



# SWANAGE GRAMMAR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Number 4 Autumn 2019

## Welcome

This newsletter has to start with very sad news. Dick Riding a stalwart of the SGSA Committee from the very beginning of the Association in 1988 passed away peacefully in January this year.

He wrote all the Swan magazines from the beginning and will be missed a great deal. More details are inside.



The Reunion this Summer was again very well attended and although it rained in the morning nothing stopped everyone enjoying themselves.

You should have all received a letter/email from the Committee regarding future Reunions. (I reprint it inside). We still welcome feedback.

Without a fresh input of committee members the 2020 reunion may well be the last.

Steve Matthews

Please send news and pictures to:  
smdoorbell@btinternet.com

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Any submitted article that gets published will get a free reunion lunch ticket.....Please start writing!

Visit our website:  
[www.sgsa.co.uk](http://www.sgsa.co.uk)

or our Facebook page:  
Swanage Grammar School



## REVERIE

Let's take the train down memory lane, or ride bikes to save fuel,  
Along the sea front, through Day's Park and join the crowd at school.  
There's hats and coats of muddy brown, (the under garments too!)  
Sheff's looking fierce; -detention looms, my socks are navy blue!

But now it's time for English Lit; somehow the tone is raised,  
For, yes, it's true, Jock's influence leaves simple folk amazed.  
We try to comprehend the text; he lifts the wooden page,  
The characters just come alive and now we're on the stage.

That's life of course, it's acted out and we all have a role,  
Our school days really made their mark, we pressed towards the goal.  
The canteen beckons, let's walk in, recline on that hard pew,  
Oh yes it's coming back to haunt, that smell of gristle stew!

And after lunch we make our way across that unspoiled track,  
For boys it's woodwork, girls go slow, walk to the gym and back.  
But hark, there's music in the hall, (one 'growler' spoils the rest!)  
'Pres' hears it, shouts 'Let's get it right; you've got to do your best!'

Miss Shaw is reading poetry, while we try to create,  
And somehow tawdry works of art, to us become first rate.  
She had that special 'something' which made every girl and boy,  
Just long to do their very best ; -to please her was a joy.

Our time is running short and so brown coats we need to get,  
But lingering a minute more- the day's not over yet.  
Ugh! what's that dreadful bad egg smell just wafting through the air?  
It must be Mr Grease Bones' lab (the canteen looks quite bare!)

What a relief, it's not the meal prepared for the next day,  
Perhaps we really should move on, no longer time to stay.  
We've got to haul our minds right back towards the present time.  
We have *so much* to thank them for, not all is told in rhyme!

Gillian Humphries  
(pupil at Swanage Grammar School 1952-1957)

## SGSA Committee - Your association needs you!

You should all have received this letter from the committee in September outlining the future of the Association. If you didn't receive it I reprint it below. We had one positive response but are keen to get other people onboard who are perhaps more local to Swanage to join the committee. We are having a reunion on the 20th June 2020 and this may well be the last as the present team can no longer organise the event. We hope that someone out there can help us continue this long running association. It was founded in 1988 and has seen many very successful events over the years. I have been on the committee since signing up at the first reunion. It would be very sad if we had to close it down.

The SGSA Committee met recently to review the 2019 Reunion and to consider the future direction of the SGSA. We want to update you on our thinking as the Association exists solely for the benefit of each one of us, as former pupils of Swanage Grammar School.

The good news is that:

More than 120 attended the June 2019 reunion and feedback suggests that it was an enjoyable occasion, catching up with many friends.

Costs were within budget, including the level of subsidy from SGSA working funds.

Fund-raising at the event resulted in a donation of £565 to the British Heart Foundation.

The not so good news is that:

The resources of the Committee are dwindling with personal circumstances leading to several individuals unable to continue.

It is increasingly difficult to find venues and caterers willing to stage such an event in Swanage during mid-summer.

Whilst there may be alternatives to the approach taken thus far with reunions, the key issue is that new, additional resources are needed to strengthen the committee – 'your Association needs you!' Without this, the next reunion would be the final event that the current group could commit to plan, organise and successfully deliver.

If you are interested to join the Committee please contact our Secretary, Shelagh Ball (01929-472368) or Membership Secretary, Malcolm Batt (01202-658397) or Bruce Chapman (Committee Member – Contact Number (01202-888603)

## Next Reunion: June 2020

The committee are pleased to invite you to a reunion. It will be held on Saturday 20th June 2020 at The Swanage School, High Street, Swanage, BH19 2PH, starting at 10 a.m.

The day will include a two-course lunch with wine, a short meeting to discuss the future of the association, the Commemoration Service, celebration cake and tea, plus a raffle. This year we are not having a bar at the school so if you wish to bring your own refreshments we will provide glasses. As mentioned there will be wine on the table.

For anyone wishing to book overnight accommodation, the Swanage Tourist Information Office telephone number is 01929 422885.

To book your lunch please complete the booking form on the back and return with your payment to Shelagh Green, 36 Briantspuddle, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 7HT as soon as possible, and by no later than 10th May 2020. If you do not want to damage this newsletter please copy the form, complete and return. Alternatively you can download and print a copy from the SGSA Website.

Parking for this event has been arranged in the grounds of St Mark's School next door to the Swanage School. This worked very well this year and is an easy walk to the school. If you are disabled or have difficulties in walking please mention this on your booking form and we will try and organise a space for you on the venue grounds.

Tickets are £20.00 (the same as last time). We must emphasise that although we welcome people just dropping in to see people for a drink and a chat after lunch, we cannot guarantee a meal for you on the day unless you have pre-booked.

All the photographs that I took at the reunion are available to view on the SGS website and the SGS Facebook page. If you would like them all on a dvd I can supply one for £2.50 including postage. Please email me on: [smdoorbell@btinternet.com](mailto:smdoorbell@btinternet.com) with your details.



## The Summer of 1959 by Nigel Humphries

*It's the only thing," said the Water Rat solemnly as he leant forward for his stroke. "Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing—absolute nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing," he went on dreamily: "messing—about—in—boats; messing — (said Mr Rat to Mr Mole)*  
*Kenneth Grahame, The Wind in the Willows.*

It was the heatwave summer of 1959, when three old Swanage Grammar School friends got together and planned a sailing adventure along the coast, and into Poole Harbour. They were Sam Hayward, who had made his career as an officer in the Army, Roger Knightbridge who had completed his national service in the RAF and me, Nigel Humphries, who having completed my national service in the Royal Navy, joined the Merchant Navy, serving mostly on Esso tankers.

We had three small sailing dinghies and there were six adventurers. I took Mervyn my younger brother, as crew in my little boat, 'Maid of Pligh', and with its Seagull outboard towing Roger Knightbridge and Sam's brother Marcus Hayward in 'Rotagel', a 12 foot Swan class dinghy. Sam Hayward and his cousin Joe were in 'Little Gull' driven by an old Anzani outboard. Full of bravado, we set off from Swanage, loaded to the gunwales with tents, water, primus stoves, eggs & bacon, tinned soup, catapults and two air guns. We spent our first night camping at Redhorn Quay where we watched the sun set which heralded the first wave of attacks from squadrons of merciless mosquitoes. Our weaponry was no match for the buzzing fanatics. The roar of primus stoves, sizzling fry ups in billy cans, accompanied by feverish cries of black headed gulls feeding at the water's edge all added to the sense of adventure.



Redhorn Quay where the six brave adventurers set up their first camp

The next morning the fleet headed west on a favourable breeze, that took us to Arne, where we made a landing and set up camp, beneath the crumbling sandstone cliff. The next morning we sat on the beach, where we had a clear view down the Wych Channel towards Brownsea. The postman chugged towards us in a small motorboat rounded the sandy spit of Long Island, called at the Round Island pier, before heading back to Poole again.

Just off a WW2 MTB, now a houseboat belonging to Mr & Mrs Sydenham, was on a mooring. They told us that it would be OK to camp on Long Island on our return voyage.

With this in mind, later we continued westward, bound for Wareham. We ended on the River Frome at Redcliff Farm, where we pulled in on the sandy beach, with a herd of cows for company.

Soon after, the water receded and we witnessed one of the lowest tides of the decade with river reduced to a trickle and by the evening it was close to overflowing.

The next morning promised another fine day, so after breakfast we loaded our dinghies and set sail for Arne again, with the prospect of 'invading' Long Island. This we did in grand style with catapults and airguns at the ready. We made a landing under the cliff on her west side just as the tide was falling. Shortly after arriving all three boats were high and dry so there was no turning back. We made our camp in a delightful clearing surrounded by rhododendron bushes and the fragrant smell of bracken and peat.



From left to right: Nigel Humphries, Sam Hayward & Roger Knightbridge.  
Front: Marcus Hayward & Mervyn Humphries

We established Long Island as our base for the rest of the week, from which point we made daily trips into Hamworthy for essential supplies and fresh water. By the end of the week the friends knew it was time to sail for home. We packed up and, loading the boats, said goodbye to Long Island and set sail for home. A favourable northerly breeze took us back via The Haven, but the wind changed to south east at the Sandbanks ferry. Thankfully a strong ebb tide assisted our passage down the Swash Channel across Studland Bay round Old Harry Rocks. We picked up a good breeze off Ballard that favoured our final leg back home to Swanage Sailing Club at Buck Shore.



Nigel took the boats off for the night, tied to a moored yacht



On calm days Nigel & Mervyn towed Roger & Marcus while Sam & Joe had their own engine.





Long Island where we made a landing under the cliff on her west side just as the tide was falling.



Sam settling down for the night armed with a Flit gun and an air gun. The mozzies didn't have a chance.

Feeding the ducks and washing up on Long Island



Nigel still sailing in Poole Harbour - July 2018

After that we each went our separate ways, so never sailed together again. Sadly, both Sam and Marcus Hayward, died in what were tragic circumstances. I lost touch with Roger and never heard from cousin Joe Hayward again. Mervyn my brother married, had two children and lives in Sheffield. As for me, I married Gillian Chapman, had three children and we live in Corfe Castle. I have had many adventures over the years but 1959 remains in my memory to this day.



# 2019 Reunion Photographs















## Obituaries

### Dick Riding

One of the very sad things about writing this newsletter is the frequent notifications of old SGS members passing away. This January I was shocked when I was told that my dear friend Dickie Riding had passed peacefully away at his home in Radlett. I regularly had lunch with him and we spoke frequently on the phone. In fact in December I had met him for lunch and although I could see he had visibly slowed down he was his normal



happy self. A few of us attended his funeral and we were pleased that there was a large turnout to say farewell. A few weeks later a memorial afternoon was arranged by his nephews in the lovely old barn next door to his cottage. Again, there was a good number of SGS people there and we were all pretty astounded to see so many people from all walks of life turn up. Dick had a hugely faceted life with his various interests, from Aviation, Seaside Piers, Watercolour painting, and Piano playing. His life was revealed to us by his many friends all telling wonderful anecdotes about his life. It was a crisp but sunny afternoon and although very sad it was a joyous occasion celebrating his incredible life. The picture shows the large number of people who turned up. I miss him a great deal.

### Graham Elmes - A tribute by his wife Jenny

Unfortunately my husband Graham Elmes passed away on the 24th December 2017 after a long battle with cancer.

He was born on the 7th November 1943 and attended Swanage Grammar School from 1955 - 1961, boarding for a short while until he ran home! He did not like school, probably because he was an undiagnosed dyslexic (and also an independent thinker!), he left without completing sixth form, in order to take up an assistant's post at the Nature Conservancy's Furzebrook Research Station. This involved driving land-rovers and digging up ant nests on Hartland Moor. However, he became interested in the ecological research and did his A levels by correspondence course, then, with a civil service bursary, attended London University (at Queen Mary

College), gaining a BSc in Zoology. Later he achieved a PhD and eventually received a DSc from London University in recognition of his research work on ants. he was by then a world authority on *Myrmica* ants (the reddy-brown stinging ones!)

Having started Furzebrook at the most junior grade in government research, forty-two years later, and after 5 levels of promotion, he retired from the same organisation as Senior Principal Scientific Officer, an Individual Merit position equivalent to a senior university chair. Such seniority is attained by fewer than 2% of the thousands of government scientists, and by no one else, it is believed, who started out as an Assistant. And he had lived all his life in Wareham!

His ant collection will be housed for future research, in the Hope Museum, Oxford. He is missed greatly by his family.

## **Eva Longley - A tribute by Gillian Humphries**

Eva Longley nee Smith (19 June 1932 - 9 November 2018). She was a pupil from 1943-1949. She went on to London Bible College and became a missionary in Algeria. We remember Eva with great affection. She was a wonderful person who radiated the love of Jesus from her whole person. I particularly remember her helping me when I won a scholarship to the same school as she attended and she gave me lots of valuable advice. Her father Reverend Stanley Smith married us (Nigel & Gillian Humphries) on 1 April 1961 nearly 58 years ago. Great memories. I remember when she went on to the London Bible College, married Peter, and went to serve the Lord in Algeria for many years. She taught us to sing 'Yes Jesus loves me in Arabic. She is with the Lord and what a rejoicing that must have been for the Lord to welcome her!

## **Tony Aylwin - A tribute by his wife Marie-Paule Aylwin**

I worked as French assistant at Swanage during 1961 and I have written a short biography of Tony Aylwin who was Games Master at the school from September 1958 until 1963.

5 years isn't a long time, but his time at Swanage had a huge influence on the rest of Tony's life.

Tony loved sports. As Head of PE and Games, he was devoted to developing the abilities of all students, not just the gifted. The less able students were important to

him too. He always wanted the best football and cricket equipment for his teams. He gave so much after school time to train the teams, Mr. Sellick, the deputy head, excused him from attending assemblies.

That's how we met. I didn't attend assemblies either. I would sneak in late and Tony would see me toiling up Northbrook Road, take pity on me and give me a lift to school. He had studied French and English at Nottingham University and so we sang French songs together and talked about the new French plays.

We enjoyed going out to the concert halls in Bournemouth with the head of music, to the pub with David Saville, Head of Divinity and a lovely Scottish holiday youth hostelling with Mrs. Boxer, the French teacher. Tony made the most of the wonderful environment around Swanage - we were regular visitors to the Blue Pool, Sandbanks, Poole and Corfe Castle.

At this time he was part of the Round Table and he would play squash with club members.

Tony's other responsibility at the school was to support the teaching of English to the Junior classes under the guidance of Mr. Jim Lindsay.

Mr. Lindsay would share his experience and love of English literature with Tony. This was a life changing experience for Tony. He always said the guidance he received from Mr. Lindsay was exceptional. They would discuss Pinter, Wesker and the angry young men. They became kindred spirits. And later Tony was able to reciprocate by introducing Jim to the benefits of joining the Aldwych Theatre Club in London. After that, Jim always took advantage of the 1/6d cheap seats and organised school trips to Shakespeare Plays.

Tony always wanted to turn everything into drama and the students loved this.

Once he told his class they were going to produce a play of The Canterbury Tales. To determine who would play which character, he set the task of learning a paragraph. Half the class memorised an entire page.

Teaching at Swanage instilled in Tony a love of theatre and literature and a conviction of the importance of enacting and performing the stories.

After Swanage, Tony taught at Bloomfield Secondary Technical School in Woolwich, where the boys were more interested in playing truant and working at the market than school. Meanwhile Tony was gaining an English degree at Birkbeck London University.



Later he taught at North Brook School, Lee Green and then lectured in English at St Marks and St John's, Chelsea where he rubbed shoulders with poet, Tom Blackburn.

He lectured at Avery Hill Training College from 1972 until 1988 inspiring young future primary teachers to go into their classrooms and use the approaches that he had first begun developing in his years at Swanage. He began a lunchtime club for students and staff, where he would invite eminent storytellers to perform.

While he was at Avery Hill, he was approached by a publisher who asked him to write study aids on Pinter, Wesker and Virginia Wolf for A Level students. Arnold Wesker gave Tony the run of his library.

He completed his MA in Education. His dissertation focussed on the Use of Storytelling in Primary Schools. He liked to give the children a voice and let them share their own stories.

After he retired from lecturing he started a new career as a Storyteller. He visited hundreds of primary schools and brought joy to little ones through his delightful performances of traditional fairy tales, folk tales, myths and legends. Tony had a mysterious and playful style all his own.

As you may have realised, gentle reader, I married him.

We had two children and spent our lives between France and Chislehurst. He was a very hands on father from the beginning. He always had evidence of the burping process on his jumper. He also took the opportunity to record the first words of our two bilingual toddlers.

Those were great years. He fitted everything in; the demands of his post, delighting in putting up displays for the new students involving arts, music and English departments - it was the approach that he had developed years before in Swanage Grammar School.

His love of sport endured. While he worked in Swanage, he returned to his home town of Farnham every weekend to play cricket with the first eleven. When we lived in Chislehurst, he was a founder member of the tennis club and eventually became tennis captain. He was still playing indoor tennis with our son in 2016 at the age of 82.

Our daughter Anne moved to New Zealand in 2008 and we visited her regularly for lovely long holidays. We spent our last days together with her there in Wellington in 2017.

## Colin Grierson - A tribute by Arthur Buckland-Pinnock

We did not always see eye to eye at Swanage Grammar School but our paths crossed quite often in our chosen career. Colin was the adopted son of Chris and Mary Grierson of Scotland. His father was the Customs Officer and Harbour Master of Port Stanley, Falkland Islands until his retirement back to Scotland. Colin grew up as an only child, his one comment on the Falklands was that it was full of sheep and the only distraction was the amateur horse racing. We both attended the University of Southampton School of Navigation pre-sea deck cadet course for the year of 1964. A surprise to both of us when first meeting at the inauguration parade. After graduation we went our separate ways, Colin into the Bank Line and tramping around the world, I into BP Tanker Co doing the same thing but different ports having a different cargo. We met again in London 3 years later when sitting our Second Mates ticket, again a surprise to both of us. Colin had changed. He had become a quiet, retiring sort of person, did not join us on the many escapades in London, kept to himself and nursed a bottle at the nearest pub. I went back to sea ahead of him but kept in touch irregularly through various channels. It was when I had not heard from him for a year that I enquired his whereabouts from Head Office, to receive the devastating news of his untimely death in West Africa. RIP Colin.

## Brenda Hardy - A tribute by Roza Aldridge

Brenda will have been known and remembered by many SGS pupils from the late 1950's to early 1960's. She was an interesting character, described by many as "one of a kind". A forthright and independent woman, she led a fascinating life which involved solo travel to many interesting parts of the world, coupled with a dynamic and lively social life.

Her funeral was attended by about 160 people, a tribute to the regard in which she is held as a result of her enduring links with so many throughout her life. A telling detail was that a gentleman who has been holidaying annually in



Make new friends  
But keep the old  
The new are Silver  
But the old are Gold

Swanage for the past 5 years, had met Brenda on “her” bench on the seafront at Buckshore (we always knew where to find her!), and struck up a friendship. On arriving this year, he missed her, and was told the news of her passing by her boatmen friends nearby. Fortuitously, the cremation date was while he was here. What a testament to her, that he came to Bournemouth to attend the event.

She was sociable, loyal, warm hearted, a lover of nature, observer of life, and a legendary raconteur. Those who have heard her after dinner talks on her overseas travels have witnessed a real treat. I remember her stated intention, shortly after we left SGS, of becoming a prison officer. How that morphed into being a well respected bank employee (and foiler of an attempted bank robbery at one stage !) we don't know.

Her influence in our family has been invaluable through the years - unintrusive but always a special part of our social history. Without Brenda's caring intervention at the time, the life of our youngest may well have been cut short. She was influential with several of our offspring, proving a great and steady support, joining with us in many family events, and will always be well loved. Her adventures with the language students that we used to host when living in Bournemouth are legendary, the source of many a humorous memory.

She may have been viewed by some as eccentric, I prefer to call her unique, definitely a one off - truly a bright star, whose loyal constant friendship will never be forgotten. RIP Dear Bren.

## Other Swanage Grammar School members

Leslie Keats - 1944  
The unbeaten record  
holder for Junior Boys  
440 yards.

Paul Kidson

Mary Cross nee Baggs

Robert Campbell

James (Jimmy Cuff)

Ian Davis

Hugh Davis

Dorothea Jones nee Dolphin

Michael Fountain

Margaret Garnett

Madge Gaskell

Nancy Hornsby nee Greene

Roy Harding

John Haysom

Jill Roberts nee Hayter

Diana Higgins nee Morgan

Sally LeDieu nee

Hildersley

John Legg

Tony Lewe

Christine Johnson nee

Lillington

Brenda Mitchell

Jane Panigai nee Baynes

Judy Selbie nee Porter

Ken Selby

Lena Simpkins

Pamela Smith nee

Woadden

# SWANAGE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

## Reunion on Saturday 20th June 2020 : Booking Form

To book your lunch please print out this page, complete and return with your payment to: Shelagh Green, 36 Briantspuddle, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 7HT as soon as possible, and by no later than **10th May 2020**.

I would like: \_\_\_\_\_ Lunch tickets at £20 each including a glass of wine. As there will be no bar at this reunion please feel free to bring your choice of drink. We will provide glasses.

Tick for vegetarian  £ \_\_\_\_\_

GRAND TOTAL £ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ School Year \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Partner/Friends Name (if attending) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

For confirmation of order. Booked tickets will be available at the Reunion. If you do not have email please enclose a stamped addressed envelope to receive confirmation of booking.

Please tick if disabled/impaired walking

Please tick if you have a Raffle prize

Please make cheques payable to SGSA

Enquiries to Shelagh Green, [shelaghsshack@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:shelaghsshack@yahoo.co.uk) or 01929 472368

To join SGSA please find details on the the website: [www.sgsa.co.uk](http://www.sgsa.co.uk)

Please check out our Facebook Page showing last years reunion photographs.

Just type Swanage Grammar School in the search bar to view them.