

AMBER VALLEY RE-UNION 21 JUNE 2009

It must be a sign of my advancing years but the old Dining Room, Masters' Common Room and Tuck Shop complex seem to be so much smaller than my youthful memory preserves. But nothing can detract from the sheer beauty of the location and the glorious surroundings of the Amber Valley; so it is little surprise that the call to re-visit, which to some was an idyllic location to begin our Grammar School education, is almost irresistible.

It was a pleasant morning, somewhat overcast but which gave way later to a warm and bright afternoon. Old Derbeians, wives, sons and daughters were soon engaged in lively conversation and of course there were the photographs and thanks to Bernard Burton for a fine selection of 'The Derbeian' to browse in the hope of finding our name against some sporting or academic achievement.

We were honoured with presence of our President, Alan Lockyer who made a short address, expressing thanks to Elisabeth and Nick for their commitment in making all the arrangements and to Ogston Sailing Club for their willingness to open their facilities for our function.

It was quite strange to survey the site from the old Dining Room without a trace of the dormitories, Grimbo's House, the sanatorium, the wash rooms, class rooms: they have now all gone but the voices and experiences of those halcyon days still whisper in the breeze and remind us of what once was, when we were just boys.

Of course, no re-union would be complete without the group photographs and there were those a plenty with Nick acting as master cameraman!

It was a very successful occasion, concluding with a fine lunch at the 'Nettles' all thanks to the dedicated offices of Elisabeth Bowden, whose love for Amber Valley, knows no bounds, and her son Nick.

On a salutary note next year 2010 it will be seventy years since the School moved to Amber Valley.

G.S. (Stan) Smith (42-48)