

The Syderstonian – October 2016

St. Mary's Church.

21st October 6pm – Harvest Festival followed by the Harvest Supper at 7pm in the Amy Robsart Hall.

29th October 6pm – Churchyard tidy up. If wet this essentially volunteer work will take place on the 5th of November.

13th November 10.55 – War memorial remembrance service.

10th December 10-12 am – Christmas party at the Amy Robsart Hall.

16th December 6pm – Carol service under flood lights.

24th December 10pm - Christmas Eve mass.

The yearly Flower Festival in August was well attended and raised in excess of £1000. The Open Gardens event was also well supported old local visitors were augmented by a coach load of Dutch garden enthusiasts. These people had visited some prominent gardens in the area including the garden at the Old Vicarage at East Ruston.

They commented on how refreshing it was to visit normal domestic garden and went away very favorably impressed.

Amy Robsart Hall hosted a most successful Family History Day on 6th August. Much information was available and resulted in some new information coming to light and was added to the burgeoning archive. Sheila Riches account - follows -

The 3rd Family History Day was held on Saturday August 6th in the village hall. This was the first opportunity to display all the family and local history since it moved into its permanent residence in the hall.

It was a very successful day with a steady stream of visitors who were either looking for family members, or who had a general interest in genealogy or those who just saw the sign outside whilst passing and dropped in for a look around and some refreshment. We made several new useful contacts and information was given and received.

Thanks to all who helped on the day - it was very much appreciated.

WW1 Soldiers updates - We were fortunate to be given a photograph of Reginald Osborne Allen who died on the Somme in 1916 (kindly donated by Richard Woods.)

After the Family History Day I received a phone call from Edna Stanfield (nee Crisp) which resulted in an exchange of information leading to us identifying the photograph of her Father, Robert James Crisp, who served in the Royal Navy in WW1. Robert married Rachel Jane Hunter, who was Harry Lawrence Hunter's sister.

Edna's uncle was Harry Lawrence Hunter who died during WW1, and is buried in Baghdad Cemetery. It is hoped in due course, that her family can find a photograph of him as well.

I would still like to identify more of the WW1 Soldiers and Sailors so if you know of any family members who served, or you have relatives who may have photographs or information about them please ask and let me know.

Another contact was made via Jean Kimber who was researching Syderstones Edgar Arthur Graveling for Edgar's Grandson, Michael Graveling. Edgar served in WW1 and through this contact we now have several photographs of him and his family (thanks to Michael for allowing us to use these photos)

Jean works as a volunteer for the Imperial War Museum and she has offered to upload all my research on the 80 + Syderstone WW1 soldiers onto the IWM website, where Syderstone has its own community area. This will of course take many months, but this will give the men the national recognition they deserve for all their service and sacrifice. <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org>

Family Histories

I have had correspondence with members of the Savory family (formerly local Farmers and landowners in Syderstone and Barmer). Paul Savory has written 2 articles for the 'Norfolk Ancestor' detailing the Savory lineage and their connections to Africa. This has enabled me to extend the family history I had already started. It has proved an interesting if convoluted history. The large memorial dedicated to the Savory Family which is in need of some repair is in the Graveyard at the front of St Mary's Church.

Thanks

Sheila Riches

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'The story of a Norfolk Boy' by John Simpson is now available. It is an interesting account of John's growing up and takes its to the time he starts work in his chosen career and worthy of your attention.

- 1) Next piece Karla Brashear's E-mail. Titled 'An education experience at Syderstone.'
- 2) Then my piece 'Holt bells' part 2.
- 3) 'Holt bells' part 3 to follow.
- 4) The 'Story of an old Syderstonian' by Carole Gilham.
- 5) Feedback by me.

Many thanks to all present and past contributors, it was especially good to have Karla's account of her education experience here albeit at the 'new school'. It is also good to have your feedback on last April's items. Ken Edge. 3 Haynes Rd. Hornchurch RM11 2HS. Essex.

'Holt Bells' part 2

An examination of the bell tower revealed the bell frame to be in good order. I remember Uncle Billy saying it looked as though it had been made by a company called Day and from the way he referred to the firm it would seem that they were the Rolls Royce of bell frame makers.

The few original bells (I can't remember how many) had not been rang within living memory and it was decided to recondition these if possible, extend the bell frame to achieve a compliment of six bells. The word work master from Greshams school and some handpicked pupils were tasked with extending the bell frame and fund raising was begun to get the bells up to six.

To cast new bells would be expensive and uncle sought the advice of Canon Thurlow. Generally he had a low opinion of the clergy as bell ringers but Canon Thurlow was in a different league and it was he who suggested they seek to secure a set of bells from a redundant church.

After some false starts they were steered in the direction of Norwich where the vicar of St. Margaret's was willing to part with his bells. 'How much?', asked Uncle Billy. 'Nothing, I'm pleased to see that they'd go to good use but please leave me with one,' said the vicar. 'No, no we're prepared to pay for what we take. We should be happy that you take something.'

An agreement was reached whereby the bells, minus the tenor bell which was left at St Margaret's, were valued at a price between scraps and new and this was paid by Holt contingent. There was another price but I shall come to this shortly. Uncle had engaged a firm from Dan to remove the bells from the tower and load them on his lorry.

All went swimmingly well until one of the bells wobbled in its descent and struck a stone mullion knocking it out. Uncle Billy was much concerned by was reassured by the builders' foreman Hector. 'You're worrying over nothing, we'll have that back in a jiffy and once we do it will be the strongest mullion in the church.' The job was done. Hector was right.

The many years accumulation of pigeon droppings, feathers and skeletons of birds and small animals were to be removed by the Holt contingent. Forty bags of knee high bags were filled and went back to Holt. 'Where do you want these Mr. West?' asked his driver. 'Don't you dare leave them here, stinking old stuff. Take you them round to the parsons I don't want them here.' No doubt 'the old Parson' put them to good use.

It remained for the bells to be taken to Taylor of Loughborough to be reconditioned and revitalised. The big day came and the bells, six in all, were hung and arrangements were made for a dedication with Canon Thurlow selected to officiate the service. Fate, however, conspired to keep Uncle Billy away from proceedings. He was taken in and spent a frustrating time in a hospital bed.

His incapacity was short, but he was soon backing among the ringers. Having revived the Holt bells which had all begun with the local vicar's question 'How is it we have no bells at Holt?'

'Holt Bells' Part 3

The story moves on to the 1988 when my cousin May sent me a cutting from the Eastern Daily Press. It was written by the well known broadcaster, John Timpson. It began 'I never met Billy West but having listened to this tape I feel that I know him.' The tape had been made in 1976 and he'd recorded Uncle Billy's involvement in bell ringing with him taking centre stage aided by the occasional prompt from his good friend Nolan Golden of Aylsham.

Neither May nor I were aware of its existence and I wrote to John Timpson asking how we might secure copies. He promptly replied and referred me to Nolan. I received an immaculately calligraphic letter enclosing two tapes explaining that it was planned to augment the ring of bells at St. Andrews.

Holt to eight and selling the tapes was part of the fund raising process. Uncle Billy had died in December, 1978 and the Holt ringers had pulled out all the stops with some fine ringing at his funeral. This to the extent that a by-stander had enquired if the bells were for somebody's wedding.

Not a wedding bell certainly for a celebration of the life of a man who had the interests of his town at heart. The tape contained a reference to a recorded conversation Uncle Billy had with Sir John Betjeman a little of which was included in the BBC programme 'A Passion For Churches.'

Uncle said that the conversation was 'a good hour' and efforts had been made to secure the whole of this recording. People of local standing had attempted to secure this from the BBC but their efforts were unavailing, it could not be found and to this day remains lost. The substance of the recording I have used here to tell this story.

He loved to talk and when visiting you never had to make conversation – just the odd word or mention of something and he was away. Nolan Golden said that he was a natural and that he had known many ringers who were not backward about voicing an opinion simply dried up when they know that they were being recorded.

May and I rounded up two of the Cooke Family from the old Fakenham band of ringers and took them to Aylsham to visit Nolan and his wife Iris. Ted Cooke was May's mums next door neighbour at Hempton and his sister, Miss Tessie

Cooke was school secretary at Fakenham Grammar school for many years and was much liked and respected. All boys were addressed by their surnames by the staff – ‘Cogens, Thompson, Beckett, Edge,’ but Miss Cooke always called me ‘Kenneth’ having known me through her acquaintance with my Aunt Tessie (Mays mum).

This always gave me a boost but caused some eyebrows to be raised by others. We all had a lovely afternoon and many memories were revived. I wonder if bell ringing and longevity are linked. Ted and Tessie Cooke both lived into their nineties, Nolan Golden made it into his late eighties and died suddenly having rang for a wedding at Salle on the previous day.

Uncle Billy was comparatively young at 82. In March 1989 the two new bells cast by Taylors of Loughborough were hung at St. Andrews, Holt and May and I attended the dedication service in the presence of the bishop of Lynn, Peter Nott. Fittingly Nolan Golden was amongst the ringers and following the service we had tea and fairy cakes in the church hall.

May nudged me and said ‘Just you listen to that. They sound like a lot of old hens settling to roost.’ I listened; there certainly was a low key murmuring which did sound like a clutch of hens. It is sometimes customary for new bells to be cast with an inscription. One of the new Holt bells carried the message ‘Praise God and remember Billy West.’ How he would have loved that. He couldn’t have asked for a more fitting memorial.

‘Story Of An Old Syderstonian’

A few of you will remember my cousin Vic Todd who last came to our reunion in April 2015. Well, he has a brother Eric who lived at Bam cottages, Syderstone until he was ten years old. He was the elder son of Bill and Bessie Todd.

He spent several years in Australia and was in the Victoria State Police for 35 years. He now lives in the United States but being recently widowed is shortly moving back to Australia to live with his family.

Although Eric is now 92 years old he has never forgotten his time in Syderstone – especially the school years. He has had a very colourful and adventurous life

and at the moment Vic and I are piecing together the story of Eric's life and it will be included in the next newsletter (April).

Feedback

Following the last piece 'The Go Between', I had an interesting E-mail from Barry Thompson. At Fakenham Grammar School Barry's wife Joy nee Frary of Walsingham had a very close friend Gillian or 'Winnie' was the daughter of Charlie who played the part of the gardener in the film. When Barry and Joy mentioned Charlie Winn provided the flowers from his nursery at Cley Rd, Holt, what a splendid gesture and a fine present.

In wake of Avril's article about RAF Bircham Newton last April, Rita Chapman wrote from West Runton to say that a relative who lived in Stanhoe took in Washing for RAF offices based at Bircham Newton camp. I do not know how much the lady earned by these means but it would of been in the days when washing was hard work. Filling and lighting the copper, rinsing, starching and mangling not to mention ironing with those old flat irons which were heated by playing on the kitchen range (pre electricity).

That money would have been hard earned and well deserved; Rita was pleased to have the memory revived.

Obituary

News has just reached me that Bob Havers, a good friend and regular attendee of the Old Syderstonians passed away in September aged 89. Our sympathy and condolences to his wife Joy and family.

Many thanks to all present and past contributors, it was especially good to have Karla's account of her educational experience here albeit at the 'New School'. It is also good to have your feedback on last April's items. Ken Edge 3. Haynes Rd, Hornchurch, RM11 2HS, - E-mail Kenneth636@hotmail.com

Recollections from my year at Syderstone School Sept. 1963- June 1964
Karla Rogers Brashear
September, 2016

In the summer of 1963 I was a 10 year old girl living in Southern California. I was the fourth of five daughters in my family. My father was a career Air Force officer, having become a pilot in World War II and flying in the Pacific during the war. He stayed in the Air Force for 30 years, providing our family with many moves and adventures. One such move came that summer. We packed up and moved to England.

We arrived at RAF Sculthorpe and moved into base housing. My father was the new base commander, so we were given a large house in the area now known as Wicken Green, according to Google Maps. I am fairly certain that our former house is on Maple Dr., the third building south of Lancaster Rd, on the east side of the street. At the time we lived there the street was named Norwich Ave. From our front door we could look down the length of what is now called Penny Croft Street. A foot path went between our house and the one next door, which is still visible on Google Maps today. One day shortly after arriving in England, my younger sister Patti and I took the footpath behind our house and went exploring. We were playing around some abandoned buildings when suddenly a siren started sounding. Now, being in a military family, I knew something about sirens. I had watched shows about the war on television, and I knew that a siren in England meant an air raid! I was petrified, and told my sister we needed to “duck and cover”, as we had been taught in school in the U.S. The siren soon quieted, and we ran for home, where I was chagrined to learn from my mother that the siren was tested every day at 12:00 p.m. and was thereafter referred to as “the noon whistle”. No air raid.

There was an American school for children of Sculthorpe families in our housing area, where Blenheim Park Primary School is now. My sister Judy attended 9th grade there. My sister JoAnne had to take a bus for an hour to her high school at RAF Lakenheath. My mother decided that my sister Patti and I should attend the local school in Syderstone. I was quite against the idea, since all the kids in the neighborhood would be going to school together and I would be the odd one out. Many younger American children attended Syderstone at that time, but none that were my age. My mother was so sure this would be a fabulous experience and opportunity for me and Patti, that she arranged an interview with Mr. John Goult, headmaster of Syderstone School. He would not agree to our enrollment without meeting with us first. We met at his home. If my 10 year-old memory is correct, his home was off of Mill Lane, southeast of the main village. He and Mrs. Goult were friendly, although I remember being very nervous as I was being interviewed. There seemed to be no problem with five year-old Patti attending the school. But Mr. Goult was very skeptical about having me in the older class. The students my age would be taking the 11-plus examination that year and he was quite sure I did not have the educational background to be successful in his class or on the test. His low opinion of American education was probably justified, but my mother convinced him that I was a good student and he agreed to give me a try.

Right away we had to buy school uniforms, which was something entirely new to us. The uniform for girls at the time was white shirt, navy blue or gray skirt or bib pinafore, gray knee socks, navy blue sweater or vest, a navy blue blazer with gold Syderstone crest, navy blue beret with gold crest, and a navy and gold striped neck tie. One of my first new skills when I started attending Syderstone was learning how to tie a neck tie. For winter we needed a navy

mackintosh and navy and gold striped knitted neck scarf (which I still have). We all needed a pair of plimsolls to wear inside the school. We had never heard of plimsolls. In California, we wore “Keds”, the American all-purpose rubber-soled shoes in the 60s.

There were enough students from our housing area attending Syderstone School that a bus was sent to pick us up. I do not remember the names of the couple that provided this service, they were known to us as “Bus Man” and “Bus Lady”. They were very kind to all of us, and quite funny. The bus man told jokes and made up songs, and the bus lady’s job was to lean over and grab our hands to help haul the little kids up the too-tall steps into the bus.

The school building I attended that year was a new or fairly recently-built structure. Aerial photos of the school taken about 1990 show that the building was located at the end of Norman Way, off of Mill Lane. Google Maps now shows several houses built in that location. The school had four wings in the shape of a cross, with three classrooms to the west, south, and east sides, and a larger wing, the “hall”, pointing to the north, towards the village. In the center were the lavatories, and an open area with cubbies and hooks where we would store our outside shoes and clothing and satchels, and benches where we would change into our plimsolls upon arriving at school. Every morning, crates of milk in small glass bottles would arrive and we all had to drink a half pint of milk. The bottles had heavy foil lids which were very hard for us to open. American kids were used to homogenized milk with a smooth consistency. This milk had a thick layer of cream on the top, and cream coated the inside of the foil lid. The other kids loved the cream and would lick it off the lids. My sister and I never got used to drinking the cream. If we shook the bottle to try to mix the cream into the milk, it just made floating cream blobs in the milk. I don’t think we were given a choice on having morning milk, or I am quite sure Patti and I would have declined.

Mr. Goult’s classroom was on the east side of the school. That was my room, and our class had about 15 to 18 students in two age groups, nine and ten year olds. The south classroom was for the younger students. My sister Patti started school in the youngest class, and she remembers being in the old school for part of the year. I assume that was the school building that is now the Village Hall. She remembers the boys’ and girls’ privies outside in the courtyard of the building. Later in the year she moved to the new building in the south classroom. She had Mrs. Goult as a teacher for part of the year, and also Mrs. Henstock. The west wing was Miss Parrot’s classroom for 7- and 8- year olds. The “Hall” was a large multipurpose room that we used for physical activities when the weather was bad, but most memorably it was used for daily morning convocation and prayers. School prayer was not something we did in American public schools, and this was new to me. Each morning at the beginning of the school day, we would line up as classes in the Hall and face the faculty where we would receive general instruction, praise or criticism. Some mornings Reverend John from the old church in the village would come to give us a homily. We would sing a hymn and then we would all kneel on the hard tile floor for a prayer that seemed never-ending to us on our knees. It was quite painful, and to make it worse, Miss Parrot would walk up and down the rows of kneeling children during the prayer, and if you dared shift position or open your eyes you could get a swift rap with the ruler.

I have to admit that Miss Parrot terrified me and my sister, and I suppose most of the other students as well. She was stern and no-nonsense most of the time, but later in the year I did see a softer side on occasion. I remember a day when all the students were playing in the yard before school. As I recall there were some stairs leading up from the village to the play area. As Miss Parrot climbed the stairs and entered the playground, every child froze in place and there was total silence as she walked through the crowd. She turned her head from side

to side and it seemed to me she glared menacingly at us as she passed into the school building. As soon as the door closed behind her the noise and playing resumed. She often called students “silly ass” or “daft clot”, and you never wanted to be caught making a mistake or acting inappropriate in her presence. British teachers had a lot more leeway with control and discipline than American teachers, and this was one of the things I had to learn to adapt to very quickly, although I was not a disruptive or defiant student by nature. As careful as I was, I was not exempt from an occasional verbal tirade from Miss Parrot.

We would eat lunch in the “Canteen” which was in the general area of the old school. We would line up in the new school building according to color teams. Each student was assigned to the blue, red, yellow, or green team. Each team had a male and female captain from the older class. I was one of the team leaders for the blue team. Team captains had a colored pin for their blazer that said “Captain”. The other students would have colored dots on their uniforms designating their team. The captains would lead their teams down the path going northeast away from the school. At one point we had to walk through overgrown stinging nettle plants that lined the sides of the path. We had to be very careful to walk straight or we would get red burning bumps on our legs. The Canteen was a long low building that we entered from the west end. Along the left side were the student tables and the faculty sat at a table along the right wall facing the students. The two team captains sat at the ends of each table toward the center of the room. There would be four or five younger students on each side of the tables. Captains were responsible for taking student orders for Large, Medium, or Small orders of food. Then we would go to the serving area by the kitchen at the east end of the Canteen and get the plates of food for our tables. It was always a hot meal, and in general I liked the food, with a few exceptions. A student never had the option of not eating, so if you liked the food you could order a large portion and you could also get a second helping after finishing the first. But if you did not like the meal of the day, you still had to eat it. You just ordered a small portion and got it down as best you could without drawing the attention of the teachers. My sister Patti was on the blue team and sat at my table. She could not tolerate the dessert of rice pudding with a glob of red raspberry in the center. I think she had a sensory aversion to the texture, and every time they served it she would sit with it in front of her and cry. As the team captain I had to give her a dish of it, and just encourage her to get it down. She would eat it, gagging with every bite, but we all realized that was preferable to having Miss Parrot come over to the table and shame her for not eating. More than 50 years later, we still talk about the rice pudding at Syderstone. My favorite dessert was a pink and white layered pudding-like substance that was cut into narrow bars and served with shredded chocolate on top. I could have eaten a lot of that, but the servings were tiny and nobody could get more than one extra serving.

My co-captain for the Blue Team was a boy named Derek. We sat across from each other at lunch for the entire year. In the classroom, I shared a two-person table with Marion in the back right corner of the room. Rosalind sat at a table in front of us. I think she shared a table with a girl named Kathleen. Derek sat across the aisle from me and I think he shared the table with a boy named Paul. Patrick also sat near the back, as we were all in the older group. A girl named Ann sat at the table to the front left side of the room. She had amazing curly blond hair. Next to her was a girl named Monica. Sadly, I cannot remember the names of all the other students in my class. I am hoping someone who reads this will help fill in the blanks in my memory.

One younger student that my sister and I both remember very well was Neville, Patrick’s younger brother. He had the amazing talent (or so it seemed to us), of being able to walk on the toes of his sturdy brown outdoor shoes, which he frequently did for our entertainment.

He seemed to be a happy-go-lucky boy, who was frequently the target of Miss Parrot's scolding.

There were many new things I had to learn as a student at Syderstone School. From the first day I needed to figure out how to use nib pens and ink wells and blotting paper. In the U.S., we always used pencils in school. Fountain pens were messy, and ink was permanent, so those were reserved for older students. I had never seen this writing equipment before and I needed to become proficient, and quickly. I watched the other students, the way they dipped the pens into the white ceramic ink well, and then carefully wiped the tip of the pen on the edge of the hole. The trick was to get enough ink on the nib to be able to write at least a few words, but not so much that you had pools of indelible ink on the lines of your writing paper. We each had a sheet of absorbent fiber blotting paper that needed to be carefully pressed onto our line of writing to dry the extra ink. If you were not very careful, the blotting paper could end up smudging all that you had just carefully written. I remember always having blue ink stains on my fingers and hands. I also had to learn a new way to form my letters. All handwriting had to be uniform, and many of the cursive letters I had learned previously in school did not pass muster. I worked very hard to conform, so that I would avoid being singled out and ridiculed, but also because I knew Mr. Goult considered me a probationary student, and if I couldn't measure up I might be asked to leave the school. I enjoyed history and learned about a whole new cast of historical figures; the kings and queens, Lord Nelson, and Guy Fawkes. I also had to learn a new money system. Although the U.S. never fully adopted the metric system for weights and measures, our money was always based on the decimal system and was quite easy. Suddenly I was dealing with the huge coin that was a penny, the tiny farthing and the ha'penny. There was tu'pence and thru'pence, and twelve pence equaled a shilling, or "bob". A half crown was "two and six", and a crown was five shillings. Twenty shillings equaled a pound or "quid". And twenty one shillings was a guinea. Shopping required some serious mental math.

Although Mr. Goult seemed to me to be a good teacher, he could be hard on the students and I was intimidated by him. A couple of experiences taught me to always be on my toes. As the only American student in the class, Mr. Goult sometimes turned to me for input on anything having to do with the U.S. I certainly was no expert, and during that school year I realized that I had a lot to learn about my own country. One day early in the year we were talking about flags. I knew the British flag was called the Union Jack, although I do not know how I came to learn that. Mr. Goult turned to me and asked what my country's flag was called. It felt like every student in the class turned around to look at me. I had only ever heard it referred to as the American Flag. So I stood up (as we always had to do when answering questions) and said it was "The American Flag." And then I had to endure probably five minutes of questioning and ridicule because I did not know that my flag was called "The Stars and Stripes." Well, to the child of a military family, the "Stars and Stripes" was the name of the military newspaper for Americans stationed overseas. But that day I learned from a British teacher the name of my nation's flag! On another occasion, a small group of us was standing in the front area of the classroom having a lesson in geometry. For my entire life I have had trouble with visualization of shapes, and spatial relationships. We were doing tangrams, taking geometric shapes and rotating them in order to fit them together into a larger shape. I was having considerable difficulty with this exercise, and in exasperation, Mr. Goult threw the shapes on the floor and told me to get down on the floor and work the puzzle, and I was not to stand up until I figured it out. I was humiliated, but I had seen every other student treated this way at one time or another.

One afternoon a week all of the girls in Mr. Goult's and Miss Parrot's classes would gather in Miss Parrot's room for instruction in sewing and needle work. The boys would go with Mr. Goult. I never knew what they did but I was quite sure it was more fun than sewing and needle work. The girls learned to cross stitch and made small rectangular doilies. Then later in the year we were taught to use the sewing machines to make checkered gingham skirts that we would wear to the dance festival at Fakenham Grammar School. These sewing machines were not electric, but had large hand cranks on the right hand side. This was good for controlling the speed of the machine, and as beginners we all went very slowly. But turning the crank allowed only one hand free to hold and manipulate the fabric, which was very tricky. Under Miss Parrot's tutelage, we successfully sewed wearable, if not fashionable skirts, although I remember many times taking my mistakes to her with shaking hands, asking for help. I do think Miss Parrot was a bit gentler during those classes with the girls, when the boys were away. I do not remember much about the dance festival in Fakenham. The boys had checkered gingham neckerchiefs to match our skirts, and we did some kind of folk dance. The Grammar School seemed large and I remember feeling overwhelmed with all the students from other schools, and the pressure of performing in front of a lot of people.

At Christmas time we had a program for families. I believe it was held in the old St. Mary's Church in Syderstone. It was very dark inside, but there were Christmas decorations and candles. I was awed by this ancient church. My family had visited many historical sites in the U.S. but of course there is no structure in North America even close in age to a church built in the 12th century. We performed Christmas carols, and my class sang the English carol, "The Friendly Beasts". I had the verse about the sheep with the curly horn. It was a memorable program in a beautiful setting.

Our year in England was memorable outside of school as well. My family took a trip to London. We stayed at a large hotel where I could look out the window and see Hyde Park across the street. We saw a variety show at the London Palladium. We rode a double decker bus, shopped at Marks and Spencer, saw Big Ben, and visited Trafalgar Square where I shared my new knowledge about Lord Nelson with my family. I also remember trips to Norwich and Kings Lynn, a day trip to the coast at Hunstanton, and a drive-by to catch a glimpse of the Queen's estate at Sandringham. England was very different from Southern California, and I loved it all.

I have two memories of events in 1963 that shook the world. On a Friday evening in November, the piano teacher had arrived at our house and I was just about to have my piano lesson. My father got a short phone call and after hanging up, he said that his commander just told him that President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas. He had to leave immediately for his office. The air base was put on alert and high security. My family was shocked, and our British piano teacher burst into tears and soon left for her home. Perhaps for the first time I realized the world was not a safe place.

A happier memory that year was the Beatles' rise to fame in England. We saw them on the BBC one night and I remember my mother's reaction, "Look at their hair! Look at their HAIR!" At school we talked a lot about our favorite Beatles, and on a shopping trip to Kings Lynn I found what became one of my prized possessions: a black plastic brooch in the shape of a bass guitar, with a round picture of Paul McCartney in the middle. I could always best my American friends by claiming to be a Beatles fan before anyone in the U.S. knew who they were.

Sometime in the second half of the school year those of us in the upper class took the dreaded 11-plus Examination. I was so anxious about it that I do not remember anything about Exam day. I think we went to Fakenham to test but I cannot be certain. To everyone's surprise, except perhaps my mother, I passed the test. My mother had planned to send me to Fakenham Grammar the next year if I passed. I had great fear of going to that big school where I was sure the teachers would be stern and I would feel lost. However, the higher powers in the military decided that Sculthorpe would be turned over to the RAF and the U.S. Air Force left in 1964. My father was reassigned to an air base in Germany and we moved in the summer. Our time in England had been cut short and my family never got to travel to many of the places we planned to see. I am still waiting for that opportunity, and after connecting with the Old Syderstonians and pulling up these memories, I hope to be able to return before too long.

After three years in Europe my family returned to the U.S. I graduated from high school in California and studied for two years at Brigham Young University. I married my husband Mike and we will celebrate our 44th anniversary this year. We have five children and four grandchildren. I have a degree in Occupational Therapy and worked as a school therapist with children having a variety of disabilities. I am now retired. Mike and I live in Kennewick, Washington.