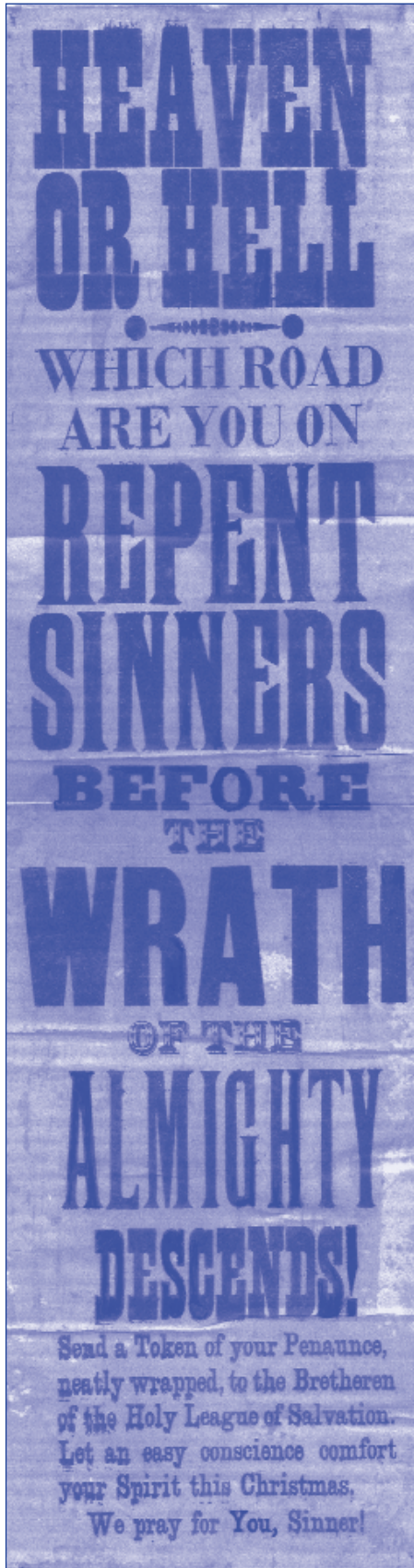


Alfredians



A newsletter for King Alfred School Alumni

Autumn 2007



"A triumph of typesetting"

No! I am not trying to convert you to some incredible religious sect! This is an (isolated) example of what certain evil pupils perpetrated in the school printworks, when 'Fred' had to absent himself on urgent school business and was therefore not there to supervise, as normal.

This particular item was devised, set up and printed by Michael Moiseivitsch, who suddenly appeared in my afternoon 'options' art class and waved it round the door to amuse his classmates who were there!

I thought it was actually rather a triumph of typesetting, considering that the typefaces in the printshop were somewhat limited, & asked him to print one for me.

Amazingly, considering the number of times I have moved house, it suddenly surfaced recently when I looked through some old folders.

(Perhaps it isn't so amazing after all - editor)

● Commentary by Jill Russell
(now known as Sylvia Hunt)

Should education make you happy?

Part of being a progressive school is to constantly question the status quo of the education system: this is not just for the sake of it but to ensure that it truly meets pupil's needs as society changes around them. Historically, KAS Society members have actively engaged in this debate. The current Society committee is organising a series of events to follow this tradition, the first of which is a conference on the 17th November entitled 'Should Education Make you Happy?', an exploration of education's role in children's well-being.

Despite our own children being lucky enough to be in an unquestionably enlightened school, we cannot ignore the fact that Britain came bottom of the league in UNICEF's recent report on childhood happiness. The issues are wider than which school you go to and no child is immune to the pervasive influences of the day. A hundred eminent educationalists, child experts and writers (among them Michael Morpurgo and Phillip Pullman) have signed an Open Letter warning us that today's children experience a 'Toxic Childhood'. The Government's Good Childhood Inquiry admits our society has got some fundamental things wrong while The Guardian's Madeleine Bunting cautions us about 'an unpleasant cocktail of celebrity, cool and acquisitiveness'.

Since children spend the majority of

their day at school, it makes sense to seek some of the solutions in education. As our first experience of group life and where the great ideas of civilisation are laid before us, it is the obvious arena to explore the complex question of how to live a 'happy life'. This exploration does of course take place between pupils and teachers but can be sidelined by the great juggernaut of the exam system which dominates the last four years of a child's school life. Could the system be re-balanced, while still remaining functional in relation to universities and employers? Should we anyway be questioning the dictates of a society which judges our children on the grades they get rather than who they are?

What is education actually for? It seems obvious but there is not a fixed answer. The Ancient Greeks thought the goal of education was to use subject matter as a tool to master themselves: in the world that Jane Austen describes, the middle and upper classes used it for self-refinement while 19th century social reformers believed it was to develop the sensibilities of 'the masses' and thereby improve social behaviour. It wasn't until the 20th century that education for all was used to train children for the world of work, for upward mobility and success.

But how many places are there at the

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Oh, to be 88

Lindsay Nichols (née Salter) – KAS pupil 1928-1935 – pictured celebrating her 88th Birthday at home in New Zealand.



Dear Editors...

I read with great interest Peter Norland and Peter Seglow's account of their hitch-hiking trip to Spain in 1952 in the latest *Alfredians*. I think that I probably heard about their exploits when they returned to KAS for the new term. Anyway I did try some hitch-hiking myself in the eastern Pyrenees (Andorra, France and Spain) during the summer of 1958 probably inspired by their own accounts. The outcome was I concluded that hitch-hiking was not the way for me to travel as one becomes too dependent on others and can spend hours by the roadside waiting for a lift. I actually walked a lot when lifts were not forthcoming.

Instead I had a love of cycling, that gives one freedom of the road at one's own pace, and had already made several very long trips within England of up to 120 miles in one day. I decided that once I finished KAS at the end of Summer term in 1959 and hoped to begin college at the University of Durham in mid-September I would have time to fulfil a dream to cycle to Greece and back. When I finished the trip in November 1959 I was determined to write a book about my travels.

Study at the NW Polytechnic, and various universities plus marriage, kids and a career job resulted in my putting off the work until 2005, over forty years latter when retirement and fading consultancy

projects gave me ample free time to put my notes and thoughts together resulting in a 433 page book.

The prime motive was to put it all down on paper before my memory became too weak and to give a copy to each of my two sons and as many friends that cared to read it. A secondary goal is to try and get somebody interested in publishing it. Lately I have occupied myself with writing a series of short stories mostly on twilight zone themes with dark endings I actually enjoy writing fiction better than the factual account of my bike trip though there is nearly as much painstaking research, even with the miracle of Google, involved to get things right. My self-imposed guidelines in the cycling non-fiction story was to put together as much as possible of my reminiscences of people, and especially characters, I met on the way rather than a guide to now well-known places. Some relationships lasted only a minute or two such as Fred and his transport café, others like that with my chance travelling companion in Greece, Sid –the Pirate, extended over a longer period.

Best regards

Paul Papadopoulos

(We hope to publish extracts from Paul's book in a later edition – Editor)

Should education make you happy?

Continued from page 1...

top of the pile? Don't we instead need people who live well, people of moral courage willing to engage in making the world more humane? This has little to do with success as our culture has defined it. The psychologist Oliver James has diagnosed our society as having 'affluenza' whereby our very affluence has increased our unhappiness. This suggests perhaps a confusion about our fundamental values and what we think happiness is. Do we need to be more overt in nurturing another dream than that illustrated by 'Hello' Magazine? If happiness is better defined as well-being, having a sense of meaning, of 'connectedness', should education aim more specifically towards such things? Now that it

is recognised that we have multiple types of intelligence, the categories and classifications derived from the past may no longer be enough. Should we define more clearly what we mean by 'the whole person'?

To address these questions, the conference is drawing together speakers from a range of disciplines: the economist **Lord Layard**, the philosopher/psychoanalyst **Adam Phillips**, the poet/professor **Peter Abbs**, assessment specialist **Christine Harrison** and two Heads from seemingly opposite schools, the overtly radical **Zoe Readhead** of Summerhill and **Dr Anthony Seldon**, the Master of Wellington College who has been

innovative in introducing 'happiness lessons'.

All parents, staff, pupils and OAs are invited. Also invited are leading educationalists and child experts, educational policy makers and members of the press who have already put this topic on their agenda. The committee believes that this conference can be a useful contribution to the national debate on childhood wellbeing.

If you would like to comment on this debate ahead of the conference, or get a registration form, email lisagodolphin@yahoo.co.uk or phone 0208 731 6319; or participate in the debate in these pages.

● Lisa Keane

Memories

I first went to KAS in 1938, at the age of five. Proof - you can see me in the middle of the front row of the school photo that year, looking very tiny and somewhat tearful. Memories of that pre-war period include being pushed off one of the swings, which used to be suspended from the ceiling on hooks, in front of the nursery school. The hooks are still there! Although Health and Safety would today ensure that such an arrangement would not be allowed. I have very fond memories of my two form teachers - Robey (Miss Robey), and Gilly (with a hard G) (Miss Gillett). My mother was on Council then, and told us of Gilly's immortal words to her, "Really, parents are positively the worst people to have children!" I'm not sure of the context in which they were uttered, but they greatly amused us.

We followed the school to Royston in 1940, and stayed there throughout the war years, returning to Manor Wood in 1945. One of my earliest memories from that time was, on about my first day, hearing beautiful music emanating from one of the rooms: a four hands one piano arrangement of the first movement of Mozart's Symphony No 40 in G minor, being played by Janet Craxton and Joyce Rathbone. Whenever I hear that symphony I am reminded of that early most moving experience. Other Royston memories include hearing Mr Churchill's speech at the end of the war, on a radio set up by Will



Nickless and John Gibson, two of the older boys. This was quite an achievement; there was no mains electricity, and they managed to get loudspeakers to work by battery. Others I remember from that time include Annelise Levy, Yvonne Lehmann, also known as Yonny (see "When Skinny met Yonny...", KASzette No 3, Spring 2004), Jane Banham, Gerrit and Angela Neef (I was in deep, unrequited love with the latter, at the age of eleven). Also, of course, all the staff: Birky, Miss Hyett, Hibby, Ros, Miss Levin... I shall never forget Miss Hyett's regularly repeated request, at the end of leatherwork - "Squeeze out your sponges and throw away your water." The water was in empty Marmite jars, which had to be returned, together with the sponges.

Older boys in the post-war period I

remember include Jocelyn Kelsey, formerly married to Audrey Barber, David Pritchard, Middlesex chess champion, recently deceased, Alec Nove, Denis Knowles, Stanley Revel.

My longest standing KAS friend is Alan Holmes. His family and mine both had caravans at Flint Hall Farm in 1940, before we found more solid accommodation, so we've been friends and are still in regular contact after 67 years! Others I remember include Michael Kerr, Julian Berrisford, Gillian Cowan, Chris Barber, Beverly and Alistair Pease, Julie Heyting, Connie Manning, Pat Essex, Tommy and Willis Vanderschmidt, Tony Kafetz... the list goes on!

● Paul Davis

Teaching for Generations

In Britain, like most of the developed world (as well as in countries like China), we are facing a "pensions time bomb". This phenomenon is examined in population studies in Year Eight and is returned to at G.C.S.E. level in Geography. Women are leaving it later to have fewer babies and we are all living longer. The shrinking "economically active" sector of the population faces the prospect of having to pay higher taxes and working longer in order to pay for the pensions of the ageing baby boom generation who may spend more years in leisurely retirement than they ever did working. Is sixty the new forty? Will "grey power" dominate the economy of this century?

But the government is on to us. They are gradually, stealthily, raising the age of retirement. We may have to go on working until we are seventy. This raises an interesting prospect for those of us who have

been at K.A.S. since our twenties. We are now well used to saying: "I taught your mother and your uncle too." When students are very young they are usually totally unimpressed by this. As they get a bit older, they become more fascinated that Laszlo also taught Maths to their parents or that they went on camp with John Peisley too. They may realise that power relationships at home can shift as they hear from horses' mouths the truth about what their parents were really like at school.

Times change and technology has made a huge impact on how different our lives have become in the last thirty years or so. However, if you looked at a photograph of K.A.S. students today compared with the mid 1970s, the hair and dress code are spookily similar and some things like human relationships never change. It is very satisfying to see a second generation of children of Old Alfredians. This is not just

because you know ex-students have enjoyed K.A.S. enough to want their children to have a similar educational experience, but also because we teachers can prolong the relationship with ex-students and times we have fond memories of. Old Alfredians are not always perfect parents (from the point of view of us teachers). They are supportive but also very questioning and tend to make suggestions for how we can do things better! We are hoisted by our own petard.

The next generation has its own talents and qualities. They are not clones of their parents. The nature/nurture debate goes on. What seems certain is that the school benefits from a balance of long standing families as well as welcoming new blood.

It is just possible, if current government policies continue, and if some of our ex-students buck the trend of later parenthood, that we older teachers may at some time in the future see the grandchildren of our first students in our classes. I'm sure the first one will be especially celebrated.

● Rita Murray

KAS Alumni Reception –



Betty Lyons (née Crown)
1932-1940



Michael Craxton 1937-1943 with his family



? & Anthea Goldsmith (née Ionid)



Pat Lipton, Mary Thompson, Peter Lipton & Paul Davis 1938-1951



Gillian Sonin (née Sack) 1943-1955 &
Peter Lipton



? & John Williams 1938-1948



?, Harry Gilbert 1957-1971 & Stephen Brandes 1965-1971



Hugh Sheridan 1944-1953, Jill Duncan
(née Ambrose) 1949-1955 & Peter
Raymond 1945-1959



Chris Kellerman 1948-1961, Dick
1945-1959 & Nicholas Bullock



David Wolchover 1951-1965, Cathy Meeus 1957-1971 & Simon
Peters 1955-1966



Simon Peters 1955-1966, Roy Greenfield
& Hermione Wood 1957-1968



John Mason 1948-1960 & Hilde

Saturday 30th June 2007



(es) 1945-1951



Caroline Bowder (née Fleming) 1949-1957, Julia Busch 1949-1960 & Nicholas Busch, 1944-1956



Roy Greenfield 1959-1987 & Dawn Moore



Arnab Banerjee 1980-1987 with his family



Hildegard Cheek, Greg Mitchel, Derek Cheek & Chris Kellerman 1948-1961



ana Hardman (née Kabadi)
1948-1956



Maris Jana Ault
1950-1957



Chris Potter, Frances Koston 1962-1971 & Wendy Sinclair



egard Cheek



Ivor Jawson 1996-2003 & Richard Vockins 1999-2006



Lazlo & Rita



This is the 1968 KAS school photo (in two halves). Are you in the picture? Can you identify anyone? We would love to hear from you if you can. Please drop us a line and we will publish the results in the next edition of *Alfredians*. The space below is for your notes...





Deaths

Peter Plaskitt. At his home in Flayosc, France in January 2007. Peter was a pupil at KAS from 1931 to 1940 and a member of Council from 1947 to 1951.

Obituaries

Audrey Yates (née Barber)

Chris Barber (KAS 1936-1946) writes...

My sister Audrey, who started at KAS at Royston and stayed long after I left (4 years, I believe), died last December after a difficult time, her husband Godfrey Yates dying in September that year while Audrey had been really more ill than she would admit even to herself.

Audrey had an interesting career in Show Business & Television starting at the Marquee organisation managing the Spencer Davis group (60s) then in the office of the Independent Television Control Association (spending much of her time discouraging spurious advertising claims!) and for many years in charge of the Derek Block Organisation (concert promoters) dealing successfully with Johnny Mathis, Howard Keel, The Everly Brothers and many more, including the Bolshoi Ballet Company... After the Block organisation closed for a time she became unintentionally semi-retired but in 1999 took over the organisation of my Band's bookings in the UK on behalf of our world-wide Impresario Wim Wigt of Holland...

She is and will be sorely missed both personally and professionally...

Hanna Busbridge (née Brandt)

Professor Geoffrey Brandt writes:

Hanna died last December, shortly before Xmas, at the age of 79. Hanna, who attended KAS from 1934-1939, always cherished a glowing memory of her time at the school. She became a teacher of various arts and crafts in secondary schools after the War, and upon retirement came to live in the West Country. She was in Bristol for a while and then moved to a village just outside Chepstow where she created a spectacular garden from scratch. Her real enthusiasm in life was gardening, and she was very much a member of the horticultural community in the area.

From the Editor

This is to introduce myself as the new editor of *Alfredians*. My name is Peter Palliser. I was a parent at the school from 1987 to 2003 and a member of Council for many of those years.

More importantly, I'd like to thank my predecessor, Susie Bridges, for all her hard work on setting up this magazine. I'm just continuing what she started. And like all new editors, I have to make a few changes. So we have moved to colour and a format which is visually more related to other school publications and to

our website.

We intend to have a school photo in each magazine, probably picked at random. But I would encourage you to write in if you recognize yourself or others. And please correct any mistakes and fill in any gaps: for example, in the photos of the Old Alfredian reception, we have a few question marks where we have not been able to identify the person. We would be very grateful for your help.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Alfredians*.

● Peter Palliser

News in brief

ALERT – Chip is in from the States

Chip Small (at KAS from 1949-59) is coming to Bonfire Night (on 10 November) and is hoping "I may just get to meet some more old shipmates! I'm looking forward to it." He adds that "we (Jean & I) have an 8-year old daughter Sabrina... who is going to Breakwater School here in Portland, Maine. There is a real déjà vu feel about the school, it is independent progressive, and as soon as we first walked in I felt – this is the place, it is so like KAS! But it only goes up to age 11, so we plan to be back in Britain for her secondary schooling. Wish London wasn't so expensive to live in!"

Donation to Music at KAS

King Alfred School has been extremely fortunate to receive a substantial donation to facilitate the introduction of Music Technology. We now have a recording studio linked to a soundproofed recording booth, enough equipment to support the A level curriculum for 5 students and a well qualified and dynamic teacher, Daniel Aarons. The A level curriculum started in September and the students will begin the coursework component after half-term. Daniel and his students are making the most of this new opportunity and we hope to release KAS music CDs in the near future.

Diary

All Alfredians and their families are warmly invited to the following events:

Bonfire Night

Saturday 10 November, 6pm-9pm
Drinks in the Old Library for Alumni, 6:30-7:30pm

'Should education make you happy?'

A one day conference (from 10 to 4) on Saturday 17 November 2007
£10 to cover food and drinks (see article on pages 1 & 2)

Open Day

Saturday 28 June 2008, 12 noon to 4pm. Alumni Reception, 4-5pm

For further information, contact the Alumni Office on 020 8457 5282 or oa.kingalfred.org.uk

Change of address

William & Riley Sennott (2003-2005)
53 Bolton Road
Harvard, MA 01451, USA
Telephone: 978 456 8556
e-mail: thesennotts@yahoo.co.uk

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The copy deadline for the next issue is 1 March 2008.

We always welcome news and memories from Old Alfredians for publication. All copy should be sent to:

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