

ST. MARY'S HALL ASSOCIATION

SPRING e-NEWSLETTER

Please note that this information is confidential to SMH Association members only and should not be passed to anyone else. If you have SMH friends who have not received this newsletter, ask them to contact smhaenquiries@gmail.com so that we can ensure that they are correctly registered, thereby keeping all members' data protected.

MESSAGE FROM YOUR TEAM

Dear Friends,

Our website, www.smhassociation.org, has had a complete face-lift; the work of tens of hours over the last four months by **Lis Eastham (Ferguson 1969-76)** to whom we all owe our thanks. Apart from a swish new look you will all notice one vital change – it's easier to access the password pages because ALL you now need is a **password** which is **Elliott2009** – Our Founder's name and the year school closed. It is needed on each protected page but once you have 'saved' it, it should fill automatically the next time you visit that page and a simple click opens it. You will need to do it (once) for each protected page you visit. See page 13 for a visual aid to use. Please DO NOT share the password with anyone who is not a member – if you're asked what it is, please refer them to me 😊 We welcome your feedback on the site so do please have a look around!

Lis and her husband spent 8 days in the UK in February visiting relations and friends scattered from East Sussex to Staffordshire. This (including the drive to Calais from the Loire Valley before arriving in England) would be enough for most of us but not "our Lis"! She had arranged a ½ day visit to The Keep to photograph over 200 images which will replace and supplement those on our website, ensuring that at the end of this exercise we have as complete an archive online as can sensibly be achieved. We've been playing catch-up ever since our 'real' archives were moved to The Keep in 2015-16 before we had the chance to photograph or scan them but Lis, Sian, Jan and I now feel that with



the final scanning of some missing 'long school photos' in the next couple of months we can say we have done a reasonable job on your behalf. On the left are two photos we did not have to pay for – Lis and Mike getting stuck in! On your behalf I thank them both most sincerely for doing this.

As **Sian Spencer (Williams 1966-76)** was the sole member to attend this year's carol service at St Mary's church we have withdrawn from future events. Obviously it is sad that no-one attended – numbers have never reached double figures despite members' requests for us to arrange something, and it is clearly unfair/inappropriate of us to ask to participate any longer. I am sure many of you enjoyed your own carol services and, like me, thought of past school events as you sang the old favourites.

Update on the **Reunion**. Numbers are low so far (to our huge surprise as previous events have been oversubscribed). There is time to book, so please email me ASAP, to reserve your place! smhaenquiries@gmail.com

The idea of a **Calendar** was floated. The number of members expressing interest was around twenty, so clearly it is 'not wanted' (which is fine!) 😊 If you have any ideas for fundraising or things you might like to purchase please let us know.

The **Management Team** met by FB messenger voice-call on 7th March and our meeting led to outcomes which directly affect each member of SMHA so please read on.

Firstly, this is your **final e-Newsletter but by no means the end of the news**. Feedback has been reducing and we have serious doubts as to how many of the 1000+ circulated are actually being read (based not least on comments in the Virtual Common Room and in emails received). The work involved in creating it is, frankly, outweighing the discernible benefit to members.

Instead we will be adding items to the **Latest News page** of our website (<https://www.smhassociation.org/latest-news>) on a regular basis and, on the same page announcing Reunions and other events / initiatives. These will also be promoted in the **SMHA Virtual Common Room** (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SMHAclosed/>) and, as far as appropriate for a public forum, St Mary's Hall, Brighton, UK - Alumnae association FB page (<https://www.facebook.com/stmaryshallbrighton/>). **If you would like a regular email reminder with the link to the Latest News then contact us and we will set this up for you.**

Your own news, photos & items you would like included in News can, as always, be emailed to us smhaenquiries@gmail.com!

We discussed **LinkedIn** at some length. It has now been agreed that as we are unable to facilitate it and those members who have signed up to it are not utilising it we will no longer promote it. An announcement on the group will refer people to our website. We would have preferred for it to continue – but properly administered! Feel free to volunteer...

Running Costs and **Fundraising** were discussed. We keep costs to a bare minimum – other than paying the annual examination fee for the accounts (which is now a lean £50 down from well over £100 in previous years) it is solely the running costs of our essential website which have to be funded. These have also been significantly reduced as a pleasing side-effect of changing platforms to an easier hosting system. With members' help in occasional printing and postage and your generous support of the 100 club, in a year with no other expenditure we can easily break even. However for the last year and in 2020 to an extent we are spending on scanning and photographing items for the website. We have spent more than our income and will do so again this year. We agreed that now that the website has been completed no future project should take place unless it was funded through donations or could be clearly identified as of benefit to a majority of members.

Wonderful news that we have sourced a member to join our Team specifically to assist our Finance Officer by learning how the accounts work and to act as second signatory / online authority. This relieves me of a huge 'burden' as accounts are NOT my thing (I manage my own very well but have not enjoyed being 'fall-back' to our wonderful Sian. Paperwork not complete yet, but we will *reveal all* shortly on our website / in the Common Room!

We have also found 'partners' for the last two members with no internet access to whom we write, annually. This is thanks to seven or eight individual members who have kindly offered to contact our list of otherwise excommunicated Old Girls with news by phone, letter or through a visit. Thank you so much all you lovely Girls who have volunteered to do this; it is greatly appreciated by the Management Team, and by those with whom you are keeping in touch.

A tiny team – all volunteers and all with other interests and commitments – cannot give more than we are giving and indeed we are having to make hard decisions about doing less. We therefore ask you once again to consider if you can step up and offer some small assistance? Please bear in mind that three of us are now in our 'Golden Years' as the Spanish so beautifully put it, and at some point we will have to STOP. At that time, unless others have already come forward to learn more about what happens so will the Association. You may be happy about this – you may not. We don't know that...but we would be interested to hear!

As a later item puts it, the aim of SMHA was that ***"it might become a real help both to past and present pupils, as a link to join the old pupils together."*** This is the simple aim still borne in mind by your Management Team in everything we do, but to go on doing it in our second decade of virtuality we need your support and engagement.

I hope you enjoy reading the news and articles and looking at the photos in the rest of this spring e-Newsletter and that you will remember to check in regularly to the Latest News (link) especially if you're not a member of the Common Room.

Very best wishes,

Penny Harrison, (Titheradge 1969-73)

Sian Spencer, (Williams, 1967-77)

Lis Eastham, (Ferguson, 1969-76)

Jan Johnson, (Launchbury, 1977-84)

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2020's first prize will be £14.10/month and second prize will be £9.40/month.

Just one win in one month more than recoups the £12 entry for the year!

But you've got to be in it to win it, so if you would like to find out about doing this for 2021 please email **Lis Eastham**: smha100club@gmail.com.

100 Club rules are on the "Support Us" page of our website.

Here are the winners (since winter e-Newsletter) Prize winners are notified individually and results are published in 'Latest News' and in the Common Room.

January 2020	February 2020	March 2020
1 st Prize Angelica Meletiou	1 st Prize Hilary Briegel (entry #6)	1 st Prize Daphne Bonner
2 nd Prize Daphne Bonner	2 nd Prize Hilary Briegel (entry #3)	2 nd Prize Margaret Ellis

Sarah Robinson (Burgis, 1947-52) saw the scanned newspaper cuttings of the Founder's Day gymnastic displays & parade in the winter e-Newsletter and sent me this email:

"Here is some more news (or should I say ponderings?)

I was at that Founders day as I joined SMH in 1947. I would have been very junior, so possibly at the back of the parade. I do remember doing a demonstration with other girls of the Western Roll high jump. And some of the girl's names are familiar. Penelope Burgis was my sister; she passed away many years ago.

I still have my form reports and reading them again I realize that my schooling and the reports would have been very different if they had known about dyslexia then. But I did excel at art and in 1952 and 1953 won bronze then silver star for paintings sent to the Royal Drawing Society's Exhibition "The Children's Royal Academy" Miss Conrady was headmistress then and I was one of the girls she was unpleasant too, so I got very little praise. Miss Robinson was a wonderful person strict but fair. I was very sorry to see her go. Those last few years were horrible and I could not wait till I was 15 and could leave. I then went to art college and when I told Miss C she couldn't hide her disgust during the goodbye in her study. And I am still an artist and craft worker!"

L-R, below, Susan, Tisha, Barbara, Helen



I investigated the 1953 Newsletter and found an extract from Miss Conrady's report which shows that although she had not been able to show Sarah how proud she was of her achievements she clearly did value her contribution to the school, mentioning her prizes and sharing that she had visited the Children's Academy to see Sarah's work on display! Sarah is pictured here, (taken from 1949 'long school photo')



Lis' mother, **Ruth Ferguson (Powell, 1948-50)** has the original photos used in the newspapers so we have been able to scan these, obviously of a much better quality, and add them to the website. Thanks, Ruth!

While I was putting this piece together Lis re-discovered an Appreciation of the Life of **Harriet Robinson (Head from 1945-49)**. I was very happy to be able to share it with Sarah and I know it will have stimulated lots more memories! **Heather Johnson (Heald, 1948-57)** was one of the Old Girls who helped the author, a relation of Miss R's, to compile the appreciation, which WILL be on our new website for all to enjoy.

Susan Mitchell (James, 1967-74) and her sisters **Barbara Marshall (1973-80)** and **Helen Walter (James, 1973-81)** had a lovely afternoon with **Tisha Dahl** reminiscing about their different times at SMH. Tisha was the first pupil to go on the US exchange in 1960. They had a "fantastic afternoon reminiscing over how the school had changed over the years and stories to share." **Jeanette Cureton (Smith, 1961-62)** sent a 'Hello' to Tisha from her fellow SMH exchange student **Lis Eastham & Judith Scott (Savery, 1970-76)** "would have known Susan anywhere." And Judith added "Whenever I'm in Bishop Road I always look for your house and remember a rather drunken teenage party."

Sarah Mylne (Boyd, 1950-60) said "I remember Tisha well - she could draw horses! I seem to recall you had a love for the Outer Hebrides. Do get in touch if you feel like it. I'm in Devon now."

The Good Companions – the story of the SMHA
(transcribed from the Jubilee (50th) edition of the Newsletter – December 1948)

I wonder how many of the 1040+ current members of SMHA pause to think of our origins? [Lis Eastham](#) went to the trouble to transcribe, for our website, an article on this very topic penned by Miss H Potter, sister of a former Head. A shortened version of her article appears here. The whole item is on the website's "[Items of Interest](#)" page.

The widespread and helpful influence of the SMHA in the affairs of St Mary's Hall, shown most conspicuously during the temporary closing of the School, seemed to justify the choice of this moment in which to give some short account of "How it all began." The St Mary's Hall Association began life under Miss Birrell (my sister's predecessor as Headmistress or Lady Principal), who felt convinced that many Old Girls would gladly contribute a small annual sum in gratitude for all that they owed to their old school. In this she was ably supported by Miss Effe Elliott, the Founder's daughter, who became a subscribing member of the new Association. The first number of the Newsletter, under its original name of "The St Maryan," appeared early in 1897, giving the news of 1896. Its chief aim was to give Hall news to members of the Old Pupils Association, which at this stage consisted solely of members subscribing towards the funds of the Hall. A list of these subscribers appeared regularly in the annual report, but at first the only list to appear in the St Maryan was of members of the Prayer Union, a union fostered by Miss Birrell of members of the Old Pupils Association, who, with some of the Staff and a few outside friends, pledged themselves to pray regularly for those Old Girls and former mistresses who were engaged in missionary work abroad. The first list of members of the Prayer Union appeared in the 1898 St Maryan and the next year's number added the names and stations of the mission workers. Links between Old Girls and the Hall were thus already being forged, and these were strengthened by Miss Birrell's continuing, after her resignation in 1899, to keep in touch with her own former pupils who had left the school, urging them to join both the Old Pupils Association and the Prayer Union. Until her health began to fail she contributed a letter to each number of the St Maryan, addressed to all Old Girls and making the same plea. Miss Birrell was, in 1899, succeeded as headmistress by my own sister, who early realised that if the Association was to expand and grow, it must be something more than a mere body of subscribers; it is true that all Old Girls were invited to Founders Day celebrations every autumn, but they came then as individuals only. Helpful advice was again given by Miss Effe Elliott, and in 1900 the first Annual Meeting was called, being held in the Alliance Club, in Curzon Street. The News Letter (the old title of the St Maryan being definitely dropped) of 1908 gives an account of this meeting, at which the necessity was urged of so re-organising the Association "that it might become a real help both to past and present pupils, as a link to join the old pupils together and as a source of support, both spiritual and practical, to the Hall." The name of the Association was to be altered to "The St Mary's Hall Association", a more inclusive title now that former members of the Staff could be admitted as subscribing members. This meeting, at which 70 members were present, thus marked the beginning of the S.M.H.A. as we now know it. The earliest Committee had a President (the Headmistress) and an Hon. Secretary (an Old Girl), but for convenience in administration, the Hon. Treasurer was a member of the School Staff and the News Letter was sent out from the Hall. Contrast with this the imposing list in the latest News Letter, of 20 members of Committee in addition to the President, two Vice-Presidents (former Headmistresses), and others. It was by Miss Ghey's wish, soon after she became Headmistress, that the editing of the News Letter passed into the hands of an old pupil, and this provided another link between it and the S.M.H. Association.

The coming of the war reduced the size of the News Letter to an alarming extent, partly because of the restrictions on paper and printing, but chiefly because the Hall itself was "for the duration" of the war, not functioning as a school. News of Old Girls became its most important item, revealing the great number of those engaged in war work of many kinds. Though reduced in size, the Newsletter still clung to life – even cheerfully – firm in the faith that the Hall's renewal would not long be delayed. And through all the crippling years of war the St Mary's Hall Association increased in strength, taking up the task of keeping alive the "Idea" of the Hall. It met the Governors' appeal for a guarantee of monetary assistance, raising funds by many ingenious methods. Reward came when the Governors reported to the Association that its efforts had made possible the re-opening of the Hall in 1946. Recognition of the help given was also shown when, during the war, the Governors resolved that two members of the SMHA should be chosen to serve on the Governing Body of the Hall. Now that St Mary's Hall is in vigorous life once more, and increasing steadily in numbers and enthusiasm under the leadership of Miss Robinson, this concession will do much to keep the Association in touch with school events. Once more the News Letter will aid the good work by being able to include in its pages a diary of the school year, and once more will be able (after a decent interval) to welcome new "old girls" to its growing list of members of the Hall's own Association.

H.R. Potter.

Our website benefited, last year, from a visit **Mick Aston** kindly made to **St Mark's (The Spire Arts Centre)** where she photographed our Honours Boards and other artefacts now permanently in their care. I am sure many of you have enjoyed looking at them in one of the many galleries of images on the site.



However, at Christmas those of us (now close to 600 in number) who are members of the Virtual Common Room also had the chance to see some beautiful photos of a production of "A Christmas Carol" which were shared by **Chris Ellison**. She commented that three generations from two families including four old girls* from four different years attended the performance.

*Others were **Amy Ellison (1988-95)**, **Lexi Forster** and **Kate Fleming**.

Emma Turner (Drew 1985-94) commented: "An amazing production company, we go every year - they also do Frankenstein! So lovely to be in St Marks - though it's a mystery how we all fitted in there for Eucharist." **Heather Johnson** pondered: "How many times did I sit and look at that window I wonder?" A thought shared by **Nicola Sampson** and **Angelica Meletiou (1957-63)**, and answered by **Micki** – "Loads of times – like me!!!"



Thanks to Chris and Kate for the images

I asked you for help identifying three OGs who had attended the 2014 reunion and am grateful to **Betty Ho (1992-98)** who recognised immediately that the girl with long hair is **Suzan Demirates**. The other girl is her younger sister **Miriam Demirates (1996-98)**.

Then I was emailed by **Corinne Andrews (Hannant 1963-69)**'s husband on her behalf to identify the mystery lady in floral top (see next page) standing between her and **Jane Watson (Amherst-Clark 1963-71)** as **Lindsey Plant (Heath 1965-70)**.



Corinne continued: "Thank you for the winter Newsletter. I read it all with great interest. Being far away in South Africa, I do appreciate all the news.

My school career never shone. I was never academic nor sporty, but I did love my dear old school very much and am proud to have been there. **Lindsey, Jane** and **Prisca Furlong (Baillie 1964-69)** were my best friends. My life is very much in Johannesburg. 3 of our 5 children and 5 of our 12 grandchildren live here but we have one son in the USA and our eldest daughter lives in Oxford so I try to visit both as often as possible. My sister is also in the UK - in

Sevenoaks. She never came to SMH as she was only 4½ when we came to South Africa. She returned to the UK when her children were small. Strangely, she married a Brighton College Old Boy – Neil Hudson, son of Ian Hudson, who was the school doctor when I was at SMH. Always interested in all the news and, if anyone is coming our way, please let us know.

Corinne Andrews."

I was interested to note that Corinne's husband Bryan's email footer revealed his own fascinating life, which will chime with many of our adventurous Old Girls (and authors, since he has also written two books, "Mykonos" and "Reuben", both available on Amazon in Kindle and paperback)! <http://www.andprom.co.za/blog-andprom.php> directs you to his travel blog.



This little screenshot is from our Virtual Common Room showing a selection of images posted by **Katie Halpin (Wilkinson, 1984-92)** from a treasure trove found in a 'clear-out'. We love seeing these especially as it reminds us to look at the Newsletters and Magazines on the website! If you want to experience the pleasure of seeing Katie's images and many more, please ask to join the Common Room. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SMHAclosed/> and ask to be approved.

AMIDST CHAOS GOOD THINGS CAN STILL HAPPEN

This email came into my in-box all the way from New South Wales, Australia, on 3rd January 2020.

"An extraordinary thing has happened today. What with all the commotion and preparations to possibly evacuate tomorrow because of the Currowan mega blaze moving northward along the coast toward our Shoalhaven Heads area, I had the most wonderful reunion with old SMH girl, **Lilian Cooper**!!! Only about 30 minutes, but fabulous, nevertheless!

Lilian was in Berry, NSW (a small town near our Shoalhaven Heads) for a very sad reason, the funeral of her husband Stephen's beloved sister who used to live in Berry. After the funeral Lilian and Stephen went to our local winery, the Coolangatta Estate, for the post-funeral reception/lunch.

Stephen's mother was from the Bishop family who own the winery, and he knows our area quite well. They had to return to Sydney today and needed to get going, to join all the rest of evacuating people travelling north.

Isn't it AMAZING that we managed to meet? We obviously never met at school because she's, I think she said, 55 now, and I'm 75. We all got along famously so she's hopefully coming back with Stephen for a longer visit. There was so much to say and so little time. We'll have to arrange for her to meet my sister **Pam Bailey (Read-Jahn, 1954-59)**, and **Penny Fitton (Hewitt, 1960-64)**, too."

Shirley

(right) **Lilian Cooper (1979-82)** [L] and **Shirley Read-Jahn (1954-61)** [R] in Shirley's home, next to her collection of SMH photos!

I can't tell you how happy this news made me. **Lilian** and **Shirley** know each other better than many who are separated by years as well as continents, though, because they are two of the members of our SMHA Virtual Garden Facebook group.



Sarah Flatt (2001-09) emailed me at the beginning of February to say: "I just saw a post in the Virtual Common Room reminding us to let you know about our "life events"! I had my second baby on 2nd December, a little boy named Finn Brian. He has a very proud big sister, Carice Cadence (who has just turned 6!!) Never imagined this is how my life would turn out back when I was at SMH!

What a lovely photo of the siblings!

Rebecca Ridgway, when sending me her terrific article (*see page 7*) mentioned that she had got together with SMH friends earlier in January. She kindly sent me this photo with the comment: "On Saturday 11 January 2020, **Paula Ashdown (Ashley)** **Ruth Chapman**, **Alex Fearn**, **Shiona Goodman (McKenzie)**, **Sam Basing (Slumbers)** **Sarah Reade**, **Rosie Drew**, **Francesca Buckroyd**, **Liz Mason (Ballantyne)** and I met up. We left SMH in **1985**, or thereabouts but little had changed between us in 35 years!"



Rebecca Ridgway (1977-83) shares some details of her amazing life with us.



My time at SMH was spent running along corridors, but for the first ten years of my life I ran free and scratted on the seashore in the northwest Highlands of Scotland.

My parents built an adventure school in 1969 at Ardmore. My Dad has just rowed across the Atlantic Ocean. I lived with them on a remote croft with no electricity or television, perched on the edge of the Atlantic. When my parents decided to take part in a sailing race around the world other arrangements needed to be made and since my Gran lived on the sea front in Brighton and her kitchen window faced the SMH lacrosse pitch I was sent to SMH.

It was as if I had landed on another planet. Sarah, my best friend, and I met on day one in the gym, my Gran and her Mum held their cups and saucers nervously. Our uniform hung loose, our hair was held back with Kirby grips. We entered Transition class. I knew nothing of 'mufti' and 'tuck'. As junior boarders we lived in Elliott, laid out like a prison, but with nicer dormitories, candlewick bedspreads of various sludgy shades. We bonded through adversity and had great fun together. I well remember chatting after lights out and our illicit midnight feasts at the end of term when I always had to take the sliced ham. Sarah, an academic scholar, was brilliant at everything. She helped me with homework and partnered me for projects, (thank goodness). I loved sport, particularly lacrosse and tennis.

Whilst at SMH, my Gran took me to Wimbledon and I began to learn that anything could be possible, Tracy Austin was just five years older and a top seed. I wanted to do something amazing in my life.

I moved to a school in Scotland for A levels and spent more time cross country running and outside. After several expeditions to the Peruvian Andes, running the NY marathon, cycling in Morocco, I got the opportunity to train to be the first woman to kayak around the infamous Cape Horn, considered to be the roughest sea area in the world. We trained for two years and were by no means naturals.

I wrote a book about my life and the trip, remembering Mrs James's O Level English class "your punctuation and spelling leaves a lot to be desired, but if you write about something you know, you can write quite well"!

I always wanted to bring up my own children here at Ardmore and in my 30's this came to pass. I took my children to meet the school bus by open boat, we often travelled home across a black velvet sea loch leaving behind a trail of phosphoresce gazing skyward to spot shooting stars. Gales, snow and frozen loch would see us walking for 45 minutes to the nearest road.

I've now been running the adventure school for 20 years. The school itself has been offering adventure for all ages for more than 50 years. I love the place. We live on the westernmost edge of Europe with mountains to our east and the Atlantic stretching away to the west. We are at the mercy of the elements, we monitor the weather by watching three digital forecasts and our broadband reaches us by satellite. I order in gallons of milk, tens of loaves of bread and fresh food to feed up to 70 people during busiest weeks. Each summer we welcome around 500 young people aged 11 – 18 years old and some adult teams, between May to September, from UK, across Europe and beyond to Ridgway Adventure where they challenge themselves and have new experiences on land and sea. I feel it is all worthwhile... and I'm still running!

Here is Rebecca at Ardmore in the winter.



Rebecca has written 2 books: "Something Amazing", published '93 by Hodder & Stoughton, and "Then We Sailed Away", published '96 by Little, Brown & Co. and has been the subject of several television films including 'First Lady of Cape Horn' '93 Survival Anglia and 'Wilderness Walks' '98 Triple Echo.

Check out her life, work and home at <https://www.ridgway-adventure.co.uk>

The Play's The Thing...

As I mentioned in the winter e-Newsletter, those of us in the Virtual Common Room spent a lot of 2019 chatting about “dhrahma” and, as promised, I have now compiled photos and memories from all sources into a piece for all of us to enjoy!

The main theme running through it is Dido and Aeneas since for reasons which no one has really fathomed this was performed over and over again in the latter part of the 20th century at SMH!

In 1976 **Susan McDonagh (1969-76)** recalled it was done in the summer with **Vicki Campbell (Angus, 1970-76)** as Dido and Margaret (can't remember her surname) as Aeneas with **Angie Risley (Charles, 1969-76)** as Belinda. “I had great fun stage managing the production as the choral society was used for chorus so you can imagine what it was like back stage with all those people around. Luckily we could open the fire doors so most of the chorus could go outside out of my team's way!”

Sian Spencer (Williams, 1966-76) “Remember it well, the summer of the drought every fan in the school employed to keep the harpsichord cool and I had to stand guard to protect it from damage! **Emma Gooden** was Aeneas and **Belinda Nobby Kentish** main witch. Happy days and very fond memories.” **Connie Sturt (Gamble, 1970-76)** added that she was a witch and a sailor.

Jenny Child (1972-81) recalls “...two lots of performances in 1976 - the second one was where we understudies got a go. That production changed me. Leaning out of the dormitory window in Elliott House one stifling hot evening, long after the cast had been sent away to bed, just to catch the sound of those wonderfully intricate melodies floating down on the breeze from the hall, as Mr Avis rehearsed the orchestra. That is one of my most treasured childhood memories. I've been hooked on Baroque music ever since. Years later, I got to play the orchestral music myself in a Baroque orchestra, which brought it all back. Happy days.”

Lesley Clifford (1971-78) was in the chorus of both Dido and Aeneas and also Orpheus and Euridice in the 70's.

Heather Hampson (Gillham, 1973-80) remembered both. “I was completely overwhelmed in Orpheus and had to leave stage to sob in the gym changing rooms.”

Lesley Clifford “...I did the same in my first (and last) ever ballet show in the 60's!”

Nicola Sampson (James, 1965-71) commented “I don't remember those productions but I was in Volpone at Brighton College and The Cherry Orchard at SMH in the old hall.”



Here is an image of 1977's Dido with **Maria Tinner (1969-76)** and **Sarah Collett (Kentish, 1973-78)** in the lead roles. **Maria** has, she says, a “slightly disturbing memory of the ladies in waiting getting caught in the pipes around a fountain at some point.” **Julia Behar (-77)** was one of the two Didos but unfortunately she didn't get to perform.

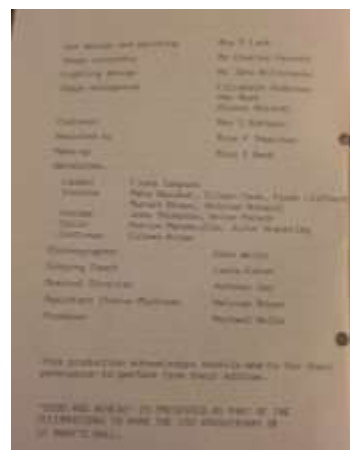
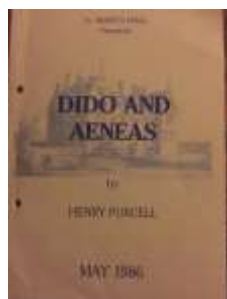
Below are **Rosa Cook (Suffolk, 1985-90)**'s photos of 1986's Programme. **Ola Both (1983-90) & Elly Maconochie (Heloise Royce, 1980-86)** both “remember it so well” **Anne Yeats (Royce, former staff)** added: “So do I. I had three daughters in it!”

“Dido and Aeneas” 1986.

There was great excitement throughout the school when we heard that Mr Wells was intending to put on a production of Purcell's “Dido and Aeneas”. This news caused great wonder and the senior choir, as to who would play the leading parts and more importantly... Across the male Pencil

Auditions took place the following Thursday and Friday in November and the results were pinned up on the music board the next Monday. Dido was going to be portrayed by Katherine Sturt, Mary Satterthwaite was to play Belinda and the three witches were to be Heloise Royce, Victoria Tink and Emma Wells. The majority of the Chorus were the renowned senior choir of St. Mary's Hall.

Rehearsals soon began with Mr Wells as stage director and Mr Jay having the equally difficult and sometimes painful task of dealing with the music. Both worked hard and long and convinced us all that if we did the same, “Dido and Aeneas” could be a great success.



(zoom in on these images to remind yourself of the full cast!)



Mary Barltrop "Haha! Good thing that's all you remember about Russell & us 'older girls'" Rosa Cook added "I was lucky enough to be involved in it as although I was only 11, so technically too young, they picked the 5 smallest girls to be cupids/cherubs (!). We had a ball being on stage a fair amount of time with no words to learn. Our French host family were lovely. On the night we arrived they took us on a drive through Paris to see all the illuminated sights. I shared a room with Terri (?) who played the spirit. I think she was in upper trans at the time

Mireille Dupire (Blass, 1982-91): "I didn't like my French family, and they had to move me in the middle of the night. They asked me where I wanted to go and I said "wherever Victoria (Miskelly) is". I was so lucky her host family would take me in!"

Joanna Bane "Happy memories. Had a great time in Paris. I stayed with **Emma Atkinson** at a French family's home."

Katy Morrison (1991-97) recalls "We did another Dido in 1996 - by candlelight in the chapel. A Mr Jay production & it was amazing to be part of it. I was Dido & **Nadia Bunker (Behdad, 1992-99)** was Belinda & there was a lot of other singing talent. Didn't get to go to Paris though!" **Nadia Bunker** "loved that show! Fast forward to around 2012-2013, I was singing evensong at Westminster Abbey and I recognised the cantor's voice. When I looked up from my score, I couldn't believe it was Jamie Hawkey, who sung Aeneas for us - now Dr James Hawkey, Canon of Westminster!"

Katy Morrison "YES! I saw him on TV a couple of years ago & couldn't believe it! He did have a beautiful voice."

Trish Glasspool (Ireland 1992-98) and **Kate Fleming (-99)** also performed in it in 1996 as did **Lucy Haverty (Ellison, 1992-98)** who remembered that a boy from Brighton College was drafted in on that occasion, too.

Alison Platt (Schuller, 1980-87)'s photos* (left and below) of 1986's Dido with **Mary Barltrop (1980-87)** as Belinda, **Elly Maconochie** as one of the witches and **Victoria Johnson (Davis 1979-87)** also **Gerry Sayers (Royce, 1982-87)** and **Joanna Bane (Royce 1982-87)**, **Claudia Duveen**, **Emma Shotts (Wills, 1982-88)** and **Victoria Claire (Miskelly, 1982-86)**, back centre!

Catherine Hicks/Barnard (former staff): "That was a fantastic production! I remember the red ribbon entrails and everyone drumming their feet on the floor at the end! Stirring stuff!"

Rosa Cook has memories of some of the older girls "hanging on Russell's every word on the ferry over to France when we took it to Paris. Being only 11 it wasn't quite the same for me."



Emma Thomas (Davies) and **Helen Nixon (Crittall)** both 1982-91 in the R Hand photo above.

**original images taken by the late great Jack Liddell.*

Victoria Johnson "Oh the memories!! Particularly when we "travelled" with it. I still haven't got over it! I had a bed in the house of the family I was staying with that was about 2 feet too short and what felt like boxes put together as the base! So much fun though with everyone!"

Joanna Bane "and my sisters **Heloise** and **Geraldine** all loved being in the choir and especially enjoyed performing Dido and Aeneas in Paris. We were in the choir with the infamous **Katherine Burt** and **Mary Barltrop**! My twin and I both live up North now and Heloise is in America."



No, it is not Dido on the left!

It is "The King and I" with **Louise Paddenburg (1988-98)** front row 6 in peach turning sideways and her sister **Katy Williams (Paddenburg, 1989-95)** front 8. **Lucy Haverty** third girl in on the front row, pink dress. **Kate Fleming** remembered having to wash out the black hair spray and **Hannah Greaves (Field, 1986-93)** also said it took her ages to wash all the makeup off! **Helen Fraser (Roberts, 1985-95)** remembered **Alice Rawdon-Mogg (1993-2000)** (The King) changed just before the end - putting on extra make-up and hairspray to look like everyone else - "which I always thought was pretty pointless as the King dies (oops, spoiler alert)."

Chris Ellison (1983-91), reading about Dido, was astonished...
 “They drafted in a bloke??? They didn't in Oklahoma and I had to play opposite Ado Annie!!! Although it did feature “Rog” (Mr Roser) who “never looked so comely as he did in those chaps! And Mr Wells scared me half to death as Judd!”

Roger Roser (former staff) commented that he had been “very scared doing this. Several years later I worked on another cowboy type show with **Olivia Beckwith (Lipscombe, 1993-97)**. I had great difficulty learning the lines and spent most of my free periods rehearsing with her when I should have probably been teaching someone else.”

A beautiful set of photos taken by Roger at a rehearsal for ‘OK!’ is in the Virtual Common Room. Just ‘search’ there for “Oklahoma”

And last, but definitely not least, “Pride and Prejudice”



“PRIDE AND PREJUDICE”

At the beginning of the Autumn term auditions were held for this year's school play, “Pride and Prejudice”, written by Jane Austen and adapted for the stage by Constance Cox.

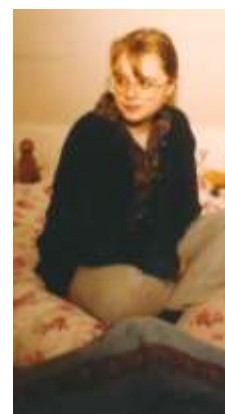
Once the play was cast the following weeks were spent learning the script; rehearsals were held and the play gradually began to fall together, mostly due to the dedication of the producer, Mr Wells, and thankfully little prompting was needed by Emma Collins, on the nights of the performance.

The story tells a witty and amusing tale, (with a happy ending) of a mother, who has to marry off her four daughters, so that there is a male heir in the family. Otherwise on the death of the father (Rachel Bolton), the house will be passed on to Mr Collins (Emma Wills), who is a distant cousin and a member of the clergy, leaving the family homeless.

Cast included **Rachael Bolton (1982-88)** and **Emma Shotts (Wills, 1983-88)**.

Jo Grey (French, 1983-88)

“I remember Pride & Prejudice. Mrs Bennett was played by our late friend **Clare Urwin** (who joined in VIth form in 1987). She sadly died in December 2016, far too young.”



News reached us in February that Old Girl **Zainub Verjee, (1969-73)**, has won the prestigious 2020 Governor General's Award for her **Outstanding Contribution** to the visual arts (including architecture and photography), the media arts, and fine craft, in a volunteer or professional capacity. Zainub co-founded the critically acclaimed In Visible Colours: An International Film/Video Festival & Symposium for Third World Women and Women of Colour. Among many appointments to boards, she is proud of her work at the B.C. Arts Board, which led to the formation of the British Columbia Arts Council. Follow her work at: <http://www.zainubverjee.com/>. The full blog of the news is to be found at: <https://ismailmail.blog/2020/02/20/zainub-verjee-zainubverjee-2020-governor-generals-visual-and-media-arts-award-winner/?fbclid=IwAR0ntwPbfpgTrXDd9ZQE85FMlq0AGSeakUsdEcg0UvERfTMPUFIKdTZh5Wk>

Rosa Cook (Suffolk, 1985-90) shared this lovely photo with the Common Room, in January.

She came across it when sorting through the loft. Rosa thinks it is c1990 and the ‘years’ of the Girls tends to support this!

Left to Right in the front row: **Amy Ellison (1988-95)**, **Katherine Cole** and **Katie ?Moorman**.

Middle row: **Barbara Butera (Cole, 1988-95)** **Sarah Weedon (Cole, 1984-91)**, Rosa herself, **Katie Ashworth (Ball 1990-95)**, **Ola Both (Ibraheem, 1983-90)** and **Amanda Robins** with, back, left, **Anne Corris** (staff).

In the background by the wall **Helen Fraser (Roberts, 1985-95)** identified herself.

(Names in italics are of OGs who have not yet reconnected)



I'm hoping that Rosa will turn up more photos – they give so much pleasure to so many. Please do send in any you find in your own loft/spare room/basement/garage clearing.

Marie Downes (Levene, 1982-90)

Emma Butterwick (Terrot, 1988-92) shared the news, on Christmas Eve, of the sad passing of Marie, who died on 22nd December 2019, after a long fight with cancer. Emma wrote:

“Marie leaves four delightful children, James, Olivia, Juliet and Clara who have shown incredible strength in supporting Marie. Marie was very proud to celebrate James’s wedding this summer in Scotland.

Marie was a professional musician who used her talent and brilliant organisational skills to raise funds for the Maggie Centre in Scotland; this was documented in *You Magazine* in 2017.

Marie loved her years at SMH and will always be remembered for her excellent tennis skills and beautiful music.” Emma and her daughter, Jessica, spent a wonderful day with Marie, Juliet and Clara in June 2019 reminiscing about the SMH years and many happy memories!

Sally Tang (1988-92) Claire Simmonds (Hall, 1986-92) Naomi Levy (Slater 1986-93), Anna Glover (Simmonds, 1985-91), Emma Saxby (1987-91), Maya Hatton (1985-96), Laura Hazeldine (1986-91), Magalie Pimental (Brown, 1985-90), Heather Goddard (1986-97), Danya Mackley (1984-90), were among her classmates to remember Marie fondly, as was former member of staff **Patricia Blunt**. Her music teacher, **Roger Roser** added “As I get older hearing news like this is like being hit with a sledgehammer. Marie was a beautiful, reliable and talented girl. **Mireille Jayne Dupire (Blass, 1982-91)** remembered: “We used to live very close to each other and had the same piano teacher (who also lived in our road) in the early 80’s. I have very fond memories of her and her clarinet. We competed together in Brighton Festival several times.” **Rosa Cook (Suffolk, 1985-90)** commented: “Marie was such a lovely girl - especially talented in both music and sport. I was lucky enough to play doubles with her in tennis occasionally but she was far superior to me.



She was very tolerant of my less than satisfactory service and played with never-ending good humour & sportsmanship. The world will be the poorer for her loss.” **Rachel Masters (1985-91)** was far from alone in remembering that:

“She was full of life and energy at school!”

The photo of Marie (*above right*, and on the *right*) is taken from an item about the Maggie Centre which originally appeared in the Daily Mail. I am sure any donations in her name would be welcomed by them.

<https://www.maggiescentres.org/>

Sandra Russell (Hayes 1964-70)

Sandra sadly passed away May 14, 2019 from pancreatic cancer.

Her husband James wrote: “She was diagnosed in October 2017 and she fought bravely and throughout her challenge, Sandra maintained her self- respect, humour, her love of life and most of all, she continued to put her family first and never stopped loving them.”

I found out about Sandra’s death only because of a ‘targeted’ email to a specific small group of OGs and although James was most gracious in our ensuing correspondence, assuring me that I had not upset him by emailing as any opportunity to remember Sandra was a pleasure, I was very upset to have contacted him “inappropriately” and I’d greatly appreciate it if readers could let me know of the passing of any of their contemporaries which may not be known to me.



Mary Panter (Noble, 1967-71) mentioned in January that she is searching for former friends **Deborah Eborn** and **Aleia Scher** and also **Anna Day** and **Clarissa Kilwick**. Jane Fowlie (Badger, 1965-72) and Caroline Bradley (Edgcumbe-Rendle, 1969-75) also remembered the names and would love to have news

Can any readers help?

And from a later era, **Shannon O'Neill (-1997)** asked for news of **Doyin Eleso** who went to Eastbourne College from SMH.

Can any contemporaries assist?

The first place to look for 'your friends' is, of course, the **Find a Friend database** on our website, (<https://www.smhassociation.org/find-a-friend>) (also the **Friends No Longer with Us database** on the same page). FaF can be sorted by 'year' to bring up all the Girls who were contemporary with you - an enormous help in jogging your memory as well as providing current names and email addresses.

I would also recommend asking in the **Virtual Common Room** as this is a huge network with tentacles stretching everywhere! Unfortunately **Mary** and **Shannon** both drew a blank with these resources.

WEBSITE – Your first visit to www.smhassociation.org

The majority of pages are password protected. When you enter the address of a protected page image (A) will come up on your device. Enter **Elliott2009** in the password box and press **Go**. The page will open. (If your device asks if you want to save the password, please say “**Yes**”). When you’re ready, select any page from the menu, which shows differently on different devices. Two examples are shown below. If the page is protected you will need to enter **Elliott2009** again BUT on subsequent visits to these pages the password will autofill, as shown in (C).

<p>A (image from smart phone)</p> 	 <p>Image of part menu from smart phone, above, laptop, below</p>	<p>C (image from laptop)</p> 
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If you experience any difficulties when first accessing the site please email Lis Eastham (smhawww09@gmail.com) who is our Website Administrator and who will assist you with your problem. Please remember that like all your Team Lis is a volunteer so may not respond immediately to your enquiry.

MEMORABILIA If you would like to order any of the items shown below / advertised on <https://www.smhassociation.org/memorabilia-shop> please contact Jan Johnson smhasales@gmail.com. She will let you know how to pay and then fulfil your order.

	<p>(Pictured Left) Colour print of the school, measuring 14" x 18" £9.85 or Coloured notelets, ten to a pack, with envelopes £3</p>	
<p>(Pictured right) B&W notelets, ten to a pack, with envelopes £3</p>		<p>(Pictured above) B&W notelets, ten to a pack, with envelopes £3</p>

LONG SCHOOL PHOTOS These are available as downloads from the website at £3 per download. Just e-mail smhawww09@gmail.com with details of the one(s) you would like. They are superb as downloads – really clear and able to be magnified to show you and your friends in all your glory! <https://www.smhassociation.org/galleries> is the link for all 9 galleries; <https://www.smhassociation.org/gallery-official-photos> goes straight to the Long School ones.

HOW TO FIND US

Website: <http://www.smhassociation.org>
 Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Marys-Hall-Association/265334070191137>
 Virtual Common Room: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SMHAclosed/>
 Virtual Garden: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2238659846193050/>
 Contact Address: 1 Welburn Close, Ovingham, Northumberland NE42 6BD (United Kingdom)
 Contact phone: 07946 772620 Please use this only if email will not serve your purpose

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