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President 2016 Simon Westwood
Dear Old Silhillians

It seems hardly credible that I am writing this as my year as OSA President draws to a close. It seems a mere matter of minutes since I was invested as President by John Loynton last December. I have been very privileged to have been invited to serve as President and I have taken as full a part as my circumstances would allow. In a few short weeks, I will be handing over the Presidential ‘gong’ to Johnny Dugdale. I am personally delighted that he will be taking the job. He is a hard-working and valuable member of the committee.

I must pay tribute to the OSA Committee. I have known members of your Committee for many years, but I had not, hitherto, appreciated the exceptional commitment and talent that goes into the running of the Association. There have been some challenges this year and many people have worked very hard to meet those challenges. It is, perhaps, unfair to single out individuals, as all make great contributions. I must, however, mention those with whom I have had the greatest interaction. Max Levenger has sorted out so many problems, both great and small and I thank him for the constructive way in which he has sought to square various circles. Malcolm Lawrie has been a constant font of knowledge and another man who sorts issues as soon as they arise. I have really appreciated his guidance and advice with so many questions. Obviously, Barry Allen, Peter Davies and Joe Bates bear a constant burden as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer respectively and they have steered a careful path through the vicissitudes of the OSA year. Rupert Young has fought a long and ultimately successful set of negotiations with the builders. Clearly, he is a formidable adversary in such matters. Finally, I must thank my predecessor, John Loynton for his help and support.

The President’s rôle demands close liaison with the School in general and the Alumni Department, headed by Susie Jordan, in particular. Susie has been very helpful during my year and I am most grateful. The Headmaster, David Lloyd, has been a tower of strength. On top of his ‘day job’ he has always been available to me for help and advice. In my view, he has become one of the great Headmasters of Solihull School. This year, the School has had the best results in its history and that must be as a result of David’s leadership of the team of teachers and other staff that run our old school. The Governors and their chair, Mark Hopton, also deserve praise for the continuing success of the institution. Mark and I have met up at many events during the year; he is certainly not an absentee Chairman.

I have been invited to many events during the year and I am looking forward to those that have yet to take place. I started with the Golf Dinner at Olton Golf Club (or ‘The Royal and Olton’ as Joe refers to it). I have always had a problem with golf in that I don’t play and have never wished to, however, the welcome from the golfers was warm and genuine. So indeed, were the welcomes from the other big evening events, namely the Hockey and the Rugby dinners. Both of which were quite hectic and boisterous affairs, but enormous fun and I am grateful for the invitations.
The Past Presidents’ Dinner was relatively quiet this year, but most convivial nonetheless. By contrast, the first of the Over Sixties lunches had, I believe, a record turn-out. The 2017 events will see the first girls from the school eligible to attend. This is one of those events where Susie Jordan puts in a lot of hard work to make things happen.

As I have mentioned at a number of events where I have been asked to speak, the unique quality of the OSA is the link to and with the School. Without that link, we are just another club. With that link we become much greater than the sum of the two parts. Put simply, it’s all about the School and what we can do to help, encourage and support. The first School event was the Chapel Choir’s visit to St Paul’s Cathedral. Christine and I attended and were amazed at the simply superb performance. I shouldn’t have been surprised, I suppose, having previously attended the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. Had we walked in off the street we would have assumed that it was the fully professional Cathedral Choir singing. We fully intend to re-visit when they return for what I believe is a record fifth visit. The small social gathering afterwards was most convivial and enabled me to meet up with some of the London-based Old Silhillians.

This brings me to the London Dinner which Christine and I also attended. This year it was at the Royal Thames Yacht Club; an excellent venue and a truly enjoyable evening. Susie Jordan did a great job of organisation and Chrissy and I fully intend to go to the 2017 event.

I attended the School Musical, ‘Carousel’, as the guest of the Headmaster. Whilst musicals are really not my thing, I very much admired the performance in terms of the acting, singing, music and the quality of the production. The amount of work that the staff and pupils had put into the performance was astonishing, although I have to say that I cannot be considered a convert to this particular variety of performance art. There was an added bonus insofar as I was sat next to the Headmaster’s Mother whom I found to be a delightful lady and far more knowledgeable than me about musicals. The Summer Concert was also a triumph for the school musicians. The highlight for me being the Megan Lloyd’s astonishing virtuosity for Mozart’s 12th piano concerto on one of the School Steinways.

I have previously attended the Remembrance Day service in the Quad. A most moving event and I am sure that this year’s will be no different. I have also attended various sporting events including watching the first Rugby match that I have seen in almost twenty years! Staying with Rugby, The Headmaster invited me to the Sportsman’s Dinner organised by the Parents Association. The number of people attending was a record and the event had to be held in the refectory. This was a terrific evening and the exceptional support was doubtless due to the high calibre of the evening’s speaker, namely Sean Fitzpatrick; the legendary All Blacks Hooker and Captain. You may be aware of my almost total lack of
knowledge about Rugby, but the number of All Blacks that I can name has now doubled, with Sean’s now added to Jonah Lomu. His speech was exceptional.

One of the highlights of the year is the Summer Ball. This year’s looked as though the weather would be unkind, but for once, the weather forecast was wrong in the right way. It was a brilliant evening. Thanks go to Malcolm Lawrie and Julia Skan for all their hard work. Malcolm, especially, managing to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat on the Friday prior to the ‘do’. The event raised £500 for the LAFF charity supported by the School.

The final big event for the year will be the Annual Dinner. I am very much looking forward to this occasion, one of the undoubted high points of the year. I look forward to seeing as many of you there as can make it. I know it will be a truly super evening.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it has been a real privilege to serve as OSA President for 2016. I intend to continue to support the School and the Association in every way that I can and I urge you all to do likewise. I look forward to handing over to my successor in December knowing that the OSA is in a better position than it was, not that I can take any credit for that.

With my best wishes

Simon Westwood

THE OLD SILHILLIANS’ ASSOCIATION - PAST PRESIDENTS

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Dear Old Silhillians

I am immensely proud and honoured to be writing as this year’s President-Elect. Indeed, I am also delighted to be writing to you as the youngest President in the Association’s proud history.

First, a brief word about the writer. In short, I am a product of Solihull and Birmingham, having been born at Solihull Hospital, educated in Solihull schools (firstly at Tudor Grange and then to Solihull itself) and as a graduate of the University of Birmingham (with any luck the Editor, being an Aston graduate, will have left that in and not replaced it with “Selly Oak Polytechnic”). I am now qualified as a commercial property solicitor with a leading firm (its own roots in Birmingham as well) and spend my time between Birmingham and Solihull.

I have nothing but fond memories for the institutions that I owe my education and career to, none more so than Solihull. Although compared to some my tenure was brief, the friendships that I built in those years remain the closest to me and the opportunities that I was given by the school served as the foundations for my work, my interactions with people and, above all, my general outlook.

The prospect of being one of eight new boys joining what was up to that point a single-sex environment was daunting. Thankfully, having played rugby from a young age with many of the boys who would become my fellow students, a few familiar faces made a huge effort to make me feel welcome and to accept me into the fold from the moment that I stepped into the Sixth Form Centre (as it was).

The easiest way to describe my experience at Solihull was that I was hooked from day one, and they remain the happiest years I have had. My life revolved around the school, which provided my social life, my sporting career (no less than the third XV captain of the 2005/2006 season, and even second XV when someone was ill...) and of course my A-Levels, which I suppose deserve a mention.
What struck me most was the feeling of camaraderie that the school exuded. I recall one particular comment made by an external examiner for A-level drama that she could not believe how many people turned out to support the students who were being examined (evidently rare in other institutions). This attitude of support was seen in every aspect of school life, and there never failed to be a crowd to support every rugby (even my noble 3rd XV) and hockey match and, as far as I am aware, not a single empty seat on any night of Les Misérables or Barnum when they were performed in 2005 and 2006 respectively.

I joined the Association’s Main Committee in 2007, and it has been a great privilege to watch the OSA go from strength to strength, including the refurbishment of the Memorial Clubhouse, the launch of a truly outstanding website and, wonderfully, the introduction of membership for every student leaving the Sixth Form. It has been a joy to see the Association develop, and I hope I do it proudly.

I look forward to my year as President with great anticipation, and I hope to meet many of you during my year in office.

Best wishes

Jonathan Dugdale

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‘The Magic of Christmas Starts Here!’
Dear Readers

I am extremely grateful to the two preceding contributors who did not heed my request for brevity. This now means I only have to write a short editorial much to my relief and, I suspect, yours! So, a list of thanks...

Susie Jordan, Director of Development and Alumni Relations has had to spend a great deal of time announcing her name and lengthy title every time she answers the phone! With that and dealing with me it’s remarkable that Susie has had the time to achieve all that she has in the last 12 months. Susie has been a breath of fresh air and her dynamic, yet personable approach has been appreciated by all who have come in contact with her. Thank you, Susie!

Like me, Barry Allen, was 60 in October. He celebrated this landmark by having a party at the clubhouse. Rather than have presents, Barry requested that all guests contributed to the the OSA’s charity, LAFF (see page 39). That kind thought raised well over £1,000 and is the biggest donation to the cause to date. Thank you, Barry.

Whilst on the topic of the Clubhouse, Max Levenger took on responsibility for overseeing its management at the start of the year. This is a post that is fraught with danger..... snipers around every corner and assassins behind every door! A post where, whatever you do, you can only please some of the people some of the time.... and boy, do the others let you know it! Well, I for one, really appreciate what you have done over the last 12 months and for immense amount of time and effort you have put into improving the place. Thank you, Max.

As ever, I must thank the advertisers without whom the magazine would be much thinner and cost us even more. Also, to those who took the time to contribute - it is you who make this magazine, not me!

I was 43 and my daughter Alex (Fetherston 2007-09) was 8 when I first started as Editor. Now she has just bought her first house and I am very much looking forward to my first Over 60s lunch in May. Tempus Fugit!

With my very best wishes,

Malcolm Lawrie (the Senior House, 1968-75)

PAST EDITORS

1. Bernard Owens (1950, 53-55)
2. Brian Coglan (1951-52)
3. Arthur Upton (1956-60, 63)
4. Robin Cooper (1961-62)
5. Mike Cusack & Mike Callaghan (1964)
6. Mike Cusack (1965-67)
7. Brian Knight (1968-71)
8. Geoff Herne (1972-74)
9. Nick Atkinson (1975-76)
11. Simon Wilcox (1980-82)
13. David Gilbert (1986-87)
15. Reg Instone (1990-91)
18. Malcolm Lawrie (2000-
The OSA Committee

Simon Westwood
President

Johnny Dugdale
President Elect

John Loynton
Imm. Past President

Barry Allen
Chairman

David Lloyd
Headmaster

Pete Davies
Hon. Secretary

Joe Bates
Hon. Treasurer

Max Levenger
Hon. Membership Sec.

Malcolm Lawrie
Silhillian Editor
Max Levenger
Management Chairman

Phil Pinto
London Representative

Jonny Dugdale
General Member

John Harrison
General Member

Rupert Young
General Member

Jamie Clapham
General Member

Julia Skan
General Member

Harry Morgan
General Member

Simon Griffiths
General Member
The academic year 2015-16 has now drawn to a close and what a busy and unique year it was.

Some of you may recall the first cohort of girls joining J1 11 years ago; the passage of time is unrelenting and this group of trailblazing Silhillians has now left for university and we no longer feel the need to emphasise that we are a coeducational school. Quite simply, that’s who we are and educating boys and girls is what we do, and I believe we do it very well!

In terms of public examination results, we had our arguably best year ever, with 79% of all GCSE grades at A* and A grade. At A Level we achieved 85% A* to B grade and 55% were graded A* and A. The Junior School won the Bromsgrove Maths challenge for the third year in a row, 12 members of J4 were awarded Senior School scholarships and all 8 of our Oxbridge offer holders achieved their grades and places. Although school league tables should be handled with caution, the Times ranked us as the 16th best independent coeducational school in the country and the 56th for all independent schools, as did the Telegraph. With ongoing national reform at GCSE and A Level, and with significant (and unsettling) changes to Examination Board remark and appeals procedures, the future is a little uncertain, but we remain optimistic and ambitious for the future. I believe that targeting 80% A*/A at GCSE and 60% A*/A at A Level is within range and I look forward to celebrating further success in the years ahead.
This is a great school and a very successful one, but we don’t always get things right and I am very grateful for the feedback provided – formal or informal and good or bad. The friendship and camaraderie shown by all members of the school community is marvellous. In an era when economics and politics have inadvertently caused the closure of many independent schools, Solihull, now in its 456th year, has grown and currently serves a record number of pupils. However, rest assured that this is not at the expense of quality of provision and I am always mindful of the sacrifices families make in order to send their children to fee paying schools.

In recent years, events at home and abroad have highlighted just how dangerous the world can be, and schools have been forced to adapt and equip staff and pupils with the skills necessary to identify, mitigate and avoid risk. The Department for Education and the Independent Schools Inspectorate now requires schools to instil a greater sense of ‘British values’ and we are legally required to help prevent pupils being radicalised and brought into terrorism. In service training is a valuable tool in this regard, although the themes can be heartbreaking. Fears around exploitation and extremism are much greater and the vocational journey I embarked upon 26 years ago bears little resemblance to the path I find myself on today.

However, you’ll be pleased to hear that many things have not changed, including our commitment to improving facilities and our busy co-curricular programme.

The Cooper Building has celebrated its first birthday, School House now contains an exciting mix of teaching, pastoral, social and IT space, the Chapel and Queen’s Court have been updated and improved, as has Learning Support in the Junior and Senior Schools, both teaching staff common rooms have enjoyed a facelift, two imposing art installations adorn the campus, and plans are underway to build a second artificial pitch, adjacent to the current (Gordon Wilcox) pitch. Doubling our pitch provision is important for a high profile coeducational sport and I’m delighted to report that plans have been bolstered by the addition of Jane Sixsmith (pictured left), four times GB Olympian, to the hockey coaching staff. With Chris Mayer, Ali Raza and Hannah Fair, that makes four hockey internationals! Further plans, big and small, are under discussion and these include our indoor sports facilities, the Refectory and further updating of laboratories. The list is long and all have their merits, but funds are limited and priorities have to be established, so watch this space for news.
On the co-curricular front, debating, drama, music, outdoor education and sport continue to dominate and we have enjoyed much local, national and even international success.

In debating we now have one of the biggest societies in the country and at Durham University we won one of the two major finals contested. In drama, we enjoyed the musicals *Ali Baba and the Bongo Bandits* and *Carousel* and the Senior Play was *His Dark Materials Part 1* by Philip Pullman, with Part 2 following this year. We also screened the British Premiere of *Close to Evil*, which tells the story of a survivor of the concentration camps trying to reunite with his captors, and Mindu Hornick, an Auschwitz survivor, came to school to plant our Anne Frank sapling. To have one of these rare saplings is a real privilege and we underwent a stringent vetting procedure by the Anne Frank Foundation. Thanks should go the Holly Krober (OS) for leading this fabulous initiative. This term we’ve added RADA to our curriculum and early signs are very encouraging.

A further welcome addition to the curriculum is wellbeing – for pupils and staff – and after early excellent momentum in the Junior School, ably aided by mascots Scuffle & Twitch (squirrels, if you didn’t know), this is now a whole school

*Solihull School’s international rugby players* (left to right) *William Cutbill (England prop), William Talbot-Davies, (Wales full back), Charlie Morgan (England second row)* and *(horizontal) Tom Serle (Scotland scrum half)*
The Headmaster's Reflections

priority. Concepts such as mindfulness, resilience, growth mindsets and many more now form part of our weekly diet and I’m confident the initiative will yield significant dividends in the long run.

In music, we enjoyed several fabulous concerts, a master class at Steinway Hall, a further visit to St Paul’s Cathedral for Evensong and following regular visits to BBC Radio Manchester, the Radio 4 team came here for a live recording of Morning Worship, with Fr Andrew leading the service. The Chapel Choir sang beautifully and at the end of the academic year, they enjoyed a very successful tour of Normandy, which included singing at a local wedding!

The mountain cottage in Snowdonia remains an important part of school life. Usage is varied and includes academic and scholars’ retreats, university preparation, Bencher training, team building and of course, mountaineering. The CCF, Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme and Terriers continue to thrive and the most recent major expedition was to Ladakh in Northern India. Last term I had the pleasure and privilege of visiting St James’ Palace to receive an award on behalf of the Duke of Edinburgh in recognition of our excellent work as an accredited centre for the award.

On the rugby field, the U12 sevens squad finished top of the RFU national league table and the 1st XV finished in the top ten schools and were ranked as the highest coeducational school in the country, losing to only one team all season, albeit twice. In addition, we had much individual success with four pupils selected for their country: two for England, one for Scotland and one for Wales. Our golfers represented the Midlands at the ISGA National Finals held at St Andrews and we are now recognised as one of leading ski schools in the country.
Sailing has been reborn and is now thriving again, and in hockey, three of our girls’ teams were crowned county champions. The boys also enjoyed much success, culminating in a very successful outing at the Bath Hockey Festival, whilst in netball, our U12 squad got through to the quarter finals of the national cup. In cricket and under the leadership of Darren Maddy, our sixes competition is gaining national recognition and both U13 and U15 teams reached the national finals, with the U13 bringing home the winners’ trophy!

The Junior School also had many sporting victories: The sevens season was very successful and included a runners-up medal and plate victory, in both hockey and cricket we were crowned county champions and regional runners up, and the athletes triumphed over 30 local schools to win the Director’s Cup at the Borough athletics competition.

The sense of community at Solihull is very strong and last year we raised £54,000 for a range of charities. Similarly, the SSPA, through its calendar of events, raised £30,000 for co-curricular spending. Our (relatively) new Development and Alumni Relations Office is forging even stronger links with Old Silhillsians and now that leavers auto-enrol in the association, the age and gender profiles of the membership is changing. One of my OSA highlights of the year was sitting with Mike Bullen (Shenstone, 1968-78) writer of the TV drama Cold Feet, at the London Dinner. Not only was Mike great company, but soon after the dinner he came back to Solihull to give the pupils a writing master class. This proved to be a great success, as did Tim Reid’s visit the year before. Tim is also an Old Sil
and co-writer of *Car Share*, starring Peter Kay. Also noteworthy was the record breaking attendance at one of last year’s Over 60s Lunches; 110 men attended and in the year ahead they will be joined by the first female Old Sils to reach 60, as well as a certain Mr Lawrie! Furthermore, thanks should go to Rupert Young (Jago, 1974-83) for organising the annual Birmingham Business Drinks, although I suspect he regretted putting his credit card behind the bar at last year’s gathering. As I’m sure you can imagine, it was a very pleasant affair.

We are blessed with a community of people whose love for the school is unquestionable and unassailable and quite frankly, it’s a humbling experience. Not only does the OSA and its members fund scholarships – for all round contribution to school life – and other worthy causes beyond school, but they (i.e. you) also provide current pupils with invaluable university and careers guidance. Careers lunches, interview practice, work experience, mentoring and many more are wonderful opportunities for pupils, for which we are all very grateful. On behalf the school, it’s great seeing more of you around school and more recent leavers at the Club House, men and women, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I do hope that the relationship between the school and OSA continues to flourish. So, in conclusion, in short and in the words of our new school song, *Perseverantia our Spirit*. 

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Photos from the School Year

Skiing: One of the leading schools in the country

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Photos from the School Year

A Levels: Proud fathers - David & Megan Lloyd and Sean & Charlie Morgan

Under 13 Cricket: National Champions

Musical: Carousel

Sailing: now thriving after its rebirth
I have for a number of years had the honour of being elected Chairman of the Old Silhillians’ Trust, which has declared objectives of developing corporate feeling amongst the former pupils and staff of Solihull School and promoting the welfare of the school in general. I would like to think that most of us receiving this magnificent magazine feel supportive of such an association to which our parents may well have enlisted us for life.

The Trust is a registered charity whose role is to provide long-term financial support for the School’s continuing development, but with a particular emphasis on the provision of scholarship support. The Trust is governed by a board of Trustees who are appointed by the membership of the Old Silhillians’ Association and who are responsible for the financial management and administration of the Trust’s assets.

**Junior School Scholars**

*These are just some of the talented pupils that your support could possibly help in the future*

This year we have again been able to provide scholarships to two pupils entering the sixth form: Annabelle Barker and Alexander Sasse who as members of the Upper Fifth have made an outstanding contribution to the wider life of the School, both curricular and co-curricular. They are both considered to be role models for the Solihull School community and ambassadors beyond our gates, and I know from their letters of thanks to the Trustees that our support of them both is well founded.

Going forward I am delighted to confirm that our reserves continue to be maintained around the Trust’s set objective of £100,000 and with
significantly increased membership income coming in each year following the introduction of the compulsory membership scheme, it is our intention to provide more in the way of scholarships and other beneficial funding in the future.

It is my belief that the relationship between the Trust and the school has never been better and thanks for this must be given to the Headmaster David Lloyd who has always given freely of his time for good counsel and support. Whilst to some degree I have to accept that an organisation such as ours whose members are linked only by their common school heritage will never form a cohesive cohort of men and women with a common purpose, I do like to think that our Association is a vehicle by which those who find pleasure in each other’s company will take the opportunity to renew and strengthen those relationships and through them support the Trust in its endeavours.

In this years report I would like to talk about philanthropy and its importance to the Trust. Our supporters include not only alumni, but also staff (past and present) parents, friends and colleagues - even those whose contact has arisen through the loss of a loved one. You are all part of the global ‘Old Silhillians’ family.

Philanthropy is a truly special kind of support and great care and time is taken by individuals, trustees or professional representatives to ensure the support that you give to us is right both for you and the advancement of the Trust. Your gifts allow talent of all kinds - academic, sporting, artistic and cultural to flourish at Solihull School. Our focus has three overarching themes - support of pupils through scholarships, the progress of our innovation and the preservation of our heritage. Our history is long and esteemed, however I believe there has never been a more exciting time to be involved with our work and your foresight, as a benefactor today has never been more valuable.

Thank you once again for your contribution to the Old Silhillians’ Trust.

Peter A Thomas
Chairman of Trustees

http://www.silhillians.net/The-OSA/The-OSA-Trust
In an attempt to further develop the relationship between the Old Silhillians’ Association and recent leavers, the OSA Under 25s Sub-Committee was set up in early 2016. Within weeks, sixteen Old Silhillians had agreed to get involved and we are always seeking leavers to represent their peers.

Comprised of Year Representatives, the sub-committee aims to engage recent leavers with the Association and its activities. Responsibilities include encouraging year groups to attend OSA events, helping current students with university or career advice and sharing year group news for publicity on multiple platforms.

It’s great to see the impact members of the sub-committee have made since its formation. From galvanising friends for reunions at OSA events, to aiding with Oxbridge applications and having a presence at school Open Mornings, the sub-committee have truly got stuck in. It’s also thanks to the sub-committee that the OSA now has a thriving Instagram account - @OldSilhillians!

Would you like to get involved or know someone who would? Please email me at harrym@silhillians.net. We are seeking Year Representatives from year groups who left in 2011, 2010 and before 2009 in particular, as well as from the 2016 leavers.
The pictures were taken at the Under 25s Christmas Party held at the Clubhouse. Further information about the OSA U25s Sub-Committee and a list of Year Representatives can be found on the Silhillians.net website.

**Cronk-Cunis**

The August Bank Holiday Monday saw seventeen recent leavers make the trip down to Richmond Athletic Ground to compete in the annual Cronk-Cunis U21s Rugby Festival. A new addition to the OSA calendar for 2016, the festival brought together some of the finest sporting schools in the name of old boys’ rugby. Comprising of ’14, ’15 and ’16 leavers the Solihull Old Boys competed in three tough fixtures, coming away with one win and two losses.

Despite the results, the day was exceptionally fun. It was great to get so many of the senior squad back together, enjoying rugby and a post-tournament riverside pint in the sun. I’d encourage everyone to get involved in the coming years… it’s a perfect warm-up for the annual Coton Cup fixture vs. Old Warwickians! A report of that game can be found on page 70.

*Harry Morgan (Windsor 2003-14)*
We have now completed our first full year and been fortunate to see previous levels of revenue exceeded. We’ve held a number of very successful corporate events across the summer, had a busy marquee season and a number of successful beer festivals amongst other events. All have welcomed new users to the Clubhouse. Following the departure of Patrick Grace, Ann Beirne has been promoted to General Manager and is doing a good job in this new position. Both Sallie Graham and Gina Blow have been with us for 10 years and we thank them for their loyalty and service during that time and in the future.

Sponsorship deals have been agreed with a number of local companies, specifically Listers who have agreed to be the main sponsor for the next 3 years.

Moving to sports, we have seen an upgrade to the rifle range, courtesy of support by JLR, which was then immediately downgraded when someone decided to park their car in the wall. This resulted in rifles being frantically rehoused across the Midlands in various locations so thank you to those who helped us on that Monday night back in June. In regards to other sports, we have welcomed Solihull Moors for the first time and they are using some pitch space during the week for training. We have also set up a small cricket section after a 16 year absence and look forward to developing that junior division starting next summer. A small table tennis section is also in the process of starting up.
The final parts of the refurbishment are now near completion in some areas that had been on hold. Back in August we redeveloped the kitchen which, after several decades of usage, needed total refurbishment. A TV wall has been installed in the bar, allowing people to view sport easily on an 84” screen. Alongside this there is new furniture and a new colour scheme which has been very well received by the members. The sports clubs’ honours boards have also been updated to a consistent look and are in the entrance hall. A new sign has been erected at the end of the drive to replace the old sign that was lost further to the sale of the land to Gracewell.

All in all it has been a successful year and with the hope that the resurfacing of the car park will happen shortly we should complete all of the areas that needed refurbishment allowing us to continue to increase the revenue for the Clubhouse and for it to be profitably maintained for years to come.

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The Big Debate
We were delighted to welcome Michael Buerk (Shenstone, 1955-65) President of the debating society, back to school on 12th November 2015 to chair the second annual Big Debate. George Diwaker (Pole, 2007-14), joined by current pupil Megan Lloyd, proposed the motion ‘This House Regrets the Government’s Pushing of British Values’ whilst Katy Hatter (Shenstone, 2009-13) and current pupil Zershaaneh Qureshi opposed. The evening was enjoyed by all who attended with the proposition emerging victorious and winning the support of the Old Silhillian community in the Bushell Hall.

CV and Interview Evening
We were delighted to welcome current and former parents and alumni back to school in February to interview 50 of our sixth formers. Volunteers from a variety of industries including: Law, Medicine, Professional Services, Logistics, Finance, Recruitment and Training offered mock interviews to students who had all submitted a CV in advance of the evening. Despite being nervous the students all excelled themselves and the interviewers were impressed at their maturity and ability.
Choral Evensong at St Paul’s
The Chamber Choir returned to St Paul’s Cathedral on 8th February for the fourth consecutive year to sing Evensong. Our current parents and friends were joined by Old Silhillians, former parents and former staff who enjoyed hearing the choir sing a number of pieces including the newly commissioned anthem ‘I will sing with the spirit’ by Old Silhillian and former chorister David Briggs (Shenstone, 1974-81).

Following Evensong we were delighted to welcome Old Silhillians and former parents and former staff to Corney and Barrow for drinks and nibbles. Guests enjoyed reflecting on the service as well as catching up with old friends and making new acquaintances.

Carousel
Since 1976 the school musical has been a focal point of the school calendar and this year was no exception. Pupils from across the school put on five fantastic performances of Rogers and Hammerstein’s, Carousel. On Wednesday 16th March over 100 members of the school community including alumni, former parents and former staff joined the audience and shared in tears of laughter and joy as the pupils put on a first class performance. Prior to the performance, guests were invited to drinks and nibbles on the top floor of the Cooper building where they could meet old friends and reminisce about the musicals they had been a part of.
Mike Bullen Screenwriting Workshop with the LV and LVI

Award-winning screenwriter and Mike Bullen (Shenstone, 1968-78) visited Solihull School to meet English and Drama pupils. Bullen is best known for writing ITV drama Cold Feet, which returned in September this year.

Lower Sixth English and Drama students were treated to a talk in the Bushell Hall about his career so far and the art of screenwriting, where he spoke of the challenges and successes of writing Cold Feet. Later in the day Bullen hosted workshops with small groups of Lower Fifth and Lower Sixth Drama and Theatre Studies students to discuss their GCSE and A Level devised projects.

Mike Bullen spoke fondly of his time here. Some of the characters in Cold Feet were also inspired by Bullen’s friends at Solihull. Pete was based on his best friend at Solihull (Mark Taylor) and Jenny was also based on the wife of another friend at Solihull.

“His relaxed and casual manner created a comfortable atmosphere in which we could all express our ideas, and we related to and learned from the different ideas he introduced. Overall, Mike Bullen is a person we can aspire to be,” said Sixth Form student Joshua Newby.

Bullen talked briefly about his time at Solihull.

What’s your fondest memory at Solihull School?
“My fondest memory was probably when we did a Sixth Form play. I think we did the first Sixth Form play, which we were encouraged to do by the Headmaster at the time. I think it was the time when the Benchers had a drink at his house and he talked us into doing it. He did that thing where we thought we’d come up with it but basically we’d been manipulated by him. He gave us the script. It was based on the McCarthy period in the States, called The Investigator. It was just organised by us, and the teachers weren’t involved at all. I fondly remember that the play was great fun and it brought the Sixth Form together. I remember it being pretty good, I was directing it.

“When I left school I didn’t think that this was going to be my future. I didn’t think that I was going to work in this field at all and didn’t for some years, but the seeds were definitely sown here with Drama.”

How do you think your experiences at Solihull have influenced you in later life?
“The Sixth Form did the school Chapel Service once a week, and it was always the same group of people leading every week. I asked the Reverend at the time
if a couple of mates and I could do an alternative point of view. This is back in 1977/8, and he allowed us to do in effect an atheist service in Chapel. Looking back, it was amazingly broad minded of him, and the school, and the Headmaster to allow us to do that. That’s what I take away from Solihull, that at that time it was a very forward-looking place. You were encouraged to think for yourself. For a lot of schools now it’s about churning out kids with good grades, and of course it was still important then, but there was a much greater emphasis on our development as people. It gave me a great sense of community, which I think you see a lot in what I write about, but also it gave me confidence to have courage in my own convictions. It was a place that encouraged you to think.”

What has it been like coming back?
“It’s been weird. It’s a weird experience coming back to somewhere that’s in your DNA. I’ve walked around that quad so many times, and today the Head of English (Mr Hart) said “Oh we’ll just walk across the quad”, and my footsteps faltered because I thought “We can’t walk across the quad!” It’s been a lovely experience because I am very, very fond of this place and there are parts of it that I know very well and parts that I don’t know at all. It’s pretty impressive. I thought it was grand when I was here but it’s grander. In terms of what’s been the best part, I had a session with a group of Lower Fifth pupils and we were talking about a piece they’d written and discussing their motivation, and there was just a moment when they started talking amongst themselves – really examining the motivation for the story. I was irrelevant, and that was very satisfying because that’s what writing is about. It’s about teasing out what the truth is and what you’re trying to say. I saw this spark suddenly catch fire.”

Birmingham Business Drinks
Old Silhillians from across Birmingham came together with staff from Solihull at Bar Opus at One Snowhill on Thursday 12th May for the biannual Birmingham Business Drinks. Alumni enjoyed catching up with old friends and making new connections over a drink after work whilst also having the opportunity to hear a little more about life at school.
Alumni come back to help Oxbridge hopefuls
On Monday 20th June, six alumni came back to School to help our LVI Oxbridge applicants with their personal statements as well as give an insight into life at Oxbridge and top tips for interviews. The pupils were grateful to have the opportunity to speak to those who had recently been through the process and hear first-hand about Oxbridge. We wish all our applicants the best of luck.

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London Dinner
On Friday 20th May, alumni, staff and former staff came together at the Royal Thames Yacht Club for the Annual Alumni London Dinner. Having enjoyed reception drinks on the terrace, guests heard the Headmaster give a brief update on life at Solihull before moving up to the Mountbatten Suite for a delicious three course meal and the opportunity to catch up and reminisce with old friends. After dinner, Mike Bullen (Old Sil and writer of Cold Feet) entertained guests as he spoke about his time at Solihull and the links between his Solihull friends and the Cold Feet characters!

Over 60s Luncheons
In October 2015 the luncheon was attended by 97 members and two guests. There were three newcomers. The school was represented by Sean Morgan, Deputy Head Teacher, who told us all about the latest achievements and other activities of the school. John Loynton, President of the OSA, spoke about progress of the new clubhouse and its wider use.

Alas, sadly we lost Brian McNidder and Bob Parker-Eaton.

In May 2016 there were 107 members and 3 guests at the luncheon, probably a record. There were ten newcomers. The
School was once again represented by Sean Morgan and the current President of the OSA Simon Westwood was in attendance.

Sadly, it was reported that departed from us were John Anderson, John Duffy, Tony Goldwater, David Spencer, Mike Williamson, Terry Chetland.

Nigel Holmes (Pole, 1951-60)

OSA Ball

At one stage it looked as though room was going to be a little tight at the Ball, but an extra section of marquee added the day before and a lot of moving of chairs and tables and the addition of fantastic table decorations by Julia Skan on the morning of the event saw the marquee ready to welcome the Ball guests on Saturday 2nd July.

It was great to see twenty-two U25s attend alongside the normal strong attendance from the 1975 leavers well supported by the year below, 40 years after they left school. The 1996 leavers took the opportunity to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of their leaving school.

The heads and tails competition, held before the guests sat down for dinner, raised a magnificent £500 for the LAFF charity which is supported by the OSA and the school. As ever, the food served up by our chef, Rupert Davies, was first class and enjoyed by all.

The party went on well into the small hours of Sunday morning with dancing to the band QUEST who had returned due to popular demand by last year’s guests.
The Old Silhillians’ Association Past Presidents’ Society held its annual dinner on Thursday 16th June 2016. Regrettably Peter Callaghan, our esteemed dinner organiser, was unable to attend due to a commitment to a family holiday in France. Past President Peter Thomas was able to co-ordinate the event in his absence.

Senior Past President Bob Toy welcomed all including the distinguished guests, the Headmaster David Lloyd, the President of The Old Silhillians’ Association Simon Westwood and the immediate Past President John Loynton.

Following a magnificent meal Julia Skan introduced her former history teacher John Loynton, the new member of the society and invited him to say a few words which he did most eloquently. The OSA President Simon Westwood was then invited to tell the society about the current status of the Association and finally David Lloyd was given the floor to update us all on the tremendous achievements being attained at school by both staff and pupils alike.

Peter Thomas read a list of apologies and all retired to the bar for a small libation (or two) having had a most enjoyable evening.

**Peter Thomas (School House, 1964-74)**

**OSA Dinner**

The Annual Dinner was a very enjoyable and well attended occasion, great company, food of the highest quality and two amusing speeches from the President, John Loynton and Guest of Honour, The Chairman of the School Governors, **Mark Hopton (Shenstone, 1968-73)**.

An enjoyable evening indeed, and for many (especially those in the photo below) an enjoyable stay to the early hours of Sunday morning too! It was great to be back in the refurbished Club House, and the presence of so many younger Old Sils augurs well for the future.

**John Loynton, Immediate Past President**
2016 has been quite a busy year for our Lodge. We now have a presence on the OSA web-site which explains what the Lodge is, how it was formed and when and where it meets. My grateful thanks to Malcolm Lawrie for making this happen. I urge anyone interested to look at the pages which include contact details, links to various sites and e-mail links.

We had some issues at the end of last season regarding storage for our ‘stuff’. We managed to overcome that hurdle with help from Max Levenger and Malcolm Lawrie. The only problem was our Master’s and Wardens’ chairs which were simply too large to go in. The Club needed the space, so the chairs had to go. I had assumed that these were part of our Lodge’s history, but small plaques on the chairs showed that they dated back to 1898 and the formation of the Albert Lucking Lodge, No 2717, in the Province of Essex. How they came to be with us, no-one knows! Clearly the right thing to do was return them to their original Lodge, assuming that they still existed and that they wanted them. They do still exist and they are over the moon to have their original chairs restored to them. As a result, they have made a donation to the Lodge charity. Their Secretary will be attending our first meeting of the new season and I will be attended their Lodge at Southend-on-Sea as one of my first visits as the new Master of Shenstonian Lodge.

My installation as Master on 10th October meant that I simultaneously hold office as President of the Association and Master of the Old School Lodge. As far as I am aware, this has not previously happened. The theme of my Mastership will be forging closer links with and increasing support of, the School. As the OSA is just another club without the School, so too, Shenstonian Lodge would be just another Lodge.

This year, the Lodge made what was then, the largest single donation to the LAFF charity supported by the OSA and School. This was only exceeded by the collection from the OSA Annual Ball. The Lodge is looking at ways of making more direct and sustainable charitable contributions to the life of the School. I am hoping that discussions between the Lodge and the School in this regard can be successfully completed before the end of this year.

The programme of events for the forthcoming season is looking good with, hopefully, some pleasant surprises for both brethren and visitors. Any Freemason is most welcome to attend our meetings and we would be delighted to hear from any prospective new members. Links on the OSA web-pages -  

http://www.silhillians.net/The-OSA/Shenstonian-Lodge
The magnificent new Sixth Form centre, the Cooper Building was officially opened by BBC reporter and Old Silhillian, Michael Buerk on 12th November last year, just too late to squeeze an article into last year’s edition of The Silhillian.

Alongside the official opening of the new £4.5 million sixth form centre, a time capsule, sponsored the Old Silhillians’ Trust, was buried. Matthew Lane Sanderson gave a speech about the superb new sculpture ‘Leap’ that has been erected outside the new building.

However, it had to be Michael Buerk’s poignant and splendidly funny speech that stole the day and I could not let it go unprinted, so here it is -

“It’s not just decently respectful, but magnificently appropriate, in this Remembrance Week that this magnificent new sixth form centre should be named after Dr. Cooper, the school’s headmaster during the First World War.

Exactly one hundred years ago that war had been raging for fifteen months; long enough to realize it would be more apocalyptic than any other in history – though most of the losses, most of the grief, were still to come.

The school lost fifty-five of its Old Boys in the war. A terrible number in any context, but when you think the school was so much smaller then – fewer than 200 pupils – what a scar the war must have left! Three of the masters were killed, too, out of a teaching staff of just twelve. So many hopes drowned in blood. So much promise unfulfilled. An aching void in so many local families, and in the community that Solihull School has always been, and I hope always will be.

This new building will be a reminder to us, as the war memorial (moved since my
Isn’t it brilliant? Today’s Silhillians are so fortunate. We Old Silhillians, old, this is, in more than the sense of having left the place, can hardly complain, and in any case it’s getting harder to think myself back into my young self, roaming around here, more than half a century ago, in that scratchy grey herringbone tweed suit that, astonishing to think of it now, was the uniform then. Short trousers, of course, until pretty much the sixth form.

Our sixth form centre, we called it a “common room”, in the old School House building on Warwick Road, doesn’t bear much comparison. In fact “common” pretty well sums it up. A row of broken lockers, a couple of benches and a handful of uncomfortable – probably dangerous chairs.

It’s the smells you remember… of stale males, mostly. It must have been the old cricket jockstrap that had fallen behind the radiator. And the cluster of gym towels in the corner that should have been taken home and washed two terms ago.

Girls were an unconfirmed rumour. We didn’t have any but we were warned about them. They were considered habit-forming and dangerous, like cigarettes but…. worse, somehow.

They were almost a complete mystery. I remember a gang of us trying to impress a gaggle of girls from what was then Malvern Hall (now St. Martin’s, I think) by showing off our CCF training on the swings in Malvern Park. They took no
notice at all. Nothing…. apart from some half-stifled giggles. It took a long time, and a lot of parade ground drill for the wounds to heal.

We did a lot of that stuff. Highly trained practically from birth. Rather like the Spartans. Cubs, two scout troops, a paramilitary organization called the Terriers loosely modelled on the Hitler Youth, without quite the same commitment to world domination. All outdoors. The showers were always cold and vests weren’t allowed even in deepest midwinter.

The Solihull School CCF was a formidable military machine that could probably put more boots on the ground than the present British Army. Heavily armed – there were hundreds of working rifles in a shed on the Field of Mars – and highly trained.

The Headmaster probably didn’t realise what power he had in his hands. One work from him and we could have taken over Birmingham by coup d’état…. In a quick, ruthless, nighttime operation. That is if…. It being Solihull, after all…. anyone could bring themselves to acknowledge Birmingham’s existence in the first place.

It even had an air force. OK it only had one aircraft, and that strangely similar to one of the Wright brothers prototypes – the one that didn’t work. It could only stagger into the air after fifty boys had pulled taut what amounted to two huge rubber bands, and fired it in the general direction of Knowle.

The schoolboy pilot was always sent off with the kind of ceremonial surrounding Japanese Kamikaze pilots, for broadly the same reasons. But as a terror weapon it had no rival. At the first sight of it being deployed, whole districts fled in fear.

It was a different world, but we felt privileged to be here then, as you must feel privileged to be here now.

It’s not just how it looks – the wonderful facilities, magnificent buildings of which this is merely the latest. It’s how it feels. A community, with high ideals and big aspirations…. confident without conceit.

A great place to be.
Alan Francis (Jago, 1954-63) sowed the idea of a tour to Normandy to Oliver Walker whilst he was over for the Mozart Requiem at school in April 2015.

That idea was developed and delivered over the following 18 months as, in mid-July, twenty-three members and two former members, Katherine Williams (Jago, 2008-15) and Muskan Shrivastava (Shenstone, 2008-15), of the Chapel/Chamber Choir spent six days touring Normandy and singing concerts. The venues were Coutances and Bayeux Cathedrals, Lessay Abbey and Millières Church. In addition to the choral works performed, Dominic Martens (left) performed two solo cello pieces at each of the concerts. Staff members, Tim Kermode, Oliver Walker and Simon Phillips, accompanied the party.

During some downtime at Pirou Plage (Alan’s local beach), members of the choir joined a couple of young Belgian lads busking at Le Galichon Café. Elsewhere, when not performing, the party went to Mont St Michel, saw the Bayeux Tapestry and on the final day they visited Gold Beach, one of the most important sites during the D-Day landings, as well as the American War Cemetery.

The Trip was summed up by UVIth pupil, now an Old Silhillian, Megan Lloyd, “Alan and his wife (below with the choir) were great company and we are all so grateful to them for helping to organise the trip for us, and for how kind and welcoming they were. I have never been on a school trip where there was such a strong sense of camaraderie and friendship, and I can’t think of a better way to have ended the school year.”
The Latin American Foundation for the Future

LAFF was founded by the daughters of Merilyn Barrett (a former teacher of French and Spanish and Head of Modern Languages from 1979-2014) - Hannah and Faye (Shenstone, 2003-5). Tragically, Hannah died from brain cancer in 2010, but her legacy lives on.

Solihull School has supported LAFF over the last 5 years by fund-raising, donating clothes or by buying the leather products that the girls make in Casa Mantay in Peru and selling them at the School Christmas Fayre. Solihull gave over £2000 last year to help with the education at Azul Wasi and to fund a bakery initiative in the Sacred Valley project. Currently pupils, staff and parents are raising £200 per annum to support each of the children at Azul Wasi.

It seems wholly appropriate that Old Silhillians should support a former pupil of Azul Wasi as the rest of the School community are doing their bit for the pupils still at the orphanage. To this end we hope, with your support, to help Dante, an 18 year old orphan who has been at Azul Wasi since it opened six years ago. He has shown real ability, leadership and ambition. Not only was he nominated as Head Boy (photo right, wearing his Head Boy’s Sash) in the school, but he has won numerous awards for his skills.

Dante’s dream was to go to University, become a Civil Engineer and put something back into LAFF, the organisation that turned his life around. This was always going to be a momentous task, but with our support in funding extra tuition and Dante’s unerring single-mindedness he passed the entrance exam and secured a place at the National University of Saint Anthony the Abbot in Cuzco.

He did not quite manage to get onto the Civil Engineering course he wanted to, but has secured a place on a Physics course. This is a truly fantastic achievement. Dante is the first pupil from the Azul Wasi School to go to university.

Dante is very excited about being at university; his shy smile appears every time he talks about it. His new dream is to become a university professor. Dante plans to return to the rural community where he was born and help the people progress. He doesn’t want other children to go through what he did. On top of this, he remains very much attached to Azul Wasi. He plans to go back to the home frequently, help wherever he can and continue to support other young boys there. As Dante says, “Azul Wasi es mi Casa”.

Dante is a young man with a bright future ahead of him that defies all odds. Both he and Azul Wasi, have an enormous amount to be proud of.

Please help us to support Dante by donating at -
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JOHN JAMMES (Staff, 1955-68)
You may be interested to hear that I recently was invited to lunch in London by Martin Palin (Fetherston, 1960-66), who was put in touch with me by Michael Buerk. Martin and I had not seen each other for exactly 50 years, when he left School in June 1966. He was a member of my Shooting Team, and has had a successful career in the City, after Cambridge. He has not changed a bit!

A wonderful example of the incredible Solihull esprit de corps, don’t you think?

With every good wish.

COLIN EDMUNDSon (Staff, 1973-79)
(Almost) Forty Years On . . . .

Over the course of the academic year 2016/17, boys who were members of Form IIIA at Solihull School in 1978/79 will turn 50 – I myself, their Form Master, having become an OAP (or should that be Senior Citizen?) in February earlier this year.

In 35 years of teaching, in three different schools, IIIA was my best class ever, and its 26 members (to whom I taught English and Music) were an absolute delight from start to finish. From Martin Arthur to Michael Williams they were a very special group, and I have often wondered what became of them all, and what paths they followed after leaving school.

Sad to say, one of their number, Peter Blenkinsop, passed away in January 2010, but I have subsequently had some contact with his parents, as I have with Nigel Fish (again through keeping in touch with his mum and dad), Jonathan Middleburgh and James Sergeant, and I’ve heard snatches of news of Richard Nesbitt from time to time. But of Messrs Arthur, Baker, Bradley, Brown, Burrows, Collingwood, Cowley, Davies, Eardley, Hammond, Johnstone, King, Mumford, Narbett, Okey, Oppenheimer, Price, Spall, Thorp, Trimble and Williams I know nothing – so this is essentially an appeal for any who would care to do so to contact me directly, so that, almost 40 years on, I can learn about what they have been up to since leaving school, and, in turn, share my own news with each one individually.

I began my teaching career at Solihull at the tender age of 21, and the years that I spent there, living on the Warwick Road, were among the happiest of my life. Running the Chapel Choir and working alongside David Turnbull, John Geddes, Jill Godsall and Jill Spurrell in the Music Department provided me with a wealth of memories that continue to this day.

I don’t do Facebook or Twitter, but if anyone would like to contact me by e-mail (profcge@hotmail.com) then I’ll certainly return the favour and provide them with an update of my own.

Good wishes to all – whether members of IIIA or not!

DONALD F H RUSHTON (Pole, 1933-42)
I happened to be listening to Radio 4 on Sunday 3rd July and was surprised and delighted to hear the Service from Solihull School Chapel, in memory of those who have given their lives for the country. Three of my school friends were lost in WW2; John Demel (1935-39), Teddy Woodall (1936-40), and my closest friend Gerald Astley (1934-42),
a clever mathematician. Their names are all on the School War Memorial. I will never forget them.

I was in a reserved occupation, having a State Bursary to read for the Mechanical Sciences Degree at Cambridge – a programme to provide Engineers for the Armed Forces. The D-Day invasion took place as we were sitting our final Tripos exams. The previous year’s group of engineers all took part in the invasion. We were subsequently re-directed to civilian jobs to rebuild the manufacturing industries, and did two years industrial service in lieu of military service, before starting our careers of choice.

I am now 92. I have so much to be thankful for. I send my best wishes to the School and the OSA.

**JOHN HADDLETON**  
*(Pole, 1943-48)*

After living in Solihull for 44 years, John and Hilary Haddleton moved down to rural mid-Devon, near Exeter, in 2012. He now lives next door to his youngest daughter Emma Haddleton *(Pole, 1987-89)*. He continues with his various business interests, motors in his Riley Adelphi and helps out his granddaughters with their maths homework - accountancy came in useful, finally! Right is a photo of his three children and seven grandchildren taken at the RAF club for a family party.

**DAVID ROSS (Pole, 1946-52)**

I was a pupil at Solihull School from 1946 until 1952. It was to prove a period when educationally I could not have been better served by such a dedicated teaching establishment as was, and still is, Solihull School.

What spurred on my father to send me to Solihull School you might ask, for after all there was no way he could have found the necessary fees? Well, in my father’s role as the leader of a nightly ARP (Air raid precautions) squad in Birmingham during WWII were several masters from Solihull School. They quickly impressed upon my father a realisation of what a great school Solihull was, and could be for me his eldest son. Also in his squad was a sixth form master from, I think, King Edward VI School in Birmingham who lived in Solihull and with whom my father arranged to give me intensive coaching
prior to the upcoming eleven-plus exams. I passed the eleven-plus, then a prelim exam set by Solihull school and finally an interview with the then headmaster A R Thompson. And all this possible as at the end of WWII.

Prime Minister Clement Attlee had decreed that lack of funds should not be a deterrent to a first class education. Solihull School was one of the first to offer assisted places and I was one of the very first state aided pupils to benefit. So this Prime ministerial decree had been the final driving force behind my father’s efforts to obtain the best education possible for his sons, I luckily being the eldest and first to benefit.

Headmaster A R Thompson though well past retirement age had, together with a clutch of other masters nearing retirement, held the school together during the was and the immediately post-war years. Despite being close to or well past retirement they were all to prove teachers of exceptional skills and great dedication and to whom I shall be eternally indebted. This, even so, from those that had been ARP wardens with my father would mutter, “Ah, so you must be Mark Ross’s son” and that ensured that I received, er, no favours. Indeed I often received, shall we say, extra special attention!!

A R Thompson, even for the short period that he was my headmaster, I remember well. On one occasion he was standing in for our absent class master when I wrongly answered a question. He looked at me sadly, and remarked that he was disappointed that I, with the same name as him, had failed to answer the question correctly. I was bemused until he pointed out that the R in his initials was for Ross. I was duly humbled.

In due course along came H B Hitchens (HBH) to take up the reins on A R Thompson’s retirement. It is largely in tribute to HBH that this treatise is dedicated, as it was mainly thanks to his efforts that Solihull School started to really develop, and my life following with it.

However having returned recently from plying my chosen profession largely around the world I had lost contact with my alma mater. Sadly, as retirement engulfs me, I have been made aware of muttered adverse situations; vague hints etc. involving HBH that have disturbed me somewhat. And so I wish to put matters more in perspective regarding especially his educational efforts. That should be only matter which we from Solihull School should concern ourselves. After all, it was largely due to his initiatives that the school leapt forward, setting a pattern that future headmasters have faithfully followed and indeed enlarged upon, making the school what it is today.

I will close with two instances of my involvement with HBH. One Thursday I as a corporal in the CCF lecturing, somewhere near Bigside, some first year cadets on the art of field craft when I became aware of HBH presence looking on. As he was about to move on he said to me, “Corporal, supposing you were faced with a numerically overwhelming enemy what would you do?”. “Er! Retreat, I guess”, I replied, to be met with a withering comment from him, “The British army NEVER retreats.... you would make a tactical withdrawal”. With that, he smiled gently and wandered off.

The second instance was my end of school final report from him. He praised my efforts as a loyal pupil, as an active member of Pole, various sports teams and as a keen lower bencher; then he made the comment that I had found the education side hard, perhaps a little too hard, but he wished me well! Our paths had hardly crossed down the years yet
it really was the most accurate and honest summing up of my time at Solihull. So please, let us remember him for all that he did for our school and for that alone! This from one of the first ex-pupils of the HBH years!!!

**MARTIN SAUNDERS (Jago, 1949-55)**

After leaving school I joined Buck and Hickman Ltd a large distributor of Machine Tools and Engineers’ supplies and embarked on a comprehensive training programme. This included works training in Watford and Plymouth while attending night school and obtaining an HNC in production engineering. I ultimately became a sales engineer based in Birmingham selling a range of American Machine Tools. This followed a lengthy training programme in the USA, and an early introduction to computer controlled machines.

In 1963 I married Judith Whysall, who was a nursing sister at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham and we set up home in Hampton in Arden. We had a son Nigel in 1965 and a daughter Alison in 1967. I became general manager of Buck and Hickman’s Machine Tool Division based in Watford in 1971 and the family moved home to Bushey Heath in Hertfordshire. In 1974 I joined The DoALL Company, an American Machine Tool Builder as UK sales director before becoming its European Marketing Manager in 1976 resulting in taking the family to a new home in The Netherlands. During this time Nigel (Fetherston, 1979-83) became a boarder at Solihull School.

We returned to the UK in 1982 when I became Managing Director and set up home in Copt Heath.

On leaving school Nigel entered the banking world and ultimately married Julie Law and they have a son Matthew now at Sheffield University and a daughter Katie (Shenstone, 2014-16) who has just completed 2 years in Solihull School’s VIth form. She has recently become a student at Loughborough University. Our daughter Alison married Paul Rawlinson in 1994 and they have a son Max and daughter Anastasia. Their home is in Surrey. Paul is a lawyer and recently became the first Briton to be elected global chairman of Baker and McKenzie the world’s largest law firm.

After returning to Copt Heath in 1982 I once again became active in the affairs of the OSA, having on leaving school played for both the OSA Cricket and Hockey Clubs. My renewed interest resulted in having the honour to become your President in 1988. I am proud to have in addition to my brother Malcolm Saunders (Windsor, 1950-61) and cousin Bill Clarke (Pole, 1944-53), both Nigel and Katie as fellow Old Silhillians.

In November I will celebrate 50 years membership of Shenstonian Lodge having been Master during the Lodge’s 50th year in 1985, and master of Knowle Lodge in 1999.

Following the marriages of Nigel and Alison I took early retirement and moved to Sidbury in East Devon where we have lived happily for the last 22 years. During much of this time I have been kept occupied by consultancy work, which has funded cruises to many interesting places around the world. I have just completed a year as President of The Rotary Club of Sid Valley having become a founder member in 2002.

As I write we are planning to relocate to Solihull and look forward to participating in future OSA events to renew old friendships and in addition make new friends.
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JOHN JUKES (Jago, 1950-59)

After completing a four-year electrical engineering apprenticeship with the Midlands Electricity Board, coupled with studying at Matthew Boulton Technical College and Birmingham College of Advanced Technology (later to become Aston University), I worked for the MEB for a couple of years before joining the Research and Development team at Triplex Safety Glass in Kings Norton.

Over the next 11 years I was involved in many interesting projects, the first being the development of a new type of gas-fired furnace! Later projects mostly involved glass toughening processes including strengthening thin glass (the thinner the glass the more difficult it is to toughen by conventional means), toughening spectacle lenses and the processing of parts for Boeing cockpit windows and for Concorde visors (the shield which moved into place when the nose was raised, the original designs for which were metal but didn’t meet the approval of the pilots).

I then supervised the instrumentation and pyrometry section for a couple of years but in 1980 the company decided to concentrate all their R & D at their site near St Helens so I transferred to the Aircraft and Special Products Division (still at Kings Norton) as Electrical Engineer. After 13 years the company, which by then had become Pilkington Aerospace offered me a retirement package, which was too good to refuse so I left the company after 26 years’ service. I subsequently spent 5 years maintaining computerised trackside equipment mainly for the motor industry including commissioning a machine that automatically fitted and inflated tyres to rims at Daimler Benz in Germany.

My son Robert (Jago, 1978-82) attended The School for 4 years and when he joined the School Cub Scouts he informed the leaders that my wife Joyce (to whom I’ve been married for 52 years) was once a Cub Scout helper in her native Cheshire. To cut a long story short this led to her becoming a fully qualified leader eventually becoming District Commissioner, 12th Solihull (Solihull School) being one of her Groups. I also became involved on the administration side firstly as District, then County, Secretary.

After I finally decided to retire in 2001, the Scout County Chairman, who was head teacher of a large local primary school, asked if I could spare some time to help sort out problems with the school computers for a few weeks. I neglected to ask his definition of ‘few’ as to date I am still the school’s ICT technician!

I would finally like to pay tribute to my physics teachers D H Christ and M J Elwell who both nurtured my interest in the subject and who were without doubt instrumental in giving me the basis for a successful career.

TIM MASKELL (Shenstone, 1951-61)

If you were unfortunate enough to be in or near Lower Slaughter in Gloucestershire, at the Slaughter Country Inn, on the afternoon and evening of 28 April 2016 the usual peace and tranquillity of the place was being upset by a small group of old men looking quite ridiculous wearing Straw Boaters, old school scarfs and ties, and making a hell of a noise. We must apologise if this disturbed you, but we were enjoying ourselves.
The cause was Ian Forsyth (Shenstone, 1954-60), Colin Johnson (1950-61, Shenstone), Red Neale (Jago, 1951-61) and me accompanied by their long serving and long suffering wives celebrating getting together, as a group, for the first time since leaving Solihull School in the early 1960s.

It’s not as though we hadn’t seen each other since then. Each of us moved away from Solihull after leaving school, and two or more of us have since met at weddings, christenings, anniversaries, informal lunches and the like on an occasional basis. Every year we have dutifully exchanged Christmas Cards always including a post script which exhorted the intention of meeting up in the New Year. It has taken 55 years for us all to get together and for this to become a reality.

Part of the reason for the disturbance in Gloucestershire was that the event was an excuse for digging out countless mementos from the school days, exchanging yarns and recollections of the characters - both staff and students – and events that had unwittingly left an indelible mark on the memory. Each of us was seeking to outgun the others by remembering the most outlandish event or character or both, which in turn triggered even greater hilarity as this was countered by yet another outrageous tale.

Many old photos and documents helped to impress just how formative and memorable the 1950s were for each of us. The reunion had been pre-empted by an active e-mail exchange of ‘memory downloads’ over the previous weeks. Much was based on the copious archive material we each discovered on the Old Boys’ website. (The detail of the reports in old editions of ‘The Shenstonian’ is remarkable.) It was amazing how this uncovered forgotten memories.
Our stay at Lower Slaughter was a memorable event recalling many memorable events. Our sincere thanks go to all those fellow pupils and members of staff who played their part in our time at Solihull School and unwittingly contributed to our wonderful reunion. The Old Boys’ wives insisted on including a toast to the next 50 years. Our more rational conclusion was that we shouldn’t leave it quite so long before the next time.

The Old Boys, their wives, and their Boaters survived the event, with yet more happy memories.

JOHN MOLE (Windsor, 1956-63)

After school I went up to Christ Church Oxford to read French and German and then to INSEAD, in Paris, for an MBA. I spent fifteen years crisscrossing Europe, the Middle East and Africa for an American Bank, Mellon. I was based in the USA, London and Greece.

My fortieth birthday present to myself was to quit salaried employment. The main incentive was to write full time. I reviewed the modern French novel and science fiction for the TLS. Published works include three comic novels - Sail or Return, The Monogamist, Thanks, Eddie! - and the best-selling guide to European cultures Mind Your Manners. Management Mole was about going back as a temp in the back offices of the kind of organisation I used to manage. For a few years I had a consultancy business focusing on how to get people from different nationalities and cultures to work together.

Meanwhile I tried my hand at various entrepreneurial ventures. An attempt to establish a chain of baked potato restaurants in Moscow came to an end when the Russian Mafia became interested. I had more success with INBIO Ltd, which imported Russian biotechnology for environmental protection and with a project to control the spread of waterweed on Tanzania’s Lake Victoria. I was a Potato Oligarch is the sorry tale of the Russian venture.

I met my wife at Oxford and have four children, who have since proliferated seven grandchildren. When we lived in Athens I restored an old stone house on the island of Evia, which the family goes back to every year. This was the material for It’s All Greek To Me!, which has just been republished and updated. By the time you read this I should have finished writing a feature film based on it and commissioned by a British/Australian production company. Whether it will hit the silver screen is anyone’s guess - movie projects have a very high fatality rate.

Backpacking has now been superseded by trundle casing but I still I love to travel, especially around the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Journeys have inspired more books. The Sultan’s Organ is the diary I found in the British Museum of a musician who took an automated organ and clock to Constantinople as a gift of Queen Elizabeth to the Sultan in 1599. It’s such a great read that I put it into modern English. The Hero of Negropont is my most recent book, a novel about an English Grand Tourist, who gets shipwrecked on Evia in 1792, when Greece was still Ottoman.

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SIMON DAWKINS (Windsor, 1953-64)

I have been reading my copy of the Silhillian and having had my 70th birthday in July it occurs to me that if I’m going to write to you, I’d better do it now!

When I joined the prep form in 1953 I was youngest boy in the school that Christmas. I also came last in the form order which meant that, as my father (himself an Old Silhillian) pointed out, I was the “bottom boy in the bottom class at bottom of the of school”.

I did improve, but academic work was not at that time the priority. It was rugby that mattered and I was captain of the XV in my final year. We lost twice, 3-0 against Warwick (disaster) and 6-5 against Rugby (the first time we played them at first XV level). The previous year with a good side we won the Oxfordshire School Sevens which, in those days, was a national competition. I was also House Captain of Windsor, Under Officer in the CCF and a senior bencher.

I was not very hard working though. When I got to Nottingham University I didn’t do well in my first exams and my father was typically forthright when I asked him what I could do if I failed.... “be a dustman”, he said. It was the first time that I really felt I was on my own. I buckled down, went to the library but continued to play rugby for the University (club captain in my last year) and for Warwickshire in the County championship.

Following graduation, I couldn’t imagine working all the way through the summer holidays so I decided to try teaching. I went to Cambridge for a PGCE and my first job was Head of Economics at Eltham College in London (it was a one man department, but I got the head of department allowance!) and I loved it. After three years I moved around the South Circular to Dulwich College, playing rugby for Rosslyn Park and Blackheath, running a boarding house and heading a 4-man department having acquired a wife, two children and an MA in occupational psychology.

In 1986 we moved up to Merchant Taylors Crosby where I was Headmaster for 19 years and towards the end of that period, Chairman of the North-West division of the HMC (Headmasters Conference).

I’ve now been retired for 10 years, have six grandchildren, play mediocre tennis and golf, ski several times each year and have just acquired a new hip.

I learned a great deal from Solihull. I learnt to argue politely, to think for myself, to question the prevailing orthodoxy (which was in those days, short hair, conventional dress and unquestioning respect for authority). I learned what we would now call interpersonal skills – how to lead when you have no real power, how to confront authority, when to back down and when to go for it and, importantly, when to accept that (occasionally) you are wrong.

DAVID N WATERS (School House, 1960-65)

I left Solihull after ‘O’ Levels in 1965 and completed ‘A’ Levels at Sevenoaks School. Following a Mechanical Engineering degree at Plymouth, my early post-graduate jobs were in manufacturing in Margate and Nottingham, a 2 year spell in a research group at Nottingham University, then 3 years in offshore seismic before spending 2 years with Lloyds Register in
KINETON BOARDERS 1960/61


KINETON BOARDERS 1960/61
London as an Engineer Surveyor. In 1979 I went to live in Denmark to pursue a romantic attachment which started in Greenland! I came back to UK in 1980 and spent a year doing a post-graduate diploma in Hydrographic Surveying in Plymouth.

Since then I worked in various roles in the oil & gas exploration industry internationally and finally hung up my boots, hard hat and coveralls about 4 years ago and retired to a small village in Somerset.

After a long gap I got back into motorcycling in 1992. I have tried to single-handedly support the resurgent British motorcycle industry with a current stable of: three Hinckley Triumphs. The annual trip to the Isle of Man TT races is a fixture in the calendar.

**ROBIN THOMSON (School House, 1959-66)**

After leaving the School I spent 14 years at various universities (slow learner!) before leaving academia to run a small computer software company, retiring in 2008. I live in Leeds, UK, and am enjoying retirement travelling with my partner Susan and also indulging in my hobby of long distance walking (alone!).

My brother, **Tony (Windsor, 1961-67)**, who was also a boarder, lives nearby in York. He worked for the Forte Group for some years, then founded and ran York Brewery, retiring at the same time as myself. An active and keen cricketer for many years, he now spends his days on the golf course.

**ROGER GRIFFLE (School House, 1957-67)**

Amazingly and wonderfully I was able to catch up with Robin Thompson (see above) in Sydney two months ago. We had not talked for nearly 40 years!! He was incredibly well and was passing through Sydney following his solo walk of the entire length of South Island New Zealand. An amazing feat.

I now live about 300k south of Sydney on the NSW coast at Broulee, almost due East of Canberra. Retired for 13 years, having spent my entire working career with an Australian based company, having transferred from the UK in 1972. Half of that time involved with opening and operating business groups in the countries of SE Asia. Married to Dee and three children, **James (Windsor, 1994)**, 38, who lives in Sydney, was at Solihull in 1966 (quadriplegic 8 yrs ago, see [Empowergolf.com.au](http://Empowergolf.com.au)) Penny, 37, in Sydney a GM corporate manager, Martin 36, an organic farmer in Deua Valley, near Moruya, 20k from us.

In retirement and immediately following James’s accident, I am heavily involved in rehabilitation with [puffimagic.com.au](http://puffimagic.com.au) which is the foundation generated
for James. Now he has gained enormous independence and our retirement offers a life of casual pursuits on the coast. We travel locally and internationally, and enjoy contacts and visits from friends, local and international. Looking forward to hosting David Wood (Fetherston, 1959-66) and his wife Elaine from Calgary later this year.

**GUY MOODY (School House, 1960-67)**

Guy very kindly sent me the photo on page 52. In my efforts to identify all present a few (the three preceding contributions) were encouraged to write in - Ed.

I left Solihull in 1967, shortly after the death of my father, with science 'A' levels and went to King’s College in London to read Zoology. A big ‘thank you’ to Bob Beach who pushed a rather diffident youth in that direction (the interests I found in my degree stay with me to this day). After graduating I was a little aimless for a while and even worked as a petrol pump attendant (remember those?) in London where my customers included Sean Connery and Lord Lucan.

I eventually took a postgraduate diploma in Librarianship (during which time I got married to Jane) and worked for three years at the Natural History Museum Entomology Library before joining the pharmaceutical industry where I stayed for the next 34 years before taking early retirement at the end of 2010.

We now live in Monmouth where I fill my days volunteering for Oxfam, playing pétanque, running a geology group with the U3A and pursuing a probably hopeless task of trying to pass ‘A’ level maths. Mr Wilkes will be spinning in his grave I am sure. We have two children Thomas and Ruth, who within the space of the last year or so have each produced a grandchild so our family continues to expand.

I was one of three brothers who all went to Solihull School in the late fifties and sixties. My elder brother, Roger (School House, 1956-61) (sometimes called ‘Ron’) has just passed 70 and spends a good deal of his time driving a glass-bottomed boat around the Fleet near Weymouth. He has had several careers including the merchant navy, being a house father, and helping run the Sea Cadets in Dorset with whom he retains strong links even though he also has a house in Wales.

My younger brother Jonathan ‘Joe’ (Shenstone, 1962-69) retired at the end of last year from a career which included both accountancy and being a school bursar, most recently at Lichfield Cathedral School. Joe still lives in the Midlands and has retained links with a lot of his former school colleagues.

**IAN SUMMERS (Jago, 1961-1970)**

I retired in 2013, having spent 35 years at the University of Exeter, latterly as Head of the Medical Imaging Department. The school provided me with a very good academic foundation, and I went on to study Physics at the Universities of Oxford and London. My most recent research (at Exeter) was into touch interfaces for virtual reality systems. I am still in touch with my school contemporary Ian Stock, who lives in California. I live in Exeter with my wife Stella Tripp, who is an artist.

**DAVID CHAMBERS (Shenstone, 1961-71)**

David Chambers, still Bursar and Clerk to the Governors at Blundell’s School (two AstroTurf pitches, but what do you expect if you appoint a hockey-minded bursar?) in
Tiverton, Devon after thirteen years in post, is delighted to challenge any other Hockey Club member, past or present, to a grandchildren junior mixed hockey match following the arrival of his and Judi’s eleventh grandchild, Emelia, in June. All eleven, seven boys and four girls, are currently aged eleven or under. If there is sufficient qualifying take-up, we can perhaps arrange a tournament or even a league. At the prolific rate we are going, aided by four of our five children to date, it might be possible to extend a similar offer to Rugby Section members in a couple of years’ time. Loving the Over 60s lunches.

PAUL NEWBY and Family (Shenstone – well almost!)

Here are the Newbys pictured at a recent family wedding in Suffolk. Paul (Shenstone 1969-77) aka Newbs, a Chartered Surveyor, is a School Governor with particular responsibility for the property endowment and Fiona who has returned to working in the travel business at local firm Andara, have three children all of whom are Silhillians. Pictured centre is Joshua (Shenstone, current pupil) currently in UVS studying for GCSEs in 2017. Josh who was the proud recipient of a prize for Academic Achievement at this year’s School Prize Giving (something never achieved by Dad!) is a member of the School sailing team and later this term will be performing in the School’s stage production of the sequel to Philip Pullman’s book *His Dark Materials*. Hannah (Shenstone, 2010-12) completed her degree at Nottingham University in 2015 obtaining a BA (Hons) First Class in Art History, and then took a year out including travelling to New Zealand, Australia and various parts of Asia. Hannah is back at home at present and is now looking for permanent employment. Also pictured is Hannah’s partner, George Morgan (Shenstone, 2005-12), who completed his MEng degree at Leeds University in Civil and Structural Engineering this summer. Rebecca (Fetherston 2007-09) is pictured with her partner Edd Pimble, who is not a Silhillian or Shenstone but that isn’t held against him!

Rebecca was in the same year as Editor Malcolm’s daughter Alex, and both were placed in different Houses to their forebears as the School chose not to follow the usual family tradition. Whilst Rebecca has been quite sanguine about the affair, this remains a bone of contention for the Editor, a stickler for these traditions! Rebecca studied at Cardiff
University obtaining a First Class Honours Degree and then a Masters Degree in English Literature. Subsequently Rebecca received a university funding award and is now in the second year of a PhD on the subject of “The Whole and Unwhole Texts of Medieval Literature: A Study of How Poems End from Chrétien to Chaucer”, and is based in Bristol.

For Newbs himself the main news update in 2016, is that after more than 30 years as a Chartered Surveyor working in private practice as a licensed and leisure property specialist, in May this year he was appointed by the Government as the Pubs Code Adjudicator. In this role he is a new national Regulator responsible for implementing and enforcing the Pubs Code, statutory regulations that govern the relationship between large pub owning businesses and their tied pub tenants in England and Wales. If you are a fan of the BBC’s One Show, you may have seen him talking about his new role on their one hour special on pubs broadcast in May this year that included being poured a pint of foaming ale by Suggs the lead singer of Madness! More about his appointment can be found on the PCA website at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/pubs-code-adjudicator.

Out of work amongst other things he is a past playing member and past President of Sils RUFC and is an active playing member of the popular Old Silhillians’ Golfing Society. This summer the family travelled to South Africa for an adventure holiday and is pictured below at a private game reserve in the Eastern Cape with Stembele the Chief Ranger. The Newby clan send their very best wishes to all their Silhillian former pupil contemporaries.

ROB WILLIAMS (Fetherston, 1973-80)

After serving 30 years in West Midlands Police I was compulsorily retired in October 2013. I have spent the last few years working either on short-term contracts or part-time with J Sainsbury’s. However, only yesterday I secured a new position working with the University Hospital Birmingham Charity Foundation in the Fundraising Office, based at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Away from work November 2015 saw a new book being published on the Great War, Courage Without Glory. This collection, edited by Spencer Jones, was aimed at increasing
knowledge of the battles of 1915 and contains a chapter on the Battle of Festubert, May 1915, which I wrote.

I recently made contact with Andrew Kay (Pole, 1973-80) who I haven’t seen since leaving School in 1980. A pleasant evening was had in a local hostelry!

**PETER HEGINBOTHAM (Shenstone, 1983-94)**

Peter has been working for South Yorkshire Police since 2005, and is now the Sergeant in charge of a response team working in the south west of Sheffield. This work involves front line policing, attending and managing the full range of policing incidents. It’s an interesting and stimulating career, and it also provides for a well-stocked fund of strange and bizarre stories!

Peter is still very much involved with music, and organ playing in particular. As well as regular duties when work permits, he also plays regularly in cathedrals both in this country and abroad. In August, he was lucky enough to share the playing at the annual service commemorating the Liberation of Paris at Notre Dame in Paris. What made this extra special was that the playing was shared with fellow Old Silhillian David Briggs (Shenstone, 1974-81). David was at the West End, whilst Peter accompanied the choir for the service on the choir organ at the East End.

In home life, he and Rachel are also expecting twins, to arrive, all being well, around the start of December. As first children, there will no doubt be big changes, and even less sleep than shift work currently allows for!
MICHAEL SAMUEL STaintON (Jago, 1934-40)

Michael, after ninety-one years a good human being and an Old Silhillian passed away on Easter Monday.

Michael Stainton attended Solihull School just before the last war and preceded thence to Birmingham School of Art and Architecture, where he studied Architecture.

Before he could start his final year at BSAA he was was called-up to serve in the RAF in 1942. He was posted to a busy Polish squadron where he was an RAF Sergeant engaged in the recalibration of their aircraft compasses. Of course, accurately set compasses were absolutely vital to the bombers’ Polish crewmen if they were to find their bombing targets and hopefully return safely to Blighty. Michael even taught the finer points of cricket to many Polish aircrew as they awaited the next “scramble”. He would apparently always keep wicket so his explanations could be heard by all the players.

During those War years, the young Michael found time to develop other interests; including his life-long passions for bird-watching, philosophy and cosmology. He later admitted to once achieving a state of helpless drunkenness. He found being out-of-control abhorrent and never, thereafter, exceeded two glasses of wine or beer. But this quietly spoken, sober young man must have found courage enough to court a certain “Maidie” Munzing; or did, perhaps, that car-driving bonnie wee teacher’s daughter court him? The happy pair were married in August 1949 and soon they’d started a family of three boys: Nicholas, Robert and Stephen followed by a long-wished-for girl, Marion.

Without completing his war-interrupted architecture course Michael joined his father’s large practice, “Cherrington & Stainton, Architects” in Dudley, as a junior partner. With a fellow junior C&S partner, Ken Norrish, Michael set up a separate partnership Norrish & Stainton, Architects in Edgbaston. Things were looking up and a large family house was designed and built on Lode Lane in Solihull. This was “Applefields” which was enlarged to house a “Nursery School” in the early 1960s.

His father Samuel had, for many years, been the well-respected Chairman of the Birmingham & Five Counties Architectural Association so it was a huge shock, to family and colleagues, when he suddenly died from heart failure. The B&5CAA then became merely a regional branch of the Royal Institute of British Architects with its previous non-architect members joining their own Surveyors’ or Engineers’ Associations - except for Michael. It mattered not that he was patently one of the Midlands’ most able practitioners of architecture: RIBA membership rules insist on full qualification by paper certificate so Michael was effectively pushed out of the Association which his father had done so much to develop.

Then, after relatively few busy years of apparently successful business, Michael and Ken’s architects’ partnership was crushed by some of its major clients not paying bills and their “conveniently-arranged” bankruptcy. Partner Ken, understandably, took up an offer of a secure job as a city Architect in Plymouth. But again, because he hadn’t completed his BSAA architecture course RIBA’s rules also precluded Michael from operating as an architect on his own leaving no choice but to wind up the partnership.

Maidie Stainton continued to teach at Solihull’s St. Alphege J&I School while Michael set about designing them an ideal retirement home in a favourite Cotswold village. Michael constructed the main bulk of this self-build honey-stone edifice, although one of his sons helped in the first storey, and returned to aid the roof-building stages. This was necessary, because Michael had injured his elbow and back by falling from a ladder. With the application
of home-cast concrete roof-tiles, the building was made weather-tight and another son helped by installing the plumbing and electrics. Maidie and Michael could then then move from Solihull with Maidie set to teach at Chipping Campden and later Moreton-in-Marsh J&I schools. Thus ‘Merryweathers’ became the setting for forty colourful autumn years of the couple’s life together with the highlight of their earlier summers being long trips in their camper-van. They travelled throughout the most scenic and interesting parts of the UK and Ireland culminating in visiting Northern Ireland just after Peace broke out. Michael was always the driver happily leaving Maidie in charge of incidentals like food and clothing! He was always a very road-aware and progressive driver and he managed to wear out a few engines and gearboxes, but safely!

In later years, he often mentioned how happy he was to have shared his life with Maidie and he couldn’t have dreamt of being so fortunate. Through over sixty-six years of marriage they had never really fallen out, although the recent frustrations of failing health and short-term memory loss made Michael somewhat fractious and even gullible. We must all forgive those uncharacteristic moments in the final months.

Let us remember Michael’s sharp intellect; his architectural knowledge; his political wisdom; his understanding of humanity; his unerring impartiality; and his integrity.

Let us remember the love and respect, which every member of his family, and countless friends felt towards him. If life had not served him a series of curved balls, he may well have become a successful architect, but as a husband and a father he was a fine example of humanity: he was a success indeed. Our world is much poorer for his passing.

SIR RONALD ARCUSUS KCMG KCVO (Shenstone, 1931-41)  
(11 February 1923 - 28 August 2016)

Sir Ronald Arculus passed away on 28th August 2016. Devoted husband of the late Lady Arculus, Sheila. Loving father and grandfather, leaving two children and two grandchildren.

Ronald Arculus was educated at Solihull School and Exeter College, Oxford. He served in the 4th Queen’s Own Hussars 1942–45, then joined the Diplomatic Service in 1947. Besides postings at the Foreign Office (later the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) he served in British missions at San Francisco, La Paz, Ankara and Washington, D.C., as deputy Consul-General at New York, and as Minister (Economic) at the embassy in Paris. He led the UK delegation to the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III), with the rank of ambassador, at New York 1977–79. He was ambassador to Italy 1979–83, his last diplomatic post before retirement.

After leaving the Diplomatic Service, Arculus was a non-executive director of Glaxo 1983–91 and continued as a consultant 1992–95. During the preparation for the Channel Tunnel project Arculus was appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport to be a special adviser on the through trains planned to run via the tunnel to Paris, Brussels and elsewhere. He was also a governor of the British Institute of Florence 1983–94. He was a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute.
Arclus was appointed CMG in 1968 and knighted KCMG in 1979 on his appointment to the embassy at Rome. He was given the additional knighthood of KCVO following the Queen’s state visit to Italy in October 1980. The Italian government made him a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Merit. He was a Freeman of the City of London and an honorary Fellow of his alma mater, Exeter College, Oxford.

**TONY GOLDWATER (Pole, 1940-46)**

Tony was born on May 29th 1929 in Hall Green, the youngest of 3 children. He chose not to be evacuated with his brother and sister and started at Solihull School in 1940. He was a typical boy; clever enough to be in the A stream but needing to apply himself better and make more effort. One report from the Winter term of 1943 had a very telling comment from his Form master which read ‘Generally satisfactory but his attitude is sometimes a little silly through a misguided sense of humour’. It was a very perceptive comment for those who knew and loved him.

As a loyal Old Silhillian, Tony was a keen rugby player playing either on the wing or in the second row. He was particularly proud of scoring a try one day, when the rest of the players had stopped to watch the first Spitfire fly over.

He always relished attending the quarterly lunches for those Old boys over 65, where he could reminisce with his old School friends.

He married his wife Joyce in 1954 and they remained devoted to each other until he died in December 2015. He had great pride recounting memories from School and it was impossible to underestimate the deep pleasure he gained from his children, Christopher and Jane, and one of his grandchildren, James, following in his footsteps in attending School. His other love in life was supporting Birmingham City and he often commented that supporting the Blues was a great indicator of the ups and downs of life. Tony was intelligent and generous, and possessed a sharp sense of humour with a love for telling stories. He was calm, reliable and unassuming and genuinely enjoyed the simple things in life. The term ‘a gentle giant’ couldn’t have been more apt.

**PROFESSOR JOHN ALASTAIR DUFFY (Pole, 1942-50)**

(24 September 1932- 2nd November 2015)

John Duffy rose to academic prominence in inorganic chemistry, in particular the application of electronic spectroscopy in the fields of molten salts and glasses. He co-originated “optical basicity”, a concept used worldwide for chemical problems, notably in glass and metal production, and geochemistry. This contribution to science will have lasting effects.

Born and brought up in Solihull, West Midlands, he was a pupil at Solihull School, and a child evacuee during WW II. After graduating from the University of Sheffield, he became a research chemist at Albright & Wilson. It was around this time that he met Muriel, whom he married in Carlisle 1959. He lectured at Flintshire Technical College, Wolverhampton Poly, and NE Wales Institute, before they moved to Aberdeen when he joined the Chemistry Department of Aberdeen University in 1966, where he remained throughout his scientific career until emeritus professorship.
He was the author of several academic books including *General Inorganic Chemistry (1966)* and *Bonding, Energy Levels and Bands in Inorganic Solids (1990)*. He published over 150 scientific papers and in 1992 was awarded The University of Aberdeen Blackwell Prize. He forged consultancy and collaboration with British Steel Corporation, Scottish HE Funding Council, Pilkington; and internationally with Schott Glass, and The National Hellenic Research Foundation.

A kind, modest man, yet of analytical mind, he made abiding friendships throughout his life. With a keen interest in music, he played French horn and timpani in local orchestras, and had a passion for opera. He enjoyed cycling and rail travel.

His marriage was idyllic. Suffering the sudden loss of Muriel in a car crash in 2012 was devastating. Despite this, he displayed great fortitude enduring continued kidney dialysis. He never lost his incisive wit and exacting nature.

He is survived by his two children, and three grandchildren.

**GRAHAM LAUGHTON SANDERS (Jago, 1941-50)**

*26th February 1932 - 16 September 2015*

Born in Solihull, Graham spent an idyllic childhood with his parents Rita and Leslie and sister Maureen at their home in George Road, now vanished beneath Morrisons’ car park but close to St Alphege’s church where the liturgy and music deeply influenced his early years. From Eversfield he progressed to Solihull School, where his main extra-curricular interests were scouting, photography and drama. In his final year he played a memorable Ferrovius in Shaw’s Androcles and the Lion.

Leaving school, Graham was called up for National Service. Colour blindness thwarting his ambition to follow his father into the Royal Navy, he was drafted into the RAF and posted to Ceylon, where he forged long-lasting friendships despite somehow managing to lose one quarter of the island’s entire flight of four aircraft!

Discerning a vocation to the ministry, on returning to civilian life he went to train with the Society of the Sacred Mission at Kelham in Nottinghamshire. While there he became engaged to Mary Sargent, but as the Kelham Fathers were a celibate community he was fast-tracked for ordination, being made a deacon in Gloucester Cathedral in 1956 and priested there a year later. He stayed in Gloucester to serve his curacy at St Paul’s Church but then felt called to mission abroad, so Graham and Mary, having married in her home town of Southampton, sailed for India to work in Chota Nagpur, where their son Michael was born, followed by two brothers who died in infancy. That loss was tempered by new joy when Anne, Patsy and Kate were adopted into the family.

Eventually returning to England, Graham became Vicar of St Martin’s in the Bradford suburb of Heaton, quickly growing to love the warm-hearted Yorkshire folk, the strong community spirit and the breathtaking landscapes of the Dales. A change of scene to the large rural Essex parish of Great Waltham was followed by a return to Yorkshire as Rector of Guiseley and retirement in nearby Shipley where he continued to assist in local churches, celebrating the golden jubilee of his priesthood at St Margaret’s, Ilkley among many old friends. A final move to Stony Stratford brought Graham and Mary nearer to Michael and his family.
Graham threw himself wholeheartedly into the life of all his parishes, participating in all local events and dispensing food and drink liberally to all comers. Ever the devoted father and grandfather, he obeyed the Gospel injunction to suffer little children and forbade them nothing in his churches, thus attracting many young families to worship. His individual and sensitive approach made him a favourite to conduct weddings, baptisms and funerals. His preaching often explored the contrasting mysteries of the Eucharist and the offices of Morning and Evening Prayer – the bread of Heaven descending to earth to nourish the faithful, and the church below joining in the ceaseless worship of angels and saints. He never failed to say his daily office and it is fitting that he died, as he had always lived, in that very act of prayer.

KEITH CRISWELL (Shenstone, 1949-52)
We regret to inform you that Former Head Boy Keith Crisswell died earlier this year.

JOHN ‘ANDY’ ANDERSON (Shenstone, 1944-52)
Born in 1934 and christened John Edward but known to his contemporaries as Andy from his first day at school. His health deteriorated in his latter years and, at the age of 82, he died peacefully on the 20th February 2016 at his home in Draughton, North Yorkshire.

He was brought up in Hall Green, Birmingham, by his parents, Mary and Jim, and first attended Solihull Grammar School, as it was then, in 1944. He engaged enthusiastically in the opportunities offered by the School - educational, social, and especially sporting where he was a keen cricketer, an exceptional athlete on the track at distances of 100 and 220 yards, and an automatic selection at wing-threequarter for the Rugby XV. He played for the Old Boys XV when time permitted during his last year at school, and accepted an invitation to join the first post-war Easter Rugby Tour, to Southend, as a guest player.

He was a prominent member of the Combined Cadet Force and, at a time when National Service was the norm, he joined the army on leaving school and in due course, was commissioned into the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. He survived the early months of training and embraced the opportunities when they came his way for travel to the Middle East and East Africa, where his interest in cultures so far outside his own experience was first awakened.

He had gained his GCE at Advanced level during his final year at Solihull and, his military service at an end in 1954, he became a student at Birmingham University where he was awarded a Degree in Social Science. He also met his future wife, Jean, on their first day at university and they were married on the 1st November 1958. Their shared interest in travelling abroad prompted him to complete a post-graduate Certificate of Education and subsequently, he and Jean were offered employment in Kenya where they spent the next eleven years, initially as teachers at the Kagumo Training College, Nyeri. There followed an appointment for John as Deputy Head of the Boys’ School at Machakos, south of Nairobi, where he introduced the students to rugby, and also to the Duke of Edinburgh’s Awards, leading to the establishment of these activities in Kenya by the time that Independence was achieved in 1963.

It was during this period that John was awarded a Scholarship to study for a Master’s Degree at Colombia University, in New York, returning to Kenya a year later to continue teaching, but now at Nairobi University. It was as a result of his experiences in East Africa, and his research whilst at Colombia, that John was able to produce his book entitled The Struggle for School, detailing the problems of achieving education in an emerging society.

John returned to the UK in 1970 where he was appointed a lecturer at the University of
Sussex, developing educational links with what was now Tanzania, until in 1973, he was appointed Principal of the teachers’ training college, St. Mark and St John, then established in West London. The college was re-located to Plymouth, Devon, during his stewardship but was hardly viable in financial terms and he fought to maintain it during the 1980s when it was threatened with closure. He ensured its survival by widening its international appeal as a centre of education, eventually attracting students from some 50 different countries worldwide. He retired in 1995, but continued to act as a consultant for the British Council and World Bank, helping to expand educational opportunities for people throughout the World. He and Jean moved to Draughton in North Yorkshire in 1996 where he served on the Education Committee of Bradford Council until 2014.

The Andersons had raised three children - Bridget, Neil and Fiona - during their years in Kenya, and now in retirement, John had the time to enjoy their company. He was very proud too of his ten grandchildren and encouraged their interest in the world around them, and the development of their own talents in the pursuit of sporting excellence. He himself played cricket for the village club until well into his 70s, continued to enjoy travelling abroad, and he and Jean acquired Ebony, a black Labrador - a faithful companion for daily walks in the beautiful countryside around Draughton.

He attended the Over 60s luncheons whilst he was able, a man of charm and humanity, greatly missed by Jean, by the members of his very close family, and by friends old and new. RIP.

JOHN G COLLIER (School House, 1944 – 52)

John Greenwood Collier was born in Barnsley on 21 November 1933. In 1944 he was sent to Solihull School as a boarder where he flourished academically and became Head of School House. He was a cousin of Bob Greenwood (Shenstone, 1946-53) and their grandmother had been a ladies maid at Castle Eden in County Durham and grandfather a guard in the old Great Central Railway at Barnsley in the Wear Riding of Yorkshire. John’s father was headmaster at a boys’ junior school in Barnsley and his mother also taught.

Coming from a grimy coal-mining town John never looked back. Not a great athlete at school he excelled as a player, notably in the Government Inspector under the auspices of Guy King-Reynolds. He was a great lover of classical music and an avid support of Aston Villa football club.

He left Solihull in 1952 and, after 2 years of National Service, he went up to Emmanuel College, Cambridge with an Exhibition. Originally he had intended to read History but he switched to Law. He was awarded a First in all parts of the tripos and his subsequent LLB examination. As a result he was awarded a Senior Scholarship in 1956 and the Rodwell Prize in 1958. With his academic success John was qualified to practise at the Bar but he decided to teach. From 1959 until 1963 he was Research Fellow at Emmanuel before spending a brief period of time lecturing at King’s College, London. In 1966 he was elected a Fellow of Trinity Hall.
John was a Bencher of Gray’s Inn and a tenant of 20 Essex Street. A legal polymath, he made Conflict of Laws an important Tripos subject. His textbook on Conflict of Laws was definitive, later in his career became he became interested in dispute resolution in international law. An exceptional supervisor and lecturer, he had a profound impact on his students. The loyalty and respect that they gave him was only matched by his devotion to them and his intense pride in their achievements; academic, professional and otherwise. Above all else, he was committed to ensuring their well-being; to nurturing their personal as well as their intellectual development.

He served Trinity Hall with distinction as Fellow, Vice Master and, after his retirement in 2001 as Emeritus Fellow. He is survived by his widow Jane, two children, Martin and Josie, two step-children and eleven grandchildren.

**PHILIP HENRY MITCHELL (School House, 1949-56)**
Philip started as a day pupil before becoming a boarder at Solihull. His love of sport was fostered by the school and he represented them at rugby, hockey and cricket.

His love of theatre was also fostered, making occasional appearances on stage and by building various sets and props. In later life, having settled in Derbyshire, he was a founding member of the Shardlow Pantomime Group directing many a show, and taking a number roles including Dame!

Philip helped build boats for the Naval Cadets in the CCF and this passion was soon to become his career.

Philip dedicated his working life to the marine industry beginning at Souters, Isle of Wight in 1960. In 1964 he joined Dobsons Ltd Boatbuilders of Shardlow Derbyshire, and acquired the company in 1980. Philip served on the Boat Safety Technical Committee for the British Marine Industry Federation, and was a long-standing member of the Canal Boatbuilders Association. Philip retired from boatbuilding when he sold the yard to BWB in 1999 but he continued his work as a marine surveyor until 2013.

In his final couple of years he took great joy from being involved in the rebuilding of the 1940s lifeboat the *Lucy Lavers* in Norfolk which, fully restored, was able to return to Dunkirk in 2015. This beautiful and historic wooden boat was destined to be a fitting final boat project for Philip.

**MIKE WILLIAMSON (Fetherston, 1946-56)**
We regret to inform you that Mike Williamson has passed away. Mike was Head Boy and Captain of Swimming.

**KEN WILSON (Shenstone, 1952-58)**
Ken Wilson was one of the most influential voices in British climbing. His death leaves a hole in the climbing community, but his legacy will continue to shape British climbing for years to come.

As editor of the classic Mountain magazine, he helped form the ethics of traditional British climbing. As the author of several great climbing books, he was responsible for inspiring many young climbers to dream big and tick off all the classics. And as a supporter of the BMC and the Climbers’ Club, he made sure the community was working to safeguard the ethos of climbing, and to ensure it was accessible for everyone.

Writing in his book, *Up and About*, mountaineer Doug Scott said: “Ken was a passionate and
sometimes vociferous supporter of the traditions of British climbing and an inspired mountaineering magazine editor. Mountain magazine had quite an influence on my climbing, especially during the late sixties and early seventies. It captured the profound changes affecting climbing at that period and Ken proved a relentless guardian of the soul of mountaineering – as he saw it.”

Ken’s list of literary achievements is, of course, long, but its highlights include: being the editor of Mountain magazine from 1969 until 1978, authoring the timeless compilations Classic Rock, Hard Rock and Extreme Rock, not to forget his take on climbing in his anthology The Games Climbers Play, and establishing two publishing houses: Diadem and Bâton Wicks. Ken helped mould the climbing clubs we know today; he was a fierce campaigner for women to be accepted as members in the Climbers’ Club, the first of many of the causes he pursued vigorously. In November 2015, Ken’s contribution was honoured and acknowledged when he was bestowed with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Boardman Tasker trustees.

Ed Douglas, climbing writer and journalist, said: “He may not have been a leading climber, but he helped shape climbing, and almost always for the good. He was without question the pre-eminent publisher and editor of the British climbing scene in the 20th century. He was also deeply committed to his family, his wife Gloria and his two sons. If there is any comfort to be drawn from his last battle, with dementia, then it’s that they were there to support him.”

DERICK GARNIER (Teacher, 1956-63)
We regret to inform you that Derick Garnier recently died in Thailand where he had retired to.

TERRY CHETLAND (Fetherston, 1962-67)
We regret to inform you that Terry passed away earlier this year. He will be sadly missed by his family and friends and particularly those at Ladbrook Golf Club.

KEITH SACH (Teacher, 1970-79)
Keith Sach was held in extremely high regard for his expertise in this area of Health and Safety across the country and not only provided guidance and support to the RLSS UK but also to many swimming pool operators. As a respected safety consultant he was regularly called upon as an expert witness for his vast knowledge as a leader in his field of sport recreation and leisure.

Keith, who leaves wife Elizabeth, two daughters Alexis and Kathryn, and son Jonathan Brierley (Jago, 1990-94), was a long term member of RLSS UK’s Warwickshire Branch and had a rich and successful history with the charity. One of the branch’s former vice-presidents and a previous combined RLSS Commonwealth Secretary and RLSS UK CEO, Keith held a number of senior roles throughout his career.
Born in 1948, a seven or eight-year-old Keith joined his local swimming club in Hounslow, Middlesex, and was encouraged to take RLSS UK awards in Lifesaving. He took his Bronze Medallion when he was 13-years-old in the open air pool at Ashford in Middlesex.

Keith went on to gain experience working in lifesaving and lifeguarding as a Master at Solihull School from 1970 to 1979. At Solihull Keith taught Biology and founded the school’s Life Saving Society in 1974. He was a House Tutor in Kineton, the boarding house that was situated opposite Brueton Avenue on the Warwick Road. From the mid-1970s he served on the National Technical and Lifeguard committee.

He was appointed as RLSS UK Director and Commonwealth Secretary in July 1979 when the RLSS UK’s Headquarters were at Desborough House in London. The role of Director and Commonwealth Secretary were then split out in the mid-1980s. Keith later became RLSS Commonwealth Vice President.

He was for many years a Justice of the Peace and sat on the Bench at several Magistrates Courts in South Warwickshire. He was also High Sheriff of Warwickshire 2013/14.

Keith was a great supporter of the school right up until death, and was a very keen supporter of the Music Department and Chapel. He was a regular at a wide selection of school events and took great satisfaction from using his skills, experience and contacts to enrich the lives of Silhillians. He was a selfless man and supported the school aims, particularly ‘community’, throughout his association with Solihull. All that came into contact with him will miss him dearly.

Although Keith only taught at the school for a relatively short time his impact on the school community over many more years was truly immense. In recognition of this I plan to publish an article in next year’s magazine. If you have any memories or anecdotes about Keith and his involvement with the School I would very much like to hear from you - editor@silhillians.net

DAVID MARK APPLETON (Jago, 1970-77)

We regret to inform you that David passed away on 16 June 2015.

RICHARD SADLER MA (Oxon), MSc (Pole 1971-78)

Richard passed away peacefully on October 11th 2015 aged 55. He had been suffering from a rare form of Sarcoma.

REV PETER HENRY WRENN (School Chaplain, 1971-97)

It was fitting that the funeral service for the Rev. Peter Wrenn was held at the school chapel – a place where as Chaplain, he led several thousands of services over 26 years. The chapel was a huge part of Peter’s life until he retired in 1997. His role as the spiritual guide for generations of pupils and staff -- as well as a teacher of English and Religious Education -- was one he took very seriously.

In the chapel sometimes the gatherings were small, sometimes they were huge grand occasions like carol concerts with choirs, teachers, parents, candles, standing room only. But he always carefully researched his sermons and addresses. Each one was tailored to a message, a time, a certain audience. He was proud to work at Solihull School, aware of the responsibilities he had. But he was always looking out for the lighter side too. When the school bus, full of boys waiting to go on a trip, failed to start in the
car park, the engine flat and lifeless, Peter walked over and blessed it. It promptly fired into life at the next turn of the ignition key.

Beyond his school career, Peter was a proud and dedicated husband and family man who brought his integrity and values to his three children and eight grandchildren.

Peter Wrenn was born in Kent and evacuated with his two brothers during World War II to Belper, Derbyshire. There, as a boy, he was drawn to the local church because he liked the sound of the bells. He was also drawn to the local cricket team where he was a respected and successful bowler. So two lifelong passions began.

He was head boy of his school, Herbert Strutt School, where Ann Bakewell was also a pupil. They were married in 1960 and enjoyed more than 55 years together, with children Elizabeth, Catherine and Nicholas.

Peter studied English at University College London before being ordained as a priest. His early work as a curate took the family to Dronfield, South Yorkshire, and Hessle, Humberside, before he became a vicar in the Derbyshire mining village of Loscoe. The mining industry was in decline and for its workers, the years were austere. Peter made sure he was available wherever his parishioners needed him, and he went down the mine with them to make sure he knew what their jobs were like.

It was a big switch from a mining parish to becoming Chaplain and English teacher at Solihull School. The job was often a seven-day commitment, including umpiring cricket on Saturdays and conducting chapel services on Sundays. He couldn’t have achieved this without the support of Ann, herself a primary school teacher. As well as performing his duties, Peter earned a reputation as a patient and empathetic listener and confidant – for pupils as well as staff. He was measured in his responses, always tempering emotion with reason and trying to see issues from as many angles as possible before making a decision. As one former pupil said: “He was a spiritual leader for the spiritual and non-spiritual alike. He never used his faith as a hammer to beat people with.”

In retirement, Peter stayed active in parish life, covering for clergy when they were away. He applied the same care and attention, for example spending as much time preparing funeral services with just two or three mourners as he did with the big services. Peter also supported the community by volunteering as a representative for juveniles in police interviews. But family came first. Peter always found time for the children, despite the demands of work, be it building sand cars on the beach, playing cricket in the back garden or, in his later years, running around with his eight grandchildren and making them laugh. As a father, Peter was never shy to congratulate or express pride. He believed in trusting people to make their own decisions – even if he may have disagreed with some of them, including questionable choices of children’s hair styles.

Ann was Peter’s best friend. He was never happier than when he was spending time with her. Peter was once pulled over by the police on Stratford Road for driving too slowly. Asked if he was OK he replied that yes, he was very well thank you. It was a nice evening, he was having a pleasant conversation with Ann. There was no need to rush.

**FAMILY NOTICES**

If you would like a birth, marriage or death notice published on our website and / or in *The Silhillian* magazine please contact editor@silhillians.net

It is requested that obituaries for inclusion in the magazine are restricted to 500-700 words and accompanied by a photo if possible.
A former Warwickshire and England cricketer is flourishing in his role helping to develop the game’s next generation of stars at Solihull School.

Darren Maddy led the Bears from 2006 to 2008 following a move from neighbours Leicestershire, going on to play at Edgbaston until his first class retirement in 2013, when he was appointed master of cricket at Solihull School. The 42-year-old, who played three Tests, eight one-day and five Twenty20 internationals, took over from David Hemp and has built on the foundations laid by the former Glamorgan batsman to catapult Solihull into a position as one of the country’s leading lights in independent schools cricket.

Under Maddy’s guidance, Solihull’s under-13s team has swept the board this summer, winning every competition from the Solihull 6s – a six-player version of the game introduced by Maddy and contested by 20 schools across the Midlands – to the ESCA national cup. Despite this success, the former international admits he was initially a little unsure about which route he would take following retirement from the professional game.

“In the years leading up to 2013, I knew my retirement was imminent,” said Maddy. “I had options to possibly explore playing county cricket elsewhere but I just felt it was coming to the end of my chapter and it was time to move on. “I was very lucky, I was club captain of Warwickshire and won the county championship, I won two championships and two Twenty20 cups with Leicestershire and played for England, so I had a wonderful 23 years playing the game. “

“A month on from having announced my retirement, I had three serious job offers, including one from Leicestershire as strength and conditioning coach, which I thought long and hard about. Then I found out David (Hemp) was leaving Solihull to move to Australia. After meeting the Headmaster and going through the interview process, I started in November 2013.”

Three years ago, Solihull School introduced sports scholarships and it is these, believes Maddy, which have really allowed its young cricketers to flourish.

He said: “The introduction of sports scholarships has made a massive difference and, in my opinion, has been the biggest turning point in the cricketing success at the school. The scholars benefit from a bit of psychology and nutritional advice, extra fitness sessions, along with one-to-one mentoring and guest speakers who come in and talk about their experiences and careers. I think what we offer for all of our scholars is outstanding.”

While his role at Solihull keeps him busy, Maddy still finds time to play for Berkswell in the Birmingham League premier division, while also being part of PCA Masters sides and the Lashings World XI. He said: “I still find myself thinking about batting again or what the lads are doing and miss being in the changing room within that professional environment. I have been associated with Berkswell since my last year at Warwickshire. After all the years of playing professionally, I never envisaged myself in club cricket but they are a great bunch of lads and I really enjoy it.”
THE HICKLIN CUP
The annual Hicklin Cup took place in late September at a new venue for us - Shirley GC. After two years of Rugby Club victories, SRUFC Captain Jim Roper had was feeling confident to make it three. With some late selection changes for both teams, including one no show for the hockey knockers, both sides ended with the necessary 12. This included an unfit Malcolm Lawrie, hobbling and complaining in equal measure whilst citing a bad back which some might say was to cover a complete lack of talent.

The hockey boys managed to take a lead in a number of early matches. This meant we had a relatively comfortable margin and did not need the 3rd team’s 2 handicapper James Hethington who carried around Tom Bacon to secure the 4-2 Cup win for the Hockey Club. This was followed by a very sociable evening for all players back at the Clubhouse, which is very much part of the day’s enjoyment and a good start to the season for both clubs.

Max Levenger

OLD SILHILLIANS v OLD TUDOR GRANGEIANS
Whilst supporting the OSGS team at Olton GC (from the bar, of course!) at the qualifier for Grafton Morrish Finals former Tudor Grange pupils Graham Webb (Richmond, 1968-73), Rugby Club legend, and Peter Chalkley (Richmond, 1979-84), former Warwickshire Golf Captain, challenged the Old Silhillians to a putting competition on the practice green at Olton. That challenge was duly taken up by Kevin ‘Bertie’ Parkes (School House, 1959-69) and Malcolm Lawrie. The competition seemed a little one-sided as the only time that Webby had previously picked up a putter was to pass it to James Hetherington whilst caddying for him at the Grafton Finals. With a putter borrowed from the pro-shop battle commenced and the Sils outfit ran out 5 & 4 winners.

However, that was not the end of it. The Grangeians wanted a rematch and to even matters up the chosen venue was to be Four Ashes crazy golf course. And what a leveller it was! Five down at the turn (Bertie had drunk something the night before that disagreed with him) the Sils rallied and fought back on the inward nine, but lost by 1 hole.

There is talk of a decider on the 18th at St. Andrews or Augusta. We’ll see!

Webby, Bert & Chalks - no prizes for guessing who took the photo!
The annual Old Silhillians versus Old Warwickians game for the Coton Cup took place on 11th September at Warwick School.

The Old Silhillians’ side were unable to convert their dominance into a safe points lead until the latter stages of the game and ran out 24-14 winners to retain the Coton Cup for the fourth successive year. Well done guys - it’s always great to beat the old enemy!


Old Silhillians’ Golfing Society
http://osgs.org.uk/

The hardy souls that started the 2015 December Vase had to face very unpleasant, cold and wet conditions, so unpleasant in fact that over half of the field had departed to the bar before the 18 holes had been completed! Nevertheless, when players and guests had been wined and dined, all thoughts of the weather had been forgotten and everyone was pleased to congratulate the Vase winner, John Loynton, and Phil Beswick who won the David Powell Memorial Salver for seniors over 65.

The 2016 Society matches began with the President versus the Captain contest which precedes the AGM. The match result was a half, so the President retained the A.G. Bragg trophy, but at least the Captain was elected unopposed!

The traditional Wiseman Foursome competition was played in early May and the old adage that “good young’uns” are better than “good old’uns” was never more amply disproved as Bob Standley (Fetherston, 1958-63) and John Duncombe (Shenstone, 1955-59) (combined age 146 years) won the Wiseman Cup, although Jamie Clapham (Windsor, 1997-2003) and Tom Hare (Pole, 1993-2004) (combined age 59 years) did win the best gross with a score of 81. The foursomes medal format off the back tees is perhaps losing its appeal and this will need to be reviewed for next year as the event only attracted eight pairs.

The OSA Challenge Cup was won, for the second year running, by Tom Hare with a score of 69 nett and, similarly, the Charles Hill Salver was, again, won by Tom Shiels (Shenstone, 1998-2009) with a gross score of 82. Fred Harris (Jago, 1953-57) won the Senior Salver with a nett score of 74.

The AM-AM this year, in memory of Roy Letts, was organised by Bob Young (Pole, 1949-63) and Tim Platt (Fetherston, 1965-73) (more of Tim later) and a very enjoyable occasion it proved to be. The winning team, for the second year running, was Max Levenger (Fetherston, 1983-94), Tom Hare, Tom Shiels and Jamie Clapham with a score of 81 points. I now know where I go wrong because my pre-match routine is NOT to have multiple gins and tonic followed by multiple bottles of white wine and large baguettes! Well done lads!

The Captain’s Away Day was held at the Worcestershire Golf Club at the foot of the Malvern Hills. The weather was wonderful, the traffic was light, the hospitality was excellent and the camaraderie was...“Old Silhillian”. The morning “round” was an 8 hole pairs Stableford with one throw per player being allowed if required. The winners were John Belcher (Shenstone, 1962-70) and Martyn Hurdley (Shenstone, 1969-78) with a score of 22 points. The afternoon AM-AM was won by Mike Cutler (Fetherston, 1953-60), Mike Wiseman (Shenstone, 1968-73), Tony Pearson and Mark Rogers with a score of 90 points! In the evening golden balls were awarded for good “throws” and other feats of special merit; my apologies go to Charles Duncombe who told me afterwards...
that he should have been awarded a golden ball for getting his father round the course in under four hours! (sorry John). Thanks go to all who helped make it such a great day and to Jeremy Stubbings (Shenstone, 1968-76) who checked all the scorecards.

The “A” team had an unfortunate year. Four matches were scheduled but only two were played. Robin Hood cancelled due to a clash with the funeral of an ex-President/Captain and the match against Olton for the Brian Urry Trophy was rained off (in August!) although the lunch did still take place. Of the two matches played, we won against Ladbrook 3½ to 2½ but we lost heavily to Copt Heath.

The “B” team fared better with Martyn Hurdley making an excellent debut as Captain. Of the four matches played, two were halved: Old Veseyans and Olton, who retained the Geoff Stubbings Trophy, and two were lost: Avenue Bowling Club by 3½ to 1½ and Old Edwardians by 4 and 2.

Now to the Grafton Morrish Trophy; the qualifying round took place in mid May with the usual combination of fear and anticipation amongst the spectators and quiet confidence amongst the players. In the event Solihull qualified 4th out of nine schools with 74 points. Many thanks to the team of Barney Dowding (Pole, 1985-95) and Richard Turner (Windsor, 1986-94), James Hetherington (Pole, 1991-2002), debutant Andy Hooper (Pole, 2008-15), Tom Shiels and David Fleet (Jago, 1978-87). The finals, as always, took

The Grafton Morrish Team 2016
Standing: David Fleet, Patrick Skakel, Andy Hooper, Louis Meryon and James Hetherington
Seated: Tom Shiels, Peter Siddall (Captain) and Laurence Shiels (President)
place in Norfolk in the first week of October. Our touring party numbered 26 including
the team which consisted of Louis Meryon (Windsor, 1984-95) and James Hetherington,
David Fleet and Andy Hooper and Tom Shiels and Patrick Skakel (Windsor, 2002-10). Patrick
who has recently returned from the USA is a member of Copt Heath Golf Club.

The trip got off to a good start with 14 golfers contesting the Norfolking Cup which
was won by Peter Levenger (Fetherston, 1951-62) with 31 points. John Duncombe was
runner up.

The serious golf of the Grafton Morrish started well on Friday when Solihull beat
Shrewsbury by 2½ to ½ and hopes were high when we set off against Uppingham at
8am the next morning! Unfortunately Uppingham were very strong and on their game
and they went through 2 to 1 despite, as always some excellent golf from our players.
Uppingham were eventually defeated by Birkenhead in the final.

Two matters are worthy of note. Firstly our changed base of Heacham Manor was well
received and with their excellent hospitality and standards the general view was that
we should return in the future. Secondly, and as always, a big thank you to the team for
playing with such good spirit and enthusiasm and it was especially pleasing to see the
two debutants, Andy Hooper and Patrick Skakel, play and fit in so well. Well done lads.

There is no doubt that the privilege of being Captain does bring with it minor pressures
and irritations (at least at my age) but these are more than outweighed by the support
and genuine goodwill of the membership and I have much enjoyed my tenure. Thanks
to Vice Captain Jeremy and all the Committee for their help but a special mention to the
two permanent members, John Belcher (Shenstone, 1962-70) and Tim Platt, who do a
tremendous amount of work year after year and without whom the Society just would
not function.

Finally and, as always, my warm thanks to Olton Golf Club for providing our “home” and
for always supporting us so well.

Peter Siddall (Windsor, 1954-62)

Old Silhillians’ Hockey Club

www.silshockey.co.uk

After recent years of significant success, the 2015-16 season was
one of on pitch consolidation and off pitch development. Old
Silhillians Hockey Club continues to be recognised as one of the
leading clubs in the Country, and has now moved into also being
named within the England Hockey “big clubs” list - which is a title given to those clubs
that have over 500 members; Old Silhillians is one of only 4 of these in the whole of the
Midlands.

Much of this growth has come through the development of our Junior section, which, as
we move into the 2016-17 season, is entering more Junior sides than the club has ever
put forward into the National Knock-Out competitions; we are entering both boys and
girls teams at U10, U12, U14 and U16 age groups, as well as a Boys U18 side. Last year
saw our U10 Boys reaching the Midlands Finals, and finishing a very credible 7th in the Region. Individual success is high as well, with over 30 of our Juniors representing the County, with strong representation in the U13 and U14 Girls teams particularly - both of whom finished in the top 2 in the Midlands.

The club also had two players who played as guests in the Stourport U14 Girls team that reached the National finals played at Lee Valley (the National Stadium) - well done Kiera Johnstone and Charlotte Harmer. The Junior offering was also further enhanced by the development, by Andre Tchakhotine (Shenstone 1989-96), of the Old Silhillians Hockey Minis - targeting those children aged between 4-6, which saw around 35 future stars turning up every week with their parents.

With the continued success of the National side (particularly the Ladies winning Gold in Rio), the club continues to focus on growing hockey participation not only at The Silhillians, but also in the surrounding community. Last year the club supported satellite clubs in 5 different schools, as well as at Solihull, where the partnership with the school continued to go from strength to strength, with the Club’s community coach, former Olympian Ali Raza, coaching for 6 hours in the school each week; this programme will continue to progress next year, with a partnership with Arden School already being lined up. The club has also formed an occasional Men’s 5th team as well to provide more chances to play for more players.

With regards to the Senior sides, the Ladies 2nds saw promotion (albeit off the back of a league restructure) and all other teams maintained their league status. Several of the teams were in a transition period last year with quite a few ‘old heads’ now being able to step down the sides a little, as our talented juniors are now progressing from our impressive Sunday morning coaching, through to the adult teams.

This is particularly evident in the Ladies section, where there were at least 14 girls aged Under 18 playing for either...
the Ladies 1sts or 2nds every week - many of whom are current Solihull School girls. Whilst this bodes well for the future, it does also reflect the limited number of Over 18 female players we currently have at the club, so we are always very keen to hear from any Ladies who are keen to get back into playing - we are able to offer a Back to Hockey programme for those that want a gentle re-introduction to the sport and/or a casual option for playing hockey without having to commit to anything more regular.

For all enquiries about playing hockey, please email the Club Chairman Steve Tabb on stephentabb@hotmail.com or visit the Club Website www.silshockey.co.uk for more information.

Steve Tabb (Windsor, 1987-96)

Silhillians Rugby Union Football Club
www.pitchero.com/clubs/silhillians/

1st XV
After last season’s great escape to remain in Midlands 1 West we had hoped to kick on and repeat previous successful years. The team could not have started any better in September with a highly memorable, last minute, length of the pitch try to win away at Hereford, which was a Club’s first away at Hereford!

However, things soon turned against us, plagued by injury and inconsistency, it took us another 1,040 minutes of Rugby until we registered our second victory in January! Not registering a win for 13 games is tough, but it is testament to the characters within the squad that we stuck together and didn’t give up the fight! A spirit exemplified by Tom Lee (Shenstone, 1999-2007) in the pivotal role of Scrum half.

During this period of drought, questions were raised about spirits within the squad, but this was one aspect I was never worried about. We were never totally outplayed and left winning teams frustrated that they couldn’t put us away. We continued to play the expansive Rugby that we enjoy and began picking up a number of victories. Most impressive being bonus point wins away at promotion hunting teams Bournville & Burton!

Sadly, in what is probably the toughest league Sils have ever faced, and with many teams paying their players, we left it too late and regrettably the 1st XV were relegated to Midlands 2 West (South).

We have seen an emergence of new youthful talent. Rory Grogan (Fetherston 2002-13) was having an outstanding first season at 7, before picking up a season ending injury! With his squat like physique and strength over the ball, he is certainly one for the future. Jack Hobbs (Fetherston, 2010-12) has shown moments of brilliance dancing his way through numerous defences for superb solo and team tries. Jack also played representative rugby and continued his scoring form for Warwickshire.

Saxons
It has been a huge season of continuous improvement and a lot of transition. With Billy Mills filling the rather large boots of Dale Cobley as the Saxon’s Skipper, he didn’t have
A third try for Tom Lee in this year’s cup match against Market Harborough

the smoothest of starts, this was down to the loss of many senior players to retirement, injury or illness.

Despite using over 95 players this season, it has still been a challenge to get a regular and consistent side out. A number of the Colts stepped up to the Saxons for their first taste of senior rugby and it didn’t take them long to get stuck in and not look out of place. Thanks go to Steve Allso (Pole, 1966-72) for his continued coaching and managing of this team.

Saints
Jim Roper again has done a tremendous job with the Saints and Vets along with now working with a new side in Warwickshire Camembears, an amalgamation of clubs who can’t get a full 15 so all can still play the game we love.

Colts
This year the Colts again entered North Midlands 1. With a tough start to the season against eventual winners and runners up, as well as battling the integrating of age groups, adjusting to the loss of players to University, it was always going to be a tough challenge. However, after a fantastic second half team performance and five tries against Hereford, the Colts had found their self-belief! From that game on they were always competitive, ambitious, always battling to the very end and finished a very respectable 5th in the league.

A total of 39 players turned out for the Colts this season, with a core of 20 playing in most of the fixtures and a number have been getting involved in training with the seniors, which will hopefully smooth the transition to senior rugby!

Minis and Juniors
The M&J’s continue to go from strength to strength and have over 390 playing on a Sunday morning from U6 through to U17. Congratulations to Tom Farrell who was selected to play for England U16s against Wales in April, Tom Serle was also selected for Scotland 16s but was unfortunately unavailable to play due to injury.

Annual Dinner
This Season’s Annual Dinner was again organised by the considerable efforts of Phil Green (Pole, 1961-66). The guest speaker this year was Jeff Probyn who played in the
1991 World Cup and gained 37 caps for England, Jeff donated England Rugby memorabilia for the Club to auction to raise funds for Lee Jones and his family.

**Lee Jones**
The season was overshadowed by the injury to our former Club Captain Lee Jones *(Windsor, 1990-99)*, A.K.A. Window. The Club continues to send our best wishes to him and his family, it is going to be a long road of recovery with much support needed. Those who know him will not be surprised at the combative and inspirational attitude he has to his injury.

**Women’s Rugby at Copt Heath, welcome to the Sils Sirens!**
The total refurbishment of the Clubhouse and upgrade to the facilities including state of the art changing rooms together with the introduction of women’s rugby to the Olympics has undoubtedly attracted our new women playing members. This transformation of the new Clubhouse and bars has created a great family friendly atmosphere which is clearly more attractive to sports women and we hope to build on this.

The Sirens train every Thursday evening from 7:00pm, and all women interested in trying rugby out are welcome to join them, and for those women who would prefer not to participate in full contact Rugby we also have mixed Touch Rugby sessions on the artificial pitch at the same time. This is becoming increasingly popular with women players, again no doubt due to the investment made in the facilities.

**And finally…..**
The Rugby Club continues to set out its stall to provide rugby of all levels and importantly provides a focal point and rendezvous for the many former Mini, Junior, Colts and Senior players who go off to university or to pursue careers further afield. Whatever direction their rugby or career takes them, the Club’s door is always open for their return.

*Oliver Beech (Jago, 2002-09)*

_Nick Elliott (Windsor, 1996-2000) celebrates as Steve Hall (Shenstone, 1997-2004) goes over the line against Kenilworth in the league*_
After a difficult couple of years due to the main clubhouse redevelopment works, the Squash Committee consider that with the much improved facilities now offered, the Club has turned a corner and the membership numbers are increasing for the first time in several seasons.

To help attract new members to participate with squash and racket ball there have been several initiatives including:-

• Temporary Membership for a minimum of three months at £20.00 per month.
• Restricted Membership in off peak times between 9.00am and 4.00pm, Monday to Friday at £60.00 per year.
• Pay and Play at £10.00 a session including a one off £20.00 membership fee.

During the year the court and changing room facilities have been improved to match the improved changing rooms and general refurbishment of the main clubhouse.

**John Parrott (Windsor, 1966-73)** and John Milne installed a new touch screen computer booking system and for those who do not know, this allows internet booking.
of the courts with automatic notification to your opponent that the court is booked, no excuse for not turning up! Also the courts and the entrance lobby have been redecorated including the cleaning of the playing walls.

Club Nights are run by Ray Mills and are scheduled for this season on Monday nights between 5.00 and 7.00 pm, Ray also runs the internal leagues and squash ladder.

The Club Championship was won by Phil Guest, seen in the photo on the right receiving his trophy from John Standley.

Coaching and a racket restringing service is offered by Andy Warmington, a locally based England Squash Coach.

It was with sadness that earlier in the year the Club had to accept Roger Taylor’s (Fetherston, 1954-66) resignation due to failing health. Roger has been a prominent member of the Club for over 40 years, both on the playing side, having represented the Club over many years in the Midland and Warwickshire Leagues and serving on the committee for a similar time, the last 20 years as Chairman. The Club and in particular the committee members offer Roger and Angela their best wishes over the coming years. The Committee organised a dinner and presentation for Roger this September, Roger is pictured below at the dinner.

All new members are welcome for both squash or racket ball and if you are interested in joining please contact John Milne, membership secretary on 0121 733 6250 or 07736 110 843.

John Standley (Fetherston, 1963-70)
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