

ST. MARY'S HALL ASSOCIATION

AUTUMN 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

We celebrated the tenth anniversary of the establishment of our Association in its present form on 1st August 2019 and I would like to thank those of you who supported the way in which we chose to mark it. Details appear later in this e-Newsletter.

Also featured is feedback from the wonderful Reunion at Prezzo in Brighton Marina, on 6th July. I really can't thank **Micki Aston (Sheftell 1960-66)** enough for organising this for us. Next year's reunion is on **SATURDAY 18th JULY, 2020** at Brighton Marina. **SAVE THE DATE!** Details, including how to book, will be in the winter e-Newsletter. Old Girls who went this year all seem to have had a great time as you will see from the photos on page 4.

Other reunions also took place this summer and it is lovely to have photos from them – please do send in your own if you get-together with friends. And share your special life-events with us, too ☺

We have struggled somewhat with LinkedIn – our Business Network group, which we really hoped would appeal to the many Old Girls who are Businesswomen. We don't plan to close it but we do need traffic there so if you are on LinkedIn please do join the group and once in the group please share, post and comment! Some of our members have expertise beyond your wildest dreams if you're starting out on your career and they are offering it free of charge or obligation. <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/868911>

As I mentioned in the email bringing this e-Newsletter to you, **if you would like to receive a quarterly email with the 'headline of the quarter' and a link to the rest of the news please let me know and I will set this up for you.** I am very keen to ensure that within the limits of practicability you receive exactly what you want from your Association – no more and no less. Please also let us have your thoughts regarding removing password protection from most of the website (subject to maintaining the security of your personal data and other sensitive matter).

We were delighted to hear from **Tim Elliott** after the summer issue went out. He provided us with an updated version of his History of SMH with permission to publish it on the website.

Check it out at <https://www.smhassociation.org/history.php>. Your web-editor, **Lis Eastham** has also referenced his insights into the Motto at <https://www.smhassociation.org/the-vault.php>.

We're also keeping Lis hard at work adding ALL missing magazines/newsletters to our website so that by the end of this (we hope) we will have a complete record. More information will be in the winter e-Newsletter.

Please do not hesitate to contribute something to a future edition of the e-Newsletter. Given our 1000+ membership there is an almost unlimited number of topics of interest which could be featured.

Email smhaenquiries@gmail.com with your contribution!

Very best wishes,

Penny Harrison, Team Manager SMHA

smhaenquiries@gmail.com / 07946772620

on behalf of SMHA Management Team, all of whom are listed at the end of the Newsletter.



I close with an item of pure self-indulgence....

Pictured, left, your Team Manager, a first-time Grandmother, with effect 30/06/2019.

Thank you to the MANY OGs who welcomed Rhys Westgarth Downing, pictured left at 41 hours old, when I posted the news in the VCR.

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS OF VIRTUAL PROGRESS WITH A GOOD DEED

We asked as many of you as possible to have an Austerity Lunch on Founder's Day, 1st August 2019, and donate the cost of the meal you saved to one of our three suggested Charities:

Susanne Rea (Nicholls 1956-61)'s work to eradicate Polio

Jo Grey (French 1983-88)'s AMEND charity

Jan Johnson (Launchbury, 1977-84)'s fundraising for Kidney Research UK.

I confess I'm disappointed that so few Old Girls joined in which means we won't be running this event in future.

You can still make a donation during September by BACS to SMHA, Sort Code: 30-92-92, Account No: 36910860.

Use Reference 'Charity1' 'Charity2' or 'Charity3'. Or just 'Charity' and we will split it for you.

Enormous thanks to those who did donate. Every penny helps these wonderful OGs' good causes.



If you want to be in it next year (*and you need to be in it to win it* 😊)

email **Lis Eastham**: smha100club@gmail.com and she will add you to the list of those to be notified in January 2020 about how to join.

Overseas members with no UK / sterling bank accounts can use PayPal, so no-one has to miss out!

Just one first prize pays out significantly more than an annual subscription.

100 Club rules are on our website.

Winners (since summer e-Newsletter):

July 2019	August 2019	September 2019
1 st Prize Margaret Ellis £14.40	1 st Prize Hilary Briegel-Jones £14.40	1 st Prize Hilary Briegel-Jones £14.40
2 nd Prize Lis Eastham £9.60	2 nd Prize Mary Philpott £9.60	2 nd Prize Heather Johnson £9.60

Bridget Sudworth (Neville-Last 1960-63) always writes so amusingly when she emails me – *and how I look forward to all your emails*. This time she wrote to enquire after my grandparental status (so kind) and to mention that the choir she belongs to took part in the Frome Festival in July – “we are singing Mozart's Requiem which I first sang in 1960/61 with the combined choirs of SMH & Brighton College. I do realise that at the time, we were very well



rehearsed indeed as I know it all by heart even after all these years.

The only problem is that I now sing tenor with several other ladies as well as blokes and my neighbour has also performed it singing soprano and alto in her previous times. Between us, we produce an interesting interpretation!!! My school friends, **Tina Challacombe (Cocks 1959-63)**, **Ros Williams, Anna Crowe (Crowley 1957-61)** and I used to lie in our respective baths in Babington House singing the Lux Aeterna very loudly plus all the other parts in between which always caused much mirth among ourselves and any poor souls who were passing by!! But it is a very popular and deeply enriching Mass to sing and one

never gets tired of the extraordinary pleasure of performing musical works.”

How true it is that our early grounding in music at SMH stays with us – and this applies to OGs of ALL ages.

Bridget is coming north later on this year and I am crossing my fingers I may get to meet her. It would be such a pleasure. She volunteers at Stourhead so if you visit there do look out for her and be sure to think up a tricky question to ask her! Her role is as one of the Walks & Talks team taking people round a fairly short route of the top garden mostly but spouting information as she goes.

Top of the *Reunion Pops*
a teachers' get-together after this year's Brighton Pride:
Addy Balogun, Anita Jensen and Tina Johnson
(l-r, on the right).
See also page 7!!!



PARKINSON'S DISEASE: DANCING THROUGH LIFE!

Shirley Read-Jahn (1954-61)

*The full version of this article appears on our website <https://www.smhassociation.org/latest-news.php>
We're most grateful to Shirley for taking the time and trouble to explain her experiences of a disease many of us know a little about but few of us fully understand.*

Many people think PD only attacks older people and that all of them manifest tremors. Not true!

I have Parkinson's. I am one of the older ones but I don't have visible tremors in my hands. I was diagnosed on 1 February 2018. I didn't believe it. I had lived a healthy exercise-filled life. But, my left arm betrayed me. Two years before, I had been performing a solo belly-dance using tall golden "Isis wings", named for the goddess Isis. I found I couldn't shake the left wing with my left hand to make it tremble to the music. When I walked, my left arm didn't react; it still just hung down, not swinging, as it still does. Doctors thought I'd had a stroke, but I was tested negative. It took two more years to get the true diagnosis. I became terrified of my future incapacity.

Parkinson's Disease is a disorder in which neurological cells carrying dopamine to the brain die. Dopamine is what our body uses to control our motor movements and muscles. As the disease progresses, it becomes harder to wash or even dress yourself. Many PD patients indeed, do shake, with tremors both externally and internally, their legs suddenly freeze to the ground, their voice softens and they become hard to understand. Unpleasant side effects occur such as constipation. Everything slows down.

A dementia called Lewy Body quite often goes hand-in-hand with Parkinson's. The side effects are frightening: depression, anxiety, panic attacks, building up to even worse—true dementia. PD is often called a "boutique" disease because it is different for everyone.

For me, a problematic side effect is that my typing is badly affected. My left hand jerks and puts letters in that shouldn't be there. I used to type 98 w.p.m. with no mistakes. Now I must correct every line I type, which, as an author, becomes tiring and tiresome. I'm sure you understand (whoops, see what happens! I won't correct the line.)

Another side effect is crying. Suddenly, often for "no reason" I burst into tears. Yet another side effect is nausea, similar to hormonal morning sickness. Now I start feeling ill around 5 p.m. (but not every day now), which means I tend to avoid evening appointments.

There are brain operations which can help when you reach an advanced, intolerable, stage of PD but Parkinson's Disease is incurable.

Attitude is key.

You don't die from Parkinson's.

You "live with Parkinson's".

I learned that exercise can be the answer to help you keep on top of the inevitable neurological deterioration—to slow it down.

Young people can also get Parkinson's. My New South Wales Parkinson's Neurological Nurse has a number of young patients as well as the older ones. In 2015 Deloitte Living estimated that 1 in every 350 Australians lives with Parkinson's disease.

I think I probably got Parkinson's from my former landscape & gardening business. I wasn't always completely careful about protecting my mouth or hands from the chemicals we sometimes had to use in the business. On the other hand, there's some thinking that there could be a connection between bowel problems such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome, and the onset of PD. I have had IBS virtually all my life.

To stay on top of the dopamine brain cell deterioration, attitude comes in. I do as much as I can of a lot of weekly exercise, as intensely as I can although my legs feel like lead. I used to walk at least two miles per morning but now I find walking quite hard. Yet I can dance, as well as the other sports I do! It's believed the brain creates a new pathway, with dopamine, when one hears music and gets up to dance.

Diet, too, is of importance when you have PD and something else that is good for PD patients, to help their hand-eye coordination and focus is art.

I hadn't drawn or painted since art classes at St. Mary's Hall. I still have the paintings that received honours rolled up in my home office. Here is an example:



Now, not only have I written, illustrated, and published my *Prince Oliver Penguin* trilogy, but also *Hidden in Plain Sight, a British Military Agent's Story*. That last is, of course, not a children's book. It is about my father who was a spy in WWII working for MI-19, based in England and Moscow. I have another children's book in preparation as well as my autobiography. Hopefully, I can continue to live a good, productive, life, even with PD.

For Shirley's books, please go to:

[amazon.com/author/shirleyread-jahn](https://www.amazon.com/author/shirleyread-jahn)

NEWS ... NEWS ... NEWS ...

Top of the news is an update on an item from the summer e-Newsletter.

I asked if members could help with names of Girls in a photo and I was delighted to receive this response:



“Your photo of the four girls is from the last few years of the school. The two on the right are **Katy Feek (2006-08)** and **Laura Valentine (-2009)** so I imagine it was taken around then. The girl on the left was a German exchange student, I believe, but I don't remember her name.” **Briony Keir, (2004-09)**. Thank you, Briony; we have added it to the website now. If anyone can reconnect us with Laura, or name the other Girl we'd love to hear!

Penny Barnes (Ryall/Hunt, 1957-61) wrote to me in May to say: 'I just have to tell you this wonderful coincidence. Yesterday I had tea with a new Rotary Club member and her partner. During the conversation they told me they had lived in Brighton a few years ago....I commented that I had been at school in Kemp Town. Immediately, Jo said - St Marys Hall? Naturally I said yes...and Jo commented that she remembered me, playing organ and piano and that we had both been in Babington House. I was about three years ahead of **Jo Walden** who was at SMH from **1958-61** and loved it. Her parents sent her to Grammar school at 13 which she was really heartbroken about at the time.' Jo is now safely reconnected with us – and would love to hear from any of her contemporaries who may remember her! She was disappointed to hear the Reunion Lunch was fully booked but we are all crossing our fingers that she will be able to come along next year!" We certainly hope that Jo, and many others, will be able to attend the Reunion Lunch on **SATURDAY 18th JULY, 2020** which promises to be even bigger and better than this year's...



*Photo credit David Spencer.
Other photos credit Micki Aston,
save group shot at foot of page
which is credit Barry Males*

Another FAB day both for weather and fellowship at the 2019 2nd Annual Reunion at Brighton Marina on 6th July. (l-r) **Margaret Rawlings (Cook 1958-62)**, **Angelica Meletiou (1957-63)** behind **Pat Sanders**, **Frances Bearn (Moojen 1955-63)**, **Christine Edmondson (Bean 1952-59)**, **Jean Ellis (1954-63)**, **Judith Patten (1950-60)**, **Liz Males (Cockburn 1948-59)**, **Ruth Wiffen (Bradbrooke 1953-57)** sadly completely hidden behind **Virginia Craig (Jackson 1961-66)**, **Micki Aston (Sheftell 1960-66)**, **Penny Wright (Strachan 1947-57)**, **Susan McDonagh (1969-76)**, **Sian Spencer (Williams 1967-77)** **Sue Burroughes (Anker 1960-64)**, behind **Ann Trustrum (1979-84)**, **Lindsey Milton (Bradbury 1962-66)**, behind **Jo Stubbs (Podd 1977-84)**, **Shelley Fergusson (1954-64)**, **Sarah Naish (1977-84)**.

Penny Barnes (Ryall/Hunt 1957-61), in the purple top in photos, below unfortunately had to leave before the group photo. More photos appear (much bigger!) on the latest news page of the website for all to enjoy.

Below, general views of lunch and, centre, bottom, the 'seniors' - (L-R) **Pat Sanders (Chapman)**, **Penny Wright (Strachan 1947-57)**, **Liz Males (Cockburn 1948-59)**, **Ruth Wiffen (Bradbrooke 1953-57)** and **Christine Edmondson (Bean 1952-59)**



Judith Patten (1950-60) posted these images of a reunion in Bristol in the Virtual Common Room, adding: "Quite a small reunion for us this year - we are the class of '53 as we were all in Lower IV that year. Judith had to leave after the delicious lunch but the others took an open top bus tour to add to their education!"

Left to right at the restaurant - **Jill Soundy (Steiner), Anne Valentine (Bethell), Janet Dunnnett (Strachan), Patricia De Juanes (Doswell), Nicola Bennetts (Bruton), Judith and Mariota Gresty (Fardell).**



Shirley Read-Jahn (1954-1961) commented on the photos: "Fascinating to see you, two of whom I recognise: Nicola Bruton (she was head girl) and you, Judith Patten. I also remember the names of the rest of the group here. I must have been younger than you lot. Isn't this Virtual Common Room amazing that we can do this!"

Sue Burroughs (Anker 1960-64) also remembered Nicola and Judith. **Heather Johnson (Heald 1948-57)** remembers all the names and recognised many of the faces and **Judith Barrington (1948-61)** thought they made a great tennis team! 'Young' **Natalie Tench (1989-97)** confirmed the way the VCR unifies us by adding "I may have walked past you all. Shopping in the centre this morning"

I also received this email from **Anne Valentine:**

"We, the "Class of '53" beat the lot!!! For our reunion in Bristol we managed to find 16 members of our class (we all, well some were in the junior school before!) started school together in Lower 4 in September 1953. We would love to find some of the others. We know that two of our class sadly died, Elizabeth Everitt and Carole Beeby but what has happened to the others?? We had heard that **Ann Braid** went to Australia and had twins. End of contact! BUT we'd dearly love to know where **Felicity Thomas, Gilvray Corker, Wendy Goff, Deanna Bennett (she had a sister Phyllida), Susan East** and **Janet Philips** may be. If anyone reading this has knowledge of them please do let smhaenquiries@gmail.com know to try to reunite us!"

Anne continued: "I loved reading the latest Newsletter. There is a photo there of **Julie Townsend** and **Penny Barnes (Ryall/Hunt 1957-61)**. Julie is our daughter Kathryn's, Godmother. Julie in 1969/70 with **Ann Salmon** travelled down the Pacific Highway to Argentina and came to stay, as we were living there at the time. Many adventures were had on the way, but you must ask her about them!" Unfortunately I cannot ask Julie as she was not persuaded by Penny to reconnect with us, but I have asked Penny to show her this message as a possible incentive for her to change her mind – and tell us the story!



Penny Barnes (middle of photo, on the left) sent me this photo taken at her home around 1960 - **Karen Strom-Gunderson (Seeberg)** is on the left....she sadly died a number of years before her twin sister **Brita Yri (Seeberg)**, Penny's best friend, who died a little over 3 years ago. Brita was in Penny's form but Karen was in the year above. Brita had a heart condition which had made her miss some of her education before she and Karen came to SMH, hence they were in different years. A few years after they left school Brita had an operation which allowed her to lead a normal life, going through university to get a degree in psychology etc..

Penny concluded: Brita was the most wonderful, kind, hard-working and loving friend anyone could possibly have." After receiving this I coincidentally opened a Newsletter on our website and found...

Yri, Mrs Brita (nee Seeberg) Married to a Norwegian for 23 years and has three boys- one aged 22 at St. Andrews University studying economics, one 20 at Imperial College studying geology and one 15 still at Norwegian School in Wimbledon. Brita has a Bachelor (honours) degree in Phs./sociology and a Masters in Psychological counselling. She has her own practice in Wimbledon and is working for Professor Crisp at Atkinson Morley Hospital as a Therapist working with anorexia nervosa patients. Her sister **Karin (now Strom- Gundersen)** also married a Norwegian and has 2 children - a girl of 19 and a boy of 17. They are living in Oslo, Norway. They are constantly in touch.



Rosie Moss (2005-2009) is now Mrs. Morris. Her wedding took place at her local chapel in Ringmer. The reception was at High Rocks in Tunbridge Wells, which **Emma Burgess (1997-2009)** described as "absolutely stunning!" Emma and **Ellis Ward (2001-2009)** went to the wedding together. *Left* are the three Old Girls (with a college friend who did not attend SMH) and *Right* Rosie & Gus, aka the Happy Couple. Their wedding was on one of the hottest days of the summer, June 29th.



Judith Patten told us (in the Common Room) on 7th July: "It's certainly been reunion week ... here's me (left) with **Gilly Fifield (Synge 1958-66)**. We met up due to the fact that we were staying for a night with my partner's sister (near Lichfield) and she had mentioned my mother's name to her friend Gilly who said "I was at the same school as her daughter" (small world!)



And another "old girls" lunch, this time on 12th July 2019.



Pictured, left, back row: **Penny Barnes, Serena Dallas (Liddell)** and **Claire Leaphard** and front row: **Jane Whitley (Usher)** and **Margaret Rawlings (Cook)**.

Penny pronounced it "Another great get together...non-stop talking for 5 hours, thanks to Keith and Syggy's hospitality!"

It is a shame that Serena, Claire and Jane have not reconnected with SMHA but Penny promised to share with them the 'non-member' version of our summer e-Newsletter in the hope it might encourage them and I am typing this with crossed fingers 😊

I received an email with her 'information' to reconnect with us from **Kitty Chan (1998-2000*)** which gave me pause for thought. I well remember feeling 'homesick' when I started at SMH when I, too, was 12, but unlike Kitty lived just 90 or so miles away from Brighton. **Kitty** wrote: "I remember the first day at school was 8th Sept, and my first class was ICT, I was only 12, in Year 8 and I was super homesick. I flew all the way from HK by myself at the time. Thinking back, that was pretty brave yet crazy. *After 2000, I went to Roedean. I was in St. Hilary House. There were three 'in charge' of the house; Miss Withers, Ms. Littlejohn, and an elegant tall and slim lady who worked in BA as an aircrew before joining the school (I thought she was really cool.) **Mrs. Meek**, our lovely Head, took all the boarders to Palace Pier in the first week for fish and chips. That was very kind of her. And she gave me a red pocket for Chinese New Year too!" (Mrs Meek was really touched to read this, which I passed this on to her.)

Were you at SMH with Kitty? I know she would like to hear from you if you were. Can you 'name' the other Hilary House member of staff? Her email also made me wonder what YOUR first memories of starting at SMH were?

These wonderful photos are from Addy Balogun!
 They, and many more, were shared with Girls in the Virtual Common Room in August.
 Names included, where known – please let us know if you can add to them and please let us have your own
 photographic memories – they really are worth a thousand words ☺

Those we 'know now' are in BOLD – who can name the rest???



Left: 2007 Y13 Last Business Lesson before Study leave
Back: Svetlana Neruh, Amanda Georgiadis, Mornie Tsang, **Sarah Westgate, Elizabeth Bodkin.**
Front: Wendy Tsang, Karen Chow, Stephanie Ho, Kayu Fong, (U/K) and **Cherie Lo**



Above: 2009 Year 13 (Upper 6)
 L-R (U/K) Erica Chan, Primrose Francis, Hayley Lai (U/K).

Right: The Final SMH Business Group YR12 2009
Back: Steffi Bohmert, Canitta Hart, Cherry Cheung & Kaki To *Front:* Honghong Hu, YK Wan & Donna Mak



Below: 2006 Year Group
Back: Xia Yan Zhang, Winnie Wong, (2 at back U/K), Reiya Yan & Calise Pang.
Front: **Keli Farkas, KaYan Mak, & Rita Yuk-hang Shau**



Left: 2006 Year Group
Rita Yuk-hang Shau on the left in the blue and Catherine Kwok on the right in red (Addy herself is in the centre)
Addy tells us the sweatshirts were 'Leavers' shirts.



*I was so happy to see a whole album of photos from **Donna Liu (1998-2002)** in August. There were great general views of the school but the most fun, I thought, were the lovely images of STAFF so here is a *Rogues'-Gallery* of some of them! As the wide range of dates show, photos appeal to members of all ages which is one reason I LOVE THEM ☺*

Leanne Smith (Pettett 1979-82) immediately commented: "Ha ha! It's my father in law" **Donna** replied "His name is **Barry** right? I remember he taught us car fixing in his spare time. He was so nice! Please say hello to Barry for me and give my best to him."

Lucy Davies (Dinning 1989-97) added "I remember him well and also **Carl** and **Dave** who, like me, supported Sunderland! All the staff at SMH were real characters."



Another member of the non-teaching staff remembered most fondly is **Chrissy**, the dinner lady, pictured left.



Jasmine Kilpatrick, Alex Tabor, Maya Hatton, Kate Lee, Justine Keet-Mayers, Jemma Grinnall, Lucy, Naj Mclovinstonville & Zulekhha Waheed all enjoyed this photo.

As well as the Girls already mentioned, **Fatima Aoucheva (Khamkhoeva 1993-99)**, **Sarah Louise Sherlock (Bridgewood 1985-91)**, **Samantha Morris (Cook 1989-92)** and **Rima Warrell (Shuman 1998-96)** loved this photo of *Miss Dempster*.



Anne Corris, who taught from 1989-2008, very much enjoyed seeing all these photos, (and helped with some of the spelling of names) commented “My bestest friend.”

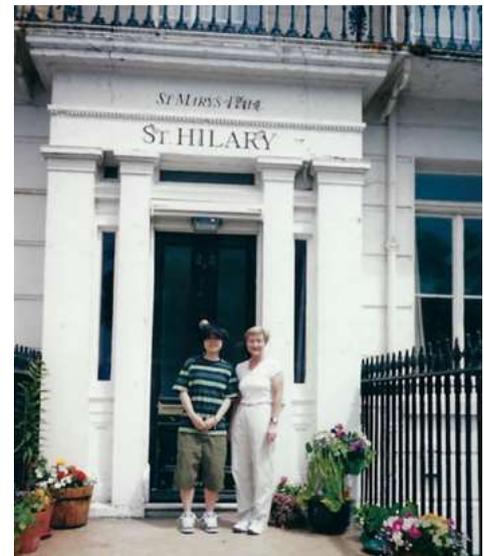
May Ho (2004-08) & Agnes Hung (2002-04) were two OGs who were very happy to see the photo of **Stella Wyeth**, who taught Pure Maths, (below)



Now, because all good things come to an end (unless you look at the other photos in the VCR) below is **Veronica Gravett**, Housemistress of St Hilary.

Miriam Demirates (1996-98) echoed many of our thoughts in saying “Thanks for sharing these, **Donna**; a real trip down memory lane.”

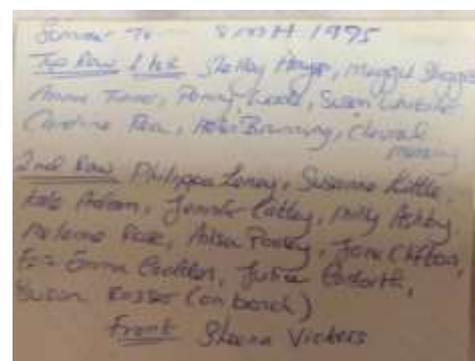
Please do look out some of your own photos and share them with us – if you’re not a member of the Virtual Common Room you are most welcome to email them to me (smhaenquiries@gmail.com) and I will use them in an e-Newsletter and, if suitable, on the website!



Anna Tinner’s photo, (below), from the summer term of 1975 shows:

Shelley Lüer (Hayes), Maggie Knapp (Sloggett), Penny Wade, Chevrel Traher (Moisey), Jenny Catley, Melanie Rose-Fyne, Jane Ponsford (Clifton), Julia Stogdale (Garforth), Suzie Gutteridge (Rosser); also Susan Whitiker, Caroline Rea, Helen Brunning, Philippa Leney, Susanne Little, Kate Adam, Milly Ashby, Ailsa Pooley and Sheena Vickers.

Anna tells us that they’re all still in touch; but unfortunately those in italics are not reconnected with us – so here’s hoping this will incentivise friends to suggest they get in touch and make it a full house?!



Readers of this issue know **Micki** as an extraordinary hostess of our annual Reunion and an excellent photographer of St Mark's Church. Not many know of her profession(s) so I am delighted that she agreed to share a little of her life and work with us as the second in a series about the influences of school on later life begun so interestingly by **Lilian Cooper (1979-82)** in the summer e-Newsletter. If you are moved to share your story please email me (smhaenquiries@gmail.com). I hope to make this an ongoing series.

Life Choices – Photography and Toasting

Micki Aston (Michele Sheftell 1960-66)

When I was at SMH there was no 'career advice' as such. After getting 'A' Levels at a crammer, my parents sent me for a 3-day psycho-technic testing evaluation, with the aim of giving me guidance on what my strengths were and what field I should explore for a career. Photography was not then considered as a serious career, certainly not by my parents! With the benefit of hindsight, I should probably have been apprenticed to David Bailey at 16, maybe as his tea girl, but immersing myself in the art form that had captivated me since the age of 6, when I was given a Box Brownie. The test results gave no guidance at all, saying that I could do anything I chose to, excluding anything involving maths!

I subsequently fell into a career in "English as a Second Language", which I taught adults while living abroad and which I fell into by accident, but enjoyed immensely. Fast forward to 1991 and back in the UK my husband and I received a devastating diagnosis pertaining to my second child, my son Guy then aged 15. After extensive medical explorations and tests, we were told he had Ewing's Sarcoma, a form of a teenage bone cancer.

The next three years were devoted to getting Guy (and ourselves) through chemo and radiotherapy, and my work and indeed my life were put on hold. Guy passed away in 1994, and I could see a chasm of deep and profound depression opening, ready to swallow me up. I had to do something to save my sanity and ultimately my life, so in a fog of despair, I picked up my camera, which hitherto I had only used for 'family snaps' and suchlike, (albeit prolifically) and started to photograph whatever appealed to me the most.



My work was seen in local publications and newspapers and I was contacted very quickly by a London agency, which took me on as a stock photographer.

I applied to three more agencies, and to my surprise they took me on too. I say "surprise" as the requirements to be taken on the books of leading photo agencies were and still are extremely stringent: one needed to produce literally hundreds of perfect colour slides. These days it is digital images that are required.

Also at this time, I learned a tricky but ultimately hugely rewarding skill, which was to give me hours and hours of creative pleasure: developing and printing my own film in my very own darkroom, which had been set up for me in my garden. Darkroom skills focus the mind, and there is no time for thinking of anything else, but to produce the very best prints that one can. It is indeed a wonderful therapy!

Within a couple of years of going professional, and being represented by agencies, I decided to take commissions, which again, focuses the mind beautifully. One is given a remit, which one has to adhere to religiously, and produce stunning photographic slides, even if one is not inspired! Again, I found this challenging and at the same time very rewarding. I became known in the industry as a travel photography specialist, and indeed travelling and photography both tick my two loves, so that path was eminently suitable for me. Also at this time, I started exhibiting frequently throughout the UK, in various galleries, and I have to say, I made a reasonable income from the sales of my monochrome prints, all hand printed in my darkroom.

In 1998, I trained to be a Photographic Judge, and started putting together lectures on my travel photography too. There are numerous camera clubs in this country all crying out for judges and speakers, so I started to get booked up pretty quickly, and over the past 21 years, I have been out on average 3-4 times a week from September to July. I just love being a photographic judge and speaker, and live in the vain hope that having to think on my feet on a frequent basis will keep mental deterioration at bay! I also now train up prospective photographic judges for the Chiltern area under the umbrella of the Chiltern Association of Camera Clubs.

Ten years ago, I retired from taking commissions from photographic agencies, and went back to my original role being a jobbing stock photographer, producing (now digital) images on my extensive travels. I also started producing photographic books, (10 to date).

It was at this point that I decided to tap into my aptitude and ability in public speaking. So I trained to become a Toastmaster. This threw up yet another challenge, as I had to attend a one-week residential course, where eight of us had 2-hour exams every morning, with a final 4-hour exam at the end of the week. I'm not naturally academic, but have a slightly photographic memory. So I memorised reams and reams of material, from 4 a.m. and late at night. The result was that I beat all seven men in the final exam, by 30%, gaining a 97% mark, thus qualifying me to toast at royal events. I don't believe I ever got a mark like that at SMH!



I then started toasting at weddings and civic ceremonies. Nowadays, I also give a lot of talks on 'My life as a Lady Toastmaster' to various groups and organisations, including the WI, Rotary, and numerous women's groups too. I find that aspect of my Toastmastering life very rewarding and satisfying. The world of a Toastmaster is predominantly male and as a Lady Toastmaster I believe I get work because I am (obviously!) very different.

So although I opened this piece by saying that I received no career advice at SMH I firmly believe SMH gave me the grit, determination and survival instincts to go on to lead a useful and productive life despite great tragedy. Maybe that is, in itself, good career advice?

I will be forever grateful to my parents for sending me there.

www.astonimages.com

www.ladytoastmaster.uk.com

WHEN IS A HOUSE NOT A HOUSE?

a shortened version of an article to be found at <https://www.smhassociation.org/the-vault.php> (click to access)

A simple question from **Sarah Davis (1984-90)**, regarding which 'house' she had been in and what the house colour was led to perhaps the largest piece of research I have undertaken in the ten years I have 'worked' for SMHA!

I knew the names of Houses in my day - Adelaide, Bristol, Chichester, Elliott and St Hilary and had a vague recollection of 'my house' colour, but no more, so I asked the wonderful Girls in the Virtual Common Room, which then exploded in a burst of electronic comments which at times I feared would crash Facebook!

To my astonishment I learned that not long after I left the boarding houses were no longer regarded as Houses, their girls being subsumed into four 'new houses' for the purposes of inter-house competitions and so forth. I found this deeply unsettling and was only slightly heartened by comments from girls of that time who had been equally distressed.

Gaynor McKinnon (Jupe 1976-82). At some point in the late 70s the VIth formers organised a strike and I can remember loads of us across all year groups sitting out on the grass area refusing to go into lessons - I think the bit that is now sandwiched between swimming block and Venn House (which wasn't built then). We were brave but not for long. I think, and forgive me if I'm wrong, that we were striking because the day and boarding houses were being merged. I ended up in Adelaide, and actually was very proud to be an Adelaide girl.

Lesley Clifford (1971-78) I can clearly remember being told that Hilary and Elliott would no longer be 'houses'. We were devastated and fought hard against it. I remember getting up on stage with a large group of borders and performing a song we had written. I can remember parts of it. The opening line was 'When boarding houses existed as two. And the daygirl houses were three'. Does anyone else remember this? I seem to remember we sang it to the tune of Scarborough Fair. I'm not sure of the year. The first 2 lines of another verse have come back to me: "Hilary and Elliott no more shall we be. But old times will stay in our minds".

Carolyn Jackson-Brown (Sycamore 1974-81) The only option was to go to purple Babington because it felt as if the houses had personalities as well as colours. When we started if you were a boarder you were either Elliott (red) or Hilary (yellow) but then we had to move across from onsite 'junior' to Sussex Square 'senior' I think in 1977, so the sports prowess was diluted anyway. All those colours were as Jenny says. In Yorkshire we say 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' so not sure why they meddled with the houses. At least we were still allowed to WIN which I dare say you can't anymore.

Alison Platt (Schuller 1980-87) I was in Chichester (green), but the other main houses were as mentioned: Babington (purple), Adelaide (orange) and Bristol (blue). I seem to remember seeing a few people with cloaks bearing the red

or yellow of Elliott and Hilary but for the purposes of inter-house sports and competitions everyone was in one of four houses. Ironically, I am now in Adelaide - Australia, that is!

Elly Maconochie (Royce 1980-86) responded "Ditto Alison, I seem to remember Chichester house won the house cup for lacrosse and drama in 1986. But I may be wrong." Alison Platt: "Elly I don't remember Chichester winning anything much during my tenure - not sure if that had anything to do with me! 😊 I was never very sporty, that's for sure..." **Judith Scott (1970-76)** added "Alison I was in Chichester too (long before your time). We never won anything then either!"

Juliet Rose (O'Hea 1960-67) commented "That's funny! I remember Bristol was very sporty and Chichester wasn't, and I was very disappointed in being put into Chichester when I became a day girl. **Judith Barrington (1948-61)** agreed "yes, Juliet, I was in Bristol and we won a lot of sports- specially tennis and ping pong! Chichester won things that required good behaviour."

But to return to the main question, I knew that before my time there had been Babington (purple) and now I knew that after the 'Houses ceased to be houses' Babington was reborn, still purple. I also knew Adelaide was 'new' in the 1960s. So all that was left was for me to read all the newsletters AND a history of the Hall, and find out the facts.

Extracts from Miss Meades' History tell us that (of course) the Hall was originally one House. In 1914 two houses in Hervey Terrace (now 'underneath Elliott House) were purchased to house boarders. By 1919 with the school taking non-clergy daughters number TWO Sussex Square was purchased and dedicated as St Hilary House. In 1921, 22 Sussex Square was purchased and became St Nicholas House. Day Girls were organised into Bristol House. This was the first 'house system' to the best of my knowledge. In 1925, 21 Sussex Square was also purchased.

No reference is made of it being 'named' so I am assuming it was an extension of (the then) St Nicholas. In later years 21 and 22 were conjoined, only being split off again when finally sold off.

4 Clarendon Terrace (Hebbert House) was purchased and opened in 1931, followed almost immediately by a Kindergarten at 4 Hervey Terrace. Babington, 2-3 Chichester Terrace, opened in 1933 whereupon Hebbert House was closed. Miss Meades makes reference to "Snowdon-Smith" – perhaps the second house in Hervey Terrace? It, and "Hervey" have disappeared in 1938 and "Chichester" has appeared.

Shortly after the Hall closed for the duration of WWII both Babington and St Hilary were badly damaged in air raids. (The school itself was of course virtually ruined by its 'occupation' by allied troops!) The off-site buildings could neither be sold nor tenanted so simply lay fallow during war-time. The school authorities believed that when the school reopened it would be self-contained with small pupil numbers.

In the event the school reopened, initially, for juniors only in Babington House, while the main Hall was still being repaired. By 1947 the school moved to its real home and Babington opened fully as a boarding house again.

21-22 Sussex Square followed suit, renamed St Hilary, with "2 Lewes Crescent" (I think this is what was referred to as 2 Sussex Square previously) being sold as an annexe for Brighton Training College. Then came the redevelopment of Hervey Terrace into what we all remember as Elliott House.

The next buildings all took place on Hall grounds - Venn House, Junior School and so forth - and all after the 'Houses' were no longer houses. The final burst of building took place as late as 2007 with the opening of Gloucester House, the new junior school now pre-prep department for Brighton College, and the Senior Boarding House and VI form Study Centre in Elliott, now staff accommodation and offices for the BSUH Trust.

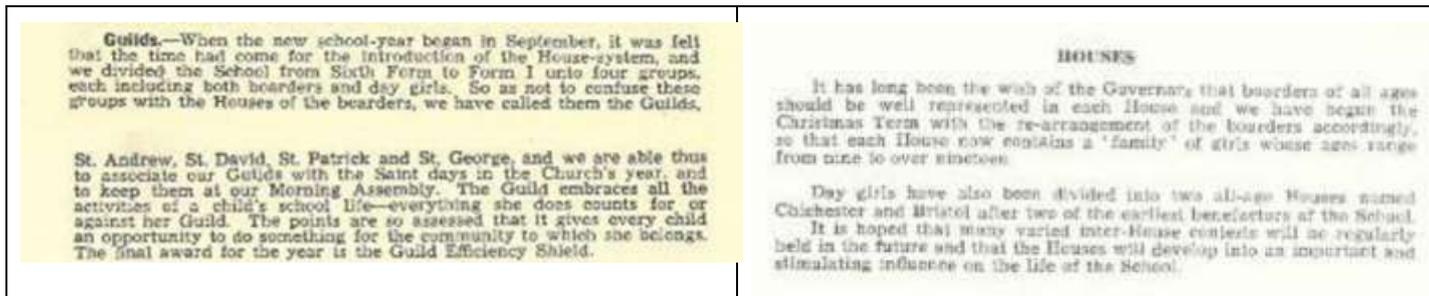
Also the happy/sad report of a return to St Hilary.

In April, the Duchess of Gloucester officially opened our wonderful new Junior School, Gloucester House. Then, this September, we launched our new Senior Boarding House and Sixth Form Study Centre, Elliott House. Both projects were brilliantly managed by our Bursar, Chris Elkins.

In order to fund our new buildings, we sadly bade farewell to St Hilary House - the grand old building in Sussex Square which was originally home to Thomas Kemp and over the years to both Junior and Senior Boarders. Last year we leased it back from the new owners, while we converted Elliott House. To commemorate the final Christmas in St Hilary, Senior Boarders arranged themselves on the magnificent staircase and entertained guests around the Christmas tree in the hall with a programme of carols and beautifully recited Christmas readings.

Sad to reflect on how short lived the great optimism shown in this – and the rest of Mrs Meek's – report was.

I now tackle the question about why the 'Houses' were dropped unceremoniously. In earlier times school had addressed the unfairness of the boarding houses 'winning everything' by forming which were the competitive arm of the school. Thus day girls and boarders alike, and a cross section of ages, were in each of the Guilds which could then compete on equal terms which the identity of girls with the house where they were, err, housed, avoided upset!



Tweaks took place with the ages of girls in Houses – the one, above right, in 1956, followed the end of the Guilds. However, in 1977-78 it was 'all change', songs and strikes notwithstanding, and girls who lived in St Hilary and Elliott were members of either Adelaide, Babington, Bristol or Chichester.

We changed the House System at the start of the Autumn Term (the new school year). From now on Elliott was to be just a boarding house for juniors, St. Hilary just a boarding house for seniors. The competitive houses running across all ages, regardless of boarders and day girls would be: Adelaide (orange), Babington (purple), Bristol (blue) and Chichester (green).

After the 'house' question, the colour one is easy...St. Hilary yellow, Chichester green, Bristol blue, Adelaide orange, Elliot red/burgundy. In both its phases of existence, Babington was purple. But please, I beg of you, don't ask me whether St Nicholas or Hebbert Houses ever had colours. Because I don't know and, at risk of expulsion, I don't care much either!

In the course of my research I found so many interesting extracts in magazines and newsletters about Houses (and houses and guilds...) that I have added them at the end of the full article for your enjoyment over time. Remember, too, that the Newsletters and Magazines can be found, enlarged, downloaded and generally enjoyed at: <https://www.smhassociation.org/newsletters2019.php> Other pages of the website include the various histories of the Hall and much more besides, better reproduced than the format of this article (published in full on <https://www.smhassociation.org/the-vault.php>) permits.



“Class of ‘80/82”

Vicky Brown shared this great photo of a reunion in August on the occasion of **Tamsin Kidwell (Johnson)**'s annual visit. Also pictured: **Elizabeth Ager**, **Caroline Robson (Morley)**, **Kate Sherwood (Taylor)**, **Pippa Benton (Pearn)** and **Nicky Currie** after a late afternoon walk from Jack and Jill Windmills to the Half Moon pub at Plumpton.

Sam Oakeshott (Surridge) & Helen Thompson (Carden) remembered everyone and **Shana Duthie (Freshley)** was 'missing you all'.

For the past ten years I have edited a 'special' annual newsletter for Old Girls and former staff who have advised us that they have no means of accessing the internet and requested written news. This has only been possible because of the kindness and financial support of members who printed and posted it.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to summarise and compress 'news' which will interest them and yet not require them to link to websites (etc.).

The Team is therefore looking at other ways of keeping them in touch with their Association.

Initially, I made contact with Old Girls living close-by and have been delighted to have obtained offers to act as a news conduit from several of you. I'm not surprised at the offers, but I am most grateful for yet another demonstration of the ethos of Our School.

We are left with:

Angela Crawley (1954-61) Toronto, Ontario, Canada

and **Ruth Raven (1947-51)** Aldham, Colchester, Essex CO6 3PL

Do you remember either of them?

Would you be willing to write or telephone once or twice a year to let them know about Reunions and in general to give them any news from the quarterly e-Newsletters which may be of interest to them & pass their news back to me?

Do you live close by either of them and, if so, would you be willing to offer to visit perhaps once or twice a year for the same purpose?

If writing, telephoning or visiting is an option for you would you please email smhaenquiries@gmail.com ASAP so that we can review our options?

Many thanks indeed!

We owe **Micki Aston** thanks for more than organising the reunion for us. She visited Brighton in June to go to "The Spire Arts Centre", known to all of us as St Mark's Church. For some years now we have hoped to access the building and photograph our artefacts which were entrusted to their care in 2009. (A list of items sent there at that time can be found at <https://www.smhassociation.org/archives.php> (Master Archive for website)) More than 20 of her photographs from the visit can be found in the website Galleries, <https://www.smhassociation.org/external-views.php> (and scroll down) but here is a taster.

Sue Meek, last head of SMH, has provided an excellent précised history of the building (largely from Commander Martin's History of SMH) c/o this link: <https://thespirearts.org/our-history/>



Sad News

Sarina Saunders (Snooky) died in April.

Condolences were sent to her sister **Marylou Greenaway (Saunders, 1950-54)**

We're indebted to **Jeanette Cureton (Smith)**, SMH Burlington NJ Exchange Scholar, 1961-2, for letting us know about the death of **Isobel Chanin (Rowland) 1951-55**. It seems that Isobel died on December 20, 2015, at the age of 76. The date of birth mentioned on the website where Jeanette found this — 13 February 1939 — is corroborated in our SMH Register.

MEMORABILIA If you would like to order any of the items advertised on

<https://www.smhassociation.org/buy-smh-memorabilia.php> , please contact Jan Johnson smhasales@gmail.com. She will let you know how to pay and then fulfil your order. The bonus of looking on this website page is the brilliant 'page topper' of "The Loos"!

LONG SCHOOL PHOTOS These are available as downloads from the website at £3 per download. Check out <https://www.smhassociation.org/gallery.php> then email 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!

HOW TO FIND US

Website: <http://www.smhassociation.org>
Log on = smhmember Password = elliot18362009

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/>

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8689113>

Contact Address: 1 Welburn Close, Ovingham, Northumberland NE42 6BD (United Kingdom)

Contact phone: 07946 772620

Please use address/phone only if email will not serve your purpose ☺ Thank you!

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If you are not ready to commit to being a team member
you can dip your toe in the water by being 'associated' with us.

Essentially that means taking on an identified task and 'working to' one of us.

It's a useful introduction to the necessary bureaucracy which running a large Association entails.

**We are particularly keen to recruit someone who uses and is active on LinkedIn to manage this for us.
Could you be that person?**

**If you feel able to assist us in any way, or have ideas for changes or improvements in
what we currently offer to members please do not hide your light under a bushel...
e-mail smhaenquiries@gmail.com!**