

## **The History of Windlesham House School**

An educational establishment located at Newport, IOW, which became known as Windlesham House School and which can with justice claim to be the oldest independent preparatory school in the country, was acquired in 1837 by Lieut Charles Robert Malden. At the outset, much advice on running a school was given to him by Dr Arnold of Rugby School and a year later it was decided to move the school to the popular health resort of Brighton. The school took on its present name in 1846 when its new purpose built premises opened on Norfolk Terrace, its name Windlesham being decided upon as CR Malden had married the daughter of the vicar of Windlesham, Surrey, in the church there.

Henry Charles Malden, the second Windlesham House head, affectionately known to his pupils as 'Old Harry,' was the eldest son of the founder and ran the school from 1855 to 1888. He had, however, even before taking on the school, already guaranteed his place in history. While he was at Trinity College Cambridge, football was a hopeless game, owing to there being no rules. It was eventually agreed that there should be a meeting to draw up fixed rules. The Public Schools, who were so frequently at odds about the various laws, sent two representatives each and the university sent a further two who had not been to a Public School. One of these was Henry Malden, in whose college rooms and under whose chairmanship the meeting took place. At this momentous gathering the Cambridge Football Rules were drawn up and the large majority of these were later to be taken on formally by all players. Thus the code for the game of Association Football was established throughout the country. It is not surprising therefore to find that a Windlesham headmaster, Henry C Malden, has always been considered the 'father of Association rules.'

The school had by 1913 become surrounded by housing as Brighton and Hove grew, so a move was made to a countryside area near Portslade, which the school renamed Southern Cross after the local pub! This site too succumbed to urbanisation so that the decision was taken in 1934 to move yet again, this time to its present location in the magnificent Queen Anne 'Highden House' in the heart of the South Downs near Washington. WWII evacuation took the school temporarily to Somerset and then the Lake District, but the Windlesham community has prospered at its ever-developing Highden home since 1945. It has, though, left behind evidence of its earlier migrations around Sussex in a Road, Avenue, Gardens and Close all named after Windlesham!

There was a remarkable consequence resulting from all these moves which concerned the school Chapel. In 1896 the then heads, the first Mr and Mrs Charles, were visiting Oxford and discovered that St Martin's Church at Carfax was being demolished. With Windlesham in need of a Chapel, they stopped the demolition there and then bought up as much of it as they could use. So, leaving Carfax Tower to stand alone as it still does today, most of the remainder of the building was re-erected in Brighton, where it was re-dedicated in 1897 as All Saints' Chapel. That chapel moved again with the school in 1913 and so once more in 1934 to its final location where it can be found at the heart of the Windlesham of today.

Throughout the first 157 years of its existence, Windlesham remained in the hands of five generations of the same family, until the retirement in 1994 of the second Mr and Mrs Charles, Charles and Elizabeth Ann Malden. The school now has its own beautiful theatre, named in their honour. The school had become an educational trust in 1963 and then four years later was the first independent preparatory boarding school to become a co-educational one. Subsequently the school has continued to flourish in its marvellous 64-acre countryside site and now has the great, great, great, grand-daughter of the founder as Chairman of Governors.