

Sixteenth

Sibford Old Scholars' Association.

President, 1920-22:

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REPORT, 1921.

Through quite unavoidable causes the Whitsuntide, 1921, Re-Union had to be cancelled. Difficulty of railway travelling and the shortage of fuel, due to the coal dispute, raised many obstacles; but these might have been overcome had not a mild case of diphtheria, unwittingly taken to Sibford from a distance, rendered caution necessary. There was no alternative but to cancel the gathering in spite of the inevitable disappointment. Over one hundred old scholars had expressed their intention to attend, and everything pointed to a successful time. Several members, not to be denied a glimpse of the village at Whitsuntide, made the journey; but in spite of perfect weather they sadly missed the customary festive air, the flags of welcome, and the friends of former days.

It has been decided not to issue the Report in booklet form this year, as so much of the usual matter is not available for publication. Obviously, with no Annual Re-Union to chronicle, no Presidential Address, Minutes of Business Meeting or photographs to print, the Report would be very sparse. This circular is issued as a substitute, and old scholars are asked to forgive its brevity.

Items of interest are more numerous than usual, the list of marriages, for example, being longer than ever! But this must wait over until the next proper Report is published. In the meantime the Secretary would be glad to receive letters from, or about, old scholars at home and abroad giving interesting news for publication. It is surprising how even small items of news interest old schoolfellows and friends.

The School itself continues to thrive and is now on the threshold of a wider sphere of work. Recognition under the Education Act having been promised, on condition that Sibford develops a sound scheme of studies on its present lines, but adequate up to the age of 16, the School Committee has decided to meet the wishes of the Board of Education. This extension will entail further alterations to school premises, a work which is now receiving careful consideration. In the general scheme of things some opportunity may arise for old scholars to help, and although the S.O.S.A. is short of members who can give "thousands," it has many keen members who will respond in the event of any appeal being made.

The recent gift of £63 towards the alterations to the gymnasium has almost exhausted our funds, and old scholars are asked, in order to keep the Association thoroughly alive, to forward their subscriptions without delay to the Treasurer.

Owing to an increasing difficulty in obtaining sleeping accommodation at Whitsuntide each year, the S.O.S.A. Committee has decided to hold the next Re-Union, as an experiment, at Easter, 1922. This will extend the length of the holiday by a day and a half, and will give opportunities for visiting places which, through lack of time, are not seen at Whitsun. Notices giving the usual details will be circulated in February.

It is hoped to issue the next Report in June, 1922, and to make it larger than usual to compensate for the shortcomings of this one. Articles or other matter for insertion should be forwarded to the Secretary in good time.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT.

DEAR OLD SCHOLARS,

"What sound was dearest in his native dells?
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells,
Far far away."

Have you ever thought how like a bell each one of us should be, with a message to deliver that can be done by no other? We cannot all hang in such favoured positions as Big Ben. Not many can be as large and important as the great bell at Moscow. Few are so highly refined as the bells of Peter van den Gheyn, into whose liquid metal kings and nobles flung their jewels and their gold. But a message we should have as insistent as the storm-bell, the Sanctus, or the Curfew,

or "that tocsin of the soul, the dinner-bell." Are we seeking to deliver our message as faithfully as these?

Again we are, each, one of a peal of bells. The circle in which we move rings out its message, and will send it echoing into the Future. Is not our Old Scholars' Association such a carillon? May there be no bell amongst us that is cracked or out of tune. May we help the S.O.S.A. to ring joy and comradeship and brotherhood in these days when the need for unity and beauty and harmony is so universal and so great.

Let the message of our peal be to--

"Ring in the valiant man and true,
The larger heart, the kinder hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land;
Ring in the Christ that is to be."

Yours very sincerely,

MABEL T. HARROD.

SCHOOL NEWS, 1920-21.

To all old scholars scattered up and down the country or in far distant lands from the old School, on this sunny October afternoon, we send greetings. It is Sunday afternoon and the boys and girls are just starting for their walk; I hear them passing beneath my window as I write.

Time brings changes to us all; but whether you are continuing your education in our schools, or whether you work in bank or office, or on a farm, we hope you sometimes look back with pleasure to the days of work and play at Sibford, and will like to hear some short chronicle of our last year's doings.

When we assembled in August, 1920, Mr. Harrod's place was still vacant; but we had encouraging reports of his returning health, and you will realise how delighted we were to welcome him back early in October, in time to share in the picnics and socials of what was to be our last half-term holiday. Our long half-years are now a thing of the past.

During the session 1920-1921 we have listened to over twenty lectures in the new Lecture Hall, transformed from the old Gymnasium. How did we manage in past days in the crowded Science Room? Many of the lecturers have carried us to other countries. Miss Morland's two entertaining

talks on her world tour will be remembered with special pleasure. Mrs. Miller's charming fairy-songs will also linger long in our memories.

Of the concerts, that given by the "Pilgrims" stands out conspicuously in our minds; and the entertainment we gave to the children of Sibford and Epwell village schools involved a good deal of earnest preparation.

The boys played eleven football matches, mostly against much heavier teams; of these they only lost one. Fifty-nine goals were gained for the School and only nine against. Of the eight matches played by the Girls' Hockey Team, three were won, and five lost; but the play was of a high order. The sports were run off in early April; Reginald Barber and Grace Faulkner were Senior Champions; Frank Goodley and Linda Watkins Junior Champions. In cricket, the Boys' and Masters' Team carried all before them, and did not lose a single match. The girls also played two cricket matches, which both ended in an easy victory for the School. Tennis was very popular during the summer term; the tournaments were a great success, and many of the girls learned to play a really good game.

Transference Scholarships were awarded to May Davidson and Maurice Eaves, who are now at Sidcot, and an extra one to James Bayly, who has gone to Saffron Walden.

It was delightful to us to break up in April, and we returned in May to a term of unprecedented heat and sunshine.

The abandonment of the Old Scholars' Gathering was a great disappointment to us, and we hope it will be long before the necessity occurs again. On Whit-Monday the few old scholars who turned up joined us in a whole-day excursion. We took the round of Shutford, Alkerton, Shenington, ~~and sitting on the village green at Shenington~~ for dinner, and afterwards raiding the village shop.

Edge Hill and Whichford Wood were also visited during the summer term.

Since Whitsuntide, 1920, all the Mistresses have left and been replaced. The Masters remain as before.

It has been decided that the teaching of French is to begin in September, as one step towards meeting the wishes of the Board of Education. The School Committee has also agreed to prepare a School Course which shall extend to the age of 16 at least, and to arrange for boys and girls to stay to that age if it is found desirable.

M. T. H.