

## Reunion of Former Residents of Sopley Reception Centre

The last week of September saw a group of 143 Cambodians, many of whom were living at the Sopley Reception Centre during the early 1980s, together with their families and fieldworker Andy Palmer. It is always a great pleasure to welcome these visitors back to The New Friends of the New Forest Heritage Centre, all that is now left of former RAF Sopley and the Reception Centre.

The plaque on the outside wall of the Friends of the New Forest Airfields Heritage Centre commemorates those who lived at the Sopley Reception Centre during the early 1980s, as well as those who perished whilst attempting to make the journey



On 21<sup>st</sup> May 1979 the British cargo ship SS Sibonga rescued 1,003 'Boat People' from their overcrowded and sinking boats

12<sup>th</sup> June 1979 to 29<sup>th</sup> September 1982

This plaque commemorates those 2,855 Vietnamese Refugees for whom Sopley Reception Centre was the beginning of a new life.

It also remembers those who perished whilst attempting to make the journey.

Tấm Bảng này để tưởng nhớ đến 2.855 người tị nạn Việt Nam, những người mà trung tâm tiếp nhận Sopley là nơi khởi đầu cuộc sống mới.

Nó cũng tưởng nhớ những người đã thiệt mạng trong khi cố gắng thực hiện cuộc hành trình.



The two brothers at either end of the picture are Thi and Phap Ung, who were 4 & 7 at the time they were at the Sopley Reception Centre. Their parents are gentleman in blue top, and their Mum in the light grey coat.

The lady with sunglasses atop her head is Lap Co Lam (8/9) at the time they were at Sopley and next to her on the right is her Aunt and Mother.

Phap came over from Dallas with his wife (just visible).

Leon Ung in the yellow top won an Oscar earlier this year; he acted in the Best Short film category. His father, Thi, has his own business in north London.