

Southey Hall Preparatory School

A short history

Appendices

I: Prep school life in the 1930s by J Good

II: Evacuated to Gr Fulford by R P Elis

**III: 1946-48- A Personal Memoire by Charles R
Butt**

IV: Memories by Stephen Midgley 1950 to 1954

Introduction by Martin Warwick

Southey Hall Boy's School



Eastwick Manor had been the seat of the Howards, one of the premier families of England but many local people will remember it as Southey Hall Boys Preparatory School. It had become a school in 1924 and remained such until 1954. But what do we know of it? There are a diminishing few who have active memories of their schooldays there.

The school was originally established far away from Bookham in about 1885 in a building in Southey Road, Worthing (hence its name) by three 'Wood sisters', Sarah, Mary and Anne aged 42, 39 and 37 all unmarried. Sarah being the oldest was the Head of the school - a boarding school for boys. The staff was the three sisters as teachers and a matron and three domestic servants one of which was the cook beginning with just twenty four boarders aged between 7 and 12.

By 1901 the school had changed ownership into the hands of a Mr Newton Hinxman and his wife Edith with Newton as Head. Ten years later the school had enlarged to 30 boarders aged 6 to 14 and a domestic staff of a Matron, a cook and five servants.

We have no record of the school during WWI but afterwards Newton Hinxman was of retiring age and sold the school to a 42 year old Henry Reginald Fussell from the Wirral, Cheshire who took over as Headmaster.

By this time the school was presumably limited by the size of the building and the

number of boarders it could take and Henry in 1924 looked for a far larger suitable property. Eastwick Manor was available and ideal and Henry purchased the lease and changed the name to Southey Hall Boys Preparatory School. The size of Eastwick Manor meant that the school could be built up to be a major preparatory school.

Both Henry Fussell and his son Dennis were good tennis players to the extent that they both played at Wimbledon. Henry played in the 1919,1920,1922,1923 and 1924 Championships. In 1922 he reached the fourth round. Denis got into the second round in 1929 but was knocked out in three sets. This established a good tradition for tennis at Southey Hall School..

The original school in Worthing was purchased and became 'Southey Hall Hotel' and in 1953 was converted to flats and called 'Southey Hall Flatlets'. It is still a block of flats but it is now known as 'Dolphin Court'.

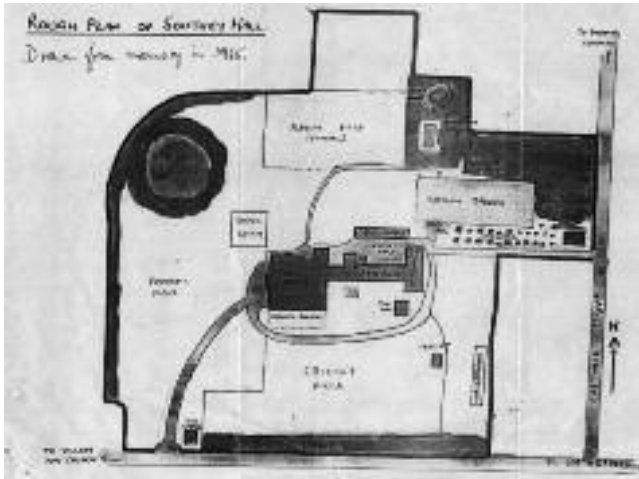


Great Fulford House, Dunsford

In Southey Hall the school continued to grow in the period up to WWII with about 60-70 boarders (no day boys). At the beginning of the war the school at first stayed in the house as the bombs started to fall. In October 1940 the lodge of Southey Hall School was bombed and shortly afterwards a land mine fell in the grounds and

it was decided that the school should be evacuated. The school evacuated to the magnificent Great Fulford House at Dunsford near Exeter for the duration of the war. At this time the Headmaster was about 60 and it was a good time for him to retire and hand over the headship to his son Denis Fussell. Denis was then 33 and a confirmed bachelor. His father did not have a long retirement and died in 1941 aged only 63.

School uniform was grey corduroy shorts, black and white striped ties, a jersey with the black and white school colours around the neck, long socks with the colours around the tops and school caps. On Sundays it was a grey flannel suit to go to St Nicolas church. The boys always referred to the Headmaster as 'Sir' but behind his back as Denis. He was a large burly man, fairly shambly in attire with somewhat whitish or auburn hair and rather a reddish face. He was approachable and well liked by the boys and a good teacher. The senior master was Mr Locke called Dumbo by the boys for the obvious reason.



Discipline was with an iron hand or more with the headmaster's slipper or the cane. This comes out strongly in memories of the four old boys who have contributed to this article. There was a system of 'stars and stripes'. The slightest indiscipline was awarded by a stripe and this meant waiting outside the headmaster's study for a beating. You could be even given a stripe for

not giving the right answer in the Maths lesson - not really the right encouragement needed and so far from the schooling of today. Far from encouraging discipline it had the effect of motivating the hardier of the boys to compete for the honour of having the most beatings in a term - one got up to 66!

While they were evacuated Southey Hall was taken over by the Canadian troops stationed locally. They didn't have the same respect for the property with military exercises in the grounds and a casual approach to the house. By the time the war ended and the troops had departed the house was in a very poor condition with banisters pulled down, decorations dirty and depleted and furniture devastated. Even with the best attempts the house was in a poor state.

This was the house to which Southey Hall School returned in 1945. The period after 1945 was not an easy time. The war had ended but rationing and shortages continued through to the late 1950s. It would have taken a fortune to restore the house to its former state, far outside the finances of a school's budget and it was a matter of living with the state it was in.

The school continued until 1954 when suddenly, overnight, the headmaster Denis Fussell vanished from the scene - he no longer appeared at the school. It was an unfortunate and amazing incident. The explanation was recorded by one of the boys at the school.

'One evening early in the summer term, soon after the rest of us had gone to bed in our dormitories, there was a terrific commotion in the house - a boy was clearly being chased and was trying to get away from Denis's clutches, and there was shouting and swearing - I remember this very distinctly because nobody ever swore at Southey Hall, even among ourselves. The very next day the headmaster disappeared from the school, and so did the boy in question.'

The rumour that the headmaster had been interfering with one or more of the boys appears to be substantiated but the degree of truth in this will never now be established. It would however account for the extraordinary departure of the person who was the owner of the school and previously had been highly spoken of and well thought of by the boys. A further rumour amongst the boys was that he had been killed by a train door hitting him but that was not true as he lived until 1977 (age 70) and died in the Southampton area.

The school was taken over by the deputy headmaster Mr Locke and continued under Mr Locke for a short time but presumably it was still owned by Denis Fussell and was closed down. It is hard to see that the school was financially viable and nobody would have taken it on with an income from fees of just 70 boys. The remaining pupils were either taken away from the school or transferred to the Little Abbey Prep School, Burghclere, Newbury.

It was sad to see what had once been a majestic house stand empty and abandoned and fast going into decay. Modern development has led to the whole area becoming the Eastwick housing estate. The sole sorry remains of the once majestic house are



Eastwick Manor /Southey Boys School Abandoned

gateposts from its original entrance still standing in Lower Road.

The appendices record four recollections of the school, one in the prewar period, one when evacuated to Great Fulford during the Second World War, one in the immediate post-war period and one in its final years.

a school. I am sure that my love for such houses and English social history must have been kindled during that five and a half years, the house and grounds were left as they had been planned and built a hundred and fifty years before. The great urban sprawl of London into Surrey began when the local LSWR line to Waterloo was built at the turn of the century, but Great Bookham was left unspoilt until after the Great War when commuting started in the village, Waterloo was only half an hour away.

The house contained six dormitories in the old stately bedrooms, plus rooms occupied by Mr and Mrs Fussell, the headmaster and his wife, for their private use. The four main dormitories on the first floor each had an adjoining dressing room which were used as bedrooms for staff members. There were about sixty boys and six full time staff, four masters and two mistresses, to look after our education. Behind the main block were a series of old store rooms and stables that had been converted into classrooms and recreation rooms where we boys spent most of our time. The worst part, which would never be allowed now, were the lavatories to the side of a small yard. They had no outer door to keep out the bitter cold in the winter. We were allowed about twenty minutes for our ablutions after breakfast, few of us abluated then, we preferred to wait till later in the day when there was more time and privacy. Such conditions seem archaic now but were no different then to those experienced by our domestic staff.

We fed in the original dining room where there was plenty of room for the sixty boys and the staff. It was a route march from the kitchen, nevertheless our food was always hot when it reached us on the table. Our food, contrary to most ideas of a Dickensian prep school, was really good. It was plain, properly cooked and nicely served and



difficult to fault. Of course there were inevitably some dishes to which I was not particularly partial, but that was only to be expected, it is impossible to please everyone all the time. Boys and staff all had the same menu and we ate together. The menu repeated itself roughly every fortnight, but as the quality was good that did not matter. I dreaded Tuesdays when bread and butter pudding appeared, alternating occasionally with sago, semolina and tapioca, always difficult to swallow and hold down. I have never liked those puddings, but that was me and not the fault of the cook and caterer. Second helpings of pudding were there for the asking. During my first year I made the mistake of imitating the affected voice of the boy sitting opposite me and when second helpings were offered I asked for the mysterious ‘custolia’ which I soon discovered was ‘custard only’. I never made that mistake again and to this day have never liked custard on my puddings however well made it is. Since we small boys were happy with our food, and small boys are difficult to please, it must have been good.

Our uniform was practical, much more akin to present day fashion than the standard of the 1930s. In winter we wore grey corduroy shorts, hard wearing for small boys, grey wool socks with black and white (the school’s colours) tops, grey shirts and the black and white school tie, and a grey wool long sleeved sweater, black and white round the collar. All very sensible, comfortable and practical though unusual for those days. In the summer we wore grey flannel shorts and jackets. Kinch and Lack were the official suppliers but Mother found that the Scotch Wool shop in Nottingham produced good copies, moreover their socks were made of softer wool and were more comfortable than those from K & L. Of course we suffered from chapped knees in the winter when it was cold but shorts were always the rig of the day for boys at that period. On Sundays we walked to church in the village, in crocodile, in Eton suits and Eton collars, neither



comfortable or suitable, wearing the school cap in winter and a straw boater in summer.

Discipline was strict and good manners were expected from us. We did not step out of line. It has always been a trait at prep and public schools to abide by the rules without question, anyone stepping over the line expected to be punished and take the consequences of their misdemeanours, and after punishment had been administered that was the end of the matter. A summons to Mr Fussell's study was to be feared. Beatings were few but were accepted punishment, always administered by the headmaster. Such chastisement is frowned upon nowadays and I wonder why. No harm was ever done by abiding by this code of conduct which we fully accepted. We had a sense of honour and loyalty to each other and the establishment to which we belonged, hence the building of esprit-de-corps and team spirit. It was easy for us to accept the rigours and disciplines later imposed upon us in the Services. There was never any bullying either at Southey Hall or any of the other many prep schools that I knew of, such stories, I believe, came from Charles Dickens and the state day schools.

Our routine was similar to most schools. The day started at 7.25am when Brown, the under matron, came round the dormitories to wake us and close the windows while we dressed. There was only one bathroom which could accommodate one dormitory at a time, so we waited our turn to wash. We dressed and stripped our beds folding our sheets and blankets neatly at the bottom of the bed. We spent a penny in our pot under the bed and waited for the bell to ring at 7.50 which was the signal for quiet while we said our prayers before filing down to the ballroom where Mr Fussell read prayers, a collect, thanksgiving, the Lord's prayer and grace. The dining room was in the next room where breakfast was ready for us. Monitors took it in turns to say grace before and after every meal. The Christian ethics were firmly entrenched in us.

Breakfast was usually porridge served with hot milk and brown sugar, not my ideal, followed by bacon or egg, always a proper cooked course. We finished with bread, butter and marmalade and had two cups of tea if we wished. Thus fortified we trooped past Mrs Fussell who inspected us to see there were no holes in our woolly sweaters, then down to the form rooms where we lived during the day to wait our 'turn' in the draughty lavs. Next was ten minutes PT or a run round the house before we started our lessons. We had four 45 minute lessons in the morning with a long break between the second and third lesson, the break was always taken outside whenever possible and thus gave us plenty of opportunity to let off steam. Lunch was 12.45, a hot first course, a roast or similar, tons of vegetables and potatoes that were grown in the kitchen garden, followed by pudding. Puddings varied from steamed treacle pud to open jam tarts, always good and filling. We played games every afternoon, cricket in the summer and soccer the winter terms. Tea was a couple of slices of bread and butter and a cup of tea or cocoa. At 4.15 we started evening school, two 45 minute periods followed by one of 30 minutes. Supper at 6.30 consisted of bread, butter and jam and quantities of tea. This meal was always better at the beginning of term and at half term when we had the cakes we brought back with us or sent by our mothers. Our cakes were shared by all the nine or so boys at our table, the lucky cake owner was allowed two slices of his

own.

Our day finished with one hours prep between 7 and 8 o'clock. Prep and the working day over we lined up in the passage and made our way up our dormitories. Matron stood outside her room half way up the stairs, always hands on hips, and as we passed her we said 'Yes Matron', or 'No Matron' as the case may be depending upon whether or not we had 'been'. I soon learned always to say 'Yes Matron' whether I had 'been' or not because the penalty was to be given a dose of cascara or syrup of figs. This was unpleasant enough in itself, but you had to reckon with the consequences too. Inevitably the medicine would take effect, usually when you were snug in a bed and action was necessary in the small hours when the house was still and pitch dark. On these occasions we had to knock on matron's door to wake her, say who we were and ask permission to be excused. She was usually too sleepy to appreciate who we were and always said yes. Next, up the stairs again in the pitch dark feeling ones way to the lavatory where you could at last switch on the light. This lavatory must have been one of Thomas Crapper's early masterpieces, a real blue and white work of art, two feet in diameter, set in spacious polished mahogany furniture. To flush you lifted a porcelain covered handle set into the furniture. I have never seen the like before or since - magnificent! And so to bed, nature having been satisfied.

One imagines matron's medicine chest to be full of pills and potions of kinds, probably today it would be full of patent medicines, but not so then. Miss Headlam had two cures only for general use (other than cascara!) a pot of homemade cream that was always in demand for chapped and cut knees that was kept in the bathroom and applied at bedtime, and the one gallon white enamel jug of homemade gargle, mainly salt and water, used throughout the winter terms. The school got by with these two concoctions and by and large kept us healthy.

Bedtime routine was always the same, the inevitable wait for your dorm to be called to the bathroom, the bell for silence while we said our prayers, a final widdle in our pots, and into bed. Matron came in to say good night and open the windows and switch off the lights. Our days were full, we had plenty of exercise and work to make us sleep soundly.

Wednesdays and Saturdays were half holidays when we had no afternoon or evening classes. We were allowed 2d, for juniors, and 3d for seniors for sweets on those days, double if it was your birthday or a special occasion - that was the equivalent of 1p in today's money but it went a long way. The so called, tuck shop was run by Mrs Fussell with three monitors to help. We were not allowed to bring sweets or food back to school other than one cake already mentioned, which Mrs Fussell removed from our care on the first day of term, to await our turn at the tea table. My father gave me 10/- (50p) pocket money each term which more than covered my running expenses at the tuck shop, and for some items from the stationery cupboard which we had to pay for, such as rulers that broke when flicking pellets and rubbers that disappeared as missiles. Other essential items for small boys were torch batteries (2d or 1p), bulbs ditto (1d),

bulb holder (3d) and a switch (6d or 2½p). The latter items were essential for lighting one's tuck box, this was a 'one-off' because a properly installed lighting system lasted one's stay at prep school. To buy these and similar items we withdrew the money from our pocket money account on Wednesdays and Saturdays and asked Miss Houlston to get them for us when she next went to Woolworths in Dorking. Any surplus pocket money at the end of term was given back to us to take home. This was a useful addition to the pocket money, 6d (2½p), which my Father gave me every Saturday when I was at home.



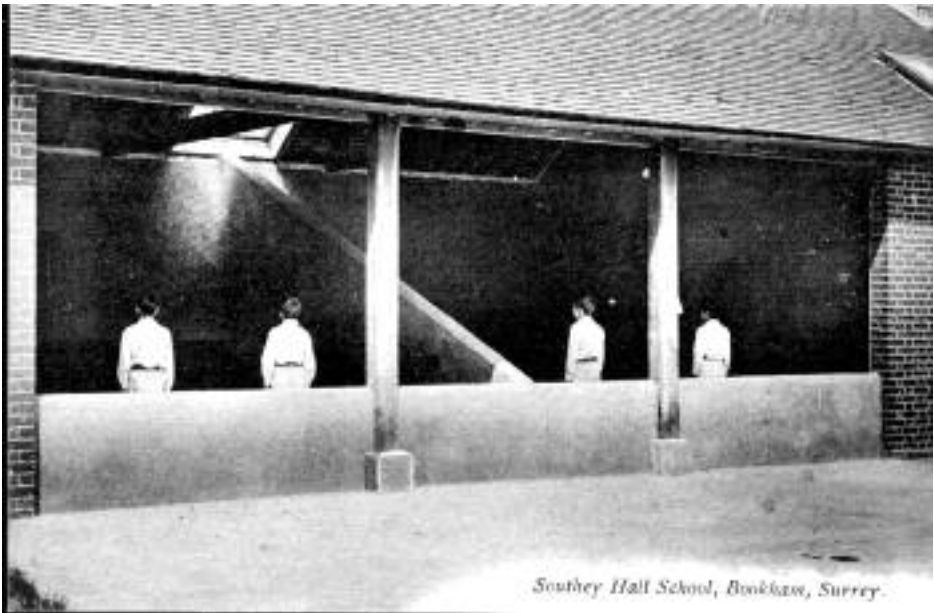
I cannot speak too highly of the standard of education we received at Southey Hall. When I heard of the poor results achieved at three of the small prep schools we played at games, and my standard when I started at Oakham I realised that I was lucky to have had such a sound grounding in the basic subjects. No one ever failed the Common Entrance exam and most - I was one of the exceptions - were successful sitting their scholarships. The school was divided into six forms, all approximately ten or eleven boys. There were six or seven only in the sixth form. Mr Fussell always referred to as the headmaster, did not teach at all, he was owner of the school, board of governors, bursar, the lot. He must have been in his sixties, seemingly very old to us. During my time at the school there were several staff changes, of course, but in general there was continuity. Miss Houlston was one of the cornerstones who started with the school, and was still there long after I left. She taught maths extremely well, and it was she who finally got me through the maths mental barrier that I had, albeit too late for a scholarship, after some extra tuition. I have her to thank for my progress in that subject. She was popular and strict, rode an old upright bike and drove an old covered Austin

Seven. She also ran the school gardens, of which more later. Her nickname was Carstairs after a great cyclist of the time. Locke, the French master and the other cornerstone, taught me all I knew. He had brilliant ideas, and at the age of eleven we were acting French plays. He provided us with the French equivalent of the Children's Newspaper, hence our vocabulary and French idiom was ahead of children of our age. When I got to Oakham I was nearly two years ahead of my contemporaries, no wonder I was expected to achieve a distinction in my School Certificate. Latin was well taught by several masters mainly Mr Cornell who left to be ordained in about 1936. I met him in Plymouth in 1943 when he was a naval chaplain. I had several English masters, Mr Cox stands out in my memory. He had a real love of Shakespeare and frequently went to the Old Vic, only half an hour away by train. He read a lot of poetry to us, Masfield was one of his favourites, but we covered much ground, Shakespeare and others, all most useful in later years. He introduced me to the Father Brown stories. Yes, he had a love of English literature which he succeeded to pass on to us, and not only English literature, for in our second and third years we were thoroughly taught grammar, thank goodness. Learning Latin was a great asset, too. History was a weak link, the subject that I later liked most. We had a series of history masters, the worst by far was Denis Fussell, the headmaster's son. He was not a good instructor, nevertheless somehow between them all, much of our early English history was well ingrained in me.

It all started in Form One. There were only six of us under Miss Bayley's wing. She taught us our tables and the rudiments of spelling and grammar. On Sundays she read some of the splendid Old Testament stories during the short lesson we had before walking to church. These half hour lessons continued right through the school so that, by the time we left, we had a good grasp of those wonderful stories. It was on one of these occasions my first year, after admitting that I did not know all of the Lord's prayer, young John McCluskie said 'And you a parson's son!', to which I replied 'And you are a doctor's son and can't take out an appendix!'

Geography was a subject that seemed to run through a lot of staff, nevertheless I always drew good maps.

It is such a pity that our educationalists are for ever arguing about what should be taught and how it should be taught. I realise that our standard at Southey Hall was high, but one thing stands out a mile, concentrate on the three Rs and the rest follows. It is the basics taught and learned before the age of nine and ten years that are the most important in our education. I was always a slow reader and wish that I could have in made to read more and that I had been given the right books to read. The library in the headmaster's study was more of a hindrance than a help. We were encouraged to take a book out each Sunday, no help or advice was ever given so I never really knew just what was available. The books I always found were small print late Victorian copies of Mr Midshipman Easy and the like which were good stories but written in a style beyond my reading ability. I needed Swallows and Amazons and books like that. No attention was paid to the type of books in the library. Thank goodness for Mr Cox and his wonderful books and stories which sowed the seeds of English in me.



Southey Hall School, Bookham, Surrey.

As I have already mentioned we played games every afternoon. I was reasonably good at soccer and cricket playing in both 1st XIs for my last two years. One of the perks of being in the teams was visiting other schools in the area and having the opportunity to get away from Southey Hall occasionally. The real highlight was sampling the teas after the games, all were good but our home teas in the summer were far the best, cream buns, jelly and all sorts of things that appealed to small boys. It was well worth being in the teams just for the teas. Our sausage and mash teas in the winter were highly acclaimed. Other recreations available were riding and a nine hole golf course, neither of which appealed to me then. I learned to play fives, we had two fives courts, and I became quite good at it. Swimming was compulsory more than goodness. We each had a small garden measuring about six foot square and shared between two. I can't say that I had green fingers, flowers were not my forte. While other boys were planting packets of flower seeds to make a colourful display I limited my skills to growing lettuces and radishes in straight lines, much the best in the school because they were the only ones and I thoroughly enjoyed them for tea, much to the amusement of the others. My gardening required less effort and the end product was more useful because it provided something to eat. I was always sorry that there was never a prize for the best vegetables.

While mentioning recreation, we all went for a walk in crocodile on Sunday afternoons, not in our Eton suits I am glad to say. Sometimes I met Godfrey, my brother, if our walk headed towards Leather head. We were about to stop and have a few words. We had several very cold winters and went sliding on the ponds on Bookham Common. The ice must have been thick to support our combined weight.

It was due to Mrs Fussell that we were fed well and that the domestic side of the school was run properly. Life was not all work and organised games. In June the hay was cut, and when there was a nice day we were told at breakfast that this was the day for the hay picnic, or hay feast as they called it. After the first lesson school was over for the day. First on the agenda was a bathe in our open air pool, having twice as long in the water than usual. Next we organised ourselves in groups of about ten and made our camps of hay. Lunch on these occasions was cold meat and salad. The staff must have worked very hard to prepare everything. Tea at about 4pm was similar to our cricket teas but with the addition of strawberries and cream. At about 5 o'clock we had a good friendly fight with our neighbours and scattered all the hay before collecting our bathing things for a second swim. I only remember one occasion when we had to have our tea indoors due to an unexpected thunder storm. These were the sort of parties we read about in childhood stories when we hadn't a care in the world.

Near the end of the Christmas term we had a party which was also made into a half holiday. We had a super tea, crackers, balloons and games - lots of fun but not as good as the summer picnic.

At the end of the Christmas term everyone from the youngest to the eldest had a part in the pantomime, a shortened version of Aladdin, Robin Hood or the usual pantomime stories. We rehearsed under the direction of Mr Locke for most of the term so that we were all well drilled in our parts when the great day came. A stage was erected in the ballroom, a beautifully proportioned room with pillars dividing it into thirds, the audience had two thirds and the stage in the other third. Behind the stage was the door to the dining room where we changed and prepared for our entry on stage. One made an imposing back stage entrance. I still remember some of the songs most clearly. Mrs Fussell made and altered all the costumes to fit us. I was told thirty years later that when these costumes were unpacked after the war they were still labelled with the names of the boys who wore them. We had a dress rehearsal to which all the domestic and outside staff and the village came, dressed in their Sunday best. Friday and Saturday were for parents so we were guaranteed three full houses. Living so far away in Nottingham Mother and Father only managed one attendance, I remember the date well, though I don't remember which play we performed - it was December 10th 1936, the day that King Edward VIII abdicated. After our play Mr Fussell brought his wireless into the ballroom and we listened to the abdication speech.

After the death of King George V in January, 1936 I watched the funeral cortege leave Kings Cross Station en route for Westminster Hall for the Lying in State. This was the day that my Father took me back to Southey Hall and our train from Nottingham had arrived at St Pancras conveniently before the arrival of the Royal train from Sandringham.

On Sunday evenings (winter only when dark enough) we had a film show. The projector, operated by Mr Fussell, was out of the Ark, so to were the films. I have not seen their like since, they were worthy of a place in a museum even then. The machine



stood five or six foot high, a solid piece of engineering that used 35mm film. No sound, of course, but it was electric! We saw Charlie Chaplin, *Out of the Ink Well*, Felix and the classic cartoons. Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck were too modern. The films were always breaking. We were summoned to the ballroom one day when a salesman demonstrated a modern 'talkie', a fraction of the size of Mr Fussell's that packed away in a small case. Part of the demonstration film was 'Man of Arran'. We all thought it was super, but were not surprised that we never saw its like at Southey Hall..

The school was taken to the cinema in Epsom twice to see the newsreels of two royal occasions, the Silver Jubilee of George V in 1935 and the Coronation of George VI in May 1937. I was not so impressed with the newsreels but delighted that, on both occasions the main films were my favourites, Will Hay in 'Oh! Mr Porter' and 'Boys Will Be Boys'.

When we are small we accept events and life as they come. I was witnessing an era drawing to a close at Southey Hall. Here we were living in a 150 year old stately home and watching a life around us that had many similarities to that of times now past. The park had been adapted to meet the needs of a school, playing fields appeared but horses still grazed on the soccer pitches and other fields on the estate, and the area to the south of the house had been made into our cricket field. The square ornate Italian Garden under the terrace outside the ballroom must have been the same for many years. The stables, about eight of them, were now garages and places where the mowers were kept. A recent TV programme describing *The Victorian Kitchen Garden* was a copy of the lovely Southey Hall walled kitchen garden, covering about two acres. The smaller beds were bordered by nine inch box hedges, the south facing brick wall formed the

back for several greenhouses heated by the sun in summer and coal boilers in the winter. Peaches and the like were grown in them. The six or so horses provided all the manure for the garden. This kitchen garden provided nearly all the vegetables for us. Dicker was the head gardener, he had one or two local men from the village to help him. He and Mrs Dicker lived in the lodge by the main gate. They were there when two bombs landed on the cricket field in 1940 and the lodge collapsed like a house of cards. Mr Locke told me later that Dicker did not seem worried about the house but was cross that he could not find his false teeth!

Other non-domestic staff consisted of Tyler, the general odd job man who lived in the bothy on the north side of the of the kitchen garden wall. The Bothy looked to be a real slum. Tyler carted the logs into the house, cleaned our shoes and did many other tasks. Mr Baker, the carpenter, lived in the village and sang in the church choir. He was employed full time, also teaching carpentry to some lucky boys. Finch, the groom, looked after the six ponies and horses and taught riding. He had been a mounted machine gunner during the war.



In the house Mrs Fussell ran the domestic side smoothly. Our happiness and well being were proof of her efficiency and ability. Cook, whose name I never knew, and always referred to as ‘Cook’, ran the kitchen with a tight rein. Like all cooks at such an establishment, she was ageless, round and I never saw her without her soft bedroom slippers. She had an equally old and fat dog called Patch. The kitchen was big as befitted such a house, pink and badly lit and always warm from the large coal range. She was helped by some of the six parlour maids. You never spoke to cook, she lived in a world apart, she fed us all very well, the food was always there and hot. There were at least two cleaners who ‘did’ the dormitories. The only time

we saw them was when we were ill with measles and things, they came in quietly, sprinkled old tea leaves on the polished wooden floors and swept the rooms.

Our milk at Southey Hall was delivered in a horse drawn milk float. I can still see that milk float, the horse trotting up the drive on cold winter mornings, the milkman standing in the back like a Roman charioteer, the lights were two flickering candles. The milk was delivered in a stainless steel milk churn, quite normal for those days.

My days at Southey Hall were happy. I was glad to have been part of such times, they were part of the patchwork of our social history now gone forever. I fully appreciate what a wonderful house it was that we lived in with its beautifully proportioned rooms, lovely wooden floors, magnificent doors and built in furniture, the like of which still exist in stately homes but we have to pay to see them, but as small boys we took it all for granted, unaware then of our surroundings. It is a great pity that the house was demolished in the 1950s, such destruction would never be allowed today. I have often wondered what happened to all the beautiful fittings and doors. I have been back to see what was left of the estate but was saddened by what I saw; the main house had gone, there was a village school on part of the kitchen garden, the north wall was all that was left of it. The north side of the estate had been developed and modern houses now stood on land that had been a wood and the swimming pool. All that remained of the estate I knew was the old cedar tree by the front door and the moat and small island in the middle of the new houses - not much of a once really stately house and park.

Prep schools have attracted a bit of a laugh maybe, and have always taken a lot of stick. I must have been cast in that mould too, but, whatever the failings of the system, and Southey Hall in particular, we were given a high academic standard which certainly

Appendix II
Memories of Southey Hall by R P Elis
Evacuated at Great Fulford

I was never at Great Bookham because I did not go to the school until after it had moved to Devon. I joined the school not at the customary age for prep school entrance for many because I had missed quite a bit of schooling due to illness. So I was somewhat older when I went there. I cannot remember my precise age when I joined. But I was born in October 1931 and I stayed at Southey Hall until after Common Entrance and moving onto Public School. I do remember though that I was there on VE Day because we had a holiday and great jollities organised by the staff to celebrate.

Great Fulford is a fortified manor house and has apparently been owned by the Fulford family continuously since at least 1190 and as given by Richard the Lion-Heart to a Fulford in recognition of gallant service in the Crusades. The present building was erected in the early 16th Century. It was besieged in the Civil War and shelled by the Parliamentarian forces. In the classrooms there were quite a few paintings, mostly of bosomy women ancestors with massive cleavages. Mainly of the Stuart era I think I fear that some of them may have been despoiled to some extent by boys flicking from



Great Fulford Manor

their rulers inky blotting paper pellets. The classrooms were on the 1st floor and dormitories on the 2nd. The Headmaster's study was on the ground floor just to the left of the entrance, as you look at it. I think it may have originally been the chapel of the house. Inside the main entrance was a great courtyard which occupied much of the area of the building. The rooms of the house ran around the 4 sides of the courtyard. I attach a couple of photographs which will give some idea of the lay-out. There is a superbly paneled Great Hall which I think was our dining room. There is also a splendid 17th Century Great Staircase which was out of bounds generally for us. I think the house is in some state of disrepair now and the current owner Francis Fulford who affects a somewhat laid back and languid manner (with deliberately shocking expletives) raises cash by various TV appearances there and certain other ventures. During the war his father was away on active service but a member of the family, one Humphrey Fulford, used to appear from time to time to keep an eye on the place. I think I remember him amusing us by playing ducks and drakes with pennies on the lake.

There was that lake in which we used to swim and where I learned how to. The staff had arranged a thickish rope across it onto which we could cling if in difficulties. When one could swim across to the far bank and back without resting one became a Duck and merited a laterally shaped V being stitched onto your bathers to represent a duck's beak. There was no nude bathing there that I can remember. The Headmaster Mr Denis Fussell when swimming would wear one of those old-fashioned swimming costumes for men with shoulder straps. Around the house and lake there was a superb and massive park area into which we were released during free time and we made camps, climbed trees, made dams in the streams and so on. There was a wonderful sense of freedom and enjoyment from the Park, I can remember nostalgically now. One boy was a very keen and able butterfly collector with much kit from Watkins and Doncaster such as nets, killing bottles, setting boards and other equipment. There were many species there for him to hunt. When the time for return to the house came we were summoned to the RV point by whistle and megaphone wielded by a fairly formidable female member of staff.

School uniform comprised grey corduroy shorts, black and white striped ties, a thick wool jersey with the black and white school colours around the V, long socks with the colours around the tops and school caps I think. On Sundays one changed into your best grey flannel suit to go to the local church service. Older boys could wear long trousers. I do not remember blazers. In summer we wore in the Park for example a soft grey hat with a band around it of the school colours again. We called these jelly bags. In summer heat we wore short ankle socks with our house shoes. We used to walk a mile or so to the church in either Cheriton Bishop or Tedburn St Mary (I can't remember which). We proceeded along the Devon lane in an orderly crocodile, talking away en route under the control of a staff member. I seem to remember the heat in summer bubbling out of the tarmac and with bees etc humming away in the hedgerow. It always seemed to be hot summer days at that time. After return from church we changed into our casual

clothes and could be released into the park and freedom.

Of the staff I remember Denis Fussell as Head Master. The boys always referred to him behind his back as Denis, but never of course to his face which was always "Sir". He was a large burly man, fairly shambly in attire. I think he may have had somewhat rufous or auburn but plentiful hair and rather a reddish face. He was approachable and I think pretty well liked by the boys but certainly respected. He had a small car in which he used to go off to Exeter from time to time. If catching some miscreant out he had the habit of saying with much stress on some of the words "What on earth do you think you are doing". The disciplinary practices at the school were very much as described by Charles Butt in his Memories. I once refused to bend over and he spent ages trying to persuade me, sitting down side by side. I thought and told him so that it was unjust because several other (unnamed by me) boys were doing exactly the same or worse and had not been reported by the mistress, she with the megaphone down in the Park. Eventually he did persuade me by employing threats about my prospective Common Entrance and speaking to my mother. I think Denis Fussell may have been a very good pianist, playing classical pieces and quite a good soccer player in his time.

Other members of the staff that I can remember now are Mr Lock or Locke. We called him "Dumbo" behind his back. Not because he was stupid: very far from it, but because there was a cartoon character of a baby elephant which could fly and Mr Lock was pretty round and portly. I remember him during break bowling in the nets which were to the left of the main entrance. He used to bowl quite slow and crafty balls and as he ran up to deliver you could hear the keys and coins in his trousers jingling. He taught me French. I remember well that when translating the seasons into en Hiver, en Automne and en Etee (however spelt) when we got to Spring we all had to shout in unison and with rising crescendo "Au Printemps". I have never forgotten it. Also, on the last day of term he used to give us 10 or 20 Questions. The final one was always "What is the colour of red lead" and the marks given were 2 for red and 1 for any other colour! Some of those prep school masters certainly had a gift of teaching small boys memorably and with enthusiasm. Another master I can mention was a Mr Lee,

He came to fill in from retirement during the war. He had been Headmaster of Dover College and a very good one I believe. He was quite old but very vigorous and alert. I remember him taking us out running in military formation as a platoon and briskly with him running alongside in his waistcoat and links around his upper arms and with fists pumping. Then there was also a Mrs Watkins. I think she may have been on the house-keeping side. A connection of hers came down for a night or so. He may have been a son. He was a naval officer and he took us for naval style PT. In the court-yard all drawn up in proper ranks and files. I understood that he was the John of the Arthur Ransome Swallows and Amazon children. Then there was the megaphone mistress who we addressed as "Pliss" (abbreviation of "Please Miss") and I think taught maths, and there were girls who used to matron the younger boys. I can't remember any other

staff now.

Our dining room was splendid. I think: it had a floor of black and white tiles. If there was too much noise at meals, silence would be imposed. The food was adequate but not marvelous. If a boy was ill-mannered at table, he would be consigned to a “pigs’ table” by himself in the corner. There was a good library from which one could take out books as wanted. I remember PC Wren, Brigadier Gerrard, Rafael Sabbatini, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Baroness Orczy and so on, which one devoured avidly. Sweets were given out in a room on the top floor, rationed and with scales employed. I remember Mars Bars apportioned by slices cut out to weight.

I remember the boys had various crazes. Paper darts, water bombs, and we had a trick of whizzing our wooden rulers across the class room by cutting your fingers sharply down the edge and getting impressive flight. Then there was desk cricket played with a roller with scores and wickets superimposed and one could devise a team and play them by rolling across the desk top. Desks were of the old-fashioned lidded variety with ink wells filled up from time to time. Stationery would be given out as required. Such as wooden relief nib holders and I remember that these would be chewed to shredded splinters by some of us. During free time in the class room there could be a fair bit of teasing of those boys who could be goaded into a real rage. Apt nicknames were used. I remember one boy could be really goaded by calling him “Dago” as he was somewhat dark and greasy looking, But on the whole boys were kind and good-natured generally to each other.

One thing I can well remember is that in bed one could hear wave after wave of bombers droning interminably overhead on their way to bomb Germany.

At the end of term our trunks would all be packed ready to go off PLA. Then with great excitement we would be picked up by a chara to be taken to the Exeter railway stations etc. We would sing in the bus “No more Latin, No more French, No more sitting on the hard school bench” and “This time next week, where shall we be? Not in this old Acadamee”. As we went past the lodge gate, a great cheer would go up.

I think: my days at Southey Hall were happy on the whole. Denis Fusell was a kind and caring and responsible Headmaster. Although a pretty strict disciplinarian, he clearly tried to make things as nice for us as he could. He gave us regular film shows in the winter terms. Rin Tin Tin, Lassie and silent classics and Laurel and Hardy and cartoons. I remember. Then in the summer term there were splendid expeditions to the beautiful Teign Valley. Here we would bathe in deep pools in the river. Then tea would be brought out by vehicle. Swathes of thick jam sandwiches and tea from a great urn. Then we would play Rounders or other sports. Lovely memories of those outings also how he would play classical gramophone records to us in bed in our dormitories sometimes. I can remember this well on summer evenings listening to that splendid music. I also seem to think I remember hearing him playing classical music beautifully on the piano sometimes.

Appendix III
Southey Hall Preparatory School
Great Bookham, Surrey, 1946-48
A Personal Memoire by Charles R Butt

As some years at a Montessori kindergarten school had failed to teach me much, my parents decided to send me to a boarding school before it was too late. After visiting various schools they choose Southey Hall Preparatory School at Great Bookham, Surrey. I was to start the September term 1946, the school's first term back at Eastwick Park on returning from its World War II exile to very primitive conditions somewhere in Devonshire. The school had evacuated there with its founders, Mr and Mrs Fussell, but Mr Fussell died there so the school was brought back by Headmaster/Proprietor Denis Fussell MA, their only child.

The school comprised teaching staff, a Matron with Assistants, domestics such as cooks and about 70 pupils, all boys, ranging in age from 8-14 years spread over five classes. The school only accepted full-term boarders - no weekly or day boys. Southey Hall's role was to prepare boys to pass the Common Entrance Examination for admission to public schools. The scholastic record was excellent.

One afternoon my Mother took me to the school's official outfitters, Frederick W Gorrindge's of Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1 to buy school uniform consisting of the following.

- Black cap with embroidered white SH monogram
- Grey woollen V-neck sweater with black/white/black stripes at the neck
- Crey shirts (Viyella type cloth)
- Tie, straight sided and square ended with horizontal black and white stripes
- Grey flannel shorts
- Grey woollen socks topped with black/white/black stripes
- Black leather outdoor shoes
- Black leather, elastic sided 'house shoes'
- Black blazer (for summer only) with white SH monogram on left breast pocket
- Round, floppy, grey felt hat for summer sports wear
- Football shorts and jerseys
- Grey, single breasted suit with grey shorts for Sunday wear (senior and older boys were permitted long trousers — much to my shame and chagrin my parents insisted I continued in shorts, claiming 'healthier')
- Very rarely awarded School Colours were denoted by reversed cap colours
- Personal flannelette pyjamas, dressing gown and slippers for dormitory.



Left to right

- 5th (Back) Row (1) Mr. Hedley-Browne, (7) Bratton, (10) Lart,
4th Row (1) Miss Holston, (2) Higginson (?), (3) Littlewood,
 (4) Butt, (5) Smith, (9) Venner, (11) Musselwhite
 (12) Richardson S., (18) Mr. Steers
3rd Row (8) Casalani (?), (9) Ellman N., (17) Miss Braddock
2nd (Seated) (1) Matron (Sister) Smith SRN, (8) Headmaster Mr. D.
 Fussell, MA, (9) Deputy Headmaster Mr. Locke,
 (16) Miss Braddock
1st (Cross-
 Legs) (8) Ellman A.

Aged 11½ years and proudly wearing my first wrist-watch, given me by my parents to mark this rite of passage, I was handed over in the cavernous entrance hall to Mr Fussell and to the bare, intimidating world of boarding school. I was allotted school and peg number '2' and allocated to 'New' Dormitory right up under the roof of the big house and directly above Mr Fussell's own quarters.

The school was housed in a grey, Georgian style mansion with the classrooms etc in a ground floor brick built wing by the back courtyard. The main house ground floor comprised an entrance hall, used only occasionally, the whole length of one side was the ballroom and library, all under an 18th century style painted ceiling, the dining room occupied a third side and kitchen etc the fourth. The first floor held the Headmaster's study and bedroom, some staff rooms, junior dormitories and the boys' communal bathroom, a rear lower mezzanine extension held Matron's domain. The top floor around the skylight well and directly under the roof held middle and senior

dormitories, interspersed by junior masters' bed-sitting rooms. The basement contained store-rooms, passageway to classrooms, the shoe and boys' games changing rooms. Five classrooms lined one side of a passage of the brick rear wing and the end room beyond the 3rd Form classroom was utilised to hold the pupils' 'tuck boxes', one per boy, neatly lined up and only available limited times each day and under the supervision of the duty teacher. The eight boys' WCs, urinal and wash-basins were situated in a side extension facing the rear courtyard and leading off the main passageway. At this juncture were the stationery cupboard and the school 'shop', which safe-guarded the boys' sweet rations, neatly stacked in individual piles as surrendered by each boy at the beginning of term and doled out on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons.

'Pocket Money' was also surrendered to Mr Fussell, who maintained individual accounts and released it on application once a week in school rule regulated amounts for officially approved shopping orders, which were obtained for us. The most we were allowed to spend in one week was 1/6d (one shilling and six pence). We did not see our cash until the balance was returned on the last day of term. Postage stamps were also given to Mr Fussell, who stuck them on letters home and thus monitored correspondence. There was a school 'out' letter box for letters written voluntarily in addition to the Friday afternoon weekly letter home, written under the supervision and approval of content and writing by a teacher.

During the Winter and Spring terms the main house and classrooms extension were centrally heated, but not very well as the ancient system comprised wide diameter, inefficient pipes and coal was rationed. The pipes were never warmer than tepid.

As food was still rationed our diet was basic without great variety, but adequate. Bread was still the grey, tasteless 'Rational Loaf' and the standard ration margerine was hard and unappetizing.

Breakfast consisted of porridge or cornflakes with milk, followed by one or two of either egg, bacon, sausage (soya based), kipper or fishcake depending which day and what was available, bread and margerine, tea (milk for juniors).

Lunch (called Dinner) was meat and two vegetables, pudding, water. Pudding was often of the suet/sponge variety and one in particular cut from long rolls and served with custard or a grey coloured sauce reminiscent of hair grease was known as 'cook's stockings'

Tea (really Supper) consisted of something hot, depending what available, bread, margerine and tea (milk for juniors); butter about once a week (ration).

Boys were permitted to bring their own private 'extras' to supplement meals - for instance different cereals, sugar or more often 'Glaxo' (powdered glucose sweetener in lieu of rationed sugar) for breakfast, jam, Marmite, biscuits or cakes for tea. These were considered to be only for personal consumption, unless biscuits or cakes, which had to be shared with the other boys sitting at the same table. It was permitted to give

extra slices of birthday cake to friends seated at other tables. Owing to rationing the margarine cubes and our own 'spreads' were soon consumed, but plain slices of National Loaf bread were unappetizing unless sprinkled with salt. It was necessary to be very careful when so doing as it was strictly forbidden (we could not understand why) and attracted a beating if detected.

Mr Fussell, the Headmaster, himself usually supervised all meals. All the teachers joined us for the midday meal and sat at the ends of the long tables. Dining hall rules forbade boys talking across tables, unless seated at the ends. Being caught offending was punished by imposed silence periods.

School classes were numbered and represented the progress year towards Common Entrance exams. Pupils transited each class completing a one year syllabus - failure to attain the requisite standard resulted in relegation for another year. My first scholastic year was with the 3rd Form and my second with the 4th Form, which worked for the Common Entrance examination. The 5th Form contained boys continuing there a bit longer working for scholarships. There was no 1st Form. During my time one boy, Trenchard, had been in the 3rd Form the previous year and was still there for my second year. Classrooms were also 'day rooms' for all purposes seven days a week. All lessons were taken there and all free time spent there. Teachers for different subjects visited the class. One would supervise the evening 'preparation'. There were four rows of desks lengthwise in each room. Each boy was allocated his desk and place for each term. Desks held all school books and implements and small private possessions and reading matter took up any remaining space. One hour's supervised access was allowed each day to the Tuck Box room. Bulk personal possessions, books, games or sweet ration were kept in the locked boxes, but not all were well secured.

The 4th Form class room acted as the daily assembly place for various school purposes such as the fortnightly work reviews and 2000 hrs evening prayers for the older boys. The fortnightly work review was read to the whole school, teachers and boys, by the Headmaster after the last lesson on Saturday morning and catalogued each boy's place in four subjects and class. The four subjects were English, French, History and Mathematics and included remarks, usually 'L' (lazy) annotated against any subject. An 'L' earned the culprit an automatic beating (4 strokes of a gym-shoe) inflicted before lunch that very same day. 2000 hrs evening prayers assembly was for the 3rd, 4th and 5th Forms. Every boy received a bed-time cup of watery cocoa poured from a large white enamel bathroom type jug. Then silence was enjoined and Mr Fussell read a lesson (especially favouring St. John's 'Revelations' Chapter 21 - 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea'), followed by a prayer/collect and then the 'Lord's Prayer', after which we filed off to our dormitories.

Headmaster Mr Dennis Fussell MA, was a bachelor, lived permanently in the school, drove an ancient green Austin Seven saloon car, registered number CPH451 (beloved of all the boys) and had a frequent and distinctive 'smoker's' cough, which betrayed

his presence everywhere. He taught English and History. He would sit on a chair in front of the class, with a smouldering cigarette stub sticking to his lower left lip and hold forth. He taught brilliantly, held the class attention and everything stuck.

Mr Locke, the Deputy Headmaster, taught French and was in charge of games. He was stocky, balding, of strong character with a powerful voice. All the boys were frightened of him. He gave all boys appropriate French names such as 'Petitbois' for Littlewood - mine was 'Plastron'. He was also a batchelor, but later married Mr, Fussell's cousin, Miss Greenwood and he eventually succeeded as Headmaster and proprietor.

Mathematics was taught by the only woman teacher on the staff, grey-haired, bespectacled Miss Holston (nick-named 'Holy' Holston), officially addressed as Miss but some younger boys used 'Pliss' as an accepted alternative title. I believe she was the only other teacher with a degree. She must have been in her 50s. She was responsible for the School Stationery Cupboard and all issues therefrom.

I remember some other masters. One was Mr Steers (boys' nick-named him 'Moose'), a gentle, elderly man, who taught Latin for most of my time. One of his successors was a Mr Reid, a wild-eyed, wild-haired Irishman, who started pleasantly enough but soon evinced a nasty streak. He would walk back up the rows of desks, rabbit-punching boys or roughly pulling their hair - on one occasion I remember him pulling out such a big tuft of Higginson's hair that it left a large bloody area. He was erratic and consequently feared. Luckily, he did not survive long.

Perhaps the best known of the junior masters was Jeremy Thorpe, later Leader of the Liberal Party. I think he was at Southey Hall only one term, during which he occupied the bed-sitting room next to my dormitory. I believe he came directly from Eton College to fill-in time before going to university. He had immense charm and charisma and treated us boys well. He had a good tone to his voice, a very entertaining way of talking and was popular with all.

Then there was lantern-jawed, dark moustached Mr Hedley -Browne, who affected a very long cigarette holder and wore horn-rimmed glasses. During my second year the teaching staff included a rather elderly, very gentlemanly, retired British Raj Indian Army Colonel. He exercised a gentle manner and used quaint phrases such as, 'paying tribute to Caesar' when referring to visiting the lavatory. He walked slowly with a very straight back and was well respected.

During my second year Mr Fussell's cousin, Miss Greenwood, joined the school staff in what appeared to be a Housekeeper capacity. She was reasonably attractive and nice to us boys. Much to everybody's surprise she married Deputy Headmaster Mr Locke and they went to live in a new, specially built bungalow by the main gate onto the Lower Road.

School discipline and studies were based on a system of 'Stars and Stripes', detentions and beatings. The 'Stars and Stripes' system was a 'carrot and stick' method. All teachers and Matron (her's were very rare) held both pink and blue coloured books

somewhat akin to cheque books - pink for 'Stars' and blue for 'Stripes', which were awarded in multiples of a quarter. The teacher would complete the slip similarly to completing a cheque and show the reason on both named slip and stub. 'Stars' were awarded for good work, or whatever, usually in single quarters, but occasionally even a whole 'Star'. Blue 'Stripes' were handed out for indiscipline, insolence, slovenly work or idleness in class. Both had to be presented to Mr Fussell for scrutiny in his study before lunch in the relevant time scale. Praise or admonishments were given accordingly. All awards were coloured on that term's 'Stars and Stripes' nominal roll chart displayed on the ballroom wall. So many completed 'Stars' merited a school prize. A similarly accumulated quantity of 'Stripes' earned the offender a beating (usually four strokes of a gym-shoe), though occasionally a single misbehaviour so notified qualified for immediate retribution. Similarly, boys excluded from class to stand outside in the corridor were so punished if seen by the Headmaster. Detention for both individuals or groups would be given for poor work or indiscipline and would be undergone during free-time on half-days.

Beatings were administered only by the Headmaster, Mr Fussell, who always referred to such as 'a thrashing'. The favoured weapon was invariably a gym- shoe; the cane was reserved for extreme cases or for the most hardened offender undeterred by lesser inflictions. The most heinous crimes could qualify for a 'Public Six' delivered in the presence of the whole school and possibly followed by expulsion. This ultimate sanction never occurred during my time. However, during 'Prep' one evening one boy (Shepperd) so annoyed Mr Fussell that he ordered him to bend over the table in front of his class (4th Form) and applied four strokes of a gym-shoe to the seat of his shorts. Usually, boys destined for punishment were lined-up in silence outside the Headmaster's study before lunch and were summoned individually after all other interviews. Each landing blow could be heard by those waiting their turn. The offender was summoned within, suitably lectured and then instructed, 'Take down your things and bend over that chair', drop his shorts and underpants and bend over the indicated arm-chair. Mr Fussell would pick-up his special gym-shoe and deliver a number of blows (the favoured quantity being four for most misdoings) to the bare buttocks. This over and clothes re-adjusted, a second shorter admonition followed and the boy told to send in the next one. The boys themselves observed an unofficial league of total strokes received; early in my time this was headed by a boy with a score of 66. It bed-time it was unofficial dormitory custom for the others to view a sore bottom; the more livid the marks the greater the esteem. Unlike senior school there was no stigma to a beating.

Mention of dormitory introduces the second of the minor communities of boarding school life. Bed and its immediate surrounding area, however public as uncurtained, was the nearest to being alone with oneself. My dormitory, 'New', was occupied by 12 or 13 boys of about my own age with all under a Dormitory Captain chosen by the Headmaster. He was probably the oldest or maybe a school Monitor, but had no real authority and was really only a licensed sneak. His task was to ensure that we all behaved, did not talk after 'lights out' and kept our personal areas and the whole room

clean and tidy. Beds were ranged round the room with the Dormitory Captain sleeping by the door. As boys were not allowed to leave the dormitory after 'lights out' there was a tin chamber-pot under each bed - a revolting practice. The cleanliness and tidiness of dormitories was encouraged by a competition, judged daily by Matron, for the weekly possession of an elevating Victorian style black and white print depicting a Roman soldier in full armour standing guard in Pompeii while flaming volcanic debris fell around him (he didn't look very happy) and known as 'The Centurion'. Unofficially, any boy, who earned bad marks for the dormitory that day, received a swipe for each mark with the bristle side of his own hair-brush on the hand or bare bottom, depending how bad or frequent the fault.

Being under the roof posed risks and our fire drills took us along corridors and platforms round the roof to fire escapes should we be unable to flee by the usual stairways. The final resort was an outer window pulley block, which regulated a canvas strap and loop to lower individual boys to the ground at safe descent speeds, but all rather slow if a bad fire had caught hold. Thank goodness this system was never tested for real. All windows were uncurtained and being under the tiles the room was very cold in winter and hot in summer. Of course, in those times we all slept in full flannelette pyjama suits. Our beds were made and chamber-pots emptied by domestic staff while we were in morning class. As a junior master lived in the corner bed-sitting room next to us we all had to behave and make no noise, especially after the Headmaster, or a Duty Master, looked in to extinguish the lights. One summer term we indulged in a midnight dormitory feast, building up a store of sweets saved from our weekly rations and kept under a floor board. It was all rather tame, though we had to be very quiet to avoid waking Mr Fussell below us. We went to and from our



Southey Hall School, Bookham, Surrey

dormitories by orderly groups, except when visiting the bathroom mornings and evenings.

As the school woke at the same time we washed in shifts by dormitory - luckily we were still too physically immature to start shaving. At night the youngest boys went to bed at 1900 hrs, a few at 1930 hrs and all older boys at 2000 hrs, thus all washed by shifts. As soon as undressed, boys would go down to the bathroom individually. This was a big room with a row of wash-basins and mirrors along one side and three bath-tubs ranged round two other walls. All washing and bathing was closely supervised by Matron and/or a Duty Assistant Matron to ensure no skimping. Baths were taken twice a week by rota, one warm evening bath and one of a morning (when I joined the school the morning bath were cold, but this practice ceased shortly). In fact baths were tepid as they had to be emptied and refilled every 10 minutes for the next bather. No boy could leave the bathroom until his hands, teeth, face and behind his ears had been inspected. Everything was very communal.

Matron's domain consisted of a set of rooms on the back mezzanine floor above the changing room. It comprised one large room with two walls fitted with sectioned wooden racks holding each boy's changes of clothing, Sunday suit etc, a large table and some chairs grouped around the fireplace, a medical corner, where First Aid was administered as well as individual boy's health supplements of that era, eg 'cod liver oil and malt', orange concentrates etc as provided and required by his parents; adjoining was a sick room with four beds and adjacent bathroom and WC. Matron herself administered all medicines after breakfast.

Matron was a feared personage. All my first year Matron was (Sister) Smith SHN, always immaculately attired in full nursing uniform, very strict but fair and excellent at her job. I doubt any of her successors were so well qualified or as good; one in fact was hard and unpleasant. Again, I doubt if any of the Assistant Matrons held any qualifications, but their duties were a mixture of minor maternal supervisory and domestic so it was probably unnecessary. Some changed each term, but two elderly spinster sisters (the Misses Braddock) were so permanent as to be part of the scenery - the elder of the two also taught class to the youngest boys. One of the younger Assistant Matrons, a Miss Innis, was pretty and only filling-in time for two terms during her engagement to be married, which event seemed fairly soon after she finished school herself. She was very popular with all the boys.

The school's medical needs were in the care of Dr Everett & Partners of Leatherhead. I believe that Dr. Everett was also one of the surgeons at Leatherhead Cottage Hospital. He was reputed to be the best doctor in the area and moved only in the best social circles. He was not my family doctor. He carried out occasional supervisory visits and had a distant aura. One of his sons was a fellow pupil. All new boys underwent a full medical examination on the first day of that term.

Games were played five afternoons a week; football during the two winter terms and cricket in the summer. I was not very good at either; quite liked football, but loathed

cricket (and still do). Mr Locke was in charge of games and coached the school teams. Mr Fussell would referee senior football games and school matches. Our opponents included Boxgrove School near Guildford. Football games were played on the pitches behind (North) of the house, or on the West side of the main drive - the cricket was played on the field south of the house.



Swimming was very popular in the summer. This was both taught and supervised by Mr Fussell himself. At first I was taken aback to find that we all swam nude and felt embarrassed when occasionally old Mrs. Fussell or Miss Greenwood watched. There were no inter-school swimming matches as the swimming pool was too small. It was hidden amongst bushes and stinging nettles about 100 yards down a path north from the house. Beyond the pool was a small moated islet. As there was no filtration system, the pool was treated with chlorine when filled and was then bright, clear blue, but as the days passed it turned dark green and had to be emptied and refilled. The first day or so of fresh, clean water were freezing. Boys who passed the school swimming test were privileged to enjoy late night dips during hot summer nights, particularly in 1947. On such nights Mr Fussell would tour the hot dormitories about 2200 hrs and call the swimmers. We would take our towels and walk - no hurrying allowed - down the path to the pool, slip in one end and swim slowly to the other, then reluctantly return slowly back to the dormitory.

The games changing room was in the basement and held several rows of wooden benches and framework mounted, numbered pegs to hang clothing with all arranged in four-boy recesses. Our outdoor coats were also kept there and our walking shoes in

the adjoining shoe room. There were deep washbasins along one wall. All changing was supervised by a master. The changing room was always dreary and slightly damp.

Apart from the terrible wrench of exchanging a happy and secure home for the coldly indifferent, massed boy humanity environment of boarding school, my sensitivities were shattered by the total lack of privacy in dormitory, bath and changing rooms.

The only place where I could enjoy some precious solitude was the school library, situated at one end of the ballroom. High bookshelves around three walls dominated leather armchairs and settees. As few boys used the library and fewer lingered, I was left alone to savour sinking into an armchair and browsing books or fascinating myself with the colour pictures and even more glamorous advertisements for American cars and radio-gramophones featured in the National Geographical magazines kept there. Boarding school really strengthened my love of reading. I enjoyed the stories of G H Henty, Stanley H Weyman, Rider Haggard, Dennis Wheatley and especially Conan Doyle. One day the post had brought me a present from my father, an ancient illustrated edition of 'Rodney Stone', which he hoped that I would like as much as he did. It became one of my favourite books and introduced me to the other historical novels, of which the 'Brigadier Gerrard' stories still delight me. Later I sampled 'The Lost World' and then Sherlock Holmes and was hooked. I was able to have the library to myself on winter Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and on some Sundays, if the school Debating Society did not meet. I also enjoyed membership of that group, but pleasures for me were few.

The term-time Sunday routine allowed some free time between programmed activities. After breakfast there was about an hour before we collected our Sunday suits from Matron, changed in our dormitories, put on black walking shoes, already cleaned by the odd-job man, assembled into a crocodile in the back courtyard and chaperoned by Mr Fussell and other masters, walked down the main drive and along the Lower Road to St Nicolas Church in Great Bookham. We trooped into church, doffing our caps and sat enbloc in the north aisle to attend the 1100 hrs Matins service. Our carpentry teacher, Mr Baker, was a senior member of the choir. The service always seemed to drag somewhat and even more so when the lugubrious rector gave his usual tedious sermon. He would ascend the pulpit steps and stand there surveying the hymn-singing congregation while sipping a glass of water (I was convinced that it was neat gin). For a period he was assisted by a tall, sallow Huguenot curate, who spoke excellent English and who we boys all liked. He was humane and gave short sermons, especially on those Sundays when our parents were allowed to visit and take us out.

After the Sunday morning service we would crocodile back to school, change and have Sunday Dinner. Half an hour's rest would ensue, then we would enjoy free time on the sports field or go for another crocodile walk around nearby roads. After some more free time, sometimes occupied by voluntary activities (i.e. Debating Society) and tea, Mr Fussell would give us a film show in the darkened ballroom. All films were silent and in black and white. The programme usually consisted of a short cartoon ('Felix the

Cat' or 'Andy Gump') an educational film and finally a single reel story film suitable for children. This would finish about 1900 hrs so the junior boys could go to bed, with free time for the rest until normal bed-time.

Two or three Sundays each term parents would be allowed to take their sons out after church until 1800 hrs. Boys going out with parents were permitted to take as a guest another boy, whose parents were unable to visit. My parents would take me, and sometimes a guest, back home to St John's Avenue, Leatherhead, a precious visit to another world.

Here I should point out that all boys were known only by surnames both by the masters and amongst themselves. Christian names were never used, though I have done so here for clearer identification.

Every September/Christmas term Mr Locke produced and directed a 'musical' amateur dramatic performance for parental entertainment over two nights at the end of that term. A rather ancient Went End show was staged, acted and sung by the boys without benefit of outside performers. The piano accompaniment was provided by our excellent woman music teacher. The stage was built at the opposite end of the ballroom to the library and scenery erected.

Another type of totally unofficial voluntary amateur dramatics occurred occasionally as performed by some 4th and 5th Formers on impulse. These events were not discouraged and the whole school would squeeze into the 4th Form classroom to watch. Once I was a non-speaking 'damsel in distress' rescued in a brief sketch, on another I was merely a set of several legs of a dragon like a pantomime horse, which was killed by some knight errant. The dragon's head sported the registered number 'OPH 451' (as did Mr Fussell's car).

One grey 1947 November morning Mr Fussell put a radio set on the table at the front of the 4th Form classroom and assembled all the boys there to listen to the BBC broadcast of the State Wedding of HRH Princess Elizabeth. We listened in awed silence. Another master supervised as Mr Fussell left the room and did not return till afterwards to order us back to lessons until lunchtime.

As Mr Fussell believed that it was good for boys to have a dog around there was a school dog - an elderly Golden Labrador bitch. She lived in a disused store-room outside the boys' lavatory wing. Somehow she had an illicit liaison and produced a large, long-coated, black and tan son named 'Watch', who lived with his mother. As time passed she got rather stout and though still game for a walk showed signs of her age.

The long winter and late spring of 1947 was misery. The decrepit central heating system was totally inadequate and we boys froze. Chilblains split and thickened my once long, slim fingers. The snow covered ground froze so hard that games were impossible. Mr Fussell introduced easy stages cross country running, but our daily exercise mostly consisted of crocodile walks along the icy surfaces of local roads. Some afternoons

we were taken down to play on the thick ice of the frozen solid moat around the islet beyond the school swimming pool. This was closely supervised to prevent accidents. This winter just went on and on and on. It was compounded by an epidemic of 'flu' overfilling the sick room and causing conversion of dormitories into extra sick bays. I was one of only about eight boys not to succumb. Everywhere was cold and uncurtained dormitories so chilly that it was barely warm in bed. This weather effected just about the whole Spring (!) term. However, the following summer was really glorious and hot.

During the summer terms two men would come from the local Council and shoot the crows/rooks' nests in the trees bordering the Lower Road.

The last morning of each term always dragged. After breakfast the long distance boys were put on the London train at Leatherhead railway station and from about 0900 hrs onwards parents could collect their sons from the school. My first term was horrible as my parents had arranged for Mr Frampton's taxi to collect both myself and Michael Ellman very late that morning as they thought that it would be wrong to take us away early. We both endured a very long, slow and miserable morning in an empty school. I made sure that all succeeding terms that I was collected as early as permissible. I used to ask Mr Frampton to drive me to school as slowly as possible at the beginning of term and as fast as possible at term's end. He was a cheerful, good natured man, but I doubt if he really complied with my requests. (Mr Frampton ran his taxi service from a lane off Linden Road behind the High Street at Leatherhead. He had two elderly saloon cars, which I used to hear smelt of beer! - apparently he liked a pint or so as a regular customer at 'The Duke's Head' at the top of the High Street, though I never heard of him being the worse for drink when working).

I sat Common Entrance the summer term of 1948 and gained a good pass into St. John's School, Leatherhead, where I was to be a Day Boy. Not bad progress from near illiteracy when I went to Southey Hall two years earlier, so the school fulfilled its purpose admirably. I cannot say that I enjoyed any of my schooldays anywhere - the best years of my life were with the British Army and several years with an Arabian force.

Appendix IV
Memories of Southey Hall School
by Stephen Midgley
1950 to 1954

I was at Southey Hall from 1950 to 1954, when the school closed – an event to which I will return later. It is quite clear from the above-mentioned accounts, including those from the 1930s, the wartime evacuation and the immediate post-war period, that the atmosphere and routine of school life changed hardly at all throughout its existence. All the practices, methods and rules were exactly the same when I was there, as they were in these other descriptions.

Clearly the dominant and guiding force was the headmaster, Denis Fussell. He was an able and efficient organiser, and some of his ideas about education would still stand up quite well to this day. He was a formidable figure, somewhat feared rather than greatly liked by us boys, although he was good with parents and I believe they were impressed with him. I say feared because he did mete out fairly rough justice, and his addresses to the boys on disciplinary matters, usually given at the end of mealtimes, would strike the fear of God into us. One of his favourite phrases was: “We don’t do that here; we just don’t do it”; and he would emphasise the words by sticking out his chin as he spoke – a mannerism often mimicked by us boys but, needless to say, never in his presence. The system of stars and stripes has already been explained in detail in one of the other accounts, and indeed if you received a stripe from a teacher – a kind of cheque entitling you to a punishment – then you would have to line up after lunch (or it might have been before lunch, as some have said) outside Denis’ study, along with any other miscreants. Any pleas of innocence or mitigation would be heard but were invariably futile, and the inevitable result was getting whacked on the bum with Denis’ gym-shoe.

In spite of all that, he did care about our welfare and tried, I believe, to make at least some aspects of our time there enjoyable – with music, school plays, games, swimming, country walks and outings. But his greatest success, I would say, was in obtaining excellent teachers for the school – and I will return to this matter as well in a moment. Sadly, however, the account already given of the school’s closure in the summer of 1954 is correct. One evening early in the summer term, soon after the rest of us had gone to bed in our dormitories, there was a terrific commotion in the house – a boy was clearly being chased and was trying to get away from Denis’s clutches, and there was shouting and swearing – I remember this very distinctly because nobody ever swore at Southey Hall, even among ourselves. The very next day the headmaster disappeared from the school, and so did the boy in question. We all knew the unfortunate boy’s

name, but of course I will not repeat it here. There were some pointers and rumours of other incidents of abuse before that, but none of those were proven; the culture in those days was very much for hushing up such things.

Anyway, we never saw Denis again; Mr. Locke, as deputy head, took over the running of the school for the time being, there was a meeting of parents and an attempt to keep the school going under Mr. Locke, but it was all to no avail. This was, as I understood, because Denis was the proprietor of Southey Hall and he chose to close it. It is true that the boys were never told anything about the sexual abuse directly, but of course our parents were told and they were each able to decide for themselves whether and how much to tell their sons. The school closed at the end of that term, we all had to find other places to go, and that was the end of it.

Now for a few words about the staff. I can say without hesitation that nearly all of the teaching was excellent, and in some cases even better than that. Most of the following characters can be seen in the school photo I have attached, which I am fairly sure is from 1952. Denis himself was a good History teacher and his lessons were both memorable and entertaining, with plenty of opportunities for role-playing in battle scenes and the like. Mr. Corney, the Latin teacher nicknamed “Corneybug”, was not greatly liked; his favourite phrase was “Oh shut up – you give me a headache” - spoken in a nasal voice and slight cockney accent, and often mimicked by the boys behind his back; he also used to hit us about the head, and was the only teacher who did this. But somehow he managed to drum Latin into those thick heads quite effectively.



Mr Corney



Denis Fussell

Miss Houlston was an excellent Maths teacher, a somewhat formidable woman but very highly regarded by most of the boys. Unfortunately she didn't manage to get through to me especially well, because when she had explained something to the class and then asked us questions, I often couldn't come up with the right answer. So I would get a stripe for “inattention in maths” and would have to take it to Denis - with the inevitable consequences. However, she was very kind to me later when the school closed, because I ended up going to school in Canterbury and she put me in touch with two friends of hers who lived in the town, lovely old ladies who used to invite me to tea once a term. Of course this admirable lady won't be around any longer, but if she were still with us I would want to say to her: “Please miss, it wasn't inattention, just incomprehension”.



Miss Houlston

Miss Braddick, who taught general subjects mainly to the younger boys, was a bit of a battleaxe in the traditional style. Her name was definitely spelt thus, because I remember she would be furious if you spelt it the same way as the well-known Bessie



Braddock MP. She had a habit of keeping her handkerchief under her skirt, tucked inside the lower elastic of her long knickers and, as she sat at her raised desk facing the class, she would cause great hilarity (carefully muffled, of course) among the boys whenever she needed her hankie to blow her nose.

Miss Braddick

The school doctor deserves a word too – Dr. Everett from Leatherhead, as one of the memoir writers has already mentioned. He had already been my family doctor since I was about three, because we lived in nearby Fetcham at that time. He was terrific, both kind and effective, and very good with children – one of the best doctors I’ve ever had.

Returning to the teachers, there was a succession of youngish men who came to teach us History and Geography for a year or two; they were usually just starting their careers, perhaps having finished their National Service, and because they were young and male they were considered quite cool by us boys. There was Mr. Sullivan, shown in the 1952 school photo, and he was extremely able – and popular too. When he left the school, all the boys turned



Mr Sullivan

out to wave and cheer him off as he rode down the school drive on his motorbike. Before that there was Mr. Leonard, and what I remember most about him was that he



Mr Macdonald

knew he was supposed to be strict with us, and indeed he did try; but we soon discovered that when he threatened you with punishment, such as a stripe, if you started to cry he would always take pity on you and let you off. As a result, our acting skills made impressive advances during his time at the school.

There was Mr. Macdonald, who was both very able and extremely decent to us; I think he taught Latin and one or two other things, but I am not quite sure about this. Next there was

Mr. Locke – universally known as “Dumbo” for reasons already explained in the other accounts. He was an absolutely superb French teacher with very progressive ideas about language teaching which then came into general usage only much later. We not only learned a lot, but we had brilliant fun in his lessons. I have always loved French ever since – so much so, in fact, that I became a modern languages teacher myself. Dumbo was married and lived in the lodge by the school gate; his wife was also a familiar and well-liked figure around the school.



Dumbo Locke



Mr Finley

The last teacher I will mention, also shown in the 1952 photo, is Mr. Finley (nicknamed Dixon, which was his first name) who taught English. His teaching was simply brilliant – the best in the school, in my opinion, and one of the two or three best teachers I ever had. I remember that he

used to call me “professor” - not something I’ve ever been called since then, I’m sorry to say. He was also a thoroughly decent man and never had to resort to any kind of punishment, or even the threat thereof, because he simply held us all spellbound. What else can I say about this truly excellent man? - he taught us English, all of it, and superbly! Because of the abruptness with which the school came to an end, we boys never had a proper chance to say our goodbyes, let alone our thanks, to our teachers; so if anyone who reads this knows what became of Dixon Finley (or Finlay, the spelling may not be exactly right) or of any of his family, I hope they will be kind enough to pass on this heartfelt tribute: thank you, sir, a thousand times!

Southey Hall School, then, had its good and its bad aspects. Of these latter the worst were, firstly, the fact that in my view this was far too young an age for a child to be packed off from home and brought up by a bunch of strangers; and secondly, the school’s ignominious end and the reasons behind that event. But on the other hand I will emphasise once again the point made by the other writers: that the standard of teaching was very high indeed, and I personally have always been grateful for that.

On the next two pages are school photos, the first in summer 1952 and the second in 1954. The second school photo has an element of sadness in it - it was the last term of the school and shows Denis Fussell no longer there and Mr Locke having taken over. The names that could be remembered are from the memories of Stephen Midgley and Michael Bate

(If you have any information about Southey Hall School or are an old boy of the school yourself please contact Stephen Midgley on sj.midgley@hotmail.co.uk)



Southey Hall School Photo, c.1952

Back row from left: 1.Mr. Sullivan, 2.Mr. Finley(“Dixon”), 3.Mr. Corney
4.Rainey(?), 5.Vacher (“Cow”), 11.Tyrell I,12.Wylie(?), 13.Tarbatt II, 17.Frost,
18.Ellis-Jones, 19.Mr. Macdonald

Fifth row: 1.Miss Houlston (“Holy”), 2.Prince I (“Burly”), 3.Webster, 11.Toulmin,
13.David Harvie

Fourth row: 1.Miss Blight (matron), 5.Bird(?), 8.Paice, 9.Freemantle (“Freewhistle”),
10.Brazil (or Brasil?), 12.David Scott, 13.Prince II, 15.Perry, 16.Sa(u)nders, 18.Miss
Braddick

Third row: 1.Samuelson, 5.Andrews, 6.Jackson, 7.Mark Batchelor, 10.Valmas,
11.Montgomerie, 12.Chandler, 13.Langtry (“Lily”), 15.Jordan, 16.Andrews

Second row: 3.Riley, 4.Richmond, 5.Pearce(?), 9.Denis Fussell (Headmaster),
10.Mr.Locke (“Dumbo”) (Deputy Head), 14.Murray, 18.Tyrell II

Front row: 2.Fawley, 3.Stephen Midgley, 10.Templer, 11.Michael Moryson



Southey Hall School Photo, Summer Term 1954

Back row from left: 1.Miss Blight, 2.Miss Houlston (“Holy”), 3.Mr. More(s)head, 4.Mr Finley (“Dixon”), 7.Ellis-Jones, 8.Vacher (“Cow”), 9.Frost, 10.Stephenson (?), 12.Miss Braddick, 14.Mr. Macdonald, 16.Mr. Hudson

Fifth row: 2.Webster, 3.Batham (??) 4.David Harvie, 8.Brazil/Brasil, 11.Jordan, 12.Freemantle (“Freewhistle”), 13.Angus Swanson, 14.Nichol (?),16.Perkins, 17.Greenhouse, 18.Andrews, 19.Langtry (“Lily”)

Fourth row: 1.Mark Batchelor, 2.Sa(u)nders, 4.Jackson, 7.Paice, 8.David Scott, 9.Valmas, 10.Richmond, 11.Andrews, 12.Watney (?), 13.Prince II, 15.Shackle, 17.Montgomerie,18.Riley

Third row: 1.Pearce, 4.Waterfall (?), 5.Tyrell II, 6.Shaw, 7.Griffiths, 9.Sturgess, 12. Emuss (?), 13.Murray, 14.Smart, 15.Mence (?), 16.Stephen Midgley, 17.Fawley, 18.Morton (?), 19.Michael Bate

Second row: 1.Gibson, 2.Templer, 4.Chandler, 5.Prince I (“Burly”), 7.Tyrell I, 8.Davis (?), 9.Mr. Locke (Acting Head), 10.Mrs. Locke, 11.Toulmin, 12.Tarbatt I, 13.Samuelson, 14.English (?)

Front row: 9.David (?), 10.Michael Moryson, 18.Baldwin