



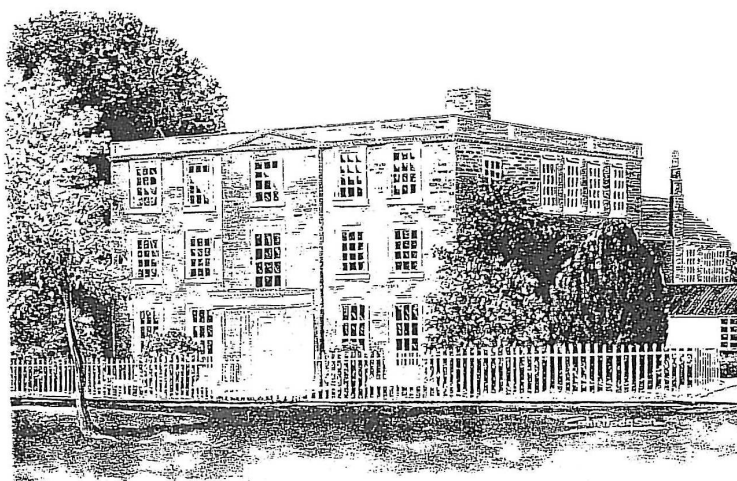
OLD AYSCOUGHFIANS

Issue 2

Special points of interest:

- Welcome
- Changes in School
- News of Past Headteacher and Chair of the Board
- News of Old Ayscoughfians
- From the Archives

Welcome message



Welcome to this second edition of the Old Ayscoughfians Newsletter.

As part of the lead up to the 100th anniversary celebration of the founding of the school in 2020 an Old Ayscoughfians Association was established in 2017. The main aim is to connect people, help maintain contact with the school and to identify opportunities to visit the school, meet up and to help the school celebrate 100 years!

We are always delighted to welcome back Old Ayscoughfians and would love to hear from you. We have opened up a Registration 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



We have had a very busy year since our last newsletter with a number of new activities which you will hear about throughout this newsletter. There is much to look forward to in the next few years as well; we are already sharing ideas and starting planning for our big centenary in 2020, which will hopefully also include the official opening of our new Infant Block.

I received a letter recently from a parent who had come for a tour around the school. I am pleased to say they registered their child immediately and they ended their letter by saying "We look forward to

joining the Ayscoughfee Hall School family soon".

You are all a really special part of that family and I am delighted that we now have an "Old Ayscoughfians" page in the "Life at AHS" section on our website, here you will find our Old Ayscoughfian newsletters and a simple registration form which we hope any past pupils or staff will complete. We will be hoping that many of you will help celebrate the school reaching 100 years old, if you do have any ideas for this do contact us.

Changes in School

This year will probably be remembered for being 'the calm before the storm', with the storm being the closure for complete refurbishment of the Infant Block, with all four classes being relocated, albeit temporarily, to the main building. The development will considerably enhance the facilities in the block with updated classrooms and new toilets. There will be an extension of the library, including a group work area which will provide a light, vibrant area similar to the Junior Library for the Infants and Kids Club to enjoy. This project will provide an environment of which the school can be justifiably proud.



"This project will provide an environment of which the school can be justifiably proud".



We have, however found the time, energy and (in no small part thanks to our amazing PTFA) the funds, to replace the much loved Junior Trim Trail.

We are delighted with our new website which went live in the early Spring and which is proving a great success.

One of the most exciting developments in terms of the curriculum has been the introduction of Spanish teaching to Years 5 & 6.

We are also thrilled to be working with Woodland Adventure who come into school every Friday to work with three classes. The children undertake a variety of topic related outdoor activities such as building Anderson Shelters and Greek Temples, hatching penguin eggs, toasting marshmallows and making clay pots and fairy tale characters out of natural materials. Working in all weathers developing team and leadership skills and surprising themselves with how many ways there are of tying knots, the whole experience has been – and promises to be an immensely valuable addition full of exciting curriculum.



Mr. Brian Chittick

After leaving Ayscoughfee Hall School at Easter 2012, I had two stints of heading the same school in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt. (In between, I delivered wholesale flowers in Spalding, which I thoroughly enjoyed.) The first ended in the summer of 2014 following a stroke but I returned in February 2016, following a panic email from the school which had been let down by my replacement and then by her successor.

During this second stint I was responsible for gaining accreditation from the British Council and registered Cambridge Associate School status. I was glad to leave the school in a stronger position when my wife and I eventually returned to the UK permanently in July 2017, allowing us the time to catch up with friends, the church, and decorating our house and garden.



Mr. Chittick and Mrs. Staples enjoying a fitness workout to raise money for Pink day in 2009.

Mr. Kevin Pallister

I had great pleasure in being part of the Ayscoughfee family between 1999 and March 2018 when I retired as Chair of Governors.

A local business colleague recommended my wife Louise and I to the school saying; "If you want your children to become well - rounded individuals AHS is the place for them." So it proved and how often those words are repeated!

As prospective parents we queried Mr. Chittick (then Headmaster) regarding discipline and his approach to the Christian faith as these were just as important to us as teaching standards. He confirmed that both were important to him and the school. Whilst times move on, I believe that the school manages to maintain traditional values (which are highly relevant to successful living) whilst improving teaching standards and keeping the place a happy one too - not an easy balance!

Our two children loved their time at AHS. I work nearby and Louise and I were able to see them at school events regularly - precious times for any parent.

I joined the Board of Governors in 2003 and although it has been hard work at times it was rewarding to give time back to the school which has given much to us as a family.

I have perhaps most enjoyed the privilege of sharing my faith in music and word during assemblies and sometimes class. My church is the Salvation Army and it has been fantastic to say something to children (whether or not they understood me!) about my faith, life and the work of the Army. I tried to offer a little humour along the way too!

The school has great teachers and a strong relationship of trust and confidence between staff and parents. I am sure this will continue. Any good organisation is founded on relationships between people and AHS does that really well. Mrs Ogden and the current leadership team are very strong and I felt able to step down with the school in a good place in so many ways. Long may it be so!

My AHS bear sits proudly in my "Man Shed" at home! I will keep in touch!

"The school has great teachers and a strong relationship of trust and confidence between staff and parents".



Mr. Pallister receiving his leaving gift from the children during his final assembly in March this year.

News of Old Ayscoughfians

Louis Pryke

Is coming to the end of his fourth and final year at Brunel University where he has been reading Maths and Computer Science. He is due to start a Graduate Data and Analytics Scheme with O2 at their Head Office in September.

Matthew Riddington

After leaving Ayscoughfee I headed to Witham Hall School for 2 years, before attending Oakham School for 5 years. I played rugby for England 16's and since the age of 17 have played professionally. I am currently studying for a degree in Business Management, Accounting and Finance whilst continuing my rugby career.

Sam Riddington

Since leaving Ayscoughfee I went to boarding school in Norfolk and then went on to The Royal Agricultural University (Cirencester) After leaving university I built a career in events and have worked in and with professional sports clubs as well as being on the Organising Committee of the Rugby World Cup 2015. Now living in West Sussex I am still running and organising events in a variety of different sports as well as doing charity and corporate events with occasional private parties thrown in too!

Katy Rowbottom (nee King)

I left Ayscoughfee in 2002 and completed my GCSEs at the Gleed Girls. I then went onto do my A levels at Spalding Grammar School, which is also where I met my husband! After A levels I studied at Norland College in Bath where I gained a first class honours degree and became a Norland Nanny. I nannied in London and Brighton for a year and then moved back to the area. I married in 2015 and am nannying locally. We are now expecting a baby boy in October this year. I have many happy memories of Ayscoughfee and have enjoyed reading about all the past pupils!

Molly Taylor

Has just picked her GCSE subjects (Art, Music, German and History) and enjoys composing for and playing the guitar.

Jasmine Walton

Is now being home schooled. She has taken Music Theory Grade 4, Aged 13 and GCSE Psychology. She plans to sit Maths, Physics and Chemistry next year and is a keen guitarist.

Robert Oldershaw

I joined Ayscoughfee at the age of eight having attended Miss Lawes in Moulton up to that time. There were three classes at that time Miss Reeks (the baby class memory vague but she was a slightly intimidating lady....as all teachers are of course!) Mrs. Quinton who took the middle class and my memory of her was that she was a kindly lady who appeared old but most people do when you are eight. Finally Mrs. Credland, I am unsure how many there were in her class but I can't remember older children but I suppose there must have been. I spent the three years I was there with Rachel Griggs and Josephine Venables as my old peers. Josephine went to the High School but I am unsure about Rachel. I went to the Spalding Grammar School much to the surprise of all.

The next age group below me was Tessa Credland, Jennifer Horberry, Ian Brown whose father had an egg company and is an accountant in Spalding now also Stuart Gibbard and his two young brothers. As Tessa was a year younger than me I suppose that ages Mrs. Credland as about 40 or slightly younger. There was always a packet of cigarettes on her desk and she sat in the window mostly obscured by smoke. Pat Gale (now Pat West) used to go to buy Mrs. Credland's cigarettes for her at the shop in the Sheep Market (aged 8 or 9).

The hall was at that time full of stuffed birds....whatever happened to them?

Playtime was if fine always in the garden....unsupervised and we could do what we wanted, although the Witches Hill (The Ice House) and the War Memorial were out of bounds which meant we spent a lot of time playing there. The end of playtime was announced with a hand bell rung from where the entrance of the garden is.

I seem to remember a shop where Ice Cream could be brought in the Summer time if you could persuade your mother to give you 6 pence....Orange Maid Lolly!!

There were ducks on the pond which I think Stephen Grundy was expelled for terrorising.

I can't remember what we did for food. I suspect it was packed from home, certainly I can't remember fish and chips. It was also the era of free school milk which was delivered in third of a pint bottles and most of the year was disgusting!



1959: This is the first school photograph taken after Mrs. Credland took over the Headship of the school. Mrs Quinton, Mrs Credland and Miss Reeks can be seen in the picture with Robert Oldershaw pictured in the front row third from left.

“Pat Gale (now Pat West) used to go to buy Mrs Credland’s cigarettes for her”

News of Old Ayscoughfians

Last year we were delighted to print the first instalment of the memoirs of the most senior 'Old Ayscoughfian', Mr Ian Smith. We pick up on his story as he leaves Ayscoughfee Hall School in 1938 for the 'Prep Department' of the Grammar School.

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

But it was a happy time. Change was on the way, however. When we returned for the September term builders were moving in too. In a year's time Moulton Grammar School was due to close after four centuries of life, with the staff and boys moving to become part of Spalding Grammar School (SGS). Much new building would be required and was now in train. Already the tennis courts on the corner of Priory and Haverfield Roads had disappeared under the foundations and footings of the new Assembly Hall. Steadily the building work progressed into 1939, along with our rather gentle transitional life in Forms 1 and 2.

So to the last summer of peace, though we did not know it at the time. The grand new school neared completion and we all gathered in ordered rows on the playing field one July morning for the School Photo. It would be the last for a long time to come. The next one in 1948 would include my brother Stuart, but by then I had flown (pardon the pun) to the young man's world of the RAF.

Visiting SGS a couple of years ago I noticed that the 1939 photo was missing from the otherwise comprehensive school photo sequence on the corridor walls. Enquiring, I was told there had never been one. I was able to correct that misapprehension and had the happy thought of presenting my own copy - still safely preserved - to complete the show. I was grateful to have it accepted, and there it is somewhere now: the last pre-war photo - including some boys who were to give their lives in the ensuing war - and the last in the line of the 'original' SGS before our joining with Moulton.

The 'big' new School opened in the September, and simultaneously we were at war with Germany. The lovely new windows were pasted over with a fabric mesh against bomb blast and flying glass; sinister concrete air raid shelters made their appearance around the school, to which we were briskly despatched at least once a term on the sounding of alarm bells. A 'practice' air raid, of course. I cannot recall their being used once 'in anger'.

So the wartime months and years passed and became the 'norm', with the peacetime years of Ayscoughfee becoming a distant dream. Little boys were growing up to become bigger ones. For us the war was more of an excitement than the terrible reality it actually was. One particular excitement was the morning of Monday 12th May 1941. As usual I arrived at Holbeach station to catch our school train, to be told of an air raid on Spalding during the night. Our train was late and as we approached Spalding reduced speed to a crawl. Crossing the Welland only a short distance from today's AHS and then on to an embankment at the foot of the SGS playing field, we hung eagerly out of the windows hoping to see a demolished school, as boys would. Not so. But a pattern of craters alongside the line, and amongst them the remains of a poor man caught in the blast a few hours before. Signals were bent and twisted, but the station - a vital target - was intact.

The town centre had been showered with incendiary bombs causing many fires, with shops and offices burnt out and destroyed. We walked through the still smouldering ruins to school, where we found windows smashed by blast, but the buildings otherwise undamaged. Fortunately. Stuart, just nine days short of his eighth birthday, went off on his own through the heavily damaged smoking town centre to Ayscoughfee. No problem. Both schools were open and the children got there. Shades of today, when they close at the sign of a flake of snow.

The fortunes of war ebbed and flowed around Spalding, the Fenland, the Wash and East Anglia as RAF, USAAF and Luftwaffe aircraft did their best, or worst, in their respective causes. The Wash alone must be full of crashed aircraft and their drowned crews, yet, although living locally, we were aware of only a fraction of the daily drama. Spalding author Alistair

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Issue 2

Goodrum's superbly researched histories form an incredible revelation of the manifold triumphs and disasters enacted in our local skies as WW2 ground its remorseless way to Allied victory on 8th May 1945.

By which time I was in the sixth form at SGS, a year younger than most of my fellow students. Therein lay trouble. Sixth form life was, unlike the rest of school, a much more laid-back, relaxed, do-your-own study affair. I loved it. Never one to exert myself unduly unless under pressure, I took this new-found life as a gentle gift. But with the inevitable result: failure in my HSC (Higher School Certificate) after two years' modest study. I was then 17 with a year in hand before call-up to National Service. Time to pull my socks up, I thought. I did and a year later sat HSC again and that did the trick.

Before leaving school life, a word about the teaching. In the lower school the method was, in general, 'teaching by fear': learning stuff by rote, being tested, with punishments ensuing for those whose memories, or energies, let them down. These were the least happy years of my school life. Teaching? "Money for old rope" I used to think. There were some, but a minority, who could teach with fairness and without malice, but none, not one, who could inspire - me, at any rate - with enthusiasm or love for their subject. Because they didn't have it themselves. Not one subject, nor one lesson, do I remember actually looking forward to with pleasure and anticipation. They were not happy days. Classroom life, I think, is much more fun nowadays. But in one respect life at SGS was a degree better than in many secondaries of that era. Our headmaster was not a 'caner'. Only under more extreme circumstances, probably when he thought things were getting a bit out-of-hand, did Mr Driver resort to the ultimate deterrent. And that rarely. I evaded the doomsday scenario probably by luck - or craftiness - rather than any innate virtue.

Thus it was that I thought I needed to find a job in life that would keep me on the straight and narrow. Hence around this time I began to have ideas, increasingly persistent, of a job in the Church; or, more precisely, the Anglican ordained ministry. But, before launching into that, National Service beckoned.

We are very grateful to Mr. Smith for taking the time to write such a detailed and fascinating account of his life at Ayscoughfee Hall School and Spalding Grammar School. Next Summer we will print the 'final instalment' of his career, including his National Service and Time as a Minister in the Church.

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Sports Day 1936 - Ian Smith pictured middle row second from the left

News of Old Ayscoughfians

We are delighted that Mr. Ian Smith has introduced his younger brother, Mr. Stuart Smith to the Old Ayscoughfians and we hope to welcome them both and Stuart's wife, Mrs. Kathleen Smith, to school on 4th July for the final night of the Junior Production.

Stuart has written a fascinating account of his life, from a five year old starting Ayscoughfee in 1938 to the present day, taking in a career as a Cathedral Organist, a Choir Master in Northern Ireland, Head of Music at Wisbech Grammar and a love of climbing.

His memoirs, like Ian's are too lengthy to print in one Newsletter but too interesting to 'cut' - forgive us Stuart—Part 2 will be in the newsletter distributed in June 2019.

From STUART MARSTON SMITH

*“the whole of the
southern side of
Hall Place was
flattened and still
smoking from
having been hit
by incendiary
bombs by Herr
Hitler”*

“Come on Stuart, it is time to get up”, was my morning wake-up call from my mother, at about 6.40 a.m., every school-day, from the age of five, because my older brother Ian and I had a train to catch. Then, after no movement on my part, some five minutes later, “Stuart, your Breakfast will be getting cold”, not that Mother had started cooking it yet, but that was enough to make me spring, no that is not quite the right word, rather, I prised myself out of bed. After a quick wash, and duly dressed in my Ayscoughfee uniform, I sat down for Breakfast of cereal – Shredded Wheat, occasionally Puffed Wheat, though Porridge in the winter; fried egg, bacon, fried bread; toast and marmalade. Marvellous! My many years of fried Breakfasts do not seem to have done my 85 year old body much harm! After cleaning one's teeth, and with shoes and coat on, I would get my small bicycle out of the garage, and together with Ian, we would pedal half a mile to Holbeach Railway Station to catch the 7.30 a.m. train to Spalding. Over the years this time did vary slightly. I think my brother and I went our separate ways in Spalding when we got to the Sheep Market, for he would wend his way to the Grammar School, whilst I walked through the town, aged 5! to Ayscoughfee Hall. What a wonderful old building, built in 1452, with lovely, interesting grounds, Ice-House, avenue of Yew trees, long fish pond with Sir Edwin Lutyens '1914-18 War Memorial' at the far end. How fortunate I was to have these few years in such a lovely ambience.

In my early days at Ayscoughfee, I went just for the mornings. At Lunch time, Miss A. T. Black, would very kindly take me to the Railway Station, with her pushing her bicycle and me riding on the saddle, to catch the 12.55 train, and on which I would travel with the Guard in his Guards Van. I would note with boyish fascination, the Guard drink cold tea out of a bottle. When eventually I stayed for the whole day, I would go at Lunch time with Miss Black to her flat in the building on the north side of the Brewery, and have my packed Lunch with her. It is strange how smells make such a deep impression on the memory, for I can still 'smell' the Brewery, indeed one could smell it from Ayscoughfee if the wind was in the right direction – I loved it.

Another early and very distinctive smell, but one I did not like, was that of the gas-mask, when they were distributed to the whole population in 1938, when I was 5. However, a smell that conjures up an awful picture in my mind, which I recollect vividly, occurred just over a week before my 8th birthday, when in my usual walk through the town, I entered Hall Place, but where I had previously walked past Pennington's big shop, the whole of that southern side of Hall Place was flattened and still smoking from having been hit by incendiary bombs by Herr Hitler, during the early hours of the previous day, Sunday, 12th May, 1941.

Nothing to do with Ayscoughfee, except that I was still wearing my uniform, was when one afternoon, I had just arrived home from Spalding and gone out into the garden. Being war time, with so many airfields in Lincolnshire, I was very accustomed to the sound of aircraft and quite an expert at recognising the great variety. However, on this occasion, the sound I heard all of a sudden was different, I looked upwards and saw a strange two-engine bomber, flying low at about 1500 feet, along the High Street through Holbeach, in a westerly direction, roughly over

the Police Station at the top of Edinburgh Walk. Funny, I thought, the air-raid warning siren had not sounded, yet I could swear it was a German. Within two or three seconds, I both saw and heard a Hurricane catching up with it, having presumably come from RAF Sutton Bridge, which was where the Power Station is now. At that moment, the siren did go off in its wailing down and up, down and up spine chilling way, whereas the sound of the All-Clear was just a steady note. Immediately, there was the sound of machine guns, and within a trice, my mother told me to go into the house quickly – oh, what a spoil sport, thought I, but nevertheless I promptly did as I was told. The bomber jettisoned its bombs at Beggars Bush, Weston, and turned over the Wash, where the Hurricane brought it down. I think it was a Dornier 217. That was my third encounter with the reality of war. “In which case Smith, you have omitted one”; “Ah, so I have, but it may well get censored by the Editor of the Newsletter, but if you insist, here goes”.

When I was aged 7, Herr Adolf Hitler was directly responsible for me getting wet feet. It was in the early hours of the morning, the siren had sounded the alarm, so the household was up and about, though I do not think Father had bothered to get out of bed, and Smith minor wanted to have a pee, (you can see why this may get censored!). In those days, we did not have an indoor loo, so I was standing in my parents bedroom, small potty in one hand, looking out of the window, down the garden, in the direction of the railway station. All of a sudden, there was an intense tearing-screaming sound, a quick crescendo to a great climax over our house, followed by a decrescendo, and then an explosion. A bomb had gone over us, falling near the railway, 200 or so yards away. With the explosion, the catch fell off the window, just inches from my nose, and, could you blame me, I dropped the potty, spilling the contents over my feet. The Nazis were a devious lot, sending out their bombers to frighten 7 year olds into dropping their pee-pot.

Ayscoughfee Hall had an even closer shave than I had, for on the afternoon of Sunday, 27th July, 1942, a Dornier 217 dropped an HE (high explosive) bomb in the grounds, causing much damage and killing all the birds in the bird-house. Hitler's final attempt to do Smith minor a mischief came after the night of Saturday, 3rd-4th March, 1945, when a Junkers 88 strafed Holbeach and Spalding with 20mm cannon shells. Very soon on the morning of the 4th I got to know that Holbeach Cemetery had been sprayed with cannon shells, so on my trusty bicycle, I was quickly down to the Cemetery and searching the graves and the grass, and it did not take long to find a shell.

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*Ayscoughfee Children, 1942 in the Cley Hall Gardens, Stuart Smith pictured Back
row third from left .*

News of Old Ayscoughians

Back home, I immediately got one of my Dinky Toy aircraft, a B17 'Flying Fortress', (why did they not make a Wellington or a Lancaster?), and into the garden I went, to carry out bombing raids with the outsize bomb held underneath my Flying Fortress, and dropped the said bomb on the concrete path with varying degrees of force. Now some 20mm cannon shells were explosive ones, though not all of them. I guess that either I had one of the 'not alls' or a dud explosive one, but on the 1.0 BBC News a warning was announced of the possible danger from this raid of live cannon shells. Father heard this and promptly confiscated my prized possession and with his best cricket over-arm spin bowling action, propelled the missile into the depths of a Fishpond Lane former brick-pit pond, reputedly 60 feet deep. Father was the spoilsport this time, not Mother.

*"...and into the
garden where
there was a good
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she would try to
teach us to swim"*

I have got nothing but thanks and praise for Miss Black's generosity and patience with this over sensitive and tearful small child. The school consisted of two rooms; looking at the front of the house, they were the upstairs on the left and the room behind. I remember music played from records on Miss Black's wind-up record player, with us dancing in the Hall. One piece was The English Country Dance, "Sir Roger de Coverley" and another which stuck in my mind was the "Royal Air Force March Past", composed in 1918 by Sir Henry Walford Davies. His "Solemn Melody" is always played on Remembrance Sunday, at the ceremony at the Cenotaph in Whitehall. In later years, I would play organ arrangements of both these Walford Davies pieces, on appropriate occasions.

A very different memory of my Ayscoughfee days which made a very definite imprint, not only on my memory, but literally upon my head, just behind my left ear in fact, was made by a hockey stick raised a shade too high during a game of hockey. Ouch! Another sporting activity, was when Miss Black would take us in the summer term, down stream of the river, past the High Bridge, along High Street to, now was it what is currently Cley Hall Hotel (?), I think it must have been, and into the garden where there was a good sized pond, where she would try to teach us to swim with the aid of an inflated inner-tube on the end of a rope. Miss Black had hold of the other end, by which means she pulled us towards the bank while we endeavoured to do the breast-stroke. How kind of the owners to allow us this attractive facility. That lovely garden has doubtless been shrunk, sold off for building plots since those days..



*Photograph of the pond in the gardens of Cley Hall as it was during the war years
and where Miss Black taught Ayscoughfee Children how to swim.*

And finally from the archives

January 27th 1996

4 1/3 bottles of milk stolen after 3.45p.m. yesterday. Mrs. Willett substituted 4 bottles of orange juice stolen during lunch hour today also 4 bottles of milk. Matter reported to the police.

But the matter wasn't allowed to rest.....

February 28th 1996

I (Mrs Credland) was absent from school from 10.15 a.m. to 1.05 p.m. today to attend Juvenile Court in connection with stolen milk and orange juice.

Special thanks to all who sent in contributions to the Newsletter, to Sally Chester and Jo Wade for creating the final product.