and chairs and tables have been obtained. They are in plain waxed oak, and the chair seats are upholstered in green leather-cloth. In the next month or two the shelving will be completed, and we shall consider our task largely ended, though I have no doubt that we shall continue to add to the room by buying pictures or additional chairs or perhaps a magazine stand.....The money has been contributed in a most impressive way. From all kinds of sources, ranging from a balance of shillings in the Loco-sporters Funds, to a very generous gift of

pounds from an Old Fincunian who left the school in 1916..... But the present pupils, with a steady and persistent effort, have been the strength of the fund....'.

The Fincunian magazine reported in 1952 :- *'...the Library has approached its permanent form, with tables, chairs, and book cases installed.....Mr Eldridge designed and carved a tablet to be placed on the architrave of the Library door in the Hall. In case you do not know what an architrave is, we can inform you that it is the top framework. The words "Memorial Library" have been lettered in real gold leaf. The same applies to the lettering on an oak tablet which will shortly appear inside the Library. We are greatly indebted to Mr D Pankhurst, Susan's father, who with great attention and generous craftsmanship has made the tabletand presented it to the School....The gold leaf will gradually change in colour. The wood is over forty years old as timber, having been purchased from Mr Sturdy, the former Woodwork master who made the Head's Lectern desk. There should be little or no deterioration, and the inscription should be permanent. The wording, set under the school shield is :-*

*This Library was furnished by
Past and Present Scholars, Parents and Friends,
as a Memorial to
OLD FINCUNIANS
who gave their lives in the
Second World War, 1939-1943.*

This tablet will be affixed to the Wall of the Library at the same time as the showcase for the Book of Remembrance is installed. Mr Eldridge is contributing this... A sloping glass case will exhibit the Book, the vellum pages of which will be turned from time to time, and this will be supported at a suitable height by a useful cupboard. The whole case is of Mr Eldridge's own design and workmanship.

Contributions of money have been received from several sources, and notably from the surplus on Senior Dances. We are in process of arranging for curtains. We should like to add some really good pictures, and it may sometime prove possible to paint over the wall-tiles and improve the floor.....gifts of books are being made by pupils and former pupils. Mr and Mrs Turner, parents of Audrey and Pat (1950/55), kindly gave a complete set of the works of Charles Dickens.....'.

At the reunion on 6 September it was noticed that the last name on the original panels on the wall was "Arthur W West" and that name did not appear on the replacement panels. No good reason could be found for this omission. I can only repeat the words written by K A Povah in 1949:-

'...we hope that any mistakes will be tolerated owing to the complexity of making contact with over three hundred Old Fincunians, many of whom have long since left the district and even the country.....'.

PICTURE PUZZLES

In the last edition of Scimitar I reproduced a picture and asked you to name the members of staff pictured there. The clue I gave you was that it was the last photograph taken of the staff before the Old School was amalgamated to form Finchley Manorhill School. Three members of staff, John Wilson, Mavis Hammond, and Janice Clifton (now Janice Mann) are actually in the picture but even they failed to name everybody. Many of you had a go but nobody got all the names correct, except those who spotted that the picture, together with the names, had appeared in the final school magazine, *The Fincunian*, in 1971 (cheating really!) From left to right the names are :-

Back Row: *Mr Nicholls; Mr Wilson; Mr Prescott; Mr Dalton; Mr Sutton; Mr Rawlings; Mr Mannel, Mr Williams; Mr Demetriou; Mr McNelly.*

Front Row: *Mrs Nixon; Miss Quass; Mrs Barker; Miss Buckley; Mrs Stewart; Mr Joscelyne (Headmaster); Miss Marwick; Mrs Mullen; Mrs Manhire; Miss Clifton; Mrs Hammond; Miss Bennet (School Secretary).*

Members of staff missing from the photograph: *Mr & Mrs Gabe; Mr Heggie; Miss Pateman; and Mr Sheppard.*

The photograph triggered off some memories for Mavis Hammond. She is seated second from the right in the front row, next to Doris Bennet :- 'I received the Special Edition of Scimitar and read it with interest and regret at the fate of the Old School building. Congratulations to everyone who has made such valiant efforts to prevent its demolition.

I shall not be able to attend the reunion; there are few folk I know, as I was a member of staff - part-time Home Economics mistress - in the final two years of the County School, and I stayed with Finchley Manorhill full-time for a further ten years, based for several of those years at the Lower School in the department above "Woodwork" in the playground. However, I have fond memories of the War Memorial and Remembrance Days and the fun we had with form assemblies.....In the photograph I am seated beside dear Doris Bennet with whom I kept in touch until her death. It all seems such an age away!.....Have a wonderful fling in September - I shall be thinking of you and all those whose names grace the Memorial Boards, with gratitude'. Mavis is well and living in Ipswich.

Now for another one. Geof Batten (1947/54) has a fund of knowledge about the Old School and everybody who worked, played or studied there. He writes :- 'If you have enough room in the next Scimitar, would you please include the attached photograph (or at least the enlargement of the man standing

between TS Jones and Mr Wills. The picture was passed to me by Arthur Hale (1946/53) and he dates it at 1946, although he admits that some people may think it was taken in 1945..... we identified everybody except the man standing between TS Jones and Mr Wills. I wonder if any of the Old Fincunians can do as well as we did ?'.

Well, Geof has thrown down the gauntlet. He can identify everyone on the photograph except the man standing between "Jonah" and "Speedy Wills". I bet none of you lot can do better than that! And it is no excuse to say that it was after your time because at least some of them had been retired for quite a long time before this picture was taken.



I have the names of everyone on the photograph except the mystery man. To me he looks like Geof Karet (1947/52) but he was only a pupil !

Let me know how many you can name and I will publish your attempts, together with the answers, next time.

Has anyone else out there got a picture puzzle they want answering?



BITS AND PIECES

Brian Brett (1934/39) writes from New Zealand :- 'I have received a letter "out of the blue" from Rosemary Holland (nee Makins 1934/39) recalling her time at FCS and mentioning the pleasure that her copy of "Charlie Viv's Memoirs" has given her..... Thank you for your sympathetic letter concerning my sister **Margaret Lee (nee Brett 1933/38)**. The latest news of her is that she remains in the **Fernbank Nursing Home in Finchley Way, Finchley, N3 1AB.**, she is unable to walk or move her right hand, but she can understand what is going on and she can speak reasonably well.... She can read and has just started to take an interest in poetry. She loves to go out in her wheelchair with her visitors.... She would love any of you to visit her there between 11 am and 6 pm, or to write to her. The home does not have telephones in the rooms and Margaret cannot dial a number without assistance, but I have spoken to her on the phone all the way from New Zealand. She would love to see or hear from any of you....'.

Peggy Hemmings (nee Emerson 1930/35) wrote :- '...I was so pleased to read some names that I remember even in my form, 1929/35. By pure chance I met Molly Powell recently and recognised her straight away although I had not seen her for years.... I well remember Charles Vivian. I was scared of him, was no good at maths, but his methods obviously helped me as I did well in Matric in maths. I always liked Miss Parker. She kept proper order by just staring at anyone who showed signs of lack of attention. She was so friendly when you reached the higher forms...'.

Unusual e-mail from Rod Champion who lives in South Yarra, Australia :- 'Please take me off your Scimitar mailing list.... not that I am not interested, I just want to save you unnecessary expense...I rarely get time to read the magazine'.

Jim Hind (1926/33) is concerned that some teachers never get a mention :- '.....it will mean nothing to anyone under the age of 88, but three teachers never mentioned so far - Mrs Jacobie, diminutive and taught French; Mr Acarie, also taught French during the late 1920's or early 1930's and gave private tuition in the evenings; and Mr Gatenby, bespectacled, tall and possibly taught English Grammar.....'. I add the name of Mr Crabtree, my first form master in 1947. I have never heard his name mentioned!

Peter Andrews (1949/56) suggested :- 'I came across a reference to an organisation called Friends of War Memorials in yesterday's Times. It seems they specialise in relocating abandoned war memorials....'. They cannot help, Peter, because our War Memorial is not "abandoned".

Geof Batten (1947/54) wrote :- 'I have just spoken to Joan Ridley (1947/54) and I support her views about the sale of "The Battle of Trafalgar". This should not be sold until all other possibilities have been completely exhausted and only then after all the membership has had an opportunity to express its view. The

value of the painting is a complete red herring - what we want is for the picture to be preserved as part of the memorial and not a sum of money, however large. If the money is required to keep the association running, then the members should provide this through increased subscriptions.....As regards to an alternative home for the memorial, the Leader of Barnet Council has made categorical statements about this. In a letter...Victor Lyon wrote "...the sensitive nature of the War Memorial.....is well known and special measures will be taken if and when any sale of the site takes place...", and he should now be pressed hard to honour this undertaking.....".

Derek Batten (1942/47), the brother of Geof wrote :- 'This is one of the rare occasions when I am in complete agreement with my esteemed brother. The fact that we own a valuable painting is a wonderful bargaining factor in negotiations to ensure that the War Memorial is retained and displayed in a suitable place. Money ain't much use to an organisation that will cease to exist in a finite number of years 'cos we'll all be up there in the great clock tower in the sky!...'. Or, perhaps, in the great furnace underground?

Connie Fozzard (1945/52), despite being elected Mayor of the City of Truro for this current year, still finds time to write regularly to Scimitar :- '....Have those who are acting on behalf of the Old Fincs considered asking conservation departments how best the War Memorial should be preserved? I would suggest The Conservation Department of the British Museum, and The Conservation Department of the National Gallery may be able to advise how to put on a suitable solvent-free transparent "skin", frame it on wooden battens and then cut the plaster free from the back. They would also advise about any water damage.

The Church Antiquities Society gathers and protects all sorts of out-of-use items for restoration, storage and distribution to other suitable sites. I know that there is a large panel in a chapel in the church in Lockington in Yorkshire where the family tree of the Fossards is depicted.....

Finally there is a second problem. If we do get the war memorial out - preferably in one piece - where do we put it? Who has a wall big enough for it? Could the Old Fincs access it? More questions than answers, I fear....'

Dick Russell (1947/53) wrote from Belgium :- '...it seems inescapable that the school building will soon be demolished and the site cleared for redevelopment. We have done everything that could have been done to prevent this tragedy, and should concentrate our efforts now on limiting the damage to our heritage.

My suggestion is that we keep up our pressure on Victor Lyon to honour his commitment on behalf of Barnet Council. In particular I would like his assurance that the rubble from the wall containing the War Memorial will be retained for later incorporation in the foundations of the new building. In addition, a stone plaque should be installed in a prominent position on the outside of the new building with

appropriate words. The Trafalgar water-colour proceeds could finance the suggested stone plaque'.

The letters, e-mails and phone calls continued, some in favour of disposing of the painting, others demanding it be retained. Nobody arguing for its retention could suggest where it should be kept. Our Chairman, Godfrey Mann, set out what had been, and was being done, on our behalf :-

'.....As an organisation, we approached both the DCMS and English Heritage to apply for listing status. Whilst the building (and the memorial) was recognised as having some architectural value, listing was denied.....it appeared that the Greek community was considering the building, but their bid was substantially less than the bid received from Barratt Homes.

Barratt's first plan was for the existing shell to be retained with the inside being developed for residential use. Even if the structure of the building had been able to support this proposal, Barratts informed me that the Hall could not have been left in a way so as to allow the memorial to remain in situ. Even if there had been this chance it is most unlikely that future residents would want such a memorial inside their "home", and just as unlikely that access would be readily made for Old Fincs to visit. I have also been told (by an engineer connected neither with the OFA nor Barnet) that it would be virtually impossible (and most certainly cost prohibitive) to remove the wall intact.....water damage has taken its toll.

Realistically, we have to accept that the existing memorial will be destroyed when the building is demolished. As a resultI have pursued alternative options to ensure that a tribute to our old scholars will exist, albeit in new form.

First, there is no room for it to be housed in Avenue House. Norman Burgess (1933/38) was closely involved with the application for listing and is closely involved with the Finchley Society who use Avenue House. The building, I understand, is in a poor state of repair.

Next, it appeared that a "new" TA Centre might provide a site as many scholars had attended Army Cadets or ATCthis proposal was rejected by the MOD/TA authorities on the basis that they do not allow non-military personnel access to their properties.....and could not guarantee future well-being or maintenance.

Third, the North Finchley British Legion have a "newish" centre off Summers Lane but the site is a prime target for vandals, the previous building was burned down....and the outside memorial to Finchley's dead, does not carry any names of individuals...our name panels are unlikely to be housed within the club building.

Finally, I received a letter from Barratt confirming :- "...that in principle Barratt North London will incorporate onto an external wall of the new residential building a memorial plaque. The size and detail will need to be agreed once the design of the site has been agreed with the Planning Department

of the London Borough of Barnet... I trust this is acceptable and we will speak again once the site design is further progressed".

I am in regular contact with both Barratt and the Development Manager of Barnet. Vic Lyon, the Leader of Barnet Council, gets copies of all relevant correspondence and he will continue to be pressurised. I am pushing for not only names to be included on the memorial but also the line "Live thou for England, we for England died", a reference to it being on the site of the former Finchley County Grammar School, and a copy of the School badge and motto. I have a graphic designer putting together an outline. I believe that this must be the optimum scenario - a memorial on the site of our school, and total accessibility for those who wish to visit.

.... the Library furniture.....has disappeared. The lectern fell apart and we gave the brass plaque to the Sturdy family....Mr Sturdy, the Woodwork Master, made it..... In my garage I have the cabinet which housed the "Roll of Honour", and was made by Mr Eldridge, Woodwork Master. It needs some restoration work. The School Song board has almost rotted away having been stored in the girls' old toilet block for the past thirty years, and....I have the "Book of Remembrance". I have removed the painted name panels from the wall and am arranging for the Jack Rawlings bench to be taken to his daughter's home in Bognor.....there is nowhere the painting can be acceptably housed.....Les Sharp and I spoke separately to the National Maritime Gallery. They would accept it as a gift but could not guarantee its display and no reference could be made to Finchley County School War Memorial.

I have discussed all the issues with the Officers of the Old Fincunians Association and with those who have been closest to the demise of the Old School building, i.e., Norman Burgess and Bob Payne. I also spoke to Jack Rawlings daughter, Sheila Segal, to ask what she thought her father's view might have been. All who have been closest to this episode in our history, supported the decision to offer the painting for sale and as a consequence I signed a contract with Christies...'. (The painting has now been sold at auction for about £8,000).

The school closed over thirty years ago so by definition the Old Fincunians Association will not gather genuinely new members. The youngest members are already in their fifties. My wish, and it seems to be shared by everyone I have spoken to, is for the association to continue to its last living member. I will do everything I can to ensure that happens. Any funds from the sale of the painting can only help the association's continuance but it is also possible, subject to the will of the members, that perhaps the like of a local children's charity can be identified to benefit from a proportion of the funds received at the right time.

I hope that you will all support what has been done so far.....'.

Scimitar believes that our Chairman has achieved the most satisfactory outcome possible given the surrounding circumstances. The memories of

those who died, not the artefacts, must be our main focus. Scimitar believes that our Chairman has ensured not only is the past remembered, but also that Finchley's future generations may, like us, benefit from those who went before. Surely that is a fitting and lasting legacy from "The Battle of Trafalgar"? I know that many of you support that view as the following sample of letters suggests :-

Mary Dark (nee Howard 1946/51) wrote :- *'...I am very sorry to learn the fate of the dear old school but it seems that everything possible has been done to safeguard the memorial. The rescue attempt has failed but the memorial will be saved in a different form. Sad as all this is we must remember that we can still meet, albeit in other surroundings, and its people that really matter, not places. Very grateful thanks are due to all those, particularly Godfrey Mann, who have spent a great deal of time and energy trying to save FCS....I do not think any of us could ask for more'.*

Peter Monk (1957/61) wrote :- *'....I think now is a good time for me to offer my thanks to Godfrey, to the rest of the committee and other helpful people, who have worked hard, and well, to keep the Old Fincunians Association going and in tackling the tricky matters around the ending of the Old School building...Nothing except a "beaming up" of the whole building to another safe site would come close to satisfying everyone. So, has everything done been in the right direction? Yes, it has. It seems to me that those who have worked so hard on our behalf, particularly Godfrey Mann, our Chairman, have been thinking things through very well indeed. Of course, at times they have had to decide on the least worst of bad options, but what they have done is "Well done!". I think there has been quite a bit of physical effort and time consuming activity and that should not be overlooked by those of us who have simply looked. Many thanks.....'.*

Jim Hind (1926/33) :- *'....Godfrey's report is magnificent. Clear, comprehensive, and good to see a determination to accept what was so dearly wanted, i.e., a place for the Memorial and a realisation of the money value of the painting, rather than it be stored as a meaningless token of things gone by and never to be the same again.....Godfrey, I want you to know that an old member, active when not so old, but more and more a real Old Fincunian as the years have passed, is delighted with what you have achieved.....'.*

Alan Lamerton (1956/1963) wrote :- *'....It is always the few who do the most, who get little thanks and sometimes much criticism. I have nothing but support for what Godfrey is doing. I spent seven years at FCS and each morning I looked up to see my Uncle's name and initials "R C Lamerton" on the War Memorial in front of me. The experience undoubtedly made me feel closer to my Uncle even though I never had the chance to meet him as he was killed before I was born. Roy Lamerton's widow, Peggy, was also an Old Fincunian circa 1924 to 1929. She died in May 1999. So was his sister and Old Fincunian, Margaret circa 1932 to 1937, still going strong and living in Croydon, and his brother Philip circa 1922 to 1927, died 1982 I think.*

I mention my Uncle in order to show that I, too, have a strong attachment to the War Memorial, but like to remember it in its original setting, aided by the photograph I bought at the reunion a few years ago. It would be sad to see a progressive deterioration in its condition, as would most certainly be the case if the building were to be listed, but without any use being made of it and without the owners having the will or the money to maintain it properly. If Godfrey can persuade Barratts to set a nice memorial plaque to FCS within one of the external walls of their development, then that would be great.....'.

Jim Williams (1946/53) wrote:- *'...This e-mail is to express support for the actions taken regarding the demise of the School building.....I hope that you are not experiencing what all organisers learn from bitter experience - that there is little support when things are ticking over but plenty of "carpers" when life gets difficult. My thanks to you, Godfrey, and the "committee" for all you have done and are doing. Please keep up the good work.....'.*

Bob Catling (1950/56) wrote :- *'...Many thanks for the Scimitars and to the whole team for the time and effort you all put in to the association. As requested I wrote to Barnet Council and did receive a reply - much the same reply as everyone else got, I guess.....'.*

On 3 August 2003 Dr Ollie Natelson, not an Old Fincunian but the man primarily responsible for preparing our bid for the listing of the Old School building, reported that in the basement of Friern Barnet Town Hall is a World War II site of local government and it is intended to turn it into a World War II museum. He queried whether the War Memorial, or some parts of it, could be housed there. Unfortunately the museum would only be able to house a function for about 50 people and access would be by appointment only..

All this is heady stuff but Audrey Payne (nee Bradford 1935/1941) brought us back down to earth by telling us about Miss D E Darker MA (Oxon), Senior Mistress at FCS 1937 to 1946 :- *'I cannot recollect any mention in any Old Fincunian magazines, of Miss Darker who came to the school when Miss Dace retired as Senior Mistress and to teach English (and at that time Latin). She was there all during the war years, with many disruptions and moves to temporary accommodation at Henrietta Barnett Junior School.....In 1940 the girls' uniform was changed. The old type pleated square-necked gym slip was replaced by a plain tunic with V-neck and a side-seam pocket. The square-necked blouses remained.....the school summer dress was also changed. Whether this was because of war-time restrictions I don't know. Miss Darker left in the summer of 1946 to lecture at a Teacher Training College. In 1951 she was invited back as Chief Guest at the Senior School Prize Giving when she was Deputy Principal at the Maria Grey Training College. Miss M Brown became Senior Mistress when Miss Darker left - promoted from within the teaching staff. She came to the school as Miss Comber in 1937 teaching Biology. Afterwards the Senior Mistress of FCS was always appointed from within the staff.....'.*

June Bradshaw (nee Ryan 1944/49) has lived in the USA since 1961 and has had no contact with any Old Fincunians since the early 1950's, '....so it was interesting for me to find the Finchley County School web page, and here I am!....'. To remind you - <http://www.finchleycounty.co.uk>

Bob Catling (1950/56) wrote :- '.....I have now retired from the Merchant Navy and instead of working on the sea, I enjoy looking at it and the channel traffic, as from my lounge window I look down the channel to the French coast.....It was interesting reading Geoff Lence's comments about families attending FCS. All four Catlings attended FCS after primary education at the Martin Junior School. We cannot claim continuous attendance, only a longer span : Sidney (Todd) 1936 to 1941; Roy 1938 to 1943; Sylvia 1944 to 1948; and myself, Robert 1950 to 1955.....On the theme of records I retired four times! I took an early retirement package whilst a Captain with Hoverspeed....I then worked for P & O ferries for fourteen months and retired again. The next summer P & O asked me to work for the season, which turned out to be two and a half years, part time.... Then to my complete surprise, I was called to work for two months that summer.. ..Are there any other Old Fincunians who had a career on the briny? I met Brian Harris from my form, whilst at anchor off Cyprus. He was on HMS Daring when I was on the Tiderace. Mike Lever, also from my form, joined the same company as me (RFA), but we lost contact when he joined another company.....'.

Ken Turner (1949/56) wrote :- '....It is good to hear that so many Old Fincunians are still in touch with each other. For the past 40 years my only contact has been with Ken Amphlett and it was his meeting with Bob Thorogood at the last reunion that triggered renewed contact.....'.

Molly Powell (nee Holbrook 1929/35) writes :- 'What a marvellous Mag! I didn't have time to read it during the day so I took it to bed with me. Finally put it down at 1.20 am!...The mention of Flopper Cooper reminds me that he was in the form below me, but I knew his sister, Barbara Campbell (nee Cooper). She was our marvellous centre-forward of our hockey team.....I still do not notice many names of the time I was at school, only Charles Hale. Bob Payne was only there one year but I do remember Olive Gems (nee Dewhurst). I know some of the boys were killed in the Wars and the girls are probably scattered around the world, like Joan Wallis (nee Thompson), in Australia...'.

Well, I wrote to Molly and sent her a list of the Old Fincunians who were at FCS at the same time as her, and who still receive Scimitar:-

Eileen Daniell (nee Gregg)
Olive Walker (nee Sainsbury)
Olive Gems (nee Dewhurst)
Miss Elizabeth M Killip

Eileen Hollis (nee Bagg)
Barbara Hawkins (nee Toyne)
Basil Pilgrim
Charles Hale

One of them, Eileen Hollis (nee Bagg 1929/34) wrote :- '...reading the two most recent copies of Scimitar, shown to me by my sister, Doris Jeffery (nee

Bagg). My twin brother, Alan, and I were in the same form as Olive Dewhurst, Molly Holbrook and Dorothy Speechley. Please give them my best wishes. I was very interested to read of Olive's war time experiences and hockey activities. I remember Mr Vivian well, but I was one of those who feared him. I would, however, be very interested to have a copy of the memoirs in whatever form it appears. I was particularly interested to see the photo of the male staff all of whom, between the three of us, we recognised. The female staff were not so easy. We thought Miss Davies on the left of Mr Carr, possibly Miss Bailey on his right, and of course Miss Dace in dark attire in the front row. I think it must have been taken before 1920.....'.

Jean James (nee Lobb 1945/52) sent a e-mail correcting numerous errors I had made in edition 145 :- '...Firstly I need to correct the impression that we are involved with the local Girl Guides. This is not the case. We are involved with the Guild, fundraisers in Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton....helping to keep the RNLI with as much cash as we can raise....'.

Rosemary Holland (nee Makins 1934/39) wrote :- 'Many thanks for another Scimitar full of news and chat and for all the hard work putting it together.....I was amused to read that Jean James was persuaded by her grandchildren to "get real, Gran, and use a computer". On my 80th birthday last year my eldest grandson (a computer buff working in London) told me his friends were very impressed when he told them his Gran was into e-mails. I was interested to hear of the proposed "History of Finchley County Grammar School" and will let you know whether I will purchase a copy. At the moment we are trying to "unload" and trying not to accumulate too much in case we decide to move somewhere with a smaller garden - a very difficult decision!'. **Joan Stevens (nee Hodgkinson 1940/45)** would also like a copy of the "History of FCS", should it ever be printed! How about you?

Joyce Stockwell (nee Tansley 1946/52) wrote from Canada :- 'I have just received the Summer edition of Scimitar and read it through from cover to cover with much enjoyment, as always. I really regret not being able to make the Final Reunion on 6 September but will be thinking of you on the day. I do hope that it will be possible to arrange future reunions in another venue. It is such a pity to lose our building but I truly believe that it is the people who make the school, not the other way around, and our Old Fincunians Association will survive for many years to come. I was rather surprised to read that you are still sending copies of Scimitar to people who have not paid subscriptions for a few years. Maybe a little note accompanying the next edition to the effect that "...this will be the last if you do not pay up!". It might encourage a few cheques.....'.

Beryl Careless (nee Stitchbury 1939/44) wrote :- 'I am enclosing a small cheque even though I am a Life Member, and I very much enjoy reading the magazine. Are there any other FCS of my generation (I am 75) in Devon? I have never met any here except my brother, Leslie. I do not think I'll be able to make the reunion - it's a long way. Hope it all goes well and best wishes to all

who attend. P.S: We are keen members of UKIP - the United Kingdom Independence Party'.

OK! Beryl the following are from your era but not from Devon :-

Geoffrey Wren	Robert Costain	Beryl Friend (nee Irving)
Rev Brian Cross	Elizabeth Gordon-Smith (nee Bailey)	
Roy Petch	Jim Dunkley	Michael Holton
Richard Seymour	Ron Lence	George Cull

Brian Mitchell (1945/50) has only recently "come back into the fold" :- '...I am prompted to take a few moments out of my ever-crowded retirement to thank all those concerned with the reunion held in June 2002. My wife, Pat, and I spent a wonderful afternoon renewing acquaintances, particularly those of the 1945/50 era and the football club - we had not seen some of them for well over thirty years. Long may it continue.....I am reminded of so many of the events reported.....my involvement in the school play, "Androcles and the Lion" as a member of the stage crew under the eagle eye of Mr Eldridge.....the alternative use of the boxing ring in which Ralph and Thomson (apologies for not remembering their full names) hid during one of "Speedy" Wills French lessons.

The letters from Roy Sim and Peter Robinson take me back to one of the football club's dinners, when we were on our way back, in Roy's car, to Cyril Rawlings house in North Finchley, when we were involved in a head-on collision.....I cannot remember how he became involved, but Peter Robinson appeared from out of the blue ...and Roy's car, which was to have been traded in the following week, was a write-off. I can still see the young policeman leaning on the bonnet and telling Roy that he would get a better deal from the insurance company than from the trade-in value..... interesting to note the name of Marian BenskinWe lived next door to the Benskin family, in Dollis Road, from 1936 until the death of Marian's parents after the war was over. As youngsters, my twin brother and I were in a constant state of war with the Benskins unaware that Marian was a scholar at FCS.....sadly, Marian died some years ago.....'.

Audrey Bruce (nee Turner 1946/50) was more concerned about the length of the girls' pigtails :- '...on page 17 of Scimitar 141, Alison Long (nee Peeling) refers to the taller of the two Audreys. I was the shorter of the two Audreys, also with fair pigtails, but not as long as Audrey Jackson's...'. **That's got that sorted, then!**

Simon Rothman (1959/66) wrote, '...Apart from Julian Rosenthal (1959/64), the only other ex-FCS person I have met in recent years is Gillian Griffiths (1960/65). Gillian keeps in touch with one or two other ex-FCS people...'.

Here comes Jean James again :- '...Connie Fozzard, my old class mate, is the Mayor of Truro... Vinia Miller, and I, went to Truro for the Mayor-Making civil ceremony - it was held in the Hall for Cornwall, a truly impressive ceremony.....We

were both very aware of Connie's impact on the community.... As she said, "probably delivering their babies did help understanding" her very real influence in the area'. (I think I got that right !!). '...We returned to Truro the following Sunday for the civic service held in the Cathedral - again, a truly memorable occasion....We left Truro feeling very proud that we had witnessed marvellous ceremonials centred around a well-known Old Fincunian.....'.

Greta Morris (nee Pizer 1941/47) wrote, '...I was saddened to read of Eric Benger's death. He was a great character and very well-liked. I am now sorry I did not attend the 2002 reunion which he attended from Canada. Isn't it amazing how Old Fincunians who live all over the world manage to organise their lives and attend reunions, yet I live five miles away and missed the day!..Anyway, I am not going to miss the reunion on 6 September 2003...'.

Here comes Jean James again :- '...One thing that is available from Connie Fozzard's year as mayor is a book of recipes that she has put together from old school pals, medical peer groups, political and local colleagues. I thoroughly recommend the book to everyone, such a selection of world recipes would be hard to find anywhere else. It is being sold for Connie's favourite charity - Marie Curie Cancer Care - and at £6 per copy it is good value for money....I have already tested out several recipes, and very good they were....'.

Phillip Gillam (1942/48) replies to **Joyce Ackerman of Woodhouse School :-** '...I married a Woodhouse girl, 46 years ago, Jill Plumbly (1947/52). She remembered Mr H G (Bunny) Martin who wrote the music for the Woodhouse School song. He was Deputy Head and Head of Chemistry and also a talented pianist (LRAM). The highlight of the annual School Concert was always his virtuosity, especially the duets with the Head of Art, Miss Marchant, also an LRAM. My wife believes the words of the school song were written by Mr George Mellor, Senior Master during Mr John Davie's headmastership, a formidable character who taught history and played a similar role to Miss Shore on the boys' side. Mr Martin succeeded him.....Curiously, about 1934, when I was about three years old and living in Fallowcourt Avenue, the nice lady who lived next door and who often patted me on the head, was the famous Miss (Shuvver) Shore, feared, I believe, by generations of Woodhousians....'.

The last words are those of Jean James (nee Lobb 1945/52) :- '....We have been in Exmouth for four years.. and an ex-neighbour in Friern Barnet told me that not only is the school building down, but also our old sports field in Hillside Avenue has been sold for development. So nothing will be left of our school life in the borough, very sad. But as long as there are some who still have fond memories of our place of learning, FCS will never die.....A belated Happy New Year to you all from Jean James (nee Lobb 1945/52)....'. After I received these words I learned from Connie Fozzard that during the last weeks of January 2004 Jean's husband, Bob James, died. He had been far from well for over thirty years. We all send our sympathies and best wishes to Jean. Anyone wishing to contact her can do so at jean@james-lobb.fsnet.co.uk

THE 2003 REUNION



I drove into the Boys' Playground on Saturday 6 September 2003 trying not to read the placards announcing that the site had been acquired for development. There were no other cars there and the emptiness was disturbed only by a piece of board that was laying on the ground near to the entrance. *"This has got to be a first"*, I chuckled to myself. *"Me, the first to arrive at school"*. During my five years at FCS I had never been the first to arrive. I looked around and remembered the many times I had been in detention for being late. I parked my car right in the centre of the boys' playground and walked over to the piece of board intending to remove it to the rubbish bin. It was a hardboard notice which had been blown over by the wind carrying the chalked words, *"Please park in the girls' playground"*. So I did, and there were quite a few cars there already.

Clearly I was not the first to arrive and my attention was drawn to a number of people carrying trestle tables, chairs, and caterers trays into the Old Building. Bryan Goulding (1947/52) had arrived and was excited at being there. *'For me it doesn't start here, it started on the journey here. It was a trip in more senses than one, a trip down memory lane. I brought Derek Geaves and his wife Carol (Castle). Derek left school in 1947, the same year that Carol and I started. I first caught up with Derek in 1953 when I joined the Old Boy's F.C. We spent the whole journey sharing a 'few' reminiscences and I also got to hear about Carol's very interesting nursing career.....'*

As I entered the Hall I was pleasantly surprised to find its emptiness was more like the Old School Hall than it had been for many of the reunions held there in the past. All trace of the Professional Development Centre

had gone and the War Memorial displayed itself as it must have looked in 1920, now well-worn and battle scarred, but proudly remembering the names of our First World War heroes. But one could not just slip back into the past because Godfrey Mann was tinkering with stereo equipment and music was belting out from the loud speakers. *"Just getting things ready to play the music of the Old School Song"*, he explained and together we listened to three piano recordings prepared by Peter Monk (1951/57). Peter explained, *"I have a top quality recording on CD of an accompaniment for the School Song. An intro plus four verses. This is up to scratch for sound quality and will push well through the PA system. . As we listened to the music I could not help but remember the piano accompaniments played by Mr McNelly in his Musical Appreciation sessions and on ceremonial occasions in the Hall. Peter went on, "The trouble with a recorded accompaniment is that we'll need to make clear to people that the record goes at a fixed pace, people can't slow up when they fancy, they must be good and listen and keep in time"*.

Why was I suddenly filled with misgivings about the accompaniment? Have you ever known the Old Fincunians keep in time with each other, never mind the music! Peter continued, *"I have a copy on audio cassette and on CD. I have brought both with me. By the way, I am nervous of opening the flood gates, but I wonder if some people might like a CD or audio cassette of their own to sing along to? Each one takes me ten minutes to do and the costs of disk or cassette plus postage would be less than £1-50, but I am not a factory which can produce hundreds"*. I promised to bring his offer to the attention of the membership and we carried on listening.

We decided which version was most likely to suit the assembled voices of the Old Fincunians later in the day and I turned my attention to the trestle tables positioned at the entrance to the Hall from the boys' cloakroom end. Typed lists and blank papers were arranged neatly so that our volunteers could book everyone in and enroll any new members. On one of the walls someone had attached some clothes hooks and hanging there were two school blazers, caps, ties and a scarf.

Further along towards the Geography Room were lists of everyone who had said they were coming, all arranged in School Years order. Against the opposite wall were a number of trestle tables scattered with photographs, registers, documents, and all the other memorabilia, together with the two panels now detached from the War Memorial displaying the names of the ex-scholars who fell in both World Wars. All of these exhibits were enjoying a breath of fresh air and a return to their proper home on one of their rare trips out of Godfrey Mann's garage. I had brought with me our old wallpaper pasting table, so I erected it and arranged upon it every edition of Scimitar with a few spares in case anyone wanted them. I wandered across to have a look at the blazers. Bill Wilson and a number of the boys were standing by a small card table nearby. They were slowly,

may reverently, turning the pages of the Book of Remembrance. Every name they quietly voiced, a whispered roll-call to which those names from the past all answered "Present" in their turn. Voices only raised a little to tell some anecdote, or other. "Alexander; Barnes; Barrett; Bullock; Butler; Campbell"..... "I knew everyone of them"..... "He was such a good-looker, the girls all loved him"..... "Cooper; Davidson; Deere; "..... "they were just boys when they fell in the War, just boys"..... "Driver; the two Edwards and Dix"..... "Fisher; "Welcome; Kilby".... "Who was it that was losing his hair even when he was at school but all the girls fell for him?"..... "Laidman; Lamerton; Lackerness"..... "What a waste", said one drawing a quick response from another, "Don't ever say that, don't even think it. It cannot be a waste to make the sacrifice they did so that all of us could have a better life"..... "Mayo; Mills; Mitchell.....".

I crept away as the roll call and the associated homage continued, and I found that Peter Dewhurst (1937/42) had arrived. "You're early?", I said. He explained the journey he had experienced to be there and produced an Old Fincunian tie from his pocket. "I understand that three people applied for ties and you only have two to give away. Here is a third, with my blessing, so that no one is disappointed". Thank goodness for members like Peter, I thought to myself. Always there when we need help and they always come up trumps.

Bob Payne (1934/36), looking his usual immaculate self, tested the microphone, '...testing one, two, three...'; and Peter Dewhurst remarked that, '...the resemblance to a Bullins Redcoat is remarkable...'. Our Chairman, Godfrey Mann, joined in the fun and perhaps conscious of the large number of members expected to attend, suggested that '...the girls can sit in rows on the right and the boys in rows on the left. The young under-60's could sit cross-legged in the first two rows...'. Peter Dewhurst laughingly suggested that, '...they would then have to give evidence of having a handkerchief with them..and anyone not having this essential piece of kit will have to stand in the front of the assembly in disgrace. Any ex-pupil of the Martin School will remember this ritual every Friday assembly.....'. The Hall was beginning to fill up :-



I saw Sheila Hatfield (1948/55) standing and staring at the wall near the Book of Remembrance. "I am reading this postcard, all the way from Australia. It's from Maureen Verga (nee Richey 1948/55) and she wishes she was here with us....". Maureen had written, 'To the Old Fincunians on the occasion of our last reunion in the School premises. Sorry we cannot be with you in person but we will be with you all in spirit...The bonds are strong throughout the world, and many doors are open around it. The Australian group meet on the second Sunday in March, in Moonee Valley, Melbourne...'. I began to think of absent friends. Many of them had sent messages which someone had pasted onto the wall. "...I will be with you all in spirit at 3 o'clock when I will be singing the School Song....", from Jim Hind (1926/33). Janice Sutton (nee Ackerman 1949/54) had written, "...remember me to the Class of 49....". Vera Sheffield (nee Payne 1931/36) is in a nursing home so she got her daughter, Lesley Sewell (1958/63) to write, '...my thoughts and best wishes are with you on September 6th.....'.

I left the absent-friend messages and went over to Barry Ackerman (1946/53), all the way from Bendigo in Victoria to be at a family function. He had managed to escape from the wedding long enough to join us. I knew that he had been an elected politician for many years in Bendigo and that his three terms of office as Mayor there was something of a record. I also knew that he had received the Australian Centenary Medal which was struck to mark the Centenary of the Federation of Australia and is only awarded for outstanding service to the community. He said, "I took the opportunity to enter by the Girls' entrance for the first time and I did not get a detention! I also had my first look at the inside of the Ladies and Gentlemen's Staff Rooms'. He showed me a photograph that Geof Batten (1947/43) had given to him. 'It is a picture of me and him in the Middlesex School's Cross Country, about 1951 - happy days!...'. Barry's attention was drawn to Derek and Jean Nicholl (1945/51), '...because Derek was so helpful to us when we first emigrated to Australia - he also coached - on a voluntary basis - my son Russell - and Philip Tufnell - at cricket when they were at Highgate School....'.

At that moment Barry was whisked away by members of his School Years 1946/53, Don and Jeanette Cording, Stan Gilks, Ian Gunter, Brian Laxton, Mary Dark (nee Howard), Len Tebbutt, and Jim and Doreen Williams. Barry was trying to persuade them to make a tour of the building and I could hear Jim Williams saying, '...the top corridor will be alright but at our age I don't think we will make it up into the clock-tower!...'. They all laughed and made off towards the stairs, passing Ron Lence, Richard Seymour, George Cull, Brian Cross and Dennis Weaver, all from the 1939/45 era, who were huddled in close conversation about the World War II days and soccer memories.

Pam Lence (nee Burge 1946/53) had found Ted Stevens (1945/51), Jean James (nee Lobb 1945/52), and Connie Fozzard (1945/52) and was remarking, '...how easy it is to talk with Old Fincunians I haven't seen

since leaving school.....the FCS common denominator makes for easy conversation and humour.....it is super to wander round the school and walk on the once "hallowed" ground.....today is the first time I have ever been in the Men's Staff Room...'. Someone, I think it was Lovinia Miller (nee Long 1945/51), was telling a group of her contemporaries, '.....look out for Ivor Kitchener, he is walking about in a computer-designed school uniform.....'.

The sun was shining down through the glass roof and if I was a sentimental sort I would say that the Old School was smiling down on us enjoying the day as much as we were. Jim Williams (1946/53) thought, *'...It might be old fashioned and out-of-date, but it still is a magnificent building of its type and compares favourably to more modern edifices half its age....'.* He then strode off to find Geof Batten (1947/54) to claim his copy of the Charlie Vivian Memoirs. Before he reached Geof Batten he almost bumped into Len Harris and Nick Phillips, both 1945/52. Nick was a renowned athlete, table tennis player and pianist, and Len had lived in East Finchley when Jim lived there. To Jim's dismay, although he remembered them, they failed to recognise him, but it did not stop them talking about the Old School and remembering their contemporaries.

Trevor Harwood (1962/69) was looking for the food tables muttering, *'I hope that the buffet includes some vegetarian dishes, and that there will be some beer as well as wine....'.* I was able to put his mind at rest on both counts. And there she was again, trying to confuse me, Lovinia Miller (1945/51) wearing a label announcing her as Elsie Long. This year I ignored it. Muriel Grant (nee Lodge 1940/46) was explaining, *'.....being here today means I have to miss the local horticultural show in which I have been heavily involved for over 40 years. I have only ever missed one before - come to that I have only missed one Old Fincunans reunion! I just had to be here today....'.*

I looked around for members of my School Years, 1947/53, but all I could see and hear were members of the Class of 54 - Max Davis, Dick Draper, Heather George (nee Marshall), Maggie Gray, Vera Hogg (nee Heath), Ann Hunt (nee Brown), Carole King (nee West), Jo Lansdell (nee Carson), Richard Martin, Christine Mintern (nee Lobb), Janet Pope (nee Munday), Sarah Prescott, and Jean Sutter (nee Arnold). *"It was Scimitar put us in touch",* said Dick Draper to nobody in particular. *"Trouble is they couldn't find Yvette Boulter for us",* Heather Marshall was saying, *"Still, we must be thankful for having you here, Richard. By the way, did anyone send any recipes to Connie Fozzard for her charity cook-book?".*

The talk of recipes roused Peter Dewhurst (1937/42) and attracted by the clutter of cutlery and clanking of bottles he asked, *'I think bottles clank when full and clink when empty, don't they?...'.* Our senses were aroused by the mouth-watering scents of roast beef and hams. Peter Dewhurst began to salivate, explaining, *'I had a very early breakfast...'*, but before he could move

towards the food came the announcement that the caterers were a little behind the clock, and lunch would be delayed. No moans or groans, just a moment of silence and then back to what was now looking like Oxford Circus in the rush-hour. The loners studied the information on the walls, the photos and memorabilia. Small groups swelled into large groups and then, as Peter Dewhurst put it, *'...like amoeba they split and the cycle continues... it brings back memories of biology lessons in the hut with Miss Comber. It is interesting just to sit and watch'*. Several class rooms had been converted into dining areas with plenty of tables and seats, and enormous royal blue linen napkins. Just one example of the commendable organisation and hard work that had gone into the preparations.

Betty Gordon-Smith (nee Bailey 1939/43) appeared out of the throng and immediately found two seats, one for her and one for Peter Dewhurst. They were joined by Audrey McMillan (nee Cornwell 1938/43) and I left them recalling the ATC and WJAC, those halcyon days of their youth with a world war raging around them. Although everyone had a sticky name-label when they arrived, already quite a few had lost them but I recognised Jim Dunkley (1939/44) sporting a tie very similar to the school tie. *'...I saw someone wearing it, admired it, so he immediately took it off and gave it to me...'*. It turned out that the tie was the company tie of Hertford Oils and the donor was an executive of that company. Never mind, Jim was pleased with it.

I was pleased to see Pam Lence (nee Burge 1946/52) looking radiant, as ever, despite some fairly recent poor health and surgery. I was lucky to find her, a petite girl in a crowd of giants. And there was Bill Wilson clutching a plastic bag containing several treasures, including some photographs. *'...We all had pictures taken when we first donned our military uniforms - one for Mum and one for the favourite girl friend, and one to carry in our wallets...'*. The photograph showed that Bill was certainly a very handsome RAF lad, and he even had a photograph of himself taken when he was just months old. *'Took a bit of courage to hand that one round'*, he said. He produced a photograph of the Old Fincunians football team, Champions of the Premier Division of the Old Boys League in 1952/53. Some members of that team were present today, Bill Wilson, Ken Taylor, Peter Dewhurst, and Geoff Lence.

Peter Dewhurst was out of his seat and looking for Molly Powell (nee Holbrook 1929/35). I found them recalling the days when Eric Benger (1940/46), now deceased, attended Molly's Sunday School Class. *'...a very caring man, loved his family, and could find a laugh in most situations - even during his very poor health he could still laugh about it...'*

I moved back towards the absent friend messages. Donald Yapp (1944/51) and Alison Yapp (nee Lang 1945/50) had written, *'...Unfortunately we will be abroad but we send you all our best wishes for a successful day...'*. Brian

Andrews (1965/72) message was so touching, "I am so very sorry and so heartbroken that I am unable to be with you. Eirian's mother is critically ill in hospital and it is necessary for me to be at Eirian's side in her time of need....she is very upset that it prevents me from being with you and she asks me to convey her heartfelt apologies to you all. Thank you all for being there and I am only sorry that I could not be part of the occasion. I also pass on apologies for the absences of Colin Cummings, John Whale, Roger Janson, Barry Hicks, Nick Mott and Marilyn Lubin....". **Margaret Message (nee Halsey 1942/48)** wrote, '...I regret not being able to attend the reunions, especially the 6th of September event, but I hope it is well-supported and 100% successful....'. **Philip Gillam (1942/48)** sent his apologies, '...FCS was an important part of my very happy childhood and I can stroll the corridors and wander the back field at any time in my imagination. I never believe in "going back" and it would be distressing to actually see the field built over and the classrooms silent and dusty. But I will be thinking of you on the day....'.

There were many more messages but at last I saw some of my own school years, 1947/53 and I immediately disgraced myself by referring to Pat Crisp (now Pat Blackburn) as Pat Rossington (now Pat Pryke). Another one of my senile moments, I thought, but the names of Sheila Hatfield, Joan Ridley and Eileen Smith, I got right. We sauntered off towards the buffet room and I was able to inform anyone who wanted to listen that there were already over 320 Old Fincunians in the building. I remembered that when I was at school there were about 300 at assembly in the Hall with the youngest at the front sitting cross-legged while the older pupils sat on forms and chairs at the back. That lot just fitted into the Hall, so how were we going to fit in over 320 today? Jean James (nee Lobb 1945/52) wondered the same. '...there seems to be many more than the expected 250..... I do hope another venue can be found so that friendships forged so long ago can still continue.....'.

The buffet room was full of people queuing, standing or sitting around talking, eating and drinking. I filled a plate with food but before I took a mouthful I found myself looking into the face of Roy Sim (1947/52). Still the boyish look, still the impish glint in his eyes, still with that quiff in his hair. We were soon joined by Pat Grainger (nee Davies) also from our years. Pat originally wrote, 'I'm really sorry to miss this. I am already booked on a cross-stitch weekend!...' Goodness knows what that is, but we were very pleased that she got here after all. Another one of our years arrived, Mike Tomlins, who still lives in the same house in Squires Lane that he lived in when at FCS. Someone produced a photograph of Mike on one of the School trips to Verulamium. (OK! Jim Hind, we know it is St Albans!). Then Geoff Karet, then Dick Colomb, then Geof Batten, then Ray Bishop, then Joan Brown, then Sylvia Davis (nee Wright), Ann Disbrey (nee France), Carol Geaves (nee Castle), Bryan Goulding, Sylvia Griffiths (nee Pates), and Jeff Walker, in from Canada.

What did we all talk about? Who knows? It was just good being together again. Geof Batten was saying, "Yes, it is an emotional event because of the knowledge that our beloved FCS building will soon be no more. On the other hand the atmosphere is so positive and forward-looking that the loss of a mere building, however much loved, hardly seems important. Everyone seems to be looking forward with great enthusiasm for future reunions - all we need is a room big enough!". Geoff Karet was supporting the idea of "Form Reunions" and found it refreshing that "...we can still not only remember each other, but still seem to have some bond and things in common.....".

I walked back into the Hall. "Over 380 here now!", said Godfrey Mann (1959/66), our Chairman. "And quite a few new members!", said Colin Luke (1963/70) our Treasurer. At the trestle tables at the entrance Janine Luke (nee Turner 1963/70) also Treasurer and Vice Chairman, and Audrey Payne (nee Bradford 1933/38) calmly and coolly dealing with the queue of aspiring new members - June Bradshaw (nee Ryan); Vicky Ayech (nee Roth); Barrie Dannenberg; Paul Lederman; Marian Jacobs (Nee Mundy); Jackie Belcher; Beryl Wilsher; and Brian Aarons. They had been hard at it since the first arrivals. I felt a gentle touch on my shoulder. It was Victor Lyon, the Leader of the Borough of Barnet Council. I was surprised to see him and I admired his courage at stepping into the lions' den. "What about this for a turn-out, then", I said. "You can see with your own eyes what we feel about this beloved old building which you have decided must go". His answer did not impress me. "This is a magnificent attendance but no more than I would expect from an organisation run by such worthy people as Godfrey Mann and the others". I walked away feeling that he had somehow missed the point.

In one of the class-rooms up by the bell I found most of the Class of 1949 sitting or standing around a table, spread with a table cloth bearing food and drink - Ken Amphlett, Peter Andrews, George Auger, Elspeth Cardew (nee Christie), Norman Gregson, Rita Lidstone (nee Matthews), Doris Lovell (nee Pomeroy), Jean Nichol (nee Robinson), Brian Rowland, Janet Seddon, Joan Spurgeon (nee Liddelow) Bob and Janet Thorogood, Beryl Tripp, Beryl Wilsher (nee Sunderland), and my brother Roy Sharp. "I enjoyed our mini-reunion in Cheddar last year and hope we might repeat it.... Today is tinged with sadness but full of optimism...", mused Joan Spurgeon. Rita Lidstone (nee Matthews) explained, "I expect you know about the 1949 intake. There are quite a lot of us here. Beryl Wilsher (nee Sunderland) arranged her visit to the UK to coincide with the Reunion. Several of us have been touring the building which was not quite as we remembered it! Sad that it will soon be no more but at least we have happy memories.....".

Norman Burgess (1933/38) passed the door so I followed him across the Hall. "What an amazing event and with such an upbeat mood. I have met up with past pupils of mine that I had taught both at Manorside and Frith Manor Schools. I had not seen them since then. What an association we belong to.

It has no equal, of that I am sure". Sheila Knowles (nee Jones 1941/47) and her friend Brenda Dean (nee Clay 1941/48) were enjoying themselves immensely. "Such a remarkable turnout - we do hope it will be possible to hold further reunions elsewhere". They were looking at a photograph that had been pinned up in the Hall with a note inviting people to identify a mystery man and lady. "Three of us have identified Miss Reid. I think she taught Maths.....later, Brenda suggested the man might be Mr Comes, Geography master. He didn't teach us for very long but in my school reports for our first year 1941/42, the initials "A C" appear opposite "Geography" so I think Brenda is right". I looked at the picture but I couldn't help except to suggest it was the Teaching Staff from 1946. Sheila replied, "If I put my glasses on....."

Brian Cross (1939/45) was moving from group to group and was wondering, "...what will happen to the money raised from the sale of the Old School and site - how much for education allocation. Perhaps a case could be made for an archive to hold all the old documents and records of FCS?....This is a grand event and the organisers must be congratulated - although I have many mixed emotions and not a little sadness...". Olive Walker (nee Sainsbury 1929/34) responded, '...Yes, it is a sad occasion, I suppose, but we must try not to let it be too sad....'. No danger of that, I thought, as my attention was drawn to the sound of hearty laughter coming from a corner of the Hall. It was Ted Stevens (1945/51), our one and only soccer international.

I remembered watching Ted play for England School Boys against Scotland at Wembley. He played at right-half (I shudder to think what they would call that position today!) and although I cannot remember the final score, I remember one lofted forty yards pass from Ted as accurate and as perfectly weighted as anything that Beckham can do today. *'Bend it like Stevens!'*, I said. Ted was laughing loudly and his eyes were sparkling. He was standing by Peter Hall (1945/51) and another I did not recognise. *"I am so pleased"*, said Ted. *"This is one of the few reunions I have been to where I have found my old classmates"*. Ted was in for a real treat because here from his old class are Connie Fozzard; Leonard Harris; Kathleen Henderson (nee Davis); Jean James (nee Lobb); Lovinia Miller (nee Long); Brian Mitchell; Derek Nichol; Joyce Pairpoint (nee Ball); Nick Phillips; Joyce Scrine (nee Lavington); Clare Vermeulen (nee Thomas); Enid Williams (nee Ashby); and Ivor Kitchener. Jean James was in close conversation with Nick Phillips and later she said, *'...Nick still has that well-known twinkle in his eye despite the problems that Parkinson's disease brings. He made light of it and he is still running his own business. Whenever there was any mischief going on in our class, it was certain that Nicky was at the heart of it.....Many of our form will remember the delights of the British restaurant at the top of Essex Park. Nicky introduced us to it as an alternative to school dinners. Remember school dinners?...'.* Kath Henderson, Clare Vermeulen and Joyce Pairpoint, are three of the group known as "The Fabulous Five". The other two, Pat Lawrence (nee Warner) and Pat Doughty (nee Proctor) had not arrived.

At that moment Ivor Kitchener came into view wearing what can only be described as the 2003 version of the Old School uniform. A "too-small" school blazer had been carefully used to produce panels of various sizes, a waistcoat had been made out of clear plastic pockets, and the blazer panels had somehow been reproduced onto the clear plastic. "I was determined to wear my Old School uniform today of all days. Not surprisingly it would not fit, so I have made it fit", said Ivor. I decided I would take a picture of him later. As he walked away back across the Hall, heads were turned as he passed little, and not so little, groups all busy talking, drinking and some eating. "Have you heard that some of the teachers are here?". "Yes. I've seen Janice Clifton. She is now Janice Mann. And a man called John Wilson". I poked my head into one such group and enquired, "Have you seen Margaret Orr? She taught Maths in the 1950's". "She was up the bell end of the Hall, last time I saw her", came the response, 'Is Charlie Gault here as well?'. I had no idea.

I trudged up to that end of the Hall past the Class of 1940, Barbara Carter (nee Clarke); Daphne Edler (nee Fletcher); Edna Grant; Alan Hamilton; and Alan Scrine; and met up again with Norman Burgess (1933/38). He looked disconsolate. "I feel completely betrayed by the Barnet Councillors who promised our War Memorial would be safe. It is just a sorry story that after two years of fighting we have come to this...". Today of all days there was nothing I could say, nothing I nor anyone could do to bring Norman out of his melancholy but he was trying to be positive about the future. "As I am the archivist for the Finchley Society I am hoping that the Foundation Stone and the Rain Hoppers can be retained, even displayed....I also hope to go along to the sale of our painting, "The Battle of Trafalgar", when it happens....". I left Norman to his musing and continued my search for Margaret Orr.

Standing by the photograph with the mystery man and woman, was a group which included Molly Powell (nee Holbrook 1929/35), Jim Dunkley (1939/44), Geoff Lence (1942/49), and Geof Batten (1947/54). Someone had guessed that the mystery man was Mr Hoffman while another was suggesting it was Mr Hilman. Geof Batten seemed to be suggesting that Mr Hoffman had changed his name to Hilman so as to avoid the possibility of being suspected as a spy. Sounded a bit far-fetched but the girls loved it.

A group making happy noises was a very young looking Class of 1968 with a few 1966-ers and 1969-ers thrown in - Janice Howkins; Jane Taylor (nee Greenwood); Julie Jackman (Nee Hicks); Susan Steed (nee Fogarty); Rowena Ward; Peter Brown; Christine Francis (nee Downs) Lynne Martin (nee Jones); Linda Williams; Richard Williams; and Kevin Plunkett. I wonder what they think about being here amongst us "wrinkleys"? Enid Williams (nee Ashby 1945/49) was apologising for her writing on the reunion acceptance slip, '...with no central vision, it makes my writing in straight lines very difficult....We got wind of the reunion through an Old Fincunian

I meet occasionally in Hoddesdon, so I contacted Joy Grahame (nee Blair 1961/66), who made us some copies of the invitation. I then contacted my two sisters, Margaret and Valerie Ashby who were at FCS in the late forties and early fifties.....Reg Ashby was my father and he was at FCS 1911 to 1918. I also contacted Keith Holness (who was our best man at our wedding) and his wife Sheila Andrews.....I could hardly wait to get here to meet up with old friends....'.

Arthur Scrine (1929/33) was looking forward to meeting some of his ex-form mates :- *'...I was going to say, "old classmate" but perhaps that word "old" is not one we should use today. Although I can picture most of them as they were, and I can remember their names, I wonder how much the passage of 70 years will have changed their appearance?...'.* I knew that at least two of his contemporaries were present, Olive Walker (nee Sainsbury), and Molly Powell (nee Holbrook), and I hope that he eventually joined up with them. Molly was sitting at the "bell" end of the Hall. *'...No preservation order for a wonderful building, yet a tree next door to me has a preservation order. Still... the OFA is far from dead or dying.....I felt it a great honour to be asked to lay the wreath at the memorial last year....a good few of those boys named on the memorial were classmates or good friends....'* For some reason I began to feel ever so humble. I stood still for a few moments and looked around letting the noise, the aromas, and the charged atmosphere sweep over me.

Jenny Spillar (nee Marston) and her husband Ted, were in Scotland climbing "Munros", and on the absent friends wall *'...Please give all my old class mates there a hearty "Hail!", especially Janet and Miriam. Perhaps Alf (Nigel) could repeat his feat of hanging some commemorative banner from the clock-tower....'* I went out side and looked up. No banners to be seen and the old clock was still stubbornly insisting that it was twelve o'clock!

I wandered back to the absent friends wall. Olive Gems (nee Dewhurst 1928/33), *'With regards - aged 85 and housebound.....it might have been possible but it would be so very emotional for me...'*. Joan Beech (nee Huckle 1932/37), *'I cannot come - arthritis and asthma - but I will be there in spirit....'*. Valerie Birch (nee Prosser 1951/58), *'Very best wishes for the occasion.'* Tony Bourner (1949/54) wrote from France, *'All good things must come to an end. Adieu, notre ecole...'*. Peter Dewhurst (1937/42) sent his apologies and then turned up on the day. Pat Dickinson (1953/60) wrote, *'...So sorry I am unable to attend. I am in hospital at present'*. Roland Finch (1929/35), *'With tears and sad regrets...'*. Peggy Hemmings (nee Emerson 1930/35) wrote, *'Sorry but I shall be on holiday that weekend....Good luck to everybody...'*. Joan Johnston (nee Orton 1933/38) promised, *'we will be there in spirit...'*, and Ann Seward (1950/56) wrote what so many would have wanted to say, *'...will be thinking of you on this sad day...'*. Norman and Ruth Cusack (nee Barstow 1933/40) wrote, *'We send greetings and our best wishes to all we knew at school...we would be delighted to hear from anyone who remembers us...'*, and Sue Coggin (nee Charles 1954/60) had sent us her *'very best wishes'*.

I saw Dr Ollie Natelson, not an Old Fincunian, but a joint author of our unsuccessful application for the Old School to be a listed building. He had a powerful camera strung around his neck and he was looking pensive :- *'Although I never studied at the school I have a strong affinity for its structure and for a number of its past pupils....Last reunion in the old school building? I share everybody's sadness ...'*. Ollie is, and will remain, our very good friend.

Jenny Arnold (nee Musk 1958/65) was *'...so sorry to learn that Jack Rawlings has passed away. I had the utmost respect for him...he was solely responsible for getting me through "O" Level Maths....'*. Kath Henderson (nee Davis 1945/50) was *'...pleased my year is well represented today and Ted Stevens brought some ancient photographs which gave us plenty of laughs and such happy memories...'*. Kath was chatting to Ivor Kitchener (1945/51) and admiring his "space age" school jacket. *'...remember when we represented the school, together with Peter Hall, at table tennis.....'*. Molly Stone (nee Holmes 1943/49), Pam Lambourne (nee Davis 1944/49), and Gwen Childs (nee Sansum 1942/48) joined in remembering pre-school days and mutual friends and acquaintances.

Back to the absent friends. Percy S Pavey (1923/28), *'...Please send my regards to anyone who may remember me....'*. There were dozens of messages - Hilary Faulkner (nee Simpson 1959/65); Bernard West (1935/40); Audrey Bruce (nee Turner 1946/50); Daphne Duff (nee Payne 1934/39); Jenny Spiller (nee Marston 1959/66); Vera Sheffield (nee Payne 1931/36) and Violet Spary (nee Millard 1924/29). Eileen Daniel (nee Gregg 1929/33) is 87 years young, and her husband is 92, *'...we cannot get there for the reunion but we do hope that the war memorial can be resited....'*. Mary Prokipchuk (nee Jacobs 1948/53) had written from Canada, *'...I'll be thinking of you all raising your voices to the School Song...hopefully not the last time...'*, and Keith and Sheila Honess (nee Andrews 1942/49) sent their best wishes.

Joan Stevens (nee Hodgkinson 1938/43) was looking hard at Peter Dewhurst and clearly neither recognised the other, but a quick look at their name labels and suddenly they were talking about who sat where in Form 5B's class room. *'I met Peter Robinson (1940/47) when I was on holiday and he told me about the Old Fincunians. Then I was sent some back numbers of Scimitar, and here I am, all the way from Norfolk', Joan was saying. Peter was reminiscing about Dennis Signy (1937/42) who '...was the clown of the form and very popular with the pupils - I am not so sure about the staff!....Paul Vermeulen (1938/43) was in the 'A' Form but that didn't prevent the 'B' Form girls having a crush on him. He looked good in his white flannels holding a cricket bat'*.

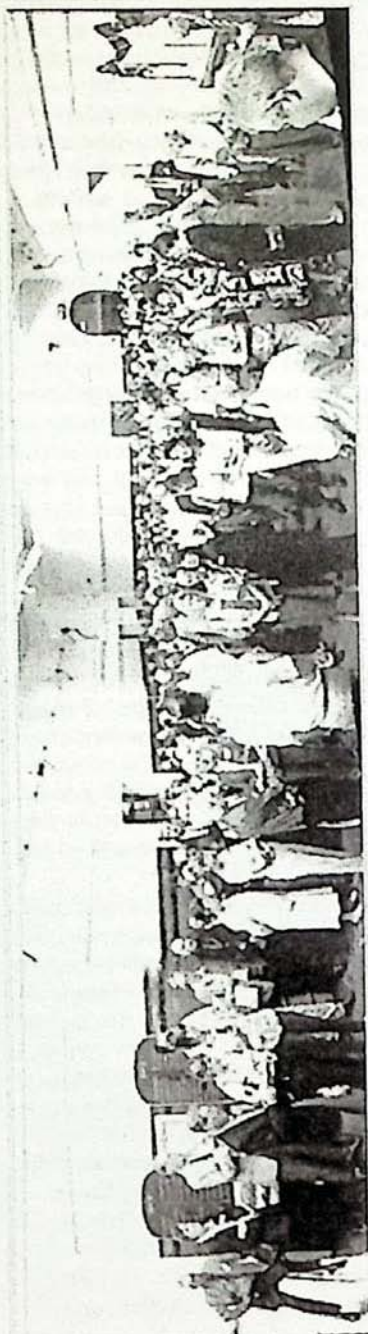
I walked over to the Scimitar table and found that all the spare Scimitars had gone, but suddenly people were emerging from the classrooms and the Hall filled to capacity. People were examining their School Song sheets. I got the feeling that everyone was preparing themselves for the singing.

I forced my way into the crowd and there was Vivian Hand (nee Pawle 1948/53), '...we are supposed to be on holiday today but how could we not come to say farewell to our dear old school? Goodbye dear Finchley County and thank you for those wonderful teachers...'. Bill Segal (1946/50) and Brian Mitchell (1945/50) were talking to Ivor Kitchener, still wearing his waistcoat of many colours, about table tennis. Ivor moved away towards Joyce Scrine (nee Lavington 1945/50). 'You were so good at Maths', he was saying. 'You sat immediately in front of me and you gave me a lot of help during the final 'O' Level year... I have just been up the stairs at the girls' end...it was like a dream to wander around the old art room and the labs...'. Ann Phillips (nee Brooks 1953/58) was in nostalgic mood, '...It was fifty years, maybe to the day, that our year started as "ticks" in 1953, so it is a specially poignant day for us.....'. By "us" Ann was referring to Chris and Carole Barker; Valerie Hencken (nee Clarke); Valerie Jeffrey; Ann Nicholas (nee Scater); Gerry Pinches over from his home in France; Joyce Robinson; Janet Saunders; and Ian Thomas, better known as the Class of 53.

Someone jogged my arm and pointed towards Clare Vermeulen (nee Thomas 1945/50), saying, 'Clare has been in great demand all afternoon...not surprising, really...gorgeous little blonde at school.....and still is.....'; but Godfrey Mann was calling us to order :-



Godfrey made some announcements, Bob Payne OBE (1934/36) slotted neatly into his accustomed role of Toast Master, and Norman Burgess (1933/38), Brian Smith (1944/49), and Peter Monk (1957/61) were all presented with Old Fincunian ties. Brigid Povah got a mention and so did the members of staff who were present, and eight pupils who had joined the Old School in the early 1920's... "Thanks" for this, "Thanks" for that..... The Hall was quiet as we listened but we were all impatient to start the singing. Everyone had been given a printed copy of the words, all four verses. All eyes were no longer on Godfrey, but on our conductor!



Peter Monk rose majestically to his full height, took up the conductor's position in front of the standing assembly, slowly turned to face his audience, and as if in slow motion he raised the cardboard tube he was using as a baton. I thought, "*Last Night of the Proms*" has nothing to match this moment. There was a gentle rustling of song sheets and some clearing of throats. Peter Monk stood poised with both arms and the baton raised above his head like a matador about to despatch the bull. The recorded piano music started and at last we were into the "*All Hails*", boasting about our "*Lusty Limbs*", singing in "*Vig'rous Strain*" to "*Our Friends and Comrades*", both here and elsewhere. Over 300 Old Fincunians all singing in tune and in time with the music has got to be a first. I just hoped and prayed that it will not be the last.

The words were sung with gusto but tunefully, not sadly but proudly, and with great enthusiasm. I looked around to see if I could recognise anyone just miming, or not singing, just listening, but I could find none. I am almost certain that mixed in amongst us I saw Carr and Chalk, Povah and Vivian, Joscelyne and McNelly, Dace and Sturgeon, and the others, all singing and orchestrated by EJR, while the lyricist and composer, Wallis and Davie, looked on. The fourth and final verse was now almost ended leading up to the final "Hail!".

I wiped my eyes - must be the pepper on my food - and stood looking around me. Some of the others must have had too much pepper as well, because there were many handkerchiefs on view. As the singing ended there was a silent pause but as the spell was broken, suddenly the chatter and the babble started again.

Not for the first time that day I just stood still and let the occasion engulf me. I could see

that quite a few boys and girls were doing the same, and for each one of us the focus seemed to be the War Memorial. At that moment the sun was covered by a cloud and it became darker.

Ruth Lesirge (1955/63) had only just arrived and immediately started talking to Jim Bennett, Alan Lamerton, Tony Trippick and David Glenn. They all wandered off towards the stairs and finding the hatch to the clock tower open, Ruth and Alan climbed up. *'Not much to see up here!'*, Ruth said.

There seemed to be a late surge of people wishing to become new members and nobody was in any hurry even to think about going home. Don Cording (1946/53) was like a shepherd trying to keep the flock of 46-ers together, trying to find Connie Fozzard (1945/52), but I was drawn back to the absent friends messages. Ken and Sheila Henley (1931/35) sent, *'...We send our best wishes for a successful Final reunion and we are very sorry we shall not be with you, although our thoughts will...'*. From Canada, Joan A Johnston (nee Orton 1933/38) wrote, *'...I will be there with you in spirit...'*. I joined the small group around the Book of Remembrance.

Above the babble in the Hall I could just hear Joan Harris (nee Nash 1943/49) who was explaining something about the war, *"...Mrs Dakin, first husband Douglas Dakin, second husband Charles Bray.....Foreign Office..... sent out to investigate the first doodle bug.....came to FCS.....we had to search for shrapnel...."*. Someone was looking for the ex-scholars from 1920, *"...apparently there are eight of them here but I can't locate them"*. I had heard that Marjorie Allen (nee Hill 1925/31) and Ellen Hoster (nee Broadbelt 1920/26) were present but I had not seen them. *"Probably with Margaret Orr"*, I said, *"I can't find her, either"*.

Back to our absent friends. Elaine Kemp (nee Barker 1955/60) was in Spain, *'...I'll be thinking of you all and will sing the Old School song at 3 pm on the 6th September...'*. John and Kathleen Young (nee Ward (1925/32), *'...we are both in our late eighties and cannot travel such a long way - but we would have loved to be there...'*. Mrs V Wells (nee Beazley 1931/36, *'...every success for the Farewell Reunion - another sad passing...'*. John Whale (1965/71), *'I am on holiday but will sing along to myself at 3 pm on the day...'*. Ann Seward (nee Prosser 1950/56), *'...thinking of you on this sad day...'*. Peter Robinson (1940/47) was away, *'...and will miss this trip down memory lane! Hope it is a successful day....Away with care and sad regret...'*. Judythe Roberts (nee Prince 1948/53) was in hospital *'...having an op.....Have fun on the day!...I will miss you all...'*. Sonnie Moffatt (1936/41) had written, *'...somewhat immobile due to arthritis.... one new knee, one to go! Best wishes for a great reunion...'*. Sylvia London (1937/42) wished us well but, *'...I am in very poor health and cannot join you...'*. Basil Pilgrim (1929/34) was on holiday, *'...I did not know that the school has finally been sold. I regret that very much, but I send all good wishes for September 6th...'*. Maria Lloyd is not an Old Fincunian, but she

is the widow of Trevor Lloyd (1927/33) :- 'Many thanks for inviting me to the Last Reunion. Trevor loved his school and was a Life Member of the OFA. He would be much saddened by its ending but he is no longer with us. All Trevor's peers have now gone, also but I still have a connection with Judy Wilson (nee Emerson). I live too far from Finchley to travel in memory of Trevor but wish you all great happiness on 6 September...'. Rosemary Holland (nee Makins 1934/39) really wanted to be here but, '...The times of coaches to Victoria weren't suitable and they always dig up the railway lines on Saturdays....seems too much hassle for an 80 years old (poor old thing!)....sorry to miss it but I am sure everyone will have a riotous time and I shall think of you all singing the School Song at 3 o'clock...'. Doreen Coghill (nee Page 1942/48) was prevented from coming by a sudden family commitment, '...It is a great disappointment but I shall be there in spirit and will even sing the School Song!...'. Daphne Duff (nee Payne 1934/39) also promised, '...to join in singing the School Song with you at 3 pm on 6th September...'.
 A picture formed in my mind of mature ladies and gentlemen on buses, trains, at football matches, in cinemas, restaurants and theatres, all over the country, nay, all over the world, suddenly bursting into song at 3 pm on Saturday 6 September. I could imagine the response of the London Bobby in Piccadilly as a well dressed lady suddenly exploded into song '...with streaming hair and lusty limb...'. 'I see, madam, you are singing this risque song because your school ceased to function in 1985 and is about to be pulled down? Pull the other one, madam!...'.
 Scattered around was the Class of 1942 - Gwen Childs; Gladys Jarman; Geoff Lence; Beryl Little (nee Simpson); and John Williams, but no time to talk because there was my brother, Roy Sharp (1949/54) and his best school friend Brian Rowland (1949/54). It looked as though they were trying to do a conjuring trick with two pieces of paper and a camera. Roy was trying to take a picture of the pieces of paper while Brian Rowland (1949/54) held them together.

"School Rules dated 1929", he explained. "At some time someone has torn them in half..."



Bryan Goulding (1947/52) had been having a last look round the Old School building. *'....Our last reunion at F.C.S.? Almost certainly, but It has provided an opportunity to walk the corridors and peer into the old class-rooms. The cold hand of Charlie Vivian descended on my neck (once again) when I stood at the door of the chem lab. I didn't enter - too many bad memories. Why did he take such an instant dislike to me?. Only later did I find out that he once went out with my Aunt Maud - it could explain a lot! Today... when I found myself in the old art room, I thought back to the day that Freddy Williams told me that he had got me a place at the Homsea School of Art and I turned it down because I couldn't face the thought of missing sport on a Saturday.....Molly James (Delaney) and Joyce Fortune, and it is great to see Roy Sim and Micky Tomlins again, after so many years, and my great pal Dick Colomb is over there. But no Audrey Bacon or Lizzie Gale - I hope they are still out there somewhere..'*

Around the Hall people were talking animatedly with what seemed to be a growing determination to make the best of the last few minutes. Others just stood, alone and silent.

Connie Fozzard (1945/52) was having a heart to heart with Ted Stevens (1945/51) about his days at Mill Hill Medical Research Institute. *'....You worked with some very impressive people...'*, said Connie. I smiled because I had my first job there at the same time as Ted worked there. I do not think I qualified as one of the *"impressive people"*. Ivor Kitchener (1944/51) joined them and the talk was of football and Truro. Someone asked Connie how her charity cook-book was progressing. *'....It is for the benefit of Marie Curie Cancer Care and I have been sent or given over two hundred recipes. This past month I have been formatting them in preparation for the printers.....it has been an enormous task...'*

I wandered aimlessly around the Hall just eaves-dropping on the general chatter. *'....Is there any chance of a further reunion at some other venue?...I heard that the bulldozers are queuing up in Squires Lane ready to move in as soon as we are gone....As long as Scimitar keeps going we will be able to stick together and meet up.....Where will we get the money to hire a Hall in the future?....The same place we get the money to hire the Old School now!....Do you know I never knew we had to pay to come back to the Old School building... Did you hear that there are more ex-scholars who are not members than those who are?.....When I arrived I thought it was going to be too sad, but what a lovely day I have had....'*

I made a mental note to answer some of these questions in the Scimitar when my attention was drawn to Peter Dewhurst who was trying unsuccessfully to help Pauline Clarke (1963/68) open a door at the girls' end of the building. After a lot of pushing and tugging Peter examined the door. It was securely fastened by a six inch nail through the frame and bore the faded legend "Fire Exit". Pauline laughed as Peter expressed his concern, *'Thank goodness there was no fire this afternoon....'*

I saw Ivor Kitchener in his space-age waistcoat so I grabbed him and took his photograph. Does he really think it fits him better than his original blazer?

I took a few more pictures for the album and the Hall was now emptying.

Audrey Payne and Janine Luke were still busy with the papers at the entrance to the Hall. Godfrey Mann had started to put things into boxes and crates. There were still people grouped around, still talking, still laughing, but most people just standing still, looking around them. The Book of Remembrance was still attracting a small crowd. Cameras were



flashing as last pictures of the War Memorial were taken. I made my way back to Norman Burgess. He was still incensed at what "the vandals" are doing to our Old School. *'...the Borough of Barnet have now decided to allow a hideous advertising notice board of immense dimensions along the front of our beloved school. It will be huge so that pedestrians and motorists will be able to see it from the roadway. Not all the Councillors are happy about it, nor about the destruction of our War Memorial. Councillor Burton, who represents East Barnet, is incandescent with rage..... We are not alone in our disgust at what is going on!.....'* Thank goodness for Old Fincunians like Norman, I thought.

I made one last tour around the school, downstairs and upstairs, and all was peaceful and quiet. No ghosts now, just a quiet "Goodbye" to the organic building known proudly and variously as Finchley County School, Finchley County Grammar School, and latterly as Finchley Manorhill Junior School. Those of us who were still there were quietly listening for the Old School's farewell, but I could only hear it sighing.

After that things came quickly to an end - kisses and cuddles and lots of "See you next time!", and the usual volunteers started to clean up ready for the bulldozers. I gathered up my trestle table, packed the Scimitar archive and walked out of the Old School building for the last time. I remembered 1947 and the first time I had walked out of the building, but on that occasion I could not wait to get home for tea. It was quite different on Saturday 6 September 2003. I had no appetite for tea, and I did not sleep a wink that night!

At the risk of missing out a few names, here is the list of attendees :-

Brian AARONS	1963/70		Janice DIXON	1961/66	BERRETT
Barry E L ACKERMAN	1946/53		Brian DODDINGTON	1962/69	
Judy ALBERT	1961/72	STEVENS	Richard Will DRAPER	1954/61	
Marjorie ALLEN	1925/31	HILL	Jim DUNKLEY	1939/44	
Ken AMPHLETT	1949/54		Daphne EDLER	1940/45	FLETCHER
Ann ANDERSON	1950/55	THOMAS	Frank EDWARDS	1962/69	
Peter ANDREWS	1949/56		Christine EMERY		HENDERSON
Martin APPLEBY	1963/71		Susan FENTIMAN		HOSTER
Jenny ARNOLD	1958/65	MUSK	Rosaline FISHEL	1962/67	HOWE
Margaret ASHBY	1945/51		Susan FLETCHER	1959/65	LAMERTON
Valerie ASHBY	1946/50		Graham FORD	1952/55	
George A AUGER	1949/56		Connie FOZZARD	1945/52	
Vicky AYECH		ROTH	Ann FRANCE	1947/54	DISBREY
Vic BAFICO	1962/68		Christine FRANCIS	1968/72	DOWNS
Janet BANKS	1959/66	TROLLOPE	David FRANKLIN	1960/67	
Chris BARKER	1953/58		Ann FRITH	1948/53	
Carole BARKER	1953/58		Susan GALLIGAN	1958/64	
Eddie BASSANT	1962/70	AUSTIN	Charles GAULT	1957/65	
Geoffrey BATTEN	1947/54		Carol GEAVES	1941/47	CASTLE
John F BEAL	1953/60		Derek GEAVES	1941/47	
Andy BEAL			Heather GEORGE	1954/59	MARSHALL
Jackie BELCHER	1944/48		David GEORGE	1957/62	
Jim BENNETT	1956/63		Christine GILBERT	1965/72	
John BIRD	1957/63		Dr Stanley GILKS	1946/53	
Ray BISHOP	1947/52		John GINN	1961/67	
Pat BLACKBURN	1947/53	CRISP	David GLENN	1957/62	
Gill BOAL	1963/70	MANNING	Inger GORDON	1965/72	HEWSON
June BRADSHAW	1949/54	RYAN	Betty GORDON-SMITH	1939/43	BAILEY
Karen BRESLAW	1963/71		Bryan GOULDING	1947/52	
Diana BROOME	1959/65	GRIFFITHS	Joyce GRAHAME	1961/66	BLAIR
Joan BROWN	1947/54		Pat GRAINGER	1947/53	DAVIES
Margaret BROWN	1965/72		Muriel GRANT	1940/46	LODGE
Janet BROWN	1960/65	HAWKINS	Edna GRANT	1940/45	DONALDSON
Peter BROWN	1968/75		Margaret GRAY	1954/59	
Sheila BURBIDGE	1950/57		Norman GREGSON	1949/56	
Betty BURGESS	1933/38		Sylvia GRIFFITHS	1947/52	PATES
David A BURGESS	1950/57		Ian GUNTER	1946/53	
Norman BURGESS	1933/38		David HABBERLEY	1960/67	
Wendy BURGESS	1962/67		Dennis HALL	1941/46	
Naomi BURGESS	1961/66		Peter A S HALL	1945/52	
Elspeth CARDEW	1949/54	CHRISTIE	Sheila HALSEY		
Barbara CARTER	1940/45	CLARKE	Alan HAMILTON	1940/46	
Christine CARTER	1948/53	EMERY	Freda HANCOCK	1939/43	
Richard CASSESE	1960/66		Vivian HAND	1948/53	PAWLE
Robert CATLING	1950/56		Joan HARRIS	1943/49	NASH
Gwen CHILDS	1942/48		Leonard HARRIS	1945/50	
Pat CLELAND	1948/53	STOREY	Sam HART	1965	
Ken COLE	1958/65		Trevor R HARWOOD	1962/69	
Richard COLLINGS	1963/70		Sheila HATFIELD	1947/54	
Richard COLOMB	1947/52		Valerie A HENCKEN	1953/58	CLARKE
Betty M CONNER	1946/51	PLUMPTON	Kathleen HENDERSON	1945/50	DAVIS
Dennis CONNER	1947/53		Joyce HILL	1931/36	
Donald A CORDING	1946/53		Maxime HOFFMAN	1961/67	PORTER
Peggy CRAVEN	1926/32	HILL	Vera HOGG	1954/61	HEATH
Sylvia CROKE	1950/57		Brian HOLDING	1957/65	
Brian CROSS	1939/45		Delia HOLMBERG	1953/58	MAY
J Clifford CROUCH	1958/65		John HOLTHAM	1957/64	
George CULL	1939/45		Michael HOLTON	1939/46	
Anthony S CURTIS	1951/58		Roger HOOKER	1959/64	
Barrie DANENBERG	1957/64		Marilyn HOPWOOD	1956/63	HOLBROOK
Mary DARK	1946/51	HOWARD	Anthony HOSIER	1955/60	
John DAVIDSON	1962/69		Ellen HOSTER	1920/26	BROADBELT
Shelley DAVIS	1962/69		Janice HOWKINS	1966/72	
Sylvia DAVIS	1947/54	WRIGHT	Deirdre HUGHES	1965/70	CHECKLEY
Max DAVIS	1954/62		Tom HUGHES	1960/66	
Sheila DAWSEY	1950/57	BROWN	Ann HUNT	1954/59	BROWN
Richard de SYLVA	1962/69		Andie IOANNOU	1961/67	
Brenda DEAN	1941/48	MAY	Michael ISAAC	1943/47	
Colin DEAN	1964/70		Barbara ISAAC	1941/45	GREENSREET
Peter DEWHURST	1937/42	FAULKNER	Alan JACKMAN	1964/70	
Lin DIXIE	1962/69		Julie JACKMAN	1967/71	HICKS

Marian JACOBS		MUNDY	Lionel PAIRPOINT	1939/45	
Andy JACOBS	1964/70		Melvyn PAMPLYN	1952/59	
Joan JAMES	1945/52	LOBB	Bob PAYNE	1934/36	
Mollie JAMES	1948/54	DELANEY	Audrey PAYNE	1935/41	BRADFORD
Gladys JARMAN	1942/46	PEARCE	Lesley PEARCE	1962/69	BRADLEY
Valerie JEFFREY	1953/60	SAUNDERS	Ann PHILLIPS	1953/58	BROOKS
Hilary JONES	1967/72	COHEN	Nick PHILLIPS	1945/52	
Paul JONES	1960/63		Alex PIKE	1962/69	
Rose JONES	1948/53	HUMBERSTONE	Pamela PIKE	1965/72	HAYHOE
Mary JOWETT	1963/69		Gerald PINCHES	1953/61	
Malcolm JUDGE	1959/65		Tony PIPE	1959/63	
Geoffrey H KARET	1947/52		Allan L PLUMPTON	1943/48	
Ken F KENCH	1952/58		Janet A POPE	1954/59	MUNDAY
Carole KING	1954/59	WEST	Lesley POUNDS	1965/71	
Ivor J KITCHENER	1945/51		Brigid M POVAH	1948/55	
Sheila KNOWLES	1941/47	JONES	Molly POWELL	1929/35	HOLBROOK
Judy KRAVETZ	1964/71	CARRINGTON	Sarah PRESCOTT	1954/61	
Pamela LAMBOURNE	1944/49	DAVIS	Roy PRITCHARD	1936/43	
Alan LAMERTON	1956/63		Miriam PRYKE	1965/72	MIKELSONS
Jo LANSDELL	1954/59	CARSON	Lynne SMITHARD	1968/70	REIN
Brian LAXTON	1946/53		Joan D RIDLEY	1947/54	
Paul LEDERMAN			Maisie V ROBERTS	1927/32	BEAZLEY
Margaret LEE	1931/36	BRETT	Margaret ROBERTS	1928/34	
Geoffrey LENCE	1942/49		Joyce ROBINSON	1953/58	LIGHTFOOT
Pam LENCE	1946/53	BURGE	Janice ROSE	1966/71	COKER
Ron LENCE	1939/46		Julian ROSENTHAL	1959/64	
Ruth LESIRGE	1956/63	BRANDLER	Alan ROSS	1948/53	
Beryl LIDDLE	1942/47	SIMPSON	Vicky ROTH	1957/64	
Rita LIDSTONE	1949/54	MATTHEWS	Simon ROTHMAN	1959/64	
Michael LIEBERMAN	1962/69		Brian F ROWLAND	1949/54	
Jean LINFORD-JONES	1948/53	SPRIGGS	Philip SAGE	1965/71	
Rita LOFTS	1951/56	MANN	Maureen SAUNDERS	1965/71	OLIVE
Doris LOVELL	1949/54	POMEROY	Janet SAUNDERS	1953/57	WINWRIGHT
Colin LUKE	1963/70		Richard SAUNDERS	1965/71	
Janino LUKE	1963/70	TURNER	Yvonne SAWYER	1962/69	
Olive LUMLEY	1948/53	HUGHES	Gillian M SCHAFF	1951/58	HAMER
Diane LYONS	1963/69		Sandra SCHNEIDER	1963/70	STERN
Susan LYTTON	1959/64		Alan SCRINE	1940/45	
Godfrey MANN	1959/66		Arthur SCRINE	1929/33	
Janice MANN	1965/71	CLIFTON	Joyce SCRINE	1940/45	LAVINGTON
Anita G MARSHALL	1948/55	KING	Janet SEDDON	1949/56	THOMAS
Richard MARTIN	1954/61		Bill SEGAL	1945/48	
Hugh MARTIN	1959/66		Sheila SEGAL		RAWLINGS
Lynne MARTIN	1968/72	JONES	Doris SEYMOUR	1938/43	ELEY
Iona MASON	1953/58	JACKSON	Dicky SEYMOUR	1939/44	
Susan McELWAIN	1962/69	CLUTTERBUCK	Roy SHARP	1949/54	
Audrey McMILLAN	1938/43	CORNWELL	Leslie SHARP	1947/52	
Pauline MEADOWS	1963/68	CORPE	Janice SHAW	1959/64	BARNETT
Brian MESSENGER	1957/63		Philip SILVESTER	1962/69	
Lovinia MILLER	1945/51	LONG	Roy SIM	1947/52	
Chris MINTON	1954/61		Eric SIM	1943/48	
Brian F MITCHELL	1945/50		Betty SMITH	1934/39	HEATON
Peter MONK	1957/61		Derek SMITH	1933/38	
Philip MONTFORD	1965/72		Eileen M SMITH	1947/54	
Margaret MORGAN	1963/70	QUALTERS	Brian SMITH	1944/49	
Greta MORRIS	1941/47	PIZER	Elspeth SNELLGROVE	1949/54	CHRISTIE
Joyce MORRIS	1943/49	WRIGHT	Marian SNOOK	1959/65	SHEWRY
Anne MOSSACK	1967/70	LEIGH	Ann SPRUCE	1962/69	BURDEN
David MONRO	1965/72		Jean SPURGEON	1949/54	LIDDELOW
Pauline MURRAY	1950/55	BELL	Jeanette SQUIRES	1949/54	KING
Joyce NASSE	1948/5	FORTUNE	Mavis STANLEY	1943/48	
Dr Oliver NATELSON			Susan STEED	1967/72	FOGARTY
Christopher NEWMAN	1964/70		Michael STEED	1962/69	
Ronald NEWMAN	1943/48		Ted STEVENS	1945/51	
Betty NEWTON-JONES	1933/38		Joan STEVENS	1938/43	HODGKINSON
Derek NICHOL	1945/51		Molly STONE	1943/49	HOLMES
Jean NICHOL	1949/56	ROBINSON	Robin SUDBURY	1950/55	
Anna NICHOLAS	1953/58	SCATER	Wendy SUDBURY		EDWARDS
Sarah NOAKES			Jean SUTTER	1954/61	ARNOLD
Clive NORMAN	1965/72		Janice P SUTTON	1949/54	ACKERMAN
Kate NORTON	1965/70	PERKS	Helen TANK	1965/72	SAWTELL
Chris J NUTTING	1962/69		Jane TAYLOR	1966/71	GREENWOOD
Margaret ORR	1947/7		Kenneth TAYLOR	1943/47	
Joyce PAIRPOINT	1945/50	BALL	Len TEBBUTT	1946/53	

David TELFORD	1955/62		Helen WELCH	1951/57	CROFTS
John TELFORD	1955/60		Martin WELLSMAN	1965/72	
Ian THOMAS	1945/52		Marion WELLSMAN	1965/72	THOMPSON
Hilary THOMPSON	1964/70	DARKE	Colin WHITELL	1962/69	
Robert THOROGOOD	1950/57		Christine WILLIAMS	1933/38	WOOLNER
Michael TOMLINS	1947/52		Janice WILLIAMS	1962/69	LAWRENCE
Mary TRIBBLE	1960/63	ROBINSON	John WILLIAMS	1942/49	
Beryl TRIPP	1949/54	BAILEY	Jim E A WILLIAMS	1946/53	
Tony TRIPPICK	1956/61		Linda WILLIAMS	1968/70	ELVINS
Pauline TRUSLER	1963/68		Alan R WILLIAMS	1948/55	
Pat TRY	1941/46	DRAPER	Enid WILLIAMS	1945/49	ASHBY
Pat TUCKER	1965/72	GRUMMITT	Alan WILLIAMS	1970/72	
Kenneth TURNER	1949/56		Doreen WILLIAMS	1946/53	
Claire VERDIER	1962/69	BALL	Beryl WILSHER	1949/54	SUNDERLAND
Clare VERMEULEN	1945/50	THOMAS	Rosalind WILSON	1964/71	
Colin VERNON	1938/43		Bill WILSON	1934/40	
Mary VOADEN	1950/57	TOWLSON	John H WILSON	1968/71	
Jeff WALKER	1947/52		Sue WOLFF	1961/363	
Stella WALKER	1963/69	SHEWRY	Evelyn WOLLENBERG	1961/67	FRANKEL
Olive WALKER	1929/34	SAINSBURY	Miriam WOOD	1959/66	WHITEHEAD
Ronald D WALLER	1951/56		Gerry WOODWARD	1950/56	
Rowena WARD	1967/69		J WRIGHT	1939/43	

Since the reunion our Chairman, Godfrey Mann, attended a planning meeting at Barnet Town Hall. It appears that the new building may, in some respects resemble the Old School, maybe even a clock tower on the roof. Negotiations continue on the size and exact location of the War Memorial and it is suggested the stone tablet is placed into a "cut back" in the front wall so that it can be seen from the street. Barratt's emphasised that the management company will have the responsibility to ensure the memorial is cared for and protected from vandalism and graffiti.

Brigid Povah (1948/55) wrote, '*...I feel I must thank you, Godfrey, and the committee for organising an excellent reunion at fairly short notice. It went very well and.....With the School song being sung with such gusto I felt we gave the building a good "send off", and the memories remain with us...*'

Councillor Victor Lyon wrote, '*I greatly enjoyed visiting the Old Fincunians Association Re-union and was very grateful to have the opportunity of talking with a number of people and having a flavour of how they felt about the former school. May I also thank you for your hospitality and I look forward to keeping in touch with you....*'.

Geoff Lence (1942/49) wrote, '*Just a note to say - Brilliant! The reunion was superbly organised and I very much appreciate all the hard work and attention to detail that went into it. The catering was first rate and it was an excellent idea to use the classrooms to sit to eat....*'.

Pam (nee Burge) and Ron Lence thought it was a great reunion, '*...and brilliantly organised. Many thanks....particularly for making it a poignant yet not over-emotional occasion. I think we saw out the Old School on a very high note and we are sure that all those present will have some good memories to look back on....*'.

Molly Powell (nee Holbrook 1929/35) wanted to thank everybody '*..who*

helped to make that Saturday afternoon a wonderful reunion. It was a joyful but sad occasion, but the memory will always stay with me....I have only missed one reunion..the car broke down.....I hope we can meet again somewhere, sometime, but the OFA will live on for many years...'

Geof Batten and Joan Oram (nee Buckenham), both of the 1947/54 vintage, ask the question, 'Are you interested in a reunion for 1947-1952/54 Old Fincunians?'. Joan and Geoffrey have been discussing the possibility of such an event at the end of 2004 (perhaps November) or during 2005. 'I floated the idea with a number of people on 6 September and got a uniformly favourable reaction to the idea' said Geof. Joan Brown (1947/54) has volunteered to host the event in the former chapel which is part of her apartment complex in the Old Convent at East Grinstead, West Sussex. Joan has also agreed to organise appropriate catering. Please contact Geoffrey Batten, (141 Swarthmore Road, Birmingham B29 4NN; Tel : 0121 475 6604; or by e-mail on grb@batten.eu.org) if you would be interested in taking part. Please include your full name (including maiden name for the girls), address, telephone number and email address if you have one.

Norman Burgess (1933/38) had recovered from his despondency enough to write, '...There was a great upbeat mood at the Reunion because of the meticulous planning. To have put together the bits and pieces in a few short weeks was just superb. Everything came together with magnificent catering, ample wine and drinks. Before the event I had felt there would have been a more sombre mood but this was just dispersed by the general bonhomie engendered. The Association owes Godfrey Mann a great deal of thanks for all he put into Saturday's warm "get-together". Those of us who have fought and lost to keep the building with the War Memorial feel betrayed by Council members.....but Old Fincunians rise above such events, such is the legacy of our dear Old School and its influence upon us...'

Dick Seymour (1939/44) was ecstatic, '.....I congratulated Godfrey Mann on the day, for the splendid way in which the Reunion was managed and organised. I think, on reflection, this was an understatement.....my thanks extend to the whole team who, collectively, made the day something that will be remembered by all who attended. I fully appreciate the dedication and work involved.... It is fifty-nine years since I said farewell to Finchley County as a pupil...but at the reunion I detected a consensus of opinion that we are fortunate to have been at a school that not only offered a good education, but also recognised the true worth of instilling in the pupils the values of becoming good citizens for the future....Why did we all turn up in such numbers to visit an empty building, and what made us join in the singing of the school song with such enthusiasm? If the staff of yesteryear, starting with Mr Carr, could all have been with us on the day, how proud they would have been to see their former pupils....'. Well, Dick, call me old-fashioned but I would like to believe that the staff from yesteryear were there, at least in spirit, did join in the singing and were smiling benevolently upon us all. But Dick goes on, '...I feel bound to say that Barnet Council were

both generous and understanding in allowing us to hold a final reunion in the old building. Furthermore, the recognition, by Barnet and the developers, of our concern about the War Memorial, and the fact that Godfrey has persuaded the developers to install a suitable memorial in the fabric of the new building, is deserving of our thanks.....'. Why do I think that will trigger off a few letters?

Alan Williams (1970/72), *'Just a quick note to say "Thanks very much" for all the efforts which were, I think, more than worthwhile for the most enjoyable afternoon that resulted for the hundreds attending, including myself.....'*

Bill and Sheila Segal (1947/50) wrote, *'.....to say how much we enjoyed the Reunion and to thank you, Godfrey, and compliment you on the organisation... highly successful, it was a shame it was the last time at the school! But no reason why a reunion couldn't be held at another venue.....'*. **Ted Stevens (1946/51)** wrote in similar vein.

Bob Payne OBE (1934/36) reminded me about the draft History of Finchley County School :- *'...the event was such a success, it was just right for the occasion, and so many were there or will read about it, that it must be recorded as part of our history - not the final curtain, not a postscript, but part of our living history...'*. I still want to know if you are interested in the School History - only twelve have bothered to let me know, so far. **Derek Woolley (1846/53)** has even paid for a copy so as to be sure of getting one!

Arthur Scrine (1929/33) had not been near the Old School since he left in 1933 but :- *'.....through my cousin, Alan Scrine....I went to the last meeting of the Old Fincunians to be held at the school on 6 September 2003. It was a happy, although nostalgic, occasion but I was disappointed not to meet any of my contemporaries - surely I cannot have survived them all. So after all that time, and while there is still time, I would like to join the OFA and enclose the fee.....'*. Well, Arthur, there are Old Fincunians who joined the Old School in 1929 and who still receive Scimitar. They are :-

*Barbara Hawkins (nee Toyne)
Olive Walker (nee Sainsbury)
Eileen Hollis (nee Bagg)
Elizabeth M Killip*

*Eileen Daniell (nee Gregg)
Basil Pilgrim
Roland Finch
Molly Powell (nee Holbrook)*

Olive Walker and Molly Powell were at the reunion on 6 September 2003.

Joan Harris (nee Nash 1943/49) and her husband, **Leonard Harris (1945/50)**, wrote :- *'... The atmosphere in the school when we arrived was fantastic...six people, including myself, were there from my year and five of them I have been in contact with since we left school....My husband met quite a few from his year...I felt sad for those who did not attend, for whatever reason, as I feel they missed out on a unique experience.....Thank you for a most enjoyable day which we will rememeber for a long time.....'*

Bob Thorogood (1949/56) has spent a good part of his life in the United States with his wife, Janet. In 2001 his work brought him back to the UK, and since then :- *'....I have really enjoyed being able to attend the last two reunions and renew friendships from my years at FCS. I often reflect on how fortunate we were to start our education just after the war years. We had a rare opportunity for education in a small grammar school which would be difficult to match these days....It is a pity that the old school building is lost, but then it is not suitable for modern use and will now provide space for much-needed homes in the Finchley area. What really matters is the ability for former students to stay in contact and I am optimistic that there will be future reunions for us all to attend.... For that reason, Janet and I are planning a minireunion for the FCS starting year 1949 - the 49ers as they have been termed. This is our invitation to anyone starting at FCS in 1949 to get together on Saturday 24 July 2004. The venue is our home in Herefordshire. Anyone interested please contact me at 01981 241 348 and I will provide the necessary details. If all goes to plan I will send a report and photos for publication in a future Scimitar...'*

Well, that just about exhausts my recollections and your reports of what went on at the last reunion to be held at the Old School building. But it was more than a reunion. It was our way of saying "Goodbye!" to our school. It was our way of being with a dear friend as the end approaches. It was our way of saying "Thank you for all you did for us". It was our way of remembering the teachers and friends of the past. All that remains to be said is, "See you all next time, whenever and wherever it may be".

John Keogh (1960/71) has placed thirteen pictures of the final days of the Old School on website <http://homepage.mac.com/jvk/fcs>, but this picture was sent by Ken Amphlet (1949/54) :-



MONEY MATTERS

Our Treasurers, Jan and Colin Luke, present their Financial Report :-

"The "accounts" for last year to 31 August 2003 are as follows :-

Building Society Balance b/fwd	5,823.34
Subs and Donations	2,123.83
Interest received	45.40
Income/Assets	7,992.57

Scimitar costs	2,216.40
Preservation costs and history	498.90
Net cost of reunion	446.93
Expenditure	3,162.23

Building Society Balance c/fwd **4,830.34**

Subscriptions & Donations gratefully received since last Scimitar up to 17 January 2004

Maisie Roberts	Peter Monk	Anne Connor
Olive Walker	Pam Kinnunen	Barbara Cranfield
Alison & Donald Yapp	Heather Marshall	Iona Mason
Olive Gems	Beryl Careless	Brian Brett
Peter Dewhurst	Joan Ridley	Les Collins (now deceased)
Jenny Spiller	Trevor Harwood	Tony Hosier
Sonnie Moffat	Margaret Message	Freda & Margaret Hancock
Mavis Hammond	Gladys Jarman	Eileen Hollis
Pat Grainger	Doris Lovell	Graham Ford
Don Cording	Judy Kravetz	Vivian Hand
J.E. Fleming	Joyce Stockwell	Dick Russell
Wendy Carmody	Joan Beech	Brian Andrews
Kipps Ruskin	Ken Turner	Joan Stevens
Roy Pritchard	Rosemary Holland	Joy Bigwood
June Bradshaw	Sheila Knowles	Ann Phillips
John & Kathleen Young	Ted Stevens	Gillian Aked
Margaret Haughton	Arthur Scrine	Mike Steed
Derek Woolley	Philip Gillam	Philip Montford
Sheila & Ken Henley	Alan Smith	Ivor Kitchener
Doris Tanner	Sylvia Croke	Colin Cummings
	Chris Fookes	

Many thanks for all subs and donations. It is always a bumper amount when we have a reunion! We also send thanks, once again, to those who pay by Standing Order. Just to remind you that subscriptions are due on 1 September each year and are currently £5.00 per annum. Please send all monies to Colin or Janine Luke, 79 Northumberland Road, New Barnet, Herts., EN5 1EB. All cheques should be made out in favour of:-
Old Fincunians Association.

LEST WE FORGET

The last edition reported that Sydney (Flopper) Cooper had died. Sydney left FCS in 1936 and married Denise Marjorie Cooper (nee Peverall 1929/36). It was Marjorie who died on 24 February 2003 in hospital, not Sydney. The cremation was on 6 March at Chilterns Crematorium at Amersham. Sydney was present at the ceremony. My sincere apologies for getting it so wrong.

Heather Garret Kitchiner (1916/23) died 10 July but I have no further details.

Sadly I report John Salmond, Physics Teacher at FCS from 1949 onwards, died on 31 July. The funeral was at Great Northern Cemetery, Southgate on 8 August. Geoffrey Batten (1947-54) wrote :- *'John Salmond taught me Physics at FCS 1952 to 1954. He was a quiet, uncharismatic teacher in complete contrast to his colleague Charlie Vivian - but no less effective for that.... I was determined to go to university, although to study Chemistry, not Physics! I am so grateful to John for providing me with the encouragement. After leaving school I remained in touch with John - an enthusiastic opponent of the fluoridation of water... This sparked an exchange of letters running over a number of years He clearly enjoyed Old Fincs reunions with so many of his old pupils around him... I spoke to him on the telephone only two days before his death ... He sounded his usual self and was looking forward to a final visit to the school building on 6 September. John was a kind, gentle man and many will remember him with affection and respect. He was a member of the Christadelphian Church and his remaining brother Ron has suggested that any contributions in his memory could be made to Christadelphian Care Homes, 17 Sherborne Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 6AD. If you are a UK tax payer, the Homes can recover the tax if a Gift Aid form is completed and this can be obtained from Mrs Esther Leigh at the Administrator's Office at the above address'*.

Connie Fozzard (1945/52) wrote a letter of condolence to Ron Salmond, John's brother, some of which is repeated here:- *'....he acted as guide and mentor to me...When I missed getting an A-Level pass in Physics, I thought the world had come to an end. Not so, for John had spotted that Charing Cross Hospital Medical School was setting up a first M.B. course.....I was accepted on this course..... So I remain indebted to John for my career in medicine. He and I remained in communication - curiously for Christmas cards, we both supported the charity of the Shipwrecked Sailors..... Occasionally I was able to give him a lift to the Old Fincunians biennial reunions. He was the most regular and senior of the old staff to attend...We shall all miss him as a teacher, mentor, gentleman and friend.....I shall cherish his memory'*.

Joan Ridley (1947/54) thinks that :-*'John Salmond was one of the most likeable of the teachers at FCS....because he liked his pupils. This is what he told us when Geof Batten and I had lunch with him and Margaret Orr last April, only a few months before he died. I remember him driving to East Finchley from his*

home in Totteridge during the Easter holidays of 1954...to help me when I was swotting for my civil service exams. He had a few "catch phrases", such as 'The eye is easily deceived', and his admonition to inattentive pupils, 'Give your eyes to the board, boy!'.....A benevolent, kindly gentleman, to be remembered with affection.... **Dick Russell (1947/58) from Belgium** :- 'I last spoke to Mr Salmond at the school reunion in 2002. He was delighted when I told him that I can still recite by heart Newton's three laws of motion that he taught me over fifty years before.... an outstanding teacher whose passing will be deeply regretted by us all'. **Iona Mason (nee Jackson 1953/58) wrote** :- 'When I last spoke to Mr Salmond he did not remember my face but he remembered my name.....he had always told me I would never be any good at Physics. How right he was...A good teacher, a kind man, he will be greatly missed but always remembered'.

Alec Churchill (Teacher 1960/64) died on 29 October 2002. When he married in 1961 some of the Sixth Form travelled from to Leytonstone from Finchley to be at the wedding. His widow, Sheila, recalls some of Alec's teacher colleagues, '...Tudor Bevan, Charlie Gault, Jonah (is it true he used to jump off the diving board fully clothed at the end of the swimming galas?), Williams, Fred something-or-other who I believe died whilst supervising an examination, and I can see the chemistry teacher who left for Shreddies, but cannot remember his name. Then there was Jack Rawlings, Povah and Doris, the secretary. Apparently Mr Povah phoned the hospital to see how I was on the day our son was born.....Alec wanted me to call the baby Ethelred, but I objected and he settled for Godric.....later he told me that he had asked the Vllth form what they thought of the name, Godric, and because they were doubtful he decided to call him Simon Godric...I remember one or two pupils names - Wanda Wojenski, who was going to be a doctor, Jennifer Cohen, a lawyer, and Pibworth who was clever but had problems with spelling and always wrote "brids" for "birds". I think he cycled to our wedding all the way from Finchley...In September 2002 it was found that Alec had contracted Sporadic CJD, a most dreadful disease and he deteriorated rapidly.....I enclose a donation so I can still receive copies of Scimitar - and although I cannot ask Alec about it, it will be a little bit of him and part of my memories.....'. I am sure Sheila would like to hear from any of you who remembers Alec - 17 Beacontree Road, Leytonstone, London, E11 3AX - 0208 989 1845.

Peter Bond (1953/60) died suddenly of a heart attack in July 2003 whilst out walking his dog. He was 61. **Tony Curtis (1951/58) wrote** :- '....Peter and I spoke at the 2002 reunion and he was so open and friendly. This is in no way an obituary but when we talked he explained about his time at school, and afterwards about his chess involvements. I seem to recall that he had either tatoos or metal rings as an adornment. I for one will miss him and at the next reunion I will be remembering him as an absent friend'.

Leslie Victor Collins (1947/51) died at his home in Australia, 15 September 2003. He had fought hard against serious health problems during recent years, including major surgery. He was back on his feet and he, and his

wife Jill, had recently finished refurbishing their home on Philip Island. He was an excellent bowls player and had recently started to play again. Les was one of the leading lights in the Australian Branch of the Old Fincunians and for a number of years produced the Australian equivalent of Scimitar in the form of a newsletter.

His sister, Gillian writes :- *'...Les emigrated to Australia shortly after leaving Finchley County on the £10 assisted passage scheme.....After years spent selling, installing, and repairing colour TV's in the rural Shire of Kerang, he won a Technical Teaching Diploma from the Hawthorn Institute of Education and went on to teach electronics at the Army School.....many people have benefitted from his computer skills, not only operating computers, but also building and repairing them.....An Arsenal fan all his life - he even named his house "Highbury" and it was a great delight to him to have been in England the year that Arsenal won the FA Cup..... A keen genealogist and a great sportsman all his life - soccer, cricket, field hockey, bowls, squash, pistol shooting (he was an umpire at the 1982 Commonwealth Games)....'*

AND FINALLY.....

Please note my new address :-

18 Penwood Heights, Penwood, Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 9EY
Telephone: 01635 253124 E-mail: Isharp8030@aol.com

Can any of you help me to track down Sylvia Vickers, please? Sylvia sent in a subscription fairly recently but I have lost her address so I am unable to send her a copy of Scimitar.

Peter Monk (1957/61) writes:- *'...If anyone would like a cassette or CD of the piano accompaniment for the singing of the school song I am happy to create and post copies out at an "at cost" basis. I suspect that would amount to around £1.00 to £1.50. I also have some good images of various versions of the song - text and music - that I got from Godfrey....I could also include printed copies if requested. There you are, a multi-made presentation pack. Being ever optimistic, these things can also be shipped over the web instead of Royal Mail, if so desired... Just telephone 01883 715758, or e-mail :- petermonk@ukonline.co.uk'.*

This the seventeenth edition of Scimitar I have had the pleasure of editing. Edition 130 was my first and I had no idea then, that one day I would be reporting the demolition of our Old School. Nine years of pleasurable hard work, and nine years of receiving and replying to your delightful letters, poems, pictures and all the other stuff you send me from time to time. This was the saddest copy I have had to write.

Bye for now, until the Autumn,

Les