

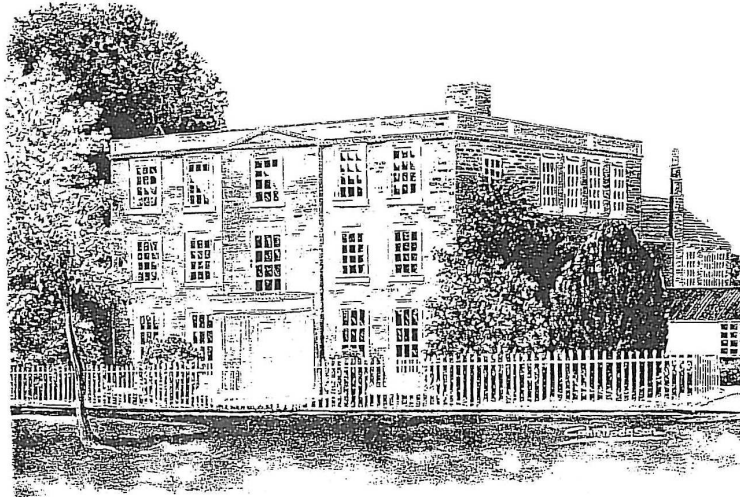


OLD AYSCOUGHFIANS

Special points of interest:

- Welcome
- Changes in School
- News of Old Ayscoughfians
- Centenary Celebrations
- From the Archives

Welcome



Welcome to this third edition of the Old Ayscoughfians newsletter.

As we enter our Centenary Year, celebrating the founding of the school in 1920, we aim to connect with as many of our ex pupils, staff and families as possible, so that we can make this a birthday to remember.

We are always delighted to welcome back Old Ayscoughfians and would

love to hear from you. We have an electronic registration form for Old Ayscoughfians on our school website at www.ahs.me.uk.

You may also wish to follow our Facebook page, Ayscoughfee Hall School Life.

Please spread the word too...we would still love to reach more people.

Welcome message from the Headteacher



As I type this, the sun is shining on our fantastic new Infant Centenary Block, completed in March, just in time for the beginning of our celebrations to mark the 100th birthday of our wonderful school.

The staff and children coped admirably all together during the building period of six months and it is a testament to the 'family' ethos of the school that there were no problems sharing spaces, with timetabling or even in the toilets! That is not to say that the infants are not relishing their amazing colourful shared

space, bright classrooms, outside area and the exciting new automatic doors!

I do hope that you will find time during this, our Centenary Year, to come and look around the school, to see the new Centenary Block and to share in our celebrations. There are further details inside, and if you have not already done so, please do register as an Old Ayscoughfian and pass the word on to any ex pupils with whom you may still be in touch.

Changes in School

On 12th July, 2018 a high metal fence was erected around the old Infant Block, the skip arrived and the diggers moved in. By the time the children arrived back in September, there was an Infant Block, but not as we knew it.



The children settled in to their new spaces (Kindergarten in Year 6, Reception in Year 3, Year 1 in Music, Year 2 with Year 5, Year 3 in the Languages Room and Year 6 in Art.... (don't ask about the peripatetic music or the fun with the Christmas production rehearsal) and within a couple of weeks it was as if we'd always had these arrangements.

"Mrs Gibson was even gifted with her own pink hat for site visits"

Bit by fascinating bit, we saw windows replaced, floors taken up and new ones put down, new sliding doors fitted and ceilings raised. The builders could not have been more accommodating and helpful and Mrs. Gibson was even gifted with her own pink hard hat for site visits.

We moved back in early March to a space that was bright and light, with a new outside area for the Early Years and with a brilliant mural by Mrs. Gibson (truly a lady with hidden talent) on our new Infant library wall. We are grateful to Mr. Kevin Pallister and Calthrops Solicitors for their very generous donation which enabled this particular dream to become reality.



The enlarged space has given us the opportunity to open the Infant library to younger siblings and their parents for a story time every Friday morning whilst the children are in assembly as well as a far larger and more comfortable area for Kid's Club and group work with the different classes.

Other changes this year include the introduction of Spanish teaching to all the children from Reception upwards. This has proved highly successful and very popular with all involved.



Changes in School - Before, During and After Photographs



Mrs. Sue McDonald



“So now it’s time to say goodbye to our friends, moving on.....” The opening lines of a song which has become something of a tradition here at Ayscoughfee, sung at the end of the school year as we say goodbye to our Year 6 pupils. Along with the rest of the school, I have sung this countless times as students and colleagues who have moved on, but this year it will carry an extra poignancy for me as I too will be leaving.

I never imagined back in 1985, when I first walked through the doors of Ayscoughfee Hall School which was then located in Church Street, feeling rather nervous about my impending interview, that I was to spend the next 34 years in my post as Music Teacher!

I have witnessed quite a few changes during those years. If my memory serves me well, we only had very limited music resources back then. One xylophone and an assortment of triangles, drums and maraccas, but not enough for a whole class! Now, we are very well-equipped and there are enough tuned percussion instruments for everyone to play in our lessons. Song accompaniments were played by me on the piano initially, but after a while, a tape recorder and pre-recorded tapes were made available too. CD players and CD’s were new technology back in the 1980’s so it was a good while before I embraced these!

During my early days at Ayscoughfee, we had no photocopier available so words for songs etc. were typed out by me on a good old-fashioned typewriter (I had an electric one which had been a 21st birthday present!) We then had to roll copies off on a Banda Machine (invented in the 1960’s!) by attaching a master copy to the drum and turning a handle to make copies – a very messy business and users invariably got covered in printing fluid and ink.... It was a great relief when we were provided with a photocopy machine.

*“CD players
and CD’s were
new
technology
back in the
1980’s”*



A picture taken in 1988 after the junior choir won the Peterborough Music Festival. Success followed success in the musical sphere after Mrs. McDonald joined the staff. Mrs. McDonald pictured back row far right.

*“Many happy
times we’ve
had and many
songs we’ve
sung”*

It is impossible to encapsulate in a few short sentences what being a part of Ayscoughfee Hall School has meant to me. It has given structure and shape to my years, as annual milestones in the school calendar are always marked by music – Easter, Summer, Harvest and of course Christmas. I know for sure that I have been involved in no less than 66 nativities! 33 with the Infants and 33 with Kindergarten and Reception and that has been wonderful and memorable. We always used to do Christmas Productions with the Junior department too for many years and I never missed any Christmas commitments in all of those 34 years, of which I am quite proud.

I will always be grateful to Mr. Peter Sivil, my Head Teacher back in 1985 for giving me a chance and offering me the post of Music Teacher at Ayscoughfee. It has been a privilege to work with so many wonderful children and colleagues over the last 34 years. I hope that my legacy to the school and all of the many students who have sat through my lessons, choir practices, band practices, Christmas nativities and Summer Productions will look back and remember happy times and remember the fun we had together, as I will. If that is so, then I can leave happy – Mission Accomplished!

To close, another couple of lines from the Leaver’s Song..... “Many happy times we’ve had and many songs we’ve sung.....”

SUE MCDONALD



Success has continued throughout Mrs. McDonald’s time at Ayscoughfee Hall School. Here she is pictured conducting this years school choir in a Christmas singing competition with local schools at the Parish Church. The children came second out of eleven schools a fantastic achievement!

Mrs. Theresa O'Leary

Sadly this term we also say a fond farewell to Mrs. O' Leary who joined us as a part time Learning Support teacher for just a year, 5 years ago! She enjoyed the children and the school so much that she stayed for much longer than she anticipated and has been a great support and help to staff and children alike. She is now definitely retiring and is looking forward to spending time with her family.



As a child I had always wanted to be a primary school teacher and have worked in the state system for about 38 years, as a class teacher working with all age groups in Birmingham, Peterborough and locally. My first 'retirement' was from a local school in July 2011, but it didn't last very long! From September that year I was asked to return on supply, working with classes from Reception to Year 6.

In February 2014 I had a phone call from a friend of mine, Martyn, who was the bursar at Ayscoughfee School, asking me to consider helping them out for a few months – and here am I retiring 5 years later! I have thoroughly enjoyed working at Ayscoughfee school - the children are hard working and enthusiastic about everything that they are involved in: the parents are very supportive and want the very best for their children and the staff are amazing – willing to take on board new initiatives in order to further the learning and progress of the children in their care.

I do remember in the early days, sitting with the Reception class waiting to take the register. We had been sitting waiting for a few minutes, the children sitting on the carpet, all quiet ready to answer their names. After a few more minutes one boy said – 'Mrs. O'Leary, what are you waiting for?' My reply was that I was waiting for the rest of the class to arrive – he smiled gently and patted my arm, saying 'this is the whole class – there's 19 of us'. I smiled and proceeded to take the register, reflecting on the fact that this was indeed an independent school!

Mrs Ogden has always said that Ayscoughfee School is like being part of a family - and I certainly agree. I wish you all the very best for the future – I am certain that this school will continue to flourish: children, parents and staff.

THERESA O'LEARY

News of Old Ayscoughfians

Charlotte Bahnam

After completing A levels at Spalding High School I studied Marketing at the University of Lincoln. I had my first job in Marketing with Associated British Foods. Recently, I've started a new job in Digital Marketing for Sophie Allport, a local homeware brand. I became a homeowner last year and live with my partner and my little dog.

Leah Bahnam

I graduated with my Masters Degree in Applied Criminology from the University of Leicester in September 2018 and then travelled to Australia. When I return to the UK, I plan on applying to the Police.

Abigail Barks

I'm still enjoying the High School and particularly enjoy music. As a member of the Air Cadets, I've recently joined their choir, successfully auditioning from over 250 applicants.

Esme Biehler

I'm currently at Anglia Ruskin University studying Paramedic Science and training to be a Paramedic. I have been working with the London Ambulance Service and absolutely love it...I can't wait to qualify!

Edward Hendry

Is currently loving life in Australia, where he has just bought his first home.

Matthew Hendry

Now married, to Rebecca, with a baby daughter, Thea, Matthew lives in Florida. He is currently in charge of the construction of a building that, when completed, will be the tallest in Miami.

Jasmine Walton

Jasmine took her Grade 5 Music Theory exam recently, having achieved Distinction at Grade 4. She is shortly due to take her Grade 6 piano and is currently working towards her Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award, She is sitting IGCSE exams in Maths and Physics this autumn.

News of Old Ayscoughians

In our 1st and 2nd Edition of the Old Ayscoughian Newsletter we were delighted to bring you the memoirs of our most senior Old Ayscoughian Mr. Ian Smith.

In this, our most recent Newsletter, we conclude his memoirs.

From IAN SMITH, Dersingham, King's Lynn, Norfolk



*Mr. Ian Smith
pictured on his 90th
birthday*

It was now 1947, and post-war National Service was well established, whereby reasonably fit 18 year-olds were conscripted into one of the three Armed Services for two years' service training. I opted for the RAF, and, following a couple of months intensive drill ('square-bashing') found myself at Cranwell (not the College) Radio School for training in ATC (Air Traffic Control). This I enjoyed. At one stage it included (peaceful) flights in a four-engined Halifax bomber as part of a radar training course. Then I qualified as a corporal instructor teaching others the ATC skills I had recently learned.

However, out-of-the-blue in the summer of '48 came a 'posting' from eastern England to the far west of Wales. The active air station was RAF Valley in Anglesey, where, later in time, Prince William was to serve as a helicopter pilot. But then it was a small station with only 120 servicemen there. We virtually ran it ourselves. We worked three or four 'watches' covering every 24 hours, which meant that we had a fair slice of free time in the course of most days. Now both 1948 and 49 treated us to a couple of brilliant summers; a short cycle ride round the airfield perimeter track brought one to a most beautiful sandy beach bordering the actual airfield, where we did justice to the sunshine and warmth. Nearby, across a crystal-clear swimmable channel, lay scenic Holy Island - from which Holyhead takes its name. Were we doing NS time at a serious RAF station, or was this RAF Butlins-by-Sea? To this day I'm still not sure.

To be sure, Dublin - untrammelled by the recent war - was a mere 3 - 4 hours ferry crossing from Holyhead. Though not by 'ferry' in today's terms: more a proper steamship, and coal-fired at that. It was the first 'overseas' trip of my life, and one memorable weekend.

Although we all looked forward to 'demob', I was sorry when it came. NS had been a happy, largely carefree existence for a young man in his late teens, and I had enjoyed the experience of meeting and making friends with others of my age from all parts of the UK and all backgrounds. It had been new, maturing and valuable. Had I chosen to make civil ATC my life's career I already had excellent base training, and it would have been a prime time in aviation history to start. One of life's big "ifs".

However, it was back now in the autumn of 1949 to a very different environment and style of training. By this time I had been accepted for training for the Anglican priesthood by the theological college at Mirfield in West Yorkshire. The course, in all, covered five years, the first three of which would be spent - under the College's supervision - as an undergraduate at nearby Leeds University. University life and the subsequent two years at Mirfield were immensely happy times, and by the time all was completed the year was 1954 and I was 25! The adventures of my boyhood and teen years already seemed a world away. Much I could say of this 'higher education' period, and it's a regret that space does not permit at this time.

I was ordained, initially as deacon, on 10th October in Chichester cathedral, then went to join a team of five other clergy serving the parish of Moulsecomb, a large between-the-wars housing area in the north-east of Brighton. It was a most memorable time: a great deal of fun with a good-humoured team (to put it mildly) and lively people. It was the decade of the 50's when things were 'getting good' after the war, life was yet to be dominated by TV and the motor car, and Brighton was a bright, stylish, smart place - Looking good and proud of its position as a premier resort on Britain's coasts. I thought then that I had discovered heaven on earth. Not now. How far has it fallen.

In 1962 I moved up the road to Crawley, half-way to London. Now a massive ever-developing conurbation with Gatwick airport on its doorstep. Then, one of the two 1950's planned 'new towns' - Stevenage to the north of London being the other. As in Brighton, I was there at the best of times. Crawley was just reaching its original planned optimum size: a ring of discrete 'neighbourhoods' each complete with its shopping arcade, churches, schools and social infrastructure. All set around the original historic village, now expanded as the town centre. It looked good and it worked well.

Once again I was a member of a larger team - sharing, supporting and learning from each other. While involved in the new town's larger scene, I had particular responsibility for the church in one of the neighbourhoods, West Green, a slice of the larger cake, so to speak. It was a long ministry there - 19 years. I was a young 33 when I moved to Crawley, 52 when I left - still young I liked to think! It was a very good time: in a young town, lots of lively work with young people, new opportunities always opening up, and much opportunity to develop church music and choir work, which was a bit of a speciality for me. Not least was the unique experience of working with team colleagues, no fewer than 27 overall in the course of my time there.

Come 1981 I was due for a different experience prior to my next move, I think it's called a 'sabbatical'. On 2nd March the destination was Australia. I joined the staff of St.Peter's, the leading church in the city centre of Melbourne in the state of Victoria. The ten weeks spent there was the high point of my working life, as was my discovery of a land and life so very different from my own. Unlike anything else I had experienced, I fell in love with all of it. They wanted me to stay and accept a permanent job and I would have accepted eagerly had I not already committed myself back home to the village of Clenchwarton, just to the west of King's Lynn. It would have been wrong to have reneged on that and let the people down, but it was a difficult time. Often did I dream of that magic experience, it had been good and had been euphoric; the simple, unpretentious, unglamorous little village of Clenchwarton could not have been more contrasting. But I hadn't been there long before I knew I had done the right thing.

The people of that little place were (and are) delightful, welcoming and kind and an unmitigated pleasure to work with and for. Parishes are not always like that. It was, again, a happy time, with opportunities to be explored that were so very different from those experienced in Crawley's urban setting. Being a Fenlander born and bred, it felt like 'coming home' again: the familiar landscape and huge skies, the air blowing cool from the Wash. I even met people in Clenchwarton whom I had known in Holbeach as a boy. It was like putting on an old comfy pair of shoes. Full circle.

"It was the decade of the 50's when things were "getting good" after the war, life was yet to be dominated by TV and the motor car".

News of Old Ayscoughians

Last year, it was our pleasure and privilege to print the first part of the memoirs of Mr. Stuart Marston Smith, one of the more senior of the 'Old Ayscoughians'. We are delighted to continue this year, beginning in 1945 when Stuart began piano and organ lessons with Russell Missin, the organist and choir master at Holbeach Parish Church.

From STUART MARSTON SMITH,

Stuart passed the entrance exam for the Grammar School. Although no music was taught there, he continued his music lessons and began playing the organ at Holbeach when Mr. Missin was called upon to play at Ely cathedral. He joined the South Holland Singers, singing bass.

Having left the Grammar School, he continued studying music at home as well as writing for the organ.

At 18 he joined the RAF to do his two years National Service, being stationed in Hereford, Hampshire and Dover. He continued to be involved with music during his time in the RAF, playing for Church parades and at a service organised as a memorial to King George V1.

After being demobbed, he was appointed Choirmaster and Organist at Holbeach Parish Church but barely a year later won a scholarship to study for two years at the Royal School of Church Music.

Having been offered jobs in Hong Kong and Canada as an organist, Stuart eventually accepted the post of Assistant Organist at Exeter Cathedral. During his time there he sang at the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall as well as giving concerts in Exeter prison.

After five years at Exeter, and now married, Stuart and his wife, Kathleen, moved to Northern Ireland where he took on the role of Organist and Choirmaster at Christ Church, Londonderry, combined with teaching music at the girl's High School. He organised music festivals for local schools and instigated an annual visit by famous musician. He was also involved with the founding of the Londonderry Light Operatic Society.

Following an escalation of the 'Troubles' and now with young children, he and Kathleen returned to England and he took up a post as Director of Music at Bearwood College in Berkshire. That, in turn, was followed by accepting the post of Director of Music at Wisbech Grammar School, with Stuart spending much of his spare time climbing in the Lakes and Scotland.

Now retired, Stuart still plays and composes for the organ and loves flying; indeed, for his 80th birthday, his children arranged a flight for him in a Tiger Moth with him spending most of the time at the controls.

This is a brief summary of an amazing piece Stuart wrote for the Old Ayscoughian Newsletter. If anyone would like to read the full version...and if you are interested in music it makes fascinating reading...please e mail SChester@ahs.me.uk.



Mr. Stuart Marston Smith pictured giving an organ recital in Exeter Cathedral in 2009



Exeter Cathedral pictured in 2009

100th Birthday Celebrations

We have been busy for many months now, putting together a programme of events that hopefully will have something to appeal to everyone and be a suitable way of celebrating our forthcoming 100th Birthday.

The new Infant Centenary Block will be officially opened in September; Mr. Ian Smith, our most senior Old Ayscoughfian has kindly agreed to cut the ribbon, hopefully aided by the youngest Kindergarten pupil at school that day.

We aim to follow that with a series of events featuring the number 100: 100 litter pickers, 100 food gifts for Agape Food Bank, a Wall Display of 100 ex pupils and their lives now and so on.

We already have in stock a lovely lapel badge, featuring the school logo which we will be launching shortly and hope also to have pens, mugs and other memorabilia available.

In March, the PTFA have taken the 1920s as their theme, with a 'Gatsby' motif for the ball and in May, we plan a Thanksgiving Service at Ayscoughfee Hall, the original home of the school.

With support from Baytree garden centre, Robert Webster, a rose specialist and Dr. Dougie and Mrs. Trish Burgess we have plans in the Autumn of 2020 to launch our 'Ayscoughfee Rose'. A beautiful yellow scented flower, it will hopefully be a lasting reminder of a very special year.

Every birthday needs a party. On 21st June 2020, we are HAVING A PARTY. The Grammar School have kindly agreed to loan their field and we are planning a family fun day for all ex staff, pupils, governors and friends of the school. Bring a picnic, have a hog roast, visit the tea tent (or drink Pimms)...you might like to take part in the fete activities, sing with the choir (100 voices...no special singing ability needed) or enjoy music provided by some ex pupils who have kindly agreed to perform. It promises to be a day to remember.....and one in which we can all feel justifiably proud of our amazing school.



And finally from the Archives

June 16th 1961

Richard Atkin ran away from Miss Reeks today. Everyone—including gardeners—had to stop work to search for him. Three sharp slaps administered to each arm when found hiding behind library shrubbery.

June 28th 1961

Richard Atkin suffered severe burns to fingers and thumb of left hand today by catching hold of exhaust pipe of motor-mower. Treatment was given at the hospital.

Clearly not a good couple of weeks for Richard!

Special thanks to all who sent in contributions to the Newsletter, to the editorial team and Jo Wade in the office for making sense of our many drafts and creating the final product.