Book Reviews

Out of the Hitler time. One Family's Story by Judith Kerr

I think this book is very good because it's about a family that leaves Germany before Hitler becomes President. Anna, Max and their parents leave Berlin just in time and flee to Switzerland. Their father is a famous author and journalist. They leave Switzerland to go to Paris in hoping for a better life and perhaps a publisher who may publish Anna's father's plays, books and newspaper articles. From here (Paris) they go to London. Max became a pilot. Anna now sixteen, becomes a secretary to Mrs Hammond who has ladies to help with knitting and sewing for those in need. Anna is also still going to the secretarial school despite the dropping of bombs now in England. I enjoyed reading about Anna's assistance and selflessness.

Michelle Mezny, Age 12

'The Two Towers' by Tolkien

This book keeps on becoming more exciting as it goes on, which is quite hard as it is such a long book. I don't normally like fantasy novels but I think that this one is different, you almost can believe what Tolkien is writing is all true.

I read 'The Fellowship of the Ring' first, after finishing it I wouldn't settled until I had read the next book.

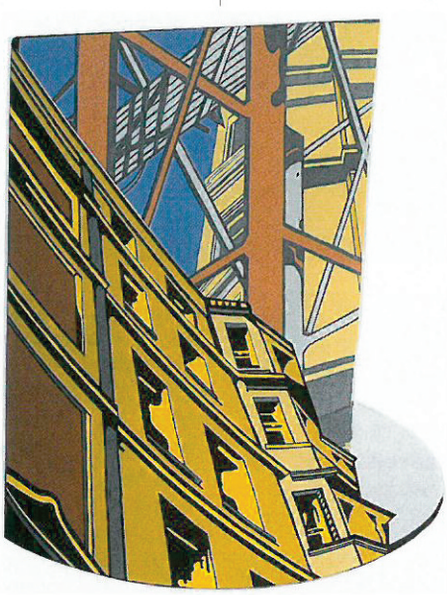
"The Two Towers" is the middle part of the story and it is when the whole group get separated from each other. I haven't read that far, but I think that they will all find each other. I don't know about Frodo and Sam who rode off in a boat together a while back in the story. I can't wait to finish this book so that I can go on to the last one, 'The Return of the King'. I am thoroughly looking forward to reading it.

Rachel Flatt, Age 12

Tremors - 'The Ghost of Golfhawx'

In the first chapter the book made me want to read on. Every page got more exciting till I realised I was on the fourth chapter. I have never read a book about a ghost before. I will now though. I don't think 'The Ghost of Golfhawx' is that scary, it's more exciting. 'The Ghost of Golfhawx' is one book in a series of other books. I recommend it to all readers as a short but interesting book to read.

Chloe Isaccs, Age 12



When We Were Orphans (Booker Prize Short-list) by Kazuo Ishiguro

Christopher Banks is a well-known detective in London. Born in Shanghai he has been using his deductive powers since a very early age, especially to try and solve the mystery of his parents disappearance at the tender age of 8. Despite his protests to stay and look for his parents, Christopher is shipped off to England to begin a new life with his aunt, assisted by Colonel Chamberlain.

At his new school he tries to hide his talent of deduction from the public eye and manages to blend in very well to English school life. Emerging from school, Christopher moves to London and gets involved in a series of murder cases. His fame grows between the upper-classes. A Miss Sarah Hemmings becomes convinced of their long friendship and is determined to find him. They had met three or four years ago and have not spoken since. What are Miss Hemmings' motives? When she finally finds Christopher, why does she show such a keen interest in Christopher's childhood friend, Akura Ymashita? Why is she so keen to get into the ball? All these questions, and more must be answered before Christopher can find out the truth about his parents' disappearance, which has been haunting him for all these years.

I would greatly recommend this book to any fans of esteemed crime writers such as Agatha Christie and Dorothy L Sayers. The text is intelligently written and reflects perfectly 1930s British life. It is very descriptive and gives a wonderful insight into growing up in a foreign country, in this case, China.

Christopher Banks is a very interesting character. He is quite introverted and likes to be by himself. He has earned himself a reputation for being a bit of an odd bird. He seems intelligent and takes the fact that he can solve impossible problems for granted. When talking about the baffling mysteries he has solved he dismisses them as the easiest thing in the world. Perhaps he is just modest .

The story is written in the first person, from Christopher's point of view. This includes many intriguing anecdotes about Christopher's past in both Shanghai and England, ranging from a curious description of his friend Akira's apparent awe of Christopher's mother to his efforts to imitate his peers to his best ability to fit in. It is a brilliant novel and I am sure that everybody will enjoy it. I sincerely hope that it wins the Booker Prize .

Jennifer Platt, Age 13

Young Enterprise

Company Members

Managing Director	Hannah Redman
Deputy M.D.	Joanne Bean
Company Secretary	Sarah Hatherly
Deputy Co. Sec.	Lavina Jonah
Finance Director	Soke Ling Yong
Deputy F.D.	Qin Zhao
Operations Director	Vicky Young
Deputy Op.D.	Lizzie Bowen
Sales Director	Lucie Marchant
Deputy S.D.	Zoe Gordon
Marketing Director	Dega Stephenson
Deputy Mkt.D.	Helene Enahoro
Personnel Director	Siobhan O'Hara
Deputy P.E.	Dee Baker

Company Profile

Our company Name:	**@it**
Our mission statement:	To promote the brand name "**@it**"
Our products:	**@it** t-shirts
	@it hairclips
	@it beanie hats

Summary and Conclusion

We feel that we have gained a great deal from our experiences with **@it**, in different ways. Some of us have already been thinking about a career in business; having taken a part in running one, being in a position of responsibility, meeting deadlines and facing consequences. Despite ups and downs, we are all glad we got involved and will always remember **@it** and draw on the knowledge gained.

Our mission statement was 'to promote our brand name and logo and become well known both in and out of school'. We believe that through energy and teamwork we have now definitely achieved this. We are proud to be part of this company, even with the controversy it has brought over the past few weeks. (This itself is something to be proud of: how many Young Enterprises create such controversy and are accused of creating a sixth form sorority and a complete cult to go with it!?)

In addition to completing our mission statement we have also made the brand name, '**@it**' an umbrella for a family of quality products, which is an added bonus. The company was a bit slow to get going, admittedly, but once we started there was no stopping us, and we have gained momentum ever since.

Financial Summary

We are proud to have made a profit overall, which is after tax £165.72 and since we took just over £100 worth of shares when we first set up our company, this will go back to the share holders next term after our company has finally disbanded.

We were very pleased to win 1st Prize for Financial Report in the local area competition.

Trading and Profit and Loss Accounts

as at 17.03.00

	£
Sales	635.37
Add Prize Awards	25.00
Extra Income	6.62
Total	666.99
Less cost of goods sold:	
Purchases	492.13
Production cost of goods completed	60.65
Less Closing Stock	(183.50)
Gross Profit	(369.28)
	297.71
Less expenses:	
Registration Fee	70.00
Postage	1.30
Travelling Expenses	0.60
Stationery	0.59
YE Area Board	10.00
Net Profit	82.49
Less Corporation Tax (23%)	215.22
Profit After Tax	49.50
	165.72

Balance Sheet

as at 17.03.00

CURRENT ASSETS:	
Stock	183.50
Cash at Bank	66.82
Cash in Hand	86.36
	336.68
CURRENT LIABILITIES:	
YE Corporation Tax (23%)	49.59
YE Vat Due	14.21
	63.71
	272.97
REPRESENTED BY:	
Issue Share Capital	107.25
429 Shares at 25p	165.72
Profit After Tax	272.97

St Mary's Hall Association

Reunion 2000, May 12th and 13th

When the time comes to leave school and move on, many pupils make fervent promises to meet up at a set time and place. Whether the arrangement is for five or ten years ahead, or for the anniversary of the exam year, when the parting of the ways comes, most pupils are determined to honour the reunion.

In practice such reunions often fail to materialise. The pressures of study, work, family and other commitments take priority, and the years slip by. A few stay in touch but many more don't, and you end up wondering "whatever happened to ..."

Until an event like SMHA 2000! After many months of planning, this special reunion was a resounding success, and the weather was superb. Over 130 former pupils of SMH gathered at the school in May 2000 to find out what really happened to old friends and acquaintances, and to see how the school had developed since their days.

Initially people gathered in the hall to mingle and chat over a glass of wine, to browse through souvenirs and find themselves and their friends in schoolday photographs. Former pupils, ranging in age from 18 to 85, gasped in delight and amazement as they met again with people they hadn't seen for years. One particular group of seven was together for the first time since 1959, one having travelled from Australia, one from USA, one from Scotland and another from New Zealand.

The amazing thing was that we all picked up again as though it had been yesterday! The chat continued throughout a delicious ploughman's lunch - and how we all marvelled at the tremendous improvement in the catering arrangements!

After lunch there was plenty of time to go on a guided tour of the school. The growth of the new primary and junior school unit (the original had been phased out in the 1960s), the development of the science laboratories, and the conversion of the old cloakrooms into a light and airy dining hall were all favourably commented on.

Everyone admired the superb quality of work in the art building (once the school sanatorium, carrying memories of flu epidemics, cough medicines and liniment for sports sprains!) but comments on Venn House were not all so favourable. While accepting that it serves its purposes excellently, many former pupils would have preferred to see an exterior more in keeping with the main school building.

For boarders, the highlight of the tour was a chance to visit again St Hilary in Sussex Square and the former Babington House in Chichester Terrace. Babington is now in private ownership, and we were all very grateful to the present owners for allowing us to tour their home. The tour of St Hilary brought back memories of midnight feasts and trips through the secret passage - do any of today's pupils know where it is?

After that it was time to prepare for a superb evening with a delicious meal, exceptional live Irish music, and an exciting casino, before saying farewell to old friends.

A few were able to stay in the area overnight, in many cases thanks to the hospitality of the Parent School Association members. These, and some who hadn't been able to come for Saturday, gathered with present pupils in St Marks' Chapel for a service of thanksgiving and commemoration. This was undoubtedly the most moving part of the weekend. Many had forgotten how the acoustics of St Mark's made the music soar - and what excellent music it was! Mrs Meek's address summed up so much of what we have been thinking, of the values of friendship formed at school, and their importance throughout life.

As the last notes of the organ died away, we were out again in the sunshine, gathered on the terrace to unfurl the new school flag presented to the school by SMHA. Sadly, it couldn't be hoisted on the new flagpole as planning consent had been delayed but we look forward to seeing the flag flying (literally) when SMHA return on May 12th 2001. Commemorative photographs were taken and after light refreshments we dispersed and made our way home.

But that wasn't the end, for friendship and acquaintances renewed then have been kept up. Many who have lost touch with the school have now joined (or rejoined) SMHA, and through emails, the Newsletter, visits and phone calls we have learned anew that friendships forged at school can withstand even 50 years separation!

Kim Cook (Kimmins) 1954 - 1960

Extract from Mrs Meek's Address at the SMHA Service

This service is entitled a Service of Commemoration; it is almost the last event of St Mary's Hall Association Millennium week-end - one of reminiscence and celebration.

This is a service to give thanks for the memories and also to celebrate a vision - the vision of a man who wished to bring the light of education to young women who had hitherto been deprived of it. This Reunion Week-end, as we look back over the years of our own time at St Mary's Hall, we cannot ignore the debt to him, nor the bond of shared experience which ties us all together as members of the St Mary's Hall community, past and present.

Today we have the opportunity for past pupils to meet current boarders. Talking to Penny Gardiner, who is Vice-Chairman of the SMHA and a Governor of the School, the boarding community in days gone by was not so very different from today. The School community continues to be enriched by many different nationalities, cultures, faiths and customs. In a way, the boarding houses are representative of a world - a boarding house really encapsulates society. It gives the opportunity not only to work alongside somebody else, but live alongside somebody else. At best, it encourages tolerance and mutual support; respect for others; an ethos of 'live and let live' which prepares boarders not only for independence but, despite differences, it prompts us to get on with it and get on with each other. But probably none of these skills which current pupils are developing are apparent to them at the moment. It's later that the experience seems to make sense. I have this on good authority from members of the SMHA!

This week I have spent some time at the Boarding Schools Association Conference, which was opened by Her Royal Highness, Princess Anne - the Princess Royal. She recalled her own memories of boarding school, of individuals, often rather quirky individuals whose company she enjoyed; of staff who made a difference to the way she went on to live her life. But she, like others who addressed the Conference, could not remember much that she had been taught in the classroom.

So what is it the SMHA remembers? What is it current pupils will remember? I remember the teacher who took us away on camps in the summer, who talked about all kinds of issues round the fire in the evenings, who was interested in us, who listened, who encouraged us to take initiatives, make decisions, take responsibility - who led by example, who instilled in us values, who gave us opportunities to achieve, to try, to fail, to try again, to hold our heads up, to laugh, to love - to live. She is the one I remember. She taught us, as we cooked burnt offerings for each other, fetched water, or wood, emptied latrines, talked or sang round the fire, played games; she taught us to be sensitive to each other, to be brave, to listen to each other and be ready to act. Those lessons (which cannot be measured on any league table) I shall never forget. I would dare to say that it is the activities outside the classroom that will probably be the ones that made the difference. Don't get me wrong - exams are vital - they are the passport to a living. Values are the stuff of life itself.

So today, we commemorate and celebrate, recalling past experiences and treasured memories - but I suggest it is timely for those of us who are still here at SMH to take the opportunity to celebrate too. There will always be things that need improving and the 'good old days' can have the rosy glow of nostalgia about them, whereas the present has more of a cutting edge! And for those with exams looming - I'm sure school days certainly don't seem the happiest days of one's life! But the most important thing is that we take time to value each other. When our present pupils leave, they won't be sorry to leave the buildings, the bells and the routine, but I remember how much I missed my friends - and funnily enough, the staff! So let's value each other - and what is good, lasting, true; and strive in our School community - and in our lives - to change what is not.

I hope members of SMHA will return often to support us in our stage of the journey. We are living in a technological age of unprecedented change. If we're not careful, we could find our feet swept away from under us. Mrs Ridge reminded us in her assembly this week that the love of God does not change, nor, after 2000 years, do the Christian values upon which this School was founded.

Mrs S M Meek, Headmistress

News from Ex-SMH Pupils

A Letter from Hungary

Dear St Mary's Hall

Hope you are all well and still going strong. I was lucky to be chosen as one of a small party from Britain to join a Bronze Age Dig in Hungary. I'll send you a copy of my Site Report when I eventually finish it! At the moment, I'm uncovering a sheep's skull (Clarabel!) - the only whole animal skull yet to be found on the Dig. I found the skull the day before my birthday, a nice surprise and I actually felt like a real archaeologist being really enthusiastic about a find. My house is really wicked, newly decorated and just two minutes from Lectures and the Union. The course is really cool!

Take Care

Gemma Finney, ex-SMH 1992-1999)
Dept. of Classics & Archaeology
University College Cardiff

Is There Life after School?

I really loved my time at St Mary's Hall especially the last year as Head girl! I thought this would be the zenith of my happiness. I loved my teachers and my A level subjects (Art, Classical Civilisation and Theatre Studies). However, having followed a completely orthodox and regulated pathway I decided that I would break away after school and not just go off to University. It just wasn't me at all, dry studying and essay writing.

Since playing the lead in the school production 'Annie Get Your Gun' with dear Mr Roser being my leading man, I couldn't get the love of theatre and song out of my soul. All I wanted to do was be an actress. I also really loved my Greek classics (thanks totally to Mrs Thomason's enthusiastic teaching).

So I decided I would like to go to Drama School but also have a degree to work for too. I went for several auditions at various places but felt I wanted to be in London where I was close to Heaven (otherwise known as The West End).

In September 1997 I started at Italia Conti in North Clapham doing a BA (Hons) in Acting. My mother nearly collapsed when she saw the dilapidated building and the environment of the Academy (as it is so decorously called). Commuting to London every day and then taking two tubes and ending up in a rather downtrodden, tough and high-crime area seemed a far cry from the delights of St Mary's! The daily schedule, when it arrived, seemed, to say the least, arduous. Every day classes were planned from 9am to 5.30pm with barely half an hour for lunch.

We learned acting from all angles. We learned to dance, to stage fight, to fence, to speak in accents, to sing, to work alone and alongside others, to put on make-up, to do lighting, producing, work in front of and behind the cameras, we made videos and movies, we learned modern acting, the history of acting and had to write daily diaries of what we had done, submit 10,000 word essays each term and finally a dissertation of about 60,000 words. And I thought I was in for an easy life!

My final work was on the changing role of women in comedy in the theatre and in films. Every term we were assessed and, believe me, the tutors were not generous with their marking or keen to praise. When all had been assessed by Italia Conti it had to be reviewed by South Bank University who validated our degrees. Eventually I fulfilled my goal and graduated in July 2000.

But was it worth it and have I worked since?

To be honest I haven't stopped for a second. In fact, I actually started work before I'd finished my degree. For experience of direct public execution, in more ways than one, I took a job as a prostitute! No don't be too horrified, teachers all, it was at the London Dungeons, and there were many other roles I played too. It was really hard work, long hours, dismal conditions but I could dress up, act and improvise. Really good experience and well paid.

As well as doing this I was singing at various venues in London and Brighton in the evenings. This I have continued with and got great pleasure from. So far my greatest singing success was at The TUC conference in Brighton where I represented Student Equity (The Actor's Union) and sang several songs from musicals and jazz numbers.

After the Dungeons came a six-week stint as Theatre Director at Summer School at Sussex University (if you enjoy any aspect of drama why not think about it for next year, everyone who came seemed to love it). This meant I was involved with teaching acting, singing, make-up and improvisation and at the end of each week I helped all the students put on a show.

Next I went to numerous auditions and ended up with three jobs! I couldn't do them all so I did two. The day job was working at The Millennium Dome as a Character Host. Every hour of every day I was a different person. I dressed up as a headmistress, a football referee, a snowman, a big soft cuddly animal called Cogsly and numerous other characters. Sometimes I was in the Body Zone talking about wrinkles and ageing, then I would be in the religious zone talking about different faiths.

The evening job was playing the parts of Mum/sphinx and a waitress in 'Greek' by Stephen Berkoff. This is currently on in a fringe theatre, The Landor, but in January we move to the prestigious Riverside Studios in Hammersmith. After this, who knows what? The play is great as I can put some of the knowledge I gained in both Theatre Studies and Classics into action. The play is a modern day interpretation of Oedipus Rex and really brought alive my schoolgirl thoughts on what did go on in those Greek Myths.

While doing all of these things I have made a demonstration CD and have been invited to several more auditions including one for a company called To Be or Not To Be!

My only problem is getting any time to sleep. If you ever see me asleep on the train, just wake me up and say Hi! It may be the only time I do get any sleep but life is fun, busy and living it in the fast track is what I wanted. Enjoy St Mary's but remember it is only a stepping-stone to life. Not all life has to involve getting to university. Doing what makes you happy is best. I know because that's what I did.

Olivia Lipscombe, Ex-SMH 1991-1997