

# **ST MARYS HALL ASSOCIATION**



## **Newsletter 116 2015**

This newsletter is published by the SMHA Committee  
on behalf of the St Mary's Hall Association

## COMMITTEE

<b>Hon Life President:</b>	<b>Mrs Sue Meek</b>
<b>Hon Vice Presidents:</b>	<b>Miss N Olwen Davies</b> <b>Mrs Clare Feaver</b> <b>Mrs Teresa Broadbent</b> <b>Mrs Pamela James</b>
<b>Hon Chairman:</b>	<b>Olive Ridge</b>
<b>Hon Deputy Chair:</b>	<b>Jo Stubbs</b>
<b>Hon Treasurer:</b>	<b>Diana Sijpesteijn</b>
<b>Hon Archivist:</b>	<b>Sue Carnochan, assisted by Jo Stubbs</b>
<b>Hon Editor:</b>	<b>Vacant <sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Committee Secretary:</b>	<b>Virginia James</b>
<b>Committee Members:</b>	<b>Frances Barham</b> <b>Maria O'Connell</b>
<b>Secretariat:</b>	<b>Jane Watson Membership Secretary*</b> <b>Melanie Bastable Newsletter Editor<sup>2</sup></b> <b>Lis Eastham Social Media Editor</b> <b>Alice Rawdon-Mogg Web Editor</b> <b>Emma Thomas 100 Club Administrator**</b> <b>Penny Harrison Memorabilia</b> <b>Vicky Riley</b> <b>Charlotte Harvey</b>

<sup>1</sup> As the Hon Editor post within the Committee is vacant, it was agreed at the Committee meeting on 14th March 2015 that Jane would act as liaison between the Committee and the Secretariat.

<sup>2</sup> This year's Newsletter has been edited by Penny Harrison.

The secretariat supports the committee. They welcome any offers of assistance.

\* [secretary@smhassociation.org](mailto:secretary@smhassociation.org)

\*\* [100club@smhassociation.org](mailto:100club@smhassociation.org)

**For further information on the committee including contact details, roles and responsibilities and to read the Constitution please go to the website, <http://www.smhassociation.org/committee.php>**

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### School Prayer

O God, by whose manifold grace all things work together for good to them that love Thee, stablish, we pray Thee, the thing that Thou has wrought in us, and make this school as a field which the Lord hath blessed, that whatsoever things are true, pure, lovely and of good report, may here forever flourish and abound. Preserve in it an unblemished name, enlarge it with a wider usefulness and exalt it in the love and reverence of all its members, as an instrument of Thy glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

### Letter from Sue Meek; SMHA Honorary Life President

#### ***Dear Friends,***

It has been an eventful year for me, coming to terms with retirement from my professional commitments, following unexpected heart surgery in January. I am so grateful for your kind messages of support and for the beautiful flowers sent by the Committee, which greatly cheered me on my return from hospital. Ironically, my surgeon has been corresponding with from his new office - in St Mary's Hall! The letterhead gave me quite a shock when I received his first letter!

The six month recovery period has meant that I have been unable to be actively involved in Committee matters this year, but I am hoping to attend the Autumn meeting. Olive Ridge does a stalwart job in leading the work of the Committee and in co-ordinating arrangements for our reunions and special events, representing the Association in the local community.

As I write, I have just returned from the commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of our Founder, Henry Venn Elliott, which was organised by St Mary's Church, Kemp Town, where Henry Venn was the first incumbent from 1827 until his death. We were shown his memorial plaque, which I had not realised was in the Church, and this was a moving experience.

Before the service of celebration, we were invited to tea and given the opportunity to view the exhibition of portraits of the Elliott family, which had been specially assembled for the occasion and to which Sue Carnochan, our archivist, made a valuable contribution. This was followed by Evensong and Anthony Elliott, great-great grandson of Henry Venn and ex- Chair of Governors of SMH, read the second lesson. The Association was represented by Olive Ridge, Pamela James, Sue Carnochan and myself. Mike Wells who served the School for many years as Head of History and as Deputy Head, was also in attendance. Our loyal bell-ringer at St Mark's Chapel, Margaret Ellis, was the sole representative of past pupils.

The choirs of St George's, St Paul's and St John's churches all joined forces with St Mary's to sing Locus Iste by Moore as the Introit, and settings of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in D minor by Walmisley. Before the address by the present incumbent, Fr Andrew Woodward, the choir burst forth with a splendid performance of the Hallelujah Chorus, which was greatly enjoyed by the congregation. Fr Andrew reminded us of Henry Venn Elliott's inspirational life and how his legacy has not only influenced the development of St Mary's Church, but through his School, St Mary's Hall, so many generations of young women have benefited from his vision and his generosity.

'Just as I am' had been sung as the Office Hymn earlier in the service and, following the address Anthony Elliott presented Fr Andrew with two exquisite miniature portraits of Charlotte Elliott: one from when she was only five years old and the other when she was a smiling teenager. The portraits were gratefully received and then blessed by Fr Andrew during the prayers of thanksgiving for the dedicated work of the Elliott family.

I felt exceedingly proud to be present to celebrate the life and achievements of a visionary man, who has had such a remarkable impact on Brighton life and whose legacy is still appreciated by members of the local community – as well as among those of us who cherish the values his School promoted.

Six years after the closure of the School, it is extremely encouraging that so many of our members are enjoying the camaraderie, amusing anecdotes and reminiscences that are exchanged in the Virtual Common Room, thanks to the initiative of Lis Eastham, assisted by Penny Harrison. Penny continues to serve our Association with huge commitment, including taking over the production of this Newsletter, for which we are all extremely grateful.

Finally, I will give you a quick update on St Mark's Chapel/Spire Arts. Sadly, the Arts Council grant which was expected in the Spring, was allocated elsewhere. This prevented the planned Festival programme from going ahead. However, this setback has not daunted our three theatre producers who manage the ongoing programme of rehearsals and meetings of arts groups, which is beginning to produce a modest income. Estimates for a replacement heating system and new toilets are now being sought. This project moves slowly, but is progressing in the right direction and is supported by the PCC of St George's Church, to whom Spire Arts report on a monthly basis and to a group of Trustees of St Mark's, which includes Fr Andrew Manson-Brailsford from St George's and myself. The SMHA continues to have the use of the upper rooms for storage of items that have not gone to the Keep and Sue Carnochan keeps a watchful eye on these. Margaret Ellis continues to ring the bells on Thursday evenings, which is a joyous and encouraging sound to hear and ensures St Mark's is not forgotten! So, we continue, slowly but surely, in our endeavours to give St Mark's Chapel a new lease of life. With warmest wishes to you all,

**Sue Meek**

**Hon. Life President & Headmistress of St Mary's Hall (1997-2009)**

## **A message from your Chair**

### **Dear Friends**

The highlight of 2014 was the Reunion in June when the new occupants of St Mary's Hall, Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, invited us to have tours of the School and see the refurbishment of the buildings. As we walked around the building, we were able to share many of our own personal memories and also appreciate the excellent use of the site today. If you were unable to attend, do look at the photographs on the website. Thank you for sharing your many positive comments with us afterwards. We forwarded a donation, on behalf of the Association, to the Staff Fund as a token of our appreciation to those who so generously gave up their time to act as tour guides.

The task of moving the archives from Roedean School to The Keep at Falmer was completed in July. All items have now been successfully catalogued and provide a comprehensive history of the School. An inventory of the material can be accessed at [www.thekeep.info](http://www.thekeep.info) Our thanks to Roedean School for providing interim storage facilities for five years and to Anna Manthorpe at The Keep for collating all the documents. Remaining items of furniture currently being stored in St Mark's Chapel include the large oak table, the Headmistress' desk, two original benches and Miss Bristol's desk.

Sue Meek is kindly storing the grandfather clock. All items are being offered for sale at recommended auctioneers' prices. If you are interested in making a purchase, please contact me directly by e-mail at [okridge@ntlworld.com](mailto:okridge@ntlworld.com)

At last year's AGM, we agreed to create a Secretariat to support the Editor. As the Editor's post on the Committee is currently vacant, I am so grateful that Jane Watson, a member of the Secretariat, has been willing to be co-opted onto the Committee and has kindly agreed to liaise with other members of the Secretariat. We welcomed Lis Eastham as Social Media Editor; she and Penny Harrison have set up the SMHA Virtual Common Room, which currently has a membership of one hundred and forty people. This is proving to be the most popular form of communication among members with lots of friendships being renewed.

Our newly designed website has proved to be much more user friendly. A recent request to produce newsletters electronically was agreed by the Committee. When the task has been completed, a set of newsletters from 1930 will be available. I understand those that have been uploaded are already creating much interest among our members. The newsletters are easily accessible on the website by pressing "The Vault" button on the left hand side of the Home page. Once again, I would remind you of the facilities on the website to network with other business members and to advertise charity fund-raising events. It is interesting to note, that during May, the website had one hundred and seventy visits.

The 100 Club, a fundraiser for the Association, continues to be administered by Emma Thomas and produces a steady flow of income; she would welcome suggestions as to how to encourage more people to sign up. If you would like to join the 100 Club, details can be obtained from contacting Emma at [100club@smhassociation.org](mailto:100club@smhassociation.org)

The Rev'd Andrew Woodward, Priest in Charge, St Mary's Church, Rock Gardens, has invited members of the Association to a special Evensong on the 4<sup>th</sup> July to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of Henry Venn Elliott. Before the service, we shall be able to visit the St Mary's Community History and Founder's Day exhibition where family portraits of the Elliott family will be on display. Sue Meek has written of this in her letter, above, and further details are at the end of this Newsletter. Owing to this event, the Carol Service planned for 2015 will now be postponed until 2016.

To ensure the continued success of the Association, we need your support. Do get in touch if you would be interested in joining us.

Once again, thank you so much to everyone who has contributed to the work of the Association during the past year.

**Olive Ridge**  
**Chair, SMHA**

## **NEWS OF FORMER HEADMISTRESSES (SMHA Hon Vice Presidents)**

### **MISS N. OLWEN DAVIES 1965 – 1973,**

Olwen writes that she has had a difficult year since she last wrote to us, spending some months in hospital and then convalescing. **Mary Panter** and **Susan (James) Mitchell** visited regularly and kept us up to date on her progress and many Old Girls wrote and sent messages to her. We are very grateful to Mary and Susan for passing these on.

At the time of writing this Olwen is back at home where with her niece's help she is improving although still needing to make regular visits to see various consultants on an out patient basis. She very much enjoyed hearing of our networking via the Closed Group on Facebook, being assured that it was entirely secure and that our vigilant administrator, **Lis (Ferguson) Eastham** moderates both members and content robustly and hopes to join us later this year! She wishes all "her girls" well and sends her regards to all reading this message.

Olwen's email address is on the database on our website for anyone who may wish to contact her.



*Olwen, at the Blue Plaque Reunion, 2013.*

## **MRS. PAMELA JAMES 1991 – 1997,**

Dear Friends,

As I have mentioned in previous letters the thing that everyone who has been at SMH has in common is that they have lived in what is now the City of Brighton and Hove, so I shall begin with a taste of the city as it is now.



Every year, in the month of May, a ceremony takes place on the beach near the Palace Pier called the Blessing of the Nets.

It comprises a short service at 1 p.m. led by a priest from the nearby Church of St Paul's and with the Salvation Army Band, to give thanks for the harvest of the sea and to pray for the safety of the fishermen.

After that, celebrations go on for the rest of the day.

It's all very relaxed, casual and enjoyable.

There is a low wall on which people can sit if they wish to. This year the sun was shining but there was a wind ("Breezy Brighton") so those of us with hair looked quite wild by the end! People looked on from the railings of the promenade or sat on the wall. The Mayor said a few words and unveiled a plaque and the VIPs retired to eat mackerel in buns. Mackerel is the main fish of Brighton. I am told they used to beach themselves chasing whitebait with predatory intent! The whitebait went out to sea again on the next tide but the mackerel were too big for that, enabling the citizens of Brighton to go to the beach with buckets and harvest them.

The celebrations started, this year, with a Samba band dressed in turquoise and white, playing bells and drums. The emphasis is on rhythm and all those playing were over 50. They, and their audience, enjoyed themselves immensely and the whole thing was very "Brighton".

Now, in your mind, travel east, towards SMH, stopping at the Royal Sussex County Hospital.

As many of you who visited in the last two years, or who live locally, know, the Hospital is in the first couple of years of a ten year modernisation project. Some of the oldest parts of the hospital are being razed to the ground and new buildings erected. To facilitate this, temporary buildings have been put on the site by crane. I know nothing about engineering and have been fascinated to watch this. Some of the new buildings are five stories high. They have metal frames and can be joined together by interlocking, giving breadth as well as height. The other day a crane took the roof off one of these buildings, put a room (complete with contents) in and put the roof back on. It was for all the world like a child playing dolls-house! The whole process has caught my notice and imagination. It is so flexible and adaptable.

So there you are, a taste of Brighton in May 2015, anchored in its history of fishing and fishermen and yet moving forward – both essential to the lives of its people.

My very best wishes to you all,



*Pamela James*

*Messages for Mrs James can be forwarded from [secretary@smhassociation.org](mailto:secretary@smhassociation.org)*

## Association Accounts: 2014

These accounts, and those for 2015 will be audited and taken to the next General Meeting for approval, in line with the Constitution.

### Approval statement

I approve the accounts which comprise of the Profit and Loss Account, the Balance Sheet and the related notes. I acknowledge my responsibility for the accounts, including the appropriateness of the applicable financial reporting framework as set out in note 1, and for providing Michael Dack & Company with all information and explanations necessary for their compilation.

*D M Kaars Sijpesteijn-Markham*

D M Kaars Sijpesteijn-Markham

9 March 2015

### Accountants' report on the unaudited accounts to St Mary's Hall Association

You have approved the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2014 which comprise the Profit and Loss Account, the Balance Sheet and the related notes. In accordance with your instructions, we have compiled these unaudited accounts from the accounting records and information and explanations supplied to us.

*Michael Dack & Company*

Michael Dack & Company  
Chartered Accountants

### St Mary's Hall Association Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2014

	Notes	2014 £	2013 £
<b>Current assets</b>			
Bank/building society balances	16,418	20,822	
<b>Net current assets</b>		16,418	20,822
<b>Net assets</b>		16,418	20,822
<b>Capital account</b>			
Balance at start of period		20,822	21,222
Net loss		(4,404)	(400)
		16,418	20,822

**St Mary's Hall Association  
Profit and Loss Account  
for the year ended 31 December 2014**

	2014 £	2013 £
<b>Other business income</b>	541	1,218
<b>Expenses</b>		
Telephone, fax, stationery and other office costs	4,825	1,464
Accountancy, legal and other professional fees	120	120
Other business expenses	-	34
	4,945	1,618
<b>Loss</b>	(4,404)	(400)

### **TREASURER'S REPORT ON ACCOUNTS**

The Association's Accounts for this financial year have again been prepared by Michael Dack and Company, Chartered Accountants of Leeds.

The accounts show that in 2014 expenditure exceeded income by £4546 (the cost incurred for the new website was £4551). The retained funds at the end of the year were down £4404. The balance sheet at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 shows assets of £16418 (down from £20822 in 2013).

#### **Investments**

The Association's investments include £15079 in a Barclays Saver account and £1338 in the Barclays Current account. Bank interest paid was £ 8.64.

#### **Sale of memorabilia and books**

This generated 191.30. Donations of £1.50 were received.

#### **100 Club**

This initiative generated a gross income of £624.00; nett £403.70.

#### **New website**

This project was successfully delivered by Charlotte Stevenson at a cost of £4520.

#### **Miscellaneous expenditure**

The main expenses incurred related to the preparation, removal and storage of archive items from Roedean School to The Keep. A total of £382 was spent on miscellaneous costs.

#### **Summary**

Excluding the capital sum required for establishing the new website for the benefit of all members over the next few years, the running costs of the Association are virtually matched by the income generated from the 100 Club and the sale of memorabilia (income of £825 and expenditure of £ 851) during the course of the year.

The time given so generously by Committee Members and others ensures that our costs are minimised.

Diana Kaars Sijpesteijn-Markham  
Hon Treasurer  
26 May 2015

## ARCHIVES

Archive information is provided in email updates to members and on our website. This includes the list of archives lodged at The Keep and accessible on application to them. The location of items held elsewhere is also identified and members who wish to know more or who would like research carried out on their behalf should contact SMHA Archivist, **Sue Carnochan, on 01273 306676**



We are grateful to Sue for providing the following information.

The documents at Roedean concerning the Junior School between 2009 and 2011 are now Roedean's responsibility. There are also some SMH documents, relating to events between 2006-2009 housed in a container which will be catalogued by Roedean this year. *(Ed. We believe a copy of the list will be provided for our website/archive listing)*

Two glass cabinets, were removed from Roedean Reference Library to St. Mark's church in 2014. They are now up in the room above the Altar, along with other archives and furniture. Sue plans to fill them this summer.

Olive Ridge and Sue attended an Open Day at the KEEP where 4 documents relating to St Mary's Hall were on display for the public to view.

In February, a 1930's film about Mallory and Irvine's expedition to Mount Everest, was shown on BBC Television and it mentioned a gentleman named Odell, who was a personal friend of the Venn Elliott family. His sister was a Geography teacher at SMH and her legacy helped fund the building of Pool block in 1976. The school will also be referenced in Douglas D'Enno's upcoming book on "Brighton in the First World War"

Sue has told the committee that she is happy to remain as Archivist, if required and (as stated above) will go to the KEEP to research material for any Old Girl who needs it. She comments that it has been a very interesting and rewarding 15 years in the role.

P.S. For those folk who live far away from Brighton, Sue writes, "you will be pleased to know that there is still a BUS STOP called ST MARY'S HALL. The school is not forgotten!!!"

I have been in touch with Sue myself to ask about **the School during the Second World War**. This was prompted by an enquiry from an Old Girl, reading some of the old Newsletters online, who wondered about the war-time closure.

Tim Elliott's fascinating history of the school (<http://www.smhassociation.org/resources/HistoryofSMH.PDF>) says:

Let the final words in this section come from the Ministry of Education's report issued in 1954... "When the War ended, the Governors were faced with buildings which were in an appalling condition ...After all the current debts had been paid, there was a deficiency of about £10,000 which had to be covered by a bank overdraft in addition to the debenture issue of £12,000". It is a sobering thought that, under current Insolvency Legislation, St Mary's Hall would almost certainly have had to have been dismantled to pay off its liabilities, instead of merely being bombed by the Germans and, more seriously, wrecked inside by our own and Canadian troops. The new Elliott House is excellent [TE remarks: I wish I knew who had made this comment. It was a thoroughly jerry-built edifice, but the best possible in those difficult days] and the School now has good grounds and buildings which have been restored and made suitable for their purposes. The School is now on a sound financial basis."

Further enquiries resulted in **Lis (Ferguson) Eastham** reminding us of the book 'In the face of danger' The History of The Lake Superior Regiment, owned by her mother, Ruth (Powell) Ferguson which names the Headquarters of the battalion A B C And D at the school, Hilary House, Arundel house and the Institute for Deaf and Dumb and mentions that 'The battalion parade square was in the grounds of Brighton College.'

Commander Martin's "Short History of St Mary's Hall" (being scanned for the website) covers the war years in Chapter 5.

"This (1937) was to be the last normal year for some time as 1938 and 1939 saw the beginning of the falling off in numbers and a sub-committee was set up to consider Air Raid precautions. Matters became rapidly worse in 1940 with the fall of France and when a head count was taken in June the following picture emerged: 26 boarders and 37 day girls definite for September, 31 boarders and 59 day girls doubtful 13 boarders and 22 day girls not returning. The school could not continue with these numbers and it was decided to close at the end of the summer term 1940. Miss Stopford took over as headmistress of St Elphin's Darley Dale and our girls were offered places at: St Catherine's Bramley, St Michael's Bognor (which had moved to Penzance and is now St Michael's Petworth) and Blatchington Court School, Seaford, which had moved to Devon.

Why did SMH not move from Brighton to a safe spot like so many other schools? Many schools which were going to evacuate had already done so and no doubt SMH hoped that a move was not going to be necessary for moving the school would have been an expensive and uncertain exercise. A major redevelopment had just been completed which had exhausted the school's financial resources...For once, however, our geographical situation was not an advantage and closure was inevitable.

The school was taken over by the military and all the boarding houses were requisitioned by the War Department. The Common Room (Classics, Room G) became the Sergeants' Mess, the Officers took over the Drawing Room and the Staff Room became the office of the CO. The contents of the boarding houses had been sold at auction or to other schools and other furniture and fittings were stored in the Hervey Terrace Houses 227-233 Eastern Road. In July 1941 the Governors declared their intention to reopen after the war...Fate was to take a hand to make this more difficult for on 25th May 1943 a bomb fell on Hervey Terrace destroying the Lodge, 227-233 Eastern Road and badly damaging the Laboratory."

The buildings were not finally handed back until March 1946. The Association was the driving force (under Miss Ghey's leadership) for re-opening, raising £5000 to this end, conditional upon the school being a boarding establishment, although the first objective was to open as a day school. At the end of September 1946 a Junior School reopened in Babington House, with about twenty girls "white socked and wearing blue overalls". They had a short service and got down to work having received a telegram from Miss Ghey and Miss Galton which read "Long Life and Happy Days to St Mary's Hall, reborn today."

## FOUNDER'S DAY, 1949.

Until Founder's Day I only half knew that the Hall was alive again. Reports, however gratifying, of increasing numbers, of a boarding house opened, of examination successes, do not carry the conviction that comes from the sight of a quickly moving file of girls with familiar hat-bands emerging from the walled passage, and passing across the gravel into St. Mark's Church. Till then the Hall was peopled, in my imagination, with my own contemporaries. Now I know that it is a solid and worth-while bit of the present world.

Worthwhileness was the permanent impression I took away from Founder's Day. This was only partly a matter of seeing prize-winners carry off their books, and hearing of examinations passed and medals won. It came quite as much from other parts of the day. First and foremost from the Commemoration Service, with its prayers that are so much a part of the old School, and the competent singing of its choir that is so entirely a product of the new.

I wished the Elliott Hall was twice as large so that many more Old Girls could have heard Miss Robinson's report of fine achievements won in very difficult material circumstances. It was good, too, to listen to that longstanding and firm friend of the Hall, the Bishop of Chichester, who gave away the prizes.

After the prize-giving came tea, and after tea a gym. display by the School. This took place on the hard courts above the inner Garden (restored now after war-time devastation). From the path above the courts an excellent view was to be had, and the display was an effective demonstration of the good work being done on the physical training side. The parents of some of those taking part were among the spectators, and it was evident that the display was a source of considerable satisfaction to them.

M.R.

## DEPUTY CHAIR & ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST, JO (PODD) STUBBS

Jo Stubbs, Deputy Chair and Assistant Archivist has written to say that 10 months after building started she finally has her home back although they still have much work to do, in the front and back gardens and also some decorating upstairs. The structural work is complete and the extra space is amazing. She says, "The kitchen is probably my favourite room - light and airy with views across to Westdene and The Downs. The extra downstairs room has also proved invaluable, doubling up as a bedroom when necessary. Christmas and New Year were hectic, but lovely ... we had a house full of Stubbs relatives from Christmas Eve until New Year's Day with my parents, aunt and brother joining us for Christmas Day. New Year was celebrated with family and close friends - I'm not sure how many people stayed, but we managed to find beds/floors for all!"

Professionally, Jo has taken on a few more hours work at school, helping to support a group of Year 6 pupils during their literacy lessons. In addition to this, she has transferred from being a Parent Governor to a Foundation Governor - this aspect of life continues to be extremely rewarding, but time-consuming. However, she continued, "I absolutely love working at St Martin's - the pastoral care offered to pupils is outstanding - it's like a second family. I'm also continuing as Safeguarding Officer for St Matthias Church and lead some of the Children's Church sessions." Her husband, Jonny, continues to work extremely long hours in London, although he does not have to travel to the US quite so frequently now which is a bonus.

As for the 'children'; Zoe has just finished a period of work experience in an admin office at the Sussex County Hospital. During her first week, she was given a tour of St Mary's Hall. Jo thought it probable that she could have given them a tour! However it is lovely to read that they are so proud of their new home.

Caitlin has successfully completed her first year at Leeds Music College. Lizzie (famed for sending the lovely photos of the buses which provided so many smiles in last year's newsletter) is currently studying for 11 GCSEs. She is still dancing and is due to take her Grade 5 Tap in July. She helps out with the younger tap classes and is also working towards her Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award. And finally, William is at the end of Year 3. He also does tap and is taking his Primary Exam in July.

Jo sends her best wishes to all members.

## ARTICLES FROM AND NEWS OF FORMER STAFF AND PUPILS

In 2014 we wrote about the busy year experienced by **Susanne (Nicholls) Rea**. Little did we know that during the second half of the year, and for all of 2015 to date, she has would scarcely spend more than a week at home. Instead she has visited countries in Australia, Asia, Africa, Europe and both Americas further promoting the Rotary International project to eradicate Polio.

We are delighted that she was honoured for this work with a Service Award and hope to bring photos of this to our Virtual Common Room soon!

As of May 22, 2015 there have been 1,157 events registered in 59 countries.

More than 65,400 participants worldwide

USD \$1,170,547.61 has been raised (a total of USD \$3,511,642.83 with matching funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)

This translates to enough funds to buy more than 5,850,000 polio vaccinations.

Susanne would like to invite you to take part in the "World's Greatest meal to help End Polio". You can join in via Facebook....all monies collected go straight to the Rotary Foundation through their Website Donate Button which means that it is fully tax deductible in many countries.

[www.facebook.com/Meal2endpolio](http://www.facebook.com/Meal2endpolio) or go to <http://wgmeal.com/>

There is a page on our website, [www.smhassociation.org](http://www.smhassociation.org) where members can give details of charity fundraising ideas. Please email us for details, or look at the page to see more. Members wishing to promote business opportunities can also do so through the site.

### A Plea for Help – Jo (French) Grey

SMH in the 80s was great for me; something of an adventure. My parents had left in 1983 to live in Nigeria where my father worked as an architect. Having devoured *The Famous Five* and *The Secret Seven* for years, I happily volunteered to go to boarding school. It quickly became evident of course, that the similarities between the fictional boarding school and SMH in the 80s ended at midnight feasts!

As a shy and naïve 13 year old, and having experienced completely suboptimal education at one of the country's worst state comprehensive schools up to that point, I entered SMH a year lower than my peers. Yet, how sophisticated everyone seemed in my 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Elliott House dormitory!

Nevertheless, I appreciated the routine and the chance to improve my educational prospects, gaining 7 good O' Levels rather than the 1 I had been aiming for in the state sector, and 2 rather more dodgy A' levels. Considering I spent every spare moment (and some that weren't technically spare) cocooned in the music cells playing my flute, even these modest achievements came as a pleasant surprise to my parents and me.

Sadly, many of my memories of my time at SMH from 1984-1989, are missing – just gaping black holes now.



My millennium present was a medical roller coaster that led to the discovery of a rare genetic illness, a couple of potentially lethal, secreting adrenal tumours, thyroid cancer, and the additional diagnoses of my mother and then 2-year old son with the same disorder.

I was lucky to have survived giving birth to my two children, Lois in 1996 and Cameron in 1999. My memory has never been the same since this particular Pandora's Box was opened, likely down to a TIA (mini stroke) or two. I am in contact with several of my good friends from that time, but feel free to contact me and help fill in the gaps.

Nevertheless, my lovely consultant recently called my schedule 'punishing' which made me sit up and think. In short, yes it is! These days, I can be often be found at medical conferences or in my small office in Tunbridge Wells in Kent, running a patient group charity for people with medical conditions like mine. The charity, the Association for Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia Disorders (AMEND) provides free information and support services to families in the UK and around the world. A top UK surgeon called us, 'the most dynamic little charity I've met'; a quote I love and always bear in mind.

I love 'translating' medical speak into lay speak, although still struggle with my deadlines as I did with submitting my English homework to Mrs James!

Being a small charity for rare disorders means that public support is very hard to find.

Luckily, I have already managed to arm-twist another SMH 'Old Girl', Catherine 'Woody' Woodthorpe to the Board as Treasurer.

There is still plenty of room for more though, and so my plea is that, if anyone has some extra time to spare and would be interested in getting involved with us in AMEND on the Trustee Board, or as a fundraiser, then I would love to hear from you! AMEND Board members are widespread throughout the UK and often use Skype to check in to meetings which are twice a year.

Equally, if you are a Trustee on or know of any Charitable Trusts that might be able to help AMEND with funding, please do get in touch.

**For more information, please do visit [www.amend.org.uk](http://www.amend.org.uk), call Jo on 07932 643187, or email her at [jo.grey@amend.org.uk](mailto:jo.grey@amend.org.uk)**

## [Transatlantic Ties](#)

**An article written for the Newsletter by Jeanette (Smith) Cureton Doane Academy/St. Mary's Hall, NJ, USA**



Turning back the clock of personal experience is sometimes hard to do. The hands may resist, reminding us that we risk wading into emotional waters where we'd best not go.

Or they can trigger memories of behaviors that, with the perspective of age and distance, we'd like to do over. On the other hand, they can bring to light old friends with whom we've lost contact, personal joys, and pivotal life chapters that announce: "These deserve to be remembered and celebrated anew."

The year 1961-62, when I was privileged to be an exchange student from St. Mary's Hall Burlington (in the US) to St. Mary's Hall Brighton, was one such chapter for me.

The exchange program between our two sister schools, which flourished between 1960 and 1972, sent English and American girls on an every-other-year basis to study across the Atlantic. **Patricia Dahl** was the first from the UK, I the first from the US.

As I have looked back over that immersion in English life, I have smiled in recalling teachers like **Miss Farmer** and **Mrs. Lawrence**, who taught us far more than geography or history, and the headmistress **Miss Conrady**, who, together with my American headmistress (and presumably the schools' governors), made that year the experience of a lifetime. I have fondly remembered fellow students and my three English families—those of **Sherry Coe**, **Tisha Dahl**, and **Jenny Riley**—who not only warmly welcomed me into their homes and overlooked my teenage foibles but also went out of their way to take me to a variety of historic, cultural, and geographically beautiful sites during the time I lived with them.

As the months went by, I learned new traditions, enjoyed new social customs, and rituals, came to understand a different educational and political system, and more clearly appreciated the shared foundation of our religious heritage and system of justice. They all left an indelible mark, and I am beyond grateful for that formative year in my intellectual, cultural, and personal development.

Sadly, the St. Mary's Hall in Brighton that I so fondly remember is no longer the bricks-and-mortar entity it once was. We all mourn its loss. However, thanks to modern technology and the work of several key Old Girls, the Revd. Henry Venn Elliott's dream is being kept alive in virtual space. In addition to the web site of the St. Mary's Hall Association, an even livelier location is the SMHA Virtual Common Room (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SMHAclosed/>), where Old Girls reminisce, compare notes, post old SMH photos, and simply natter. One of the special joys of these conversations is that they span a range of ages; in so doing, new friendships are taking shape, just as long-time ones are being nurtured.

Once again, warm hospitality has extended across the Pond as my new friends have invited me to join this group, thereby giving me real and symbolic Old Girl status and enabling us to revive the spirit of the student exchange program that thrived in the sixties and seventies.

In early May I tripped back to my own St. Mary's Hall for the annual Founder's Day activities and class reunions. Since boys are now fully integrated within this once all-girls environment, SMH changed its name to Doane Academy, honoring its 1837 founder Bishop George Washington Doane. A Friday night cocktail party kicked off the reunion weekend of May 1-2. On Saturday a service of Morning Prayer in the chapel was marked by a procession of the graduates, the singing of familiar hymns, a short homily by the chaplain, and the shedding of an occasional tear.

At the meeting of the Society of Graduates that followed, I was delighted to bring greetings from my dear friends active in the English St. Mary's Hall Association, as I had been charged to do. The response was surprise and delight, and a vow to revive and continue the international friendships embedded in the successful exchange program of a generation ago. More conversations about the historic relationship between our two schools ensued over lunch and, no doubt, will continue into the future.

An evening gala under a tent climaxed the day, this to celebrate the accomplishments of, and say a formal farewell to, Headmaster John McGee and his wife Alice, who have served the school with vision, dedication, tireless energy, and utter faithfulness for the past 15 years. They are retiring and will be succeeded July 1 by a new leader and his wife, George and Carolyn Sanderson. A school and its people have a way of getting under our skin. No matter where we live, what our circumstances, who we have become, we all hearken back to our roots.

Both of our two St. Mary's—in Brighton and in Burlington—grew out of a commitment to a similar mission: preparing young people for a life of value and service. They are institutions with a soul. I feel immensely privileged to be a member of both communities.



Here is a second lovely photograph, also taken at the Doane Academy reunion of **Alice (Collins) Fisk** who hosted the first exchange student from SMH, Brighton, **Tisha Dahl**.

***Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could reunite them?***

***Does anyone reading this know Tisha?***

Perhaps my greatest SMH associated joy this year (writes Penny H) has been – through a random comment made by a friend regarding exchange students – re-finding our links with our sister school, SMH Burlington, New Jersey. I am now close email friends with Jeanette and can confidently state that each of us has found enormous pleasure in chatting not only about memories of long ago but of our lives and interests now. I am grateful beyond measure for the opportunities given to me by my role first as an initiator and now as a participant in the SMH virtual community. I truly cannot recommend it highly enough. I am never alone, unless I wish to be, as our network stretches through all time zones!

## "Girls will be Girls"!

Some questions / random observations.....The question, posed on our Facebook page

**"Can you remember your House Colour and did you have headgear"**

(and if so, what)? - attracted 110 responses.

**"Which Headmistress was Head Dragon?"** - 54 responses

**"Do you remember table duty at meal times?"**- 30 responses

**"Recollections of "Sister""** - 36 comments

**"The Haunted Room/A bomb in the building"** - 50 comments

**"Miss Orme"** - 46 comments

Not all of the comments were 'on topic' but generally they generated other memories which were then further discussed.

These, and other, threads of conversation led to the suggestion that "there's a book in this" and clearly it would be called "What Fun!"

It is early days, but we know that two or three Girls out there are compiling comments and writing "chapters" so, watch this space (or better yet, join in with the Facebook discussions!)

Now, a word of explanation for those of you who do not follow us on Facebook!

We have for some time now had an "Open" Facebook page – open in the sense that anyone who looks at Facebook can access the information on the page. With the increase in use of this medium, girls began to post items which might be considered "risky" in the sense that personal information could be seen. So our wonderful Facebook coordinator, **Lis (Ferguson) Eastham** set up a "Closed" group. To see this you have to be invited to join and your membership approved. All members asking to join are checked by Lis and **Jane (Amherst-Clark) Watson** and if not on the database have to provide that information before they can access. It is therefore safe and a fantastic repository for our memories. The link to the page is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SMHAclosed/> or you can just search for "SMHA Virtual Common Room"

The downside to the Group (other than the "waste" of time and Health and Safety risks when accessing our physical memories in lofts and other difficult places) is that nearly 20% of the members now use this group, so have already seen some of the information in this Newsletter.

It is my fault that it is now called the "Virtual Common Room" (VCR for short). When I go to the page I feel, at once, that I am up in the eaves, warming my shins at the somewhat dodgy gas fire and drinking black coffee (the milk was always off), generally doing anything as a displacement activity rather than those things I ought to have been doing. Back then, it was homework and revision; now it is washing, ironing, cooking, cleaning...NO contest – let's see what my lovely Virtual Friends are up to!

I am conflicted – absolutely delighted with the constant friendship network I am part of, but not wanting to bore my readers. So, skip through the bits you have already seen, dear FB friends, and the remainder of you, please enjoy the items which have been taken from the online pages. Many items which follow are completely new to all readers, thanks to the kindness of our contributors!

One such is **Heather (Heald) Johnson** who told us via Facebook that she had been fortunate enough to visit St Kilda in May 2015 and of course I pounced on this immediately – "please write me an article" And here it is, on the next page! Husband Roy provided the photographs which so beautifully illustrate Heather's words.

## A visit to St Kilda.

May in Scotland and the weather was more like January, what chance did we have to make it on to St. Kilda? On arrival at Village Bay, Hirta, the main island of the archipelago we were unable to anchor, however instead we spent the morning circumnavigating the many islands and stacs. This was amazing. St Kilda is 100 miles off mainland Scotland in the Atlantic. The seas were choppy but we were able to appreciate the sheer cliffs rising straight out of the sea, many of them covered with seabirds, especially fulmars and gannets, sadly no one saw any puffins, although there are supposed to be large colonies on the islands.

The St Kildans relied on seabirds for their food; for their eggs, flesh, fat and also their feathers that were used as part payment for their rent to their landlords, the Chiefs of the Clan Macloed of Dunvegan, Skye. They could also fish but this was dangerous because of the seas and sheer land masses, many good men were lost.

However the main thing was that we did eventually manage to make landfall. On landing we made our way up the cobbled slipway, not much changed since the day the St Kildans made their last journey down to the sea to join HMS Harebell and leaving their homes behind them for good, nor was the weather much dissimilar to that day 85 years ago.

We made our way up to the village. It was strange to see the old houses, some of them in ruins and others restored by the National Trust, you felt the ghosts of the people surrounding you.

There was the graveyard. Although it is quite small St Kildans are still buried there. At the Kirk whilst we were there there was a service in progress and scattering of the ashes of a relative of the last postmaster on St Kilda. The Manse next to the Kirk is now an NTS shop.



It was hard to imagine how people existed on these remote islands. Everywhere there were Cleits, small stone structures topped with turf, used to store eggs, dried birds, fat, barley and oats for use during the winter and also in payment to the factor when he arrived. The Soay sheep were another attraction, only seen on these islands but they had provided the islanders with wool and meat and now roam freely across the hillsides.

We spent our time on shore wandering in and out of the old houses, known as blackhouses. We went up narrow, rocky paths between the houses to the wee fields that belonged to each croft, each with its own cleit and the dry stone walls dividing each piece of land still intact in many places.

We had mixed weather whilst on shore, sun, rain, gales - I was nearly blown off my feet when at the top of the village, how did these people exist in these conditions so far from civilization!

The people lived an insular life – no one knows where the first inhabitants came from. Of course there was much inter-marrying and everyone knew everyone else.



The Kirk was dominant, these were the Wee Frees and on a Sunday folk were expected to attend three services and the only work allowed was to prepare and serve the dinner. Families were also expected to attend services during the week and the Minister also ran the school where children were taught to read and write – usually texts from the bible. However there were many absences as children had to help with chores; gather crops, collect water,

help make the local tweed – not for the fainthearted!

In the 1920s there were 70 people on the island but then they gradually began to leave and eventually in 1930 the remaining 36 asked to be evacuated, not without many regrets. Life was not easy for them on the mainland, it took much adjustment and many succumbed to TB and other illnesses they had not encountered on their rocky outcrop.

Hirta now has transient inhabitants, the National Trust folk who are doing restoration work and MOD personnel manning the tracking station.

As we left the island the sun shone but as we set sail the mist came down and engulfed the village, this somehow seemed appropriate.

I make no apologies for reproducing, below, two letters from **Miss Laura Bristol** – beloved former Classics and Form Teacher and i/c 'all things Library'. Miss Bristol impacted on so many of our lives over a period of thirty years and the smallest mention of her to an Old Girl brings forth a flood of memories, all happy and many amusing.

***Firstly, extracts from her Christmas letter, December 2014...***

Greetings from Harting! This year has disappeared even more quickly than last. This is chiefly, I think, because I am getting slower. My hands are troublesome. I have had two carpal tunnel operations with 2-3 weeks after each one in Devon to recuperate. I have been given some ointment to take the pain away. On the product it says "wash hands after use"! Apart from all that I am reasonably well. With a wheeled frame I can walk at a reasonable pace up to the 10 a.m. service on a Wednesday and to the Post Office and shop quite happily. Every now and then a friend runs me to Petersfield and we have a shopping spree. My neighbours also shop for me. My dog, Blue, is taken for a walk most days and enjoys the garden where she likes digging in search of mice. At the beginning of May I sold the car. Driving seemed unwise with my mobility problems and now difficult fingers. I miss it, having had access to a car all my adult life.

August 4<sup>th</sup> marked the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my enrolment as a Girl Guide. I am certainly grateful for the things I learnt, among them splicing a rope (useful for the garden), first-aid, camping and so forth. Finding homes for things I no longer need is a long task but I have disposed of most of my Classics books. They have gone in 34 boxes to Bedales School. Some will go to the library; others to pupils who are off to University. So that is something done! I see **Susan Judd** from time to time. She's now the Revd. Her mother-in-law, now in her nineties, went to St Albans High School and was about 5 forms above me.

***and secondly,  
to Jane (Amherst-Clark) Watson  
in March 2015***

Dear Jane,  
Thank you for the two letters and lots of information. I must apologise for taking so long to reply. Since I broke my hip in 2013 I have had problems. The hip healed well but I have not regained my balance so I need sticks or a frame, or, preferably, a wheeled walker.

My fingers, as you know, have also gone stiff.  
At present I am steadily drowning in paper. It comes through the letter box faster than I can deal with it. However I count my success by the number of times I can fill the recycling box!

My dog is very good company and if she thinks I have been upstairs too long she comes and sits on the landing – just checking!

I'm sorry to hear about Mary Hayhurst and have heard nothing, recently, from Kay Griffiths (RI) which is a worry.

I still see **Katherine White** frequently as she lives just up the road from me. **Henrietta Grey** comes to Matins now and then to see her mother whom I have known for over 70 years (I used to take my younger sister to play with her) .

I am so glad the Old Girls are keeping the spirit of Henry Venn Elliott alive. I always felt the school did such good work with girls who were not necessarily Oxbridge material but who gave (and give) so much to society.



With all good wishes to those who remember me.

**Laura J Bristol, SMH 1958-1988**

### Pen Pals

One of our new Old Girls, **Jeanette (Smith) Cureton**, whose fascinating article appears above, told us about her pen pal at SMH...“Way back in Lower School at SMH, Burlington, long before the powers-that-be thought of an exchange student program, a pen friend program between SMH Brighton & Burlington was created. Although I'm uncertain of the precise year we began the correspondence, I believe it may have been in 1956 or '57.

My friend was **Jean Ellis**, who lived in Babington House if I recall correctly. I met her, of course, during that wonderful year as an exchange student (1961-62). She was then in the Fourth Form (can't remember whether Upper or Lower); I was in Sixth. Unfortunately, we didn't maintain the correspondence after I left England and went home, but I have fond memories of many par avion letters back and forth on thin blue stationery.”

**\*\*UPDATE Jean has now joined our on-line network and Jeanette is back in touch!\*\***

This prompted **Penny (Buck) Gardiner** to write of her own experience.

“I was assigned a French pen friend, Bernadette de Resequier. I've got a picture of her too - somewhere - I can see that I shall have to dig out some albums and get scanning! Back to Bernadette. In 1963 I was all set to do an exchange visit with her family - huge adventure for someone who had never set foot outside England - when I got whisked off straight after O levels to Great Ormond Street hospital for an operation on my woefully misshapen head and I spent the summer convalescing! No French adventure for me.”

*Mention of "France" leads nicely to news of a reunion which took place in France, last July!*

Readers will recall that our Secretariat lead for Facebook, **Lis (Ferguson) Eastham** coordinates this work for us from her home, La Petite Touche, in Pays de la Loire, France. <http://www.la-petite-touche.com/>. We are very fortunate that the internet allows us to use the skills and expertise of Girls worldwide in our Association!

Lis writes:

“Last July, **Sian (Williams) Spencer** and her husband, David came on holiday to Saumur, Pays de la Loire for their holidays. As we live just 45 minutes from Saumur we invited them to visit as for the afternoon. I have not seen Sian for about 30 years but she is exactly as I remember her from school!



*Mike Eastham / David Spencer  
Lis Eastham / Sian Spencer*

We walked into our village of Genneteil to have a look at the murals in our local church. The church is the largest in the canton. It is first mentioned in 774 as part of the "Villa Genestolatus" in the Chapter of St Martin de Tours.



*Genneteil Church*

The church, which dominates the village, shows a number of medieval construction phases. The nave was built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, its remarkable width being nurtured by pre-Romanesque experiences. The Choir dates from the first half of 12 Century and the bell tower, located on the south side, was built soon after. The redesign of the roof was realized in 12 century to alter the profile of the 'Chevet' - the entire structure of Apse, Choir and radiating chapels -the 'headpiece.

The story goes that until relatively recently it was unknown that the church had many murals depicting religious scenes. It was the poor state of the roof, allowing it to leak which washed off some of the lime wash which had covered the murals.

Some work has been done to establish where the murals are and the roof has been made good but the total cost of renovation is utterly beyond the means of a 350 strong community so it is to be hoped that the French Heritage or Church funds may, at some time in the future pay for the preservation of these murals.

The church is still consecrated but as it is in such poor repair it is only used for 'hatches, matches & dispatches', there not having been a priest for around 50 years apparently. The church is kept locked for this reason but as a commune councillor I was able to borrow the key to show Sian & David the interior.

We walked back to our place, narrowly missing being soaked by a sudden thunderstorm and enjoyed a few drinks of the local 'vin' and a meal.

**Margaret (Jones) McCall**, a regular and much valued correspondent, wrote, just before Christmas, 2014.

Her letter appeared in an email update but it bears repetition to tell those readers who may not have seen it that her old school friend **Jean Roberton**, died peacefully at her nursing home on 13<sup>th</sup> October. She had celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in July. At the funeral her family had arranged some of the photos she had taken on her many travels. She went, either with a friend but mostly alone, in really remote areas of, for example, Cambodia, Indonesia and Armenia! Margaret first met her in 1929.

**On the right is an extract from a letter Margaret wrote for the 1953 newsletter.**

**FROM PAKISTAN AND BACK.**

Mrs. McCall (Margaret Jones) writes at the end of September: "I am just going back to Pakistan again after three months in England. . . John is now seven and Michael is five . . . they go to a convent school at Risalpur, where they are two of the twenty British children among 180 Pakistanis! Their school hours are from 6 a.m. till noon. . . We flew home, arriving a day before the Coronation. . . I came principally for treatment at University College Hospital, where I saw **Margaret Schurr**, who is a Sister there, and she often came in to talk to me. I have also met **Mrs. Parker (Jane Felton)** and her three small children, who have recently come to live in Chichester.

I am much looking forward to the warm weather and a garden full of flowers. . . Keith and I love car expeditions. We have been up to the Afghan border through Waziristan, where we had to have an escort, first of Tochi Scouts and then tribal Khassidars, as it is supposed to be dangerous territory. Certainly all the bridges had been blown up, but when we stopped we merely had an interested crowd to peer at the cameras, at the boys' clothes, and especially at me, as their women are in strict purdah!

We have also been to Amb State and met the Nawab when the boys said "they had never had breakfast with a King before!"

This winter we hope to go to Chitral and Dir State.

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An example from another newsletter appears overleaf.

(The subject matter, with the US so on my mind, jumped out at me!)

**If you enjoy these extracts, why not log on to the website and check out the full archive as it is updated.**

## A YEAR IN AN AMERICAN WOMEN'S COLLEGE

During my time in the U.S.A. I became more or less hardened to the demand for articles or talks on the subject of England, for it is an engaging American habit to exploit English visitors; but when the process is reversed and I am asked to write an article on America I become diffident, for there is so much to say, so many aspects from which to write about that astonishing country, that any article must necessarily be inadequate. Therefore I shall restrict myself to a limited account of something of what I did and saw and refrain from commenting upon the enormous perplexities of American politics and social conditions.

In the late spring of 1935 I had the great good luck to get a fellowship to Smith College, Massachusetts. Smith is the largest women's college in America, in fact the largest resident women's college in the world, having roughly 2,050 students. The thought of such a concentrated dose of femininity slightly appalled me before I got there but I found them so charming, so completely friendly, and, I must confess, so infinitely more attractive to look at than a corresponding number of English undergraduates, that my fears were groundless. Moreover, there were never more than sixty in one house so one rarely saw them all at once except at compulsory chapel on Wednesdays, and that was an impressive sight.

I lived in a pleasant small wooden house with sixteen other graduate students, one French, one Italian, one Spanish, one Puerto Rican, and twelve American; but I got to know a great many of the senior (4th year) undergraduates, and it was with them that I spent most of my time. Before I go on further I must, at the risk of repeating every English visitor to America, stress the amazing hospitality of the Americans. In that respect they leave us miles behind, they are really interested in us, and having none of the diffidence or even superiority which tends to

afflict the Anglo-Saxon, they are not afraid to show it. They took me to their homes, they introduced me to their friends, they asked me innumerable questions, they gathered round to listen to what I had to say (chiefly, I suspect because of my "lovely English accent"), in fact they were the easiest people to get on with I have ever met.

As for work I was left free to make my own choice and as an American college offers every kind of subject from Higher Mathematics to the Russian novel, I had plenty of scope. Actually I chiefly studied American History and Literature, and in so doing discovered much to criticise in the English habit of ignoring America in the teaching of History. There is an American History, or a great deal of it, and it is extremely interesting and extremely important for it helps enormously to explain one of the greatest and certainly the most perplexing of modern nations. Also it seems a little unjust that while the unfortunate American schoolboy or girl is forced to wade through English History from 1066 on, his English contemporary should have only the briefest glimpse of George Washington and possibly Abraham Lincoln, and then allow the entire Western continent to slip into unmerited obscurity. The U.S.A. is a country worth studying, at first hand if possible, but if not then through its History and Literature, if only to counterbalance that most limited and fantastic impression which is supplied by Hollywood.

Were I to launch into a full description of the life, tradition, and ceremonies of an American college I should go on for ever. Every thing the American undergraduate does she does with zest and a good deal of efficiency, plays are put on astonishingly well, political societies are alive and flourishing, and the work itself though probably of a lower academic standard than that of an English university, seems by that very variety which can and does carry with it the danger of superficiality, to encourage a breadth of intelligent interest which is most stimulating, and which frequently put me to shame. I never found the work difficult, but I always found it interesting.

As for the life itself it had all the pleasant comfort which comes with good food, sensible clothes and amusing people, in a leisurely small college town. The clothes were perhaps what amused me most. Without exception every girl in Smith College dressed every day, except Sunday, in a tweed skirt and a sweater, no stockings, brown and white low-heeled shoes, light golf socks, and lipstick. Beyond all question they have the dress sense, and the effect of simplicity in cut and variety in colour was most refreshing after the assorted jumble of strange garments which were apt to deck the female population of Cambridge. In the winter we wore ski-ing trousers and boots all the time because the snow was deep. The social life of Smith tended to gravitate

round a series of small cafés near the grounds and run entirely for the college, where one might go and spend endless time drinking coffee or orange juice, or merely smoking, and where one was sure of meeting a good number of one's friends at any hour of the day or evening, a useful habit in a College so big. The sight of a café cluttered up with books and girls, some working, some talking, some playing patience or bridge, some drinking ice-cream sodas, was slightly staggering at first but one quickly accepted it as part of the day's work.

During the vacations I had the good luck to travel quite a lot and although I was in the States for ten months I never spent a night in a hotel, everywhere I went I stayed with friends. At Christmas I travelled 1,100 miles (a horrifying process lasting two nights and a day) to Chicago where I saw no gangsters, nor, in fact, very much else, because there was a thick mist, and so on by train to Winnipeg where the temperature was 20 degrees below zero, where at last I found the traditional Christmas with deep snow and lighted Christmas trees outside everyone's front door, and where we skated and tobogganed but were never cold because the air is so dry. At Easter I spent 10 days in New York that

most fantastic city, and practically developed a permanent crick in my neck by walking about like the veriest backwoodsman gazing at the skyscrapers. I did all the correct things, I shot to the top of the Empire State Building and mastered the geography of New York from the 102nd floor, I rode on the underground and the EL, I shopped at Macky's, I walked down Broadway at night, and finally decided that it was the most fascinating city to visit but would be rather exhausting to live in. I also visited Washington when the cherry blossom was out, a white, spacious and beautiful city; and Philadelphia and Yale and Harvard and Boston. After college was over I went up to the Canadian woods for ten days' fishing and canoeing, travelling part of the way in an incredibly dirty goods train which took twelve hours to cover 130 miles. Finally I sailed from Montreal fascinated by the paradox of a country where every kind of extreme flourishes, where moderation is little known, where science still contends with mediaeval problems, where repression and licence both flourish under the flag of democracy, and where blatant corruption lives side by side with many of the most charming people in the world.

M. C. GRAY.

The Committee has approved the expenditure of £500 this year for us to scan all Newsletters we still have in hard copy and this is on-going. They are being placed on the website and shared with the VCR.

The project was born out of the wishes of members reading extracts I scanned from copies and posted on line. They have been well received and are generating many comments and recollections. OGs are reminded of qualifications gained and reading about their mothers' sisters' and aunts' activities – in some cases a revelation!

## SMH Reunions, Facebook and The Virtual Common Room

Confession, they say, is good for the soul. **Sian (Williams) Spencer** admits that she is a Facebook and SMH Virtual Common Room addict. "How did this come about from a relatively 'non teccie' person?" she asks. "Like I suspect many of us I left SMH (in July 1977) vowing never to darken the doors ever again and for many years never gave the place a second thought. Time passed, opinions mellowed and in 2009 I was horrified that the school was closing down.

I therefore went to the final reunion and met up with 20 or so of my year group! We had a wonderfully enjoyable day posing a threat to the artefacts, school and furniture and causing utmost chaos in our wake - nothing much had changed. My husband acted as photographer and bag carrier for all of us; the only man to brave our group, but then he has always loved the madness of my SMH friends!!

During this day I heard about Facebook as a good way of keeping in touch. Now working in an office of bright young things who refer to me as "granny" behind my back, I had heard of Facebook but dismissed it as not being relevant to my generation.

### **How wrong I was!!**



Shelley (Hayes) Luer, Sian (Williams) Spencer, Melanie (Rose) Fyne, Camilla Ashby, Anna (Tinner) Waring, Jane Clifton, Sandra (Jantuah) Pepera, Caroline (Rea) Halvatzis, Ashley Bretcher

After an initial hesitation about privacy I was soon keeping in touch with my SMH friends, my nieces and other friends both old and new on Facebook.

A chance remark led to 30 comments from various of my year group resulting in nine of us enjoying a lovely evening on 1st August 2014 at Pressos on Brighton Marina.

Once again we were a lively bunch as we exchanged news and caught up generally after a gap of 30 years.

I'm truly delighted that this sporadic contact, both virtual and real, has been maintained. Personally I find FB a wonderful means of staying in touch as it removes the problem of finding a convenient time to phone as we all lead ever increasing busy lives and I love the Virtual Common Room!

If you have any doubts about FB please try it - join the Virtual Common room and I promise you will not look back!

Here are a couple of pictures from the dinner at Pressos."



Ashley, Caroline, Sian and Shelley

*(Old Girls, Vintage 1967-77)*

**Old Girl Prisca (Baillie) Furlong's year has been taken up with archaeology!**

She writes:

The trail that led from a search for evidence of a labyrinth at Julian Bower in Louth of possible medieval date to the conclusion that the origins of the labyrinth lie in the Bronze Age /Iron Age.

Having attended a talk on the spiritual aspects of medieval labyrinths I discovered there was one sited at Julian Bower Alkborough and that Julian Bower is synonymous with labyrinth.

Later I found out there were 4 Julian Bowers in Lincolnshire at Louth, Horncastle, Appleby and Alkborough (only the last still in existence). The historical records state that the Julian Bower labyrinth in Louth was sited on the crown of the hill.

I went to the crown of the Julian Bower hill in Louth and discovered, not evidence of a medieval labyrinth but an impressive embanked platform roughly 333ft square with commanding panoramic views in all directions and out to sea. It looked like an obvious site chosen for an important purpose – perhaps ritual (being crown of hill), perhaps beacon or look out place. The platform looked more Roman than medieval.

For my application to Historic England, to ask for the site to be listed as a Scheduled Monument, I concentrated on providing historical evidence that this was the site of the labyrinth rather than the site Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record asserts to be in the quarry on the east of the A16. I showed that the quarry site could not be the location of the labyrinth as it is not and never was the crown of the hill.

Additionally the flat platform site would be ideal for the mustering of the multitude, historically recorded, at the cross on Julian Bower for the Lincolnshire Rising in 1536. The cross at Julian Bower was historically recorded again in 1544 and the site, surrounded by trees, was additionally stated to have been a landmark out to sea – not possible for the quarry site location suggestion.

However historical evidence supporting the probable location of the labyrinth is not sufficient to list the site as a national Scheduled Monument as additional archaeological evidence is needed in order to do this.

There is a satellite image cropmark on the platform, highly suggestive of a 7 ring Classical labyrinth. This design dates not to the medieval era but rather as far back as the Bronze Age.



A few interesting flints had been found within feet of the labyrinth, in disturbed earth, which I had photographed and had sent in with my application.

The report came back that there was not sufficient archaeological evidence to list the site.

Subsequently I have photographed more flints found both on the site and in an adjacent garden (obviously some had been worked into tools and some were debitage).

It appears that the former, now filled in quarry, within feet of the platform which existed until relatively recently (houses have now been built on top of it) was the source of the worked flints and the haunt of pre-historic man.

I have done extensive field walking in the Wolds over the last two years and have never found such an intense cluster of worked flints and debitage.

To me this site is highly significant on that basis. Potsherds from the site have been positively identified as Romano-British and some of the flints, found on the site, have been positively confirmed as tools by one of the world's experts on the subject - Will Lord - who grew up at Grimes Graves, where his parents were curators. We now know for sure that the Romans and prehistoric people were here.

I began to research all the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman topography of the area. At the same time I watched television archaeological programmes on the Peat Bog bodies of the Bronze/Iron Age where the conclusion was that the local 'king' was ritually crowned on a stone on the crown of the hill but if harvests failed he was hung or garroted at the foot of the hill and thrown into the bog as a sacrifice to appease the gods. I watched other archaeological programmes which revealed that heretofore archaeologists have wrongly been considering sites to be of medieval origin but modern technology is revealing that in fact their origins are in the Bronze Age.

I discovered that the ancient 7 ring labyrinth is considered to have been associated with fertility rites. In Scandinavia classical labyrinths often have a standing stone at their centre. It is historically recorded that the Blue Stone outside Louth Museum once stood at the centre of the Julian Bower labyrinth. This would tie in with the above and hints at



Celtic / Bronze Age origin for the labyrinth in Louth. I discovered that places called Hungry Spot, Hunger Hill, Hungry Hill, all have associations with Bronze Age ritual sites and Cairns.

There is a Hungry Spot at the southern foot of the Julian Bower platform site – it is a boggy area with a fenced off pond beside the prehistoric track which leads through Tathwell, within sight of Bully Hills Bronze Age barrows, and stops dead on the Julian Bower platform. It is believed there was a Bronze Age settlement very close to the Julian Bower platform at the southern end of Hubbard's Hills. Half-way down the hill, towards Hungry Spot, is another track that leads off from the prehistoric track though the site of the possible Bronze Age settlement and towards Hallington and Withcall with Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman connections.

It is now looking as though the Julian Bower Recreation Ground site in Louth has been in continual use as a hilltop site for pagan rituals / cults from the Neolithic era, through Bronze Age, Iron Age, Romano-British era and then the Christians put their stamp on the site in the medieval era, erecting a cross, and using it as the site for Wapentake gatherings. In 1536 it was used for the mustering of the Lincolnshire Rising and from 1878 it was used on several occasions for the Lincolnshire Show.

In the absence of a direction from the county archaeologist that the site must be surveyed before planning permission is granted because it is close to and probably associated with other obvious places of archaeological interest, not least the prehistoric track that stops dead on the platform and to try to save a possible site of historic importance before it is lost to development I, and some friends, lobbied for a private geophysical survey, at our own expense.

On 19<sup>th</sup> May I received permission from the Trustees / Landowner to carry out a geophysical survey of the Julian Bower platform, using GSB Propection - the company who worked with Time Team for 19 years. The Trustees have requested that we delay the survey until the hay has been taken off by the farmer and we have agreed to this. We have sent in a request to the Council (ELDC) to delay the hearing of the planning application until the results of the survey are ready. We have agreed that Lincs Design Consultancy and the Trustees will have sight of the survey results before they are made public. I have been informed by ELDC that the hearing for the planning application will not now be scheduled for 4th June. Meanwhile the fresh application to Historic England to list the site as a Scheduled Monument is almost complete. We have extensive new evidence based on recent finds on an adjacent site to the platform where excavations are underway in a garden and further in-depth general and topographical historical research is producing very convincing evidence that this is a site of supreme national historic interest.



I, for one, sincerely hope that the outcome will be a very happy and fortuitous one both for Louth, in order to put it on the map as an archaeological / historical place of national importance to draw in more tourism and give the town an economic boost, and also to generate public interest and a will to make the most of this site for the town and the nation, perhaps with the assistance of lottery funding, so that the landowner will benefit too. This was my vision from the moment I discovered there used to be an ancient labyrinth at Julian Bower. If the vision comes to fruition Louth will benefit in every way... if it doesn't the knowledge and experience gained in 3 months of working between 6 - 20 hours per day has to have a book in it somewhere!!

If there is further information before the Newsletter goes to press then we will try to include it – otherwise please check on **“Julian Bower Louth Historic Site” on Facebook, or email [prisca@uwclub.net](mailto:prisca@uwclub.net) for updates!**

**Lis (Ferguson) Eastham** asked the VCR "Who listens to BBC Radio 2?" adding that her reason for asking is that Chris Evans does a daily article 'Top Tenuous', essentially a top 10 very loose claims to 'fame'.

She continued: "Watching our posts I note that the son of an old Sister designed the Daleks." And wondered who could add other "Top Tenuous" connections.

### ***And in they flooded:***

Several of us noted that Noddy's brother was Meredith Davies who was a conductor, organist, cellist and one-time principal of Trinity College of music, also a CBE, Fred Perry was the father of Penny Perry and Dora Bryan's daughter Georgina went to the school in the 70s. Elisabeth Beresford (Wombles)' obituary was in a recent newsletter.

Another Old Girl commented that Hilary House was in Sussex Square, a couple of doors away from the home of the sister of Lewis Carroll. Lewis Carroll used to visit there as a child and played in the private gardens, which had a dark tunnel down into the seafront. It is believed that this tunnel that was the inspiration for Alice falling down the rabbit hole into Wonderland.

**Vivienne (Goff) Lagraulet** recalls a girl called Marilyn from SMH, born about 1953 ish, who became an incredibly attractive model, as we think, did another contemporary, Anne Cornelius.

**Heather (Heald) Johnson** commented that Rosemary Wilton was in her year, an excellent actress, but it is her sister Penelope who has risen to fame.



Natasha Taylor - professionally known as Natascha McElhone (left) is a well known actress who went to the school as did Nigel Kennedy's mother, and, we believe Anne Nightingale's daughter.

Barbara Hulaniki's sisters (Biba) both referred to in recent Newsletters, and Mrs Money Penny are Old Girls.

**Shirley Read-Jahn** notes that when **Pam (Read-Jahn) Bailey** and she were at SMH there was a girl whose claim to fame was that her grandparents had gone down in the Titanic and that one Sunday she was out on an exeat and rang the doorbell of her friend SMH day girl Victoria Burge's house on the seafront (Royal Crescent) and Laurence Olivier answered the door, in carpet slippers and a cardigan. He said "Sorry, she lives next door".

**Angelica Meletiou** then added that Clive Lythgoe, the pianist, lived in Chichester Terrace and for a dare she rang his doorbell and asked for his autograph – and got it!



**Prisca (Baillie) Furlong** reminded us that Dame Sybil Thorndyke was an 'old girl' and remembered Penny Bastedo (younger sister of actress Alexandra Bastedo) taking her for prep, but we think Alexandra was at Brighton and Hove High.

**Jane (Peggy Barnwell Friend)** remembers "Mr. Pastry" (Richard Hearn's) daughter.

**Corinne (Hannant) Andrews** told those of us who had not connected it that old girl Judith Patten, awarded an MBE (2014) for services to renewable energy, is Marguerite Patten's daughter (Marguerite died recently, at 99) Corinne also believes that Sir Laurence Olivier's daughter Tamsyn went to the school.

*Old Girls who are contributors to the above item have been highlighted in bold – those referred to have not. (Simply to keep it consistent.) This is the type of thread which runs through the VCR – especially on the dull, chill days of winter!*

## Living in a Virtual World - Vicky Mokhtar Riley

I am not exactly an earlier adopter of technology and remain somewhat baffled by some of the emerging social media. I have a latent concern that one day we will end up like the people in Wall-E, living entirely via screens and fed entertainment. It is hard to deny though the way in which social media can connect people. SMHA is a case in point. Whilst to a degree all school alumni organisations are 'virtual' generally there is a locus around which its members can gather, the school itself, which carries on and which provides new 'news' whether it be its latest academic results, artistic performances and a presence in the local community. Being in the old school network is a way of staying in touch with the school. In our case though the school is no more. There can be no carol services; no garden party with art show; no reading up on how the Netball A team triumphed in the county championships; or a review of the latest school ski trip. SMH is firmly in the past. So why have an old girls association? What point does it serve? It can only be for the purpose of maintaining a link with those that you shared a formative part of your life and to be part of a wider community of people with whom you share something in common. How do you do that though when there isn't a school with its natural events to draw you back?

I left SMH 29 years ago. We were a bulge year, 31 of us when I joined in Trans in 1980. I know it was 31 because 31/31 was where I came in the end of year maths exam. I seem to think there were near on 50 of us by the V form in 1986. A bulge year which reduced to 10 (I think) who carried on into the 6<sup>th</sup> form. It would be fair to say that we voted with our feet, walked away and generally didn't look back. For 24/25 of those years I paid no real attention to the association. I was a member but living in London my only tether to it was the newsletter. What changed? The internet, principally the advent of Facebook. Connecting with a few ex school mates led to reconnecting with the school. The circle of face book school mates has grown (to 13) with a couple more via Linked in. I am a member of the virtual common room (not much of a contributor) but I dip in and out. What do I get from it? It isn't about the reminiscing. It is a bit like being back at school. The fun bits. The sharing of news & gossip in the common room or in the asides in halls and classrooms. I have enjoyed reconnecting with girls I knew who have become amazing women and being a part, if only virtually, of their lives now. They make me laugh. Sometimes their posts make me take a hard look at myself and my petty troubles and to quote a former boss 'I pull myself together and remember that I am nearly British'. Often their posts make me inwardly shout 'you go girl!' Might I spend too much time on it .. possibly .. does it add something to my life.. certainly.

What do I post ... pictures of flowers, the English country side, views of London and updates on the weirdness of my family life. I have a simple rule ... only post things I think will make someone somewhere smile ...as I did.



*Vicky, Anthony, Alex and Olivia*

For a more traditional newsletter update - **Vicky (Mokhtar) Riley** left SMH in 1986 in the exodus to BHASVIC. She went on to study at Warwick University where she met her now husband Anthony, who is Zimbabwean. She has two children, Alex (11) and Olivia (3), and lives in St Albans. In a move that would have left Mr Liddell pole axed, Vicky graduated from Warwick and joined Barclays Bank. That is where she remains 24 years later as a Director in the Offshore Business. Post SMH Vicky kept in contact with **Alison (Cox) Turner** and they were bridesmaids at each other's weddings. Via Facebook Vicky is now virtual friends with a number of old girls and met up with **Jo (French) Grey** and **Catherine Woodthorpe** at the unveiling of the blue plaque where she got them all told off for talking during the ceremony. Proving that some things will never change!

I am most grateful to Vicky for allowing her arm to be twisted to write this. She, like most of our Old Girls between 18-60+, lives a hectic life, juggling work, children, a partner, a home and hobbies and activities, but she has written very openly about how making five minutes here and there for SMHA has given her pleasure. I am older than Vicky (this year is the 42<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of me leaving school) but through the Virtual World we have found common interests both in where she lives and in her passion for gardening, and she has brought many smiles to my face with tales of her travels (especially from London City Airport to the Isle of Man!) and of her visits to the National Rose Centre in St Albans which was a regular port of call for me in childhood. THIS is what the virtual community brings to us all, young and old – it transcends the barriers of age and allows us to share our interests and lives without barriers. Thank you so much, Vicky, for taking the time to write and for contributing such a lovely piece. (Penny Harrison)



Front:—Left to Right (on ground): Miss Saberton, Miss Humphries, Mrs. Scott-Janes, Miss Farris, Miss de Baughn.  
 1st Row: Miss Gilligan, Miss Purfree, Mrs. Hora, Miss Farmer, Miss Conrady, Mrs. Lawrence, Mrs. Jackson, Miss Wyn, Miss Barr.  
 2nd Row: Mrs. Geady, Miss Howard, Mrs. Parsons, Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Bell, Miss Rogers, Mrs. Capildeo, Miss Bristol, Miss Bauer, Sister Brown.  
 Back Row: Mrs. Webb, Miss Orme, Miss Brown Douglas, Mrs. Eggleton, Miss Armstrong, Miss Miller, Miss Hill, Miss Gordon, Mrs. Dibdin, Miss Hauser, Miss West.

**Vivienne (Goff) Lagraulet** commented on this photo.

"**Mrs. Jackson** - a sort of female version of the evangelist Billy Graham and yet definitely from the Old Testament; **Mrs. Bell**, trying desperately to make a dignified exit from our 1st form class when Woody had greased the doorknob with Nivea cream; **Miss Farmer**, trying so hard to console **Juliet (O'Hea) Rose** after a slide show, because of the tears streaming down her face, when in fact we'd all been rolling around in hysterical laughter while the

lights were out ... What fun these members of staff had with us." **Prisca (Baillie) Furlong** added: "Mrs Jackson was the very devout RE teacher who had been completely cured of breast cancer. I've just remembered that Miss Farmer was deputy head so that must be why she's sitting next to Connie. Miss Bell was the elocution and drama teacher, Miss **Hauser** was Swiss and a great-great (not sure how many greats) grand-pupil of Beethoven for the piano. She was replaced by Miss Ratner. **Sister Brown** retired in 1965 and was replaced by Sister Dunn who sadly died after only a short time with us and in turn was replaced by Sister Robinson. **Miss Miller** was the formidable Matron of Elliott House, also left in 1965 and was replaced by the lovely laid back gin-guzzling Mrs. Winter-Blythe - a genteel lady from Dorset, near where I lived, who had fallen on hard times. **Miss Barr** was the Matron of Hilary House, replaced by Mrs Twiss (who went on to be Housemistress of Elliott) and then Miss Payne. I wonder if Miss Raisebeck, the Physics teacher, was sick that day or if she was locked away in a cupboard somewhere!"

**Penny (Buck) Gardiner** shared this photo in the VCR. It was taken on 3 June 1965, at Speech Day at the Dome.

Upper VI from left to right.  
**Marchia Allsebrook, Tricia Cohen, Liz Douse, Yasmin Balolia, Sue Ponder, Jo Eaton, Anne Finch, Penny Buck.**





Thanks again, to **Penny (Buck) Gardiner**, here is a photo of the occasion, in the summer of 1962, when the Queen passed by!

L to R, Miss Hatten, Miss Rogers, Mrs Lawrence, Mrs Eggleton and Miss Farmer - standing on the bench.

Another Royal visitor, but this time one who came to see the school and girls, was the Princess Royal, who inspected the Girl Guides.

**Rowan (Cawkell) Fookes** has named the girls (L-R) as:

**Tessa** something  
**Vivienne Ottaway**  
**Rowan** herself  
**Philippa Bennett**  
**Pam Bailey**  
**Shirley Foulsham**  
**Shirley Read-Jahn**  
**Cecilia Kimmins**  
**Nicola Bruton**  
**Anne Jarvis**  
**Gloria Smart**  
**Gillian** something.

And of course the Princess Royal and Miss Conrady.



Rowan added "I think this was the only time Connie ever smiled in my direction"

There has been a wealth of information in the VCR about Guiding, prompted initially by an extract from an old newsletter which identified that SMH had a Guide Troop before the official commencement of Guiding! A copy of the newsletter has been sent to the Guiding Association for their archivist.

For the benefit of non-VCR readers I have reproduced this item at the end of the Newsletter.

The Princess was also the guest of honour at the SMH prize giving at the Dome.

Shirley Read-Jahn received a prize. (*right*)

It was for being the best in basket-weaving.

Princess Mary gave her Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop* and Shirley says she is scowling in the photo because she already had a copy!

HRH was also missing a pearl button on her glove...

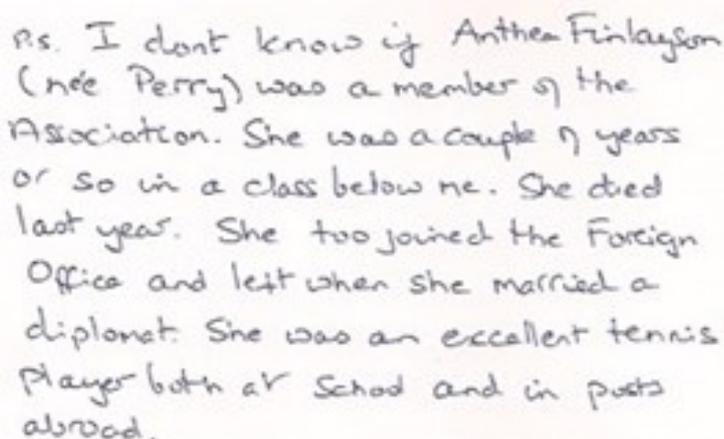


**Belinda Lindbeck** wrote, to Melanie, earlier this year.

"I am most grateful for being able to receive printed copies of the Newsletters. I used to enjoy reading of the happy exploits of those at school and how it had changed since my day and I was surprised at how sad I was to hear of the closure. I was a day girl from 1948? – 1952 and the only reunion I attended was in 1998 when a friend, Grace, and her sister, originally from Hong King came over from America and arranged a dinner for the Upper V at the Old Ship Hotel in Brighton. The majority of us had rather miserable and bleak recollections of our time – post-war austerity still reigned (think of the starving Germans, we were told if we left anything on our plates) and the school had only just reopened. There was no fostering of self-esteem. But we were made to feel ashamed as the two Chinese sisters spoke of concentrating on their studies, rather than on their feelings, in order to make good their father's sacrifice on sending them from Hong Kong for a good education.

My life improved when I left to attend secretarial college and later joined the Foreign Office where I was fortunate enough always to serve in posts of my choice. In the early 60s before the hippies came Kathmandu was in a fascinating time warp.

I spent five years in Tehran, from glorious times travelling around Iran and Afghanistan, to watching the revolutionary mob passing past the Embassy shaking their fists. And then, later, Athens, with wall to wall visitors to accompany on trips to the islands and mainland archeological expeditions. After various jobs at the FO I am now fully retired and spend my weeks in London with all that has to offer and weekends in Arundel where I can indulge my attachment to walks on the South Downs"



P.S. I dont know if Anthea Finlayson (nee Perry) was a member of the Association. She was a couple of years or so in a class below me. She died last year. She too joined the Foreign Office and left when she married a diplomat. She was an excellent tennis player both at school and in posts abroad.

Belinda added a rather sad post scriptum to her letter, (*right*). Thank you for letting us know, Belinda.

As I have been fond of saying, since 2010, no Newsletter would be complete without the annual updates from **Pam (Read-Jahn) Bailey** and her sister **Shirley**. Shirley starts off this year..

"There were two highlights in 2014 in my life. The first was the return in June of my sister, Pam Bailey, and me to Matala, Crete for the now annual hippy reunion. Some ten or so of us "old hippies" try to get back whenever we can. We had helped to pull together the first reunion in 2011. This has now become an annual music festival with literally thousands of people converging on Crete for the annual 3-day festival, bringing (to my great joy) a great economic boost to Greece's economy.

This time we took my husband, Horst Reimann, with us, because he was fascinated to see where I had spent such happy days in the late sixties living in the ancient Roman burial tombs of Matala, and having read the book about us all written by one of us old hippies, the German author Arn Strohmeier. The book is called *The Myth of Matala* and Pam and I have a whole chapter devoted to us in it.

Once again we, and the other old hippies who'd returned with us in June 2014, were filmed for a documentary about those times, this time by the principal Greek television station of "Se Proto Plano" ("In the Spotlight"). This film is on YouTube in two parts.

The first film of us was made in June 2011 by the then main Greek TV station and published in 2012, with YouTube saying it's "*an ERT S.A. documentary about the Hippie movement during the 60's, their life in the caves of Matala, Crete, and the social and political situation in Greece, Europe, and USA at that period.*"

Travelling from Australia to Greece is a massive journey (especially for us "newly-oldies") so we decided to break our journey at either end in Dubai, UAE for a bit of R&R. There we had an amazing time going dune-bashing, having an Arab feast in a permanent Bedouin desert encampment, and going for a boat ride in a dhow as well as taking a city bus tour to see pretty much everything Dubai has to offer.

The other major highlight for me in 2014 was my turning 70 and my son, Samuel Sutton Kline, flying out to Australia from New York City with his bride, Mary Gould, to celebrate his 30<sup>th</sup>. Both of our birthdays are in November so we were celebrating together 100 years! We stayed in Tamarama (the little beach area around the cliff from Sydney's famous Bondi Beach in Sydney) at my sister, Pam Bailey's, cliff-side home half-way down the reserve.

As well as the wonderful birthday party on Pam's deck, there were a number of terrific outings, including taking "the kids" to the Illawarra Fly. This is one of Australia's premier tree top walks where we all walked high, high above the treetops, averaging a height of 35 metres, and with a 45-metre Knight's Tower to climb, offering absolutely stunning views of the literally thousands of square miles of bush all around you.

We also all went to the Nowra Tree Tops Adventure where Sam & Mary zoomed through the trees on ziplines, climbed endless rope ladders and stairs and propelled themselves from footrest to footrest along huge riverside cliffs, while older sister, Pam, and I wobbled about on the horizontal plank-ladders for 8-year-olds and decided it was "all too much" for us!

But I did continue to teach belly dancing at our local village sports club, plus I joined an advanced belly dance class in our local town with a view to becoming one of their troupe members and doing something I really enjoy: performing at old folks' homes. A real skill needed there is learning how to avoid old men's walking canes that they're quick to wave around hoping to fish you in toward them as you sashay past their wheelchairs!

Pam and I continue to visit each other, either up in Sydney or down here 2.5 hours' drive south of Sydney in the Seven Mile Beach resort and fishing village of Shoalhaven Heads.

I have fun at our local chapter of the Red Hat Society attending various teas, lunches and other events with the kind of ladies I like who all believe in our motto of "Friendship, Frivolity and Fun"!"

[Here is Shirley with husband, Horst at the Matala reunion](#)



[Pam and Shirley, with their SMHA Cookbook.](#)



Pam sent her news in the form of a lovely time-line...

**2014: January:** My no. 2 daughter, Nic, lives in New York. She owns a flat here in Sydney, and wanted to totally renovate it between tenants. So the first half of January was spent visiting the flat, and dealing with all the workmen, with Nic being involved most of the time too, thanks to Viber and WhatsApp, handy little aps for the mobile phone, so that she was able to see and choose floorcoverings and paint, and talk to the men. Amazing what you can achieve these days! After that, some of us, drove up to Tamworth, in northern N.S.W. for the entire ten days of the Country Music Festival. In **February**, much to my surprise, I developed a hernia on the bowel, and got whipped into hospital for a couple of days to get a patch put on it.

At the beginning of **March** I was off to the glorious Lord Howe Island (off northern NSW) for a few days. One gets around the island by bike. I'd just had my operation and wasn't allowed to ride one for a couple of weeks. So I hired one of the few cars on the island, and manage to reverse it into a hidden palm tree trunk in long grass. Expensive mistake! It's lovely there, the southernmost part of the Great Barrier Reef, and on some of the beaches the fish swirled around your feet if you just walked into the water.

In **April** Nic came home from New York for a visit. After that I visited a favourite spot in Queensland, for Easter, for a couple of weeks. In **May** we took Ray's houseboat up the Shoalhaven River (Shirley and he both live in Shoalhaven Heads, NSW, where the river meets the sea). We spent several days up there - think peace and quiet, sandy beaches to swim from, and only the cows in the fields alongside for company. In **June** it was off to Greece. (But Shirley has written all about that).

In **July** Nic visited again from New York. **August** is the height of the ski season here. My no. 1 daughter Justine, her husband and 3 children, and no. 3 daughter Anna, and husband and baby, and I, all rented a house "down at the snow" as they say here. We had a fun week together, and the following week I was still "at the snow" with my friend Andrew, with whom I go every year.

**September** had a few nightmare days, as Ray and I decided we were capable of putting new windows into my old yacht by ourselves. It took ages, but we finally achieved it, ready for our forthcoming adventure in her. In the event, the weather was so rough and scary that a wave killed my laptop...In **October** we drove up to Tin Can Bay in Queensland, towing the old girl, an apparently unsinkable (thank goodness) old Nomad yacht, 1972 vintage. They built them well, back in the day. Ray had assured me the waters between the mainland and Fraser Island (the largest sand island in the world) were calm, transparent turquoise waters, fringed with sandy beaches...we planned to take three or four days sailing up, three or four sailing back down, and spend a few days in a marina in Hervey Bay, so that we could venture out each day and go whale watching. Well....with gale force winds against us, and rough seas, all the way there, and also all the way back again, it was somewhat scary, to say the least. We were relieved to be able to tie up safely in the marina and recover! On learning that with the speed of my good ship, it would take us ten hours to motor out to where the whales currently were, with no safe overnight anchorages nearby, I decided we would pay our money and go on a big tourist boat, which we did. And saw plenty of whales too.

In **November** Shirley's son Sam and his wife flew in from New York. She has written all about those days. And **December** was, as usual a busy time of making Christmas cakes, mince pies, and doing too much shopping.

**2015:** In **January** no. 4 daughter Zoe, and her boyfriend Chris, visited from London. While they were out here, we went to stay with no. 1 daughter Justine and her family and friends, who were camping a couple of hours down south of Sydney, by Sting Ray Beach. Despite the almost non-stop torrential rain during our stay, we all enjoyed getting into the water, where lots of sting rays (the harmless sort, presumably) weave in and out of your feet as you move around in the water. An amazing experience. Shirley and Horst joined us there one day.

So then in **February** Ray and I took the houseboat back up the river for a few days. In **March** we were busy sanding and painting the underneath of my yacht, and discussing the horrors of having to crane the houseboat out to scrape and paint that. Last time we did that I managed to crack my head open underneath it and had to be driven half an hour to the nearest hospital to get stitched up. Apparently that there are no nerves in your skull, so it didn't hurt at all, when it happened or when I was being stitched together again. We'll soon be having to do it all again, so next time I will wear my bike helmet!

In **April** I had a visitor from California for a few days. Now it's **May**, and no. 3 daughter had mysterious pains and got rushed to hospital. Due to being nearly six months pregnant, they couldn't see anything with the ultrasound, so just in case, they whipped out her appendix, and did a hernia op while they had the tools in there. They still don't know what the problem is. But she's safely home, with instructions not to lift anything for six weeks. Since she has a toddler under two, I have moved in for the duration, as her husband is out at work, six days a week. Today is my day off, so I am writing this!"

## Girl Guides at SMH

In the newsletter of 1908 a letter from old girl Janet Smith mentioned that she had organised a body of Scouts among the village boys and found Scouting a fine thing for them. She had even taken them camping...then after Easter Janet came back to the school as a student-mistress and during the term certain students were to be seen dashing around with poles, uttering animal cries and painstakingly learning to tie knots and to track by signs and, we imagine, were secretly lighting camp-fires!

So enthusiastic did they become that the authorities realised that the matter must be taken in hand and by the time that the B-P Girl Guides Association came into being in 1910 a number of girls were formed into patrols as Peewits, Kingfishers, etc.. We were not at all pleased when we later had to turn into Cornflowers, Acorns, Thistles, Fuchsias etc. as being more womanly. Patrols were averaging 10 girls each and a lot of good work was being done.

The article continues: "I suppose that one of the greatest thing that we of our decade got out of our school life was the opportunity of being in at the very beginning of Girl Guides. Yet none of us wanted to be GGs we all desperately wanted to go on being Scouts, to continue being "animals" and to punctuate our activities with strange jungle war-cries. We did not see any advantage in learning to be ladylike and no inspiration at all in having a flower emblem. One of the first things we had to learn was improved deportment. We had to march round the hall with our dormitory baskets on our heads. If we dropped them we had to practise in the passage before returning. Later we did complicated mazes and curtseying easily and efficiently.

However we had two things of great value left to us from our Scouting days; we went straight to B-Ps Scouting for Boys for inspiration, and we kept our scout poles, this meant rope-craft without tears, and putting up patrol bivouacs and slinging billycans on a tripod over a gypsy fire and lashing the patrol flag, attached to the Leader's pole, on a gate or a tree. We were pretty well perfect in those days in stretcher drill (two coats inside out and buttoned with the poles through the sleeves) It was often carried made up and used instead of a trek cart to carry equipment, including our greatest treasure the axe, which we thought we had to carry to Be Prepared properly."

### THE BEGINNINGS OF GIRL GUIDING AT S.M.H.



Mrs. Charles Scott Malden, Commissioner for Girl Guides, Sussex, addressing the St. Mary's Hall Troop in the Old Cloisters—1909

Miss F P Thornburgh was appointed Girl Guide Mistress and her article in the magazine of 1911 gives all the rules for becoming a guide and speaks of the visit of Mrs Scott Malden of Windlesham School, the Head Commissioner of the movement in Sussex and a leading light in Scouting for Boys.

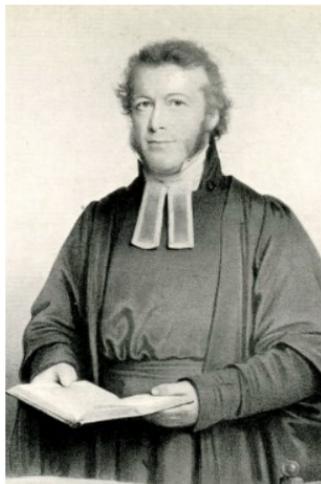
This is pictured, on the left.

## 150th anniversary of the death of the Revd Henry Venn Elliott (1792-1865)

The Revd Henry Venn Elliott died 150 years ago, on 24 January 1865, just a week after his 73rd birthday. He was the first incumbent at old St Mary's Chapel, serving there for 38 years from its opening in 1827 until his death.

Elliott had a big impact on the life and indeed the buildings of Brighton. Under his leadership, St Mary's became one of the most fashionable chapels in Brighton, and drew preachers and churchgoers from around Britain and far-flung bits of its empire. In the course of his work he founded St Mary's Hall (1836) as well as its associated church, St Mark's (1838). He was also one of four founder-directors of Brighton College (1845), the college's Aldwin Soames, being a worshipper at St Mary's.

In an era when politics were on the rise of Anglo-Evangelical. But subtly different to current usage. Evangelicals were liberals of their the forefront of slavery and the indigenous advocates of the Britain's working Church Missionary



*This article is taken from the website of St Mary's Church, Kemptown, where a celebration of the life of HVE took place on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2015. SMHA was represented by Sue Meek, our President.*

Brighton's church convulsed by the Catholicism, Elliott side - a leading that label had connotations then Victorian the political day, activists at campaigns against exploitation of peoples and keen education of poor. Elliott was a supporter of the Society, founded

by his uncle John Venn, driven by a belief that all humans were fundamentally equal and equally loved by God. More conservative voices within the Church scorned the idea that Africans or Indians could become 'real' Christians.

There are many things - most, probably - that we wouldn't do in Henry Venn Elliott's way in 2015. A devout opponent of Sunday entertainments and church theatricals, he'd certainly disapprove of the shows we host in St Mary's these days. And he would be very uncomfortable with the vestments, the incense, the bells... But nonetheless there remains much to inspire us in his hope-filled, inclusive theology. We can respect and learn from the past without having to worship it uncritically

***How we crave letters/emails and photographs of your informal reunions!***

***It is enormously frustrating to know that particularly in Sussex, but all over the place, groups of Old Girls get together in their twos, threes, fours or more – and don't share their experiences with us!***

**Please do remember us when you meet your friends and let us have a few words about where, when and who—with a photo...It will help to enliven next year's Newsletter!**

**Jean Ann Ellis**, 1954-1963, in first Elliott and then Babington houses, would LIKE to have a reunion with two of her friends from school with whom she has lost touch. If anyone has knowledge of **Suzanne Fleming** or **Patricia Cohen** please could they let [secretary@smhassociation.org](mailto:secretary@smhassociation.org) know? Thank you so much.

**Items for the Newsletter are accepted  
throughout the year  
and may be emailed to  
[secretary@smhassociation.org](mailto:secretary@smhassociation.org)  
or posted to**

**Jane Watson,  
58 London Road,  
Hassocks,  
West Sussex  
BN6 9NU**

**Please ensure, when sending items to Jane, that you let her know they are intended for the Annual Newsletter and not for the email updates which she delights her readers with every other month!**

## SMHA Prayer

O God, who art everywhere present, look down in Thy mercy on all those who have gone forth from this school. Grant that by the light of Thy divine inspiration and the gifts of Thy bountiful providence they may fulfil Thy purpose for them here on earth and may attain at length to that blessed home where they shall go no more out but serve and praise Thee continually in Thy temples; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen