

# WOSA Europe Reunion 2003, October 4

The Annual WOSA Europe reunion was held at the Quaker Centre, Byng Place, London on October 4, 2003. We were a small group of 25, with a number of our "regulars" missing this year, as they had attended a dinner to meet David Jeffery a few weeks earlier. We were delighted to welcome some new younger members, Susmita Ghosh '92, Daniel Russell '01, Sanjana Sethi '02, Lalri Jahau '01, Ringae Nuek and Sahajo Haertel '01, and also to renew acquaintances with old friends who have only recently discovered us: Rajan Chetsingh '50, John Morgan '51 and Alison Thursfield '54. Most senior members present were David Little and Alex Burton from the Class of '39. Our youngest attendee was Sarah Viney, daughter of Richard & Christine Viney (Staff) who has been attending our meetings since she was quite little and is now a confident young teenager! Richard Balaran '88 brought his Dad, Stephen, all the way from Newcastle and we also welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Tympel, parents of a SAGE student, who came from Germany for the weekend. We wish we could tempt others to come over from mainland Europe. We heard with great sadness of the death of Thelma Nisser Buchwald '34. Thelma first started the WOSA gatherings in her home in Wimbledon – informal get-togethers where the emphasis was on renewing acquaintances and reminiscing about the "good old days". Sita Kashyap Lichtenstern '64 continued this tradition of informal tea parties, which we all enjoyed.

There has been some concern at Woodstock that WOSA Europe should become a more formally organised group and the major part of our meeting this year was spent in deciding how this was to be done. Those of us on the committee have for years been unable to recruit younger, more energetic members to join us in planning the annual meetings. Now, at last, we are lucky to have found Daniel Russell '01, who is keen to make contact with former Woodstockites and to take on the responsibility of organising future gatherings. The existing committee members, some of whom have not been involved for some time due to other commitments, are happy to pass the baton on to Daniel and younger colleagues, (Deirdre, Sasmita, Rehan, at time of writing). Robin Starte and I will carry on a little bit longer in order to provide continuity. From next year each

committee member will commit to serving three years, after which he or she has the option to resign. On the financial side, including contributions from members who could not attend this year's meeting, we are delighted to be able to send £500.00 to Woodstock as this year's contribution to the Hanson Field fund.

We had two guest speakers this year – Janie Downs Wallbrown '52 and Deirdre Straughan '81. Janie told us about the website she has created to make a contact point for new alumni as they begin university and as they enter the job market. Setting up this web site has been an enormous task for Janie and shows every sign of being a big success in connecting alumni with one another.

Deirdre came from Italy to speak about the new book on Woodstock, which she is helping to compile for the sesquicentennial celebrations and to ask for our contributions of information and memories. This is another very worthwhile project and I hope everyone will support Deirdre and supply plenty of material for her to use. I must just add a note about Alison Thursfield's '54 little khaki rucksack, which she brought along. It was one she was using when she left Woodstock as a "chut". It still had all her classmates' signatures and farewell messages on it, including one signed "Fatty" from Eva Seegall Chandler '54, one of our regular (very slim) members, who finally persuaded her husband Michael to come along for the first time this year. Eva said everyone called her "Fatty" in those days – even the teachers, unimaginable in today's strict code of conduct! As always, Chris Appleby '51, with Margot at his side, did the lion's share of organising this event. He has increasingly taken over the running of WOSA Europe and we are grateful to him for doing this, as well as managing the accounts for many years. As Chris reaches a new milestone in life, his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, he has decided to lessen his work load and retire from the committee. On behalf of all WOSA Europe members I should like to thank him for all his commitment, good humour and hard work. Together with Chris and other former members of the committee we should like to wish the new committee the very best of luck for many successful years to come. Photos of the reunion can be viewed on the WS Alumni Yahoo site (see p. 12).

—Nandita Kashyap Hollins '52

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