

ST. MARY'S HALL ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2017 e-LETTER

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

Dear Friends

It's April already and Easter as I start to write this! As we in the Northern Hemisphere are moving swiftly into Spring - bluebells are here at last – those of you reading this below the equator will now be moving towards your winter. I think that the reason that the years seem to pass by more quickly as we get older is that we all get busier – hopefully doing the things that we enjoy doing and not the things that we have to do. My retired friends are always telling me that they wouldn't have time to fit 'going to work' into their days now!

To start this newsletter, I am sure you would all join in wishing the alumni of St Mary's Hall and Doane Academy, Burlington, New Jersey, a great weekend of reuniting with their cohorts on 5th and 6th May to celebrate their 180th Founder's Day.

For the younger members amongst you, a little history about Doane Academy: The academy was founded as *St. Mary's Hall* by the Right Reverend George Washington Doane, second Episcopal bishop of New Jersey. It opened on May 1, 1837 with 52 pupils. Founded to offer an education equal to that of boys, it accepted girls and young women as undergraduates and postgraduates, and was the first all-girls academic boarding school in the United States.

Bishop Doane raised capital for the new school by issuing shares of stock, but a severe financial depression hit the United States just as the school was opening. St Mary's Hall survived, financed mainly from the personal funds of Eliza Green Perkins Doane, the Bishop's wife. She received a \$9,500 annual dowry from the estate of her late first husband, which she donated to the school.

The success of St Mary's Hall encouraged Bishop Doane to open a boys' school on an adjacent site in 1846. The new *Burlington College*, though, did not enjoy the success of the girls' school, and its doors closed in 1877. The girls' school continued to flourish, its campus developing throughout the late 19th century. This prosperity continued into the first half of the 20th century, which saw the introduction of central heating, electric lighting and showers, as well as the purchase of a large house nearby, initially as a lower school and later as a senior dorm.

Many private schools were forced to close during the Depression, but St Mary's Hall was able to increase its number of day pupils by establishing additional bus routes over the newly completed Burlington-Bristol Bridge. By the 1950s, though, boarding numbers were in decline and in 1953, the trustees decided to abandon boarding and become a day school.

In 1966, the trustees once again opened a boys' school, Doane Academy, in association with St. Mary's Hall. Although managed by the same Board of Trustees, the two schools were separate institutions; signage around St Mary's Hall instructed the girls "Do not fraternize with the Doane boys.

On February 27, 1974, the main building on the St Mary's campus was destroyed by fire. There had been plans afoot to merge the two schools and the fire encouraged the trustees to bring the plan forward. From September 1974, a single school—the co-educational St. Mary's Hall-Doane Academy opened. In April 2008, the name was shortened to Doane Academy.

Founded at about the same time and with a similar ethos, the two SMHs obviously had a lot in common. In the 1960s a School Exchange programme was arranged between the two schools and **Jeannette Smith Cureton** was the first exchange student to visit us from Burlington in 1961-62. She is now a welcome member of our Facebook Virtual Common Room and her memories of her year at SMH, Brighton, can be found there published in April 2015.

Team News

The last three months have been fairly busy for us as a Team. We have successfully held our first meeting by Skype with Lis in France, Penny in Northumberland, Diana in Yorkshire, Sian and I in Sussex (me in the caravan where I had to remove myself to the car at one point due to surprise visitors!) and Sue, I'm not sure where – Cornwall or back in Surrey! All went well and we covered a number of items – notes of the Meeting are on the website.

We have updated the **Terms of Reference** to reflect how we are working now and these are also on the website www.smhassociation.org and attached with this newsletter. Members have until 31 May 2017 to make any comments or objections to me, otherwise they will be adopted with effect from 1 June 2017.

We have also amended the **100 Club** rules to reflect that the year now runs from January to December and that members joining during the year will pay on a pro rata basis for the remaining months. These are effective immediately – again, also on the website.

Sue McDonagh (despite broken wrist) has been having a bit of a tidy up of the website with **Lis Eastham**. Do take the time to have a look and if you spot any anomalies or have any suggestions please email them to me and I will pass them on.

Lastly, we have identified a couple of missing Newsletters, 1977 and 1988, on the website and would like to make the collection complete. If anyone has either of these and can scan a copy to pdf format, we would be very grateful. Please let me know. If you are unable to scan I am happy to scan and return to you if you want to send to me. My address is at the end of this newsletter.

Treasurer's Report on Accounts

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

The accounts show that in 2016 expenditure exceeded income by £715.

The balance sheet at 31 December 2016 shows assets of £17,323 (down from £18,038 in December 2015).

Investments

The Association's investments include £15,094 in a Barclays Saver account.

Sale of memorabilia and photos

This generated £157.

100 Club

This initiative generated a nett income of £199.

Miscellaneous expenditure

The reunion lunch in September was subsidised by £484 from the Association funds. This equates to approximately £11.10 per head for each attendee. Gifts to five retiring Committee members, the outgoing Chair and Hon Life President in appreciation of their service amounted to £177.

The Web host licence was renewed for a period of 5 years, hence the higher cost.

Summary

Income from the 100 Club and sales of memorabilia funded 77% of the Association's general running costs (postage, website and accountancy costs). Thanks to all the Committee/Team members and other Association members who give their time generously and ensure that our running costs are minimised.

Diana Kaars Sijpesteijn-Markham
Hon Treasurer, March 2017

The accounts are attached to this newsletter and also available on the website and in the VCR.

Obituaries

Betty Brothers (Lea) 1947-1952 - We were sorry to learn from **Betty's** husband, after sending a letter to her, that she passed away some time ago.

Thelma Celestine Hammerton (Appleyard) 1947-1950 – Penny Wright (Strachan) told us that she had been notified of **Thelma's** passing in a card from her family giving her dates at SMH and that she had died on 31 January this year aged 85. An internet search shows that she leaves four children and nine grandchildren! We acknowledged the card on behalf of the Association and as I have a surplus of 1949 long photos, we sent one to the family. Through the wonders of Facebook we tried to identify **Thelma**, with lots of her contemporaries commenting on their memories which were passed on to the family as well.

Most were younger and recall her as Head Girl, but some had other memories as well:

Beryl Richardson (Swan) 1947-1951 said that **Thelma** was a good actress and played the main part in School for Scandal while **Beryl** was at SMH. She recalls that **Thelma** was a day girl and lived locally in Brighton, and was friendly with **Pat Austin**.

We also discovered that had it not been for **Thelma, Lis Eastham (Ferguson) 1969-1976** would not now be managing our social media online presence. Her mother, **Ruth Ferguson (Powell) 1948-1950** and **Thelma** both attended Avondale College in Hove, from where **Thelma** went on to SMH. **Ruth** and **Thelma** subsequently met at a bus stop and **Thelma** told **Ruth** about the school she now went to - which **Ruth** liked the sound of since it included the opportunity of taking School Certificate and had sports every afternoon! She therefore discussed it with her parents and ... the rest is history!

Also, as a direct result of the notification of **Thelma's** death, **Heather Johnson (Heald) 1948-1957** (who lives in Glasgow) and **Janet Jones (Summerscale) 1947-1953** (who has lived in Canada for the last 60 years) have reconnected and are now back in contact with each other.

Following the report of **Avril Bryson's** death in the last newsletter **Mike Wells (Staff 1979-2009)** wrote to me: *"Thanks for this and I was sorry to hear that **Avril Bryson** has died. When I came to work at SMH as Head of History in 1979 she was very friendly towards me. Both she and her colleague in domestic science, **Jean Needham**, brought a real down to earth touch to the staff room. They were a double act - a sort of Little and Large as **Avril** was small and **Jean** rather*

*robust and both had a superb dry sense of humour and a kind and good humoured, if rather no-nonsense, way with the girls. I am sure many old girls remember them with affection. **Avril** was a real 'Lady', but not in the sway of standing on her dignity: she was immaculately dressed and poised, always ready to chat as well as being at ease with everyone as she had to be in her ceremonial role as Sir Lyndsay's first lady, as it were. When I did a production of Oliver with staff and girls, she and **Jean** were incredibly good sports and played Mr Bumble and Widow Corney with huge enthusiasm and absolutely no loss of dignity - the girls loved it. Neither of them could stand for any pretensions and I was glad of their friendly support many times."*

Clare Urwin (mid 1980s) - Jo Grey (French) 1983-87 has advised us that following the sad and untimely death of her school friend **Clare** she has been galvanised to arrange a reunion for the "Leavers of 1987" this June. Around 30 will be coming from all four corners of the globe to Brighton at the end of June.

Valerie Martin (Staff 1980's – 1990's) - Jenny Piggott (Lovell) (Staff) 1987-1995 has informed us that sadly Valerie, who taught Biology and English as a foreign language at SMH for a number of years, has died at her home in Newick, East Sussex. Her funeral will be in the church at Newick on Friday 12 May at 12 noon if anyone wishes to attend.

We send our condolences to all family and friends.

Birthdays

On 21 March **Anthea Holland (Drake) 1967-1970** notified us that in The Court and Social page of the Daily Telegraph on line there was an entry: "Today's Birthdays - **Miss Olwen Davies**, Headmistress St Swithun's School, Winchester 1973-1986, 91." There was no mention **St Mary's Hall 1965-1973** but - Belated Congratulations Noddy. A great age!

100 Club

January 55 entries

1 st Margaret Ellis	No 75
2 nd Sue Carnochan	No 46

February 46 entries

1 st Margaret Ellis	No 59
2 nd Mary Philpott	No 18

March 51 entries

1 st Daphne Bonner	No 09
2 nd Emma Thomas	No 05

As I have mentioned before, when the number of entries is down it is the best time to join the 100 Club as your chance of being a winner is greater! For just £8 per number you can join the 100 Club and be in all the draws from May to December inclusive. (From January 2018 you would pay £12 per number.) This small fund raiser really does help with the day to day running of the Association as you can see from the accounts. So, what are you waiting for? Contact me on secretary@smhassociation.org for further details.

News from Sue Carnochan

Sue (Staff 1994-1999 and Archivist to 2016) has written that she was able to get access to St. Mark's recently and has removed some Books of Common Prayer, the old wooden cross which came from Babbington Boarding House, a portrait of Queen Adelaide and the family bible used by Henry Venn Elliott which was donated to the school in 1859 and which has a dedication written in his own handwriting. All these items are now safely in the care of Father Andrew at St. Mary's Church, Upper Rock Gardens, Brighton, a very suitable home for them.

Continuing from the last newsletter, these are the last two pictures sent to Sue from the Charity Director at Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust:



The old history room (with the arch) - now houses Digestive Diseases!



The room behind the arch – is now the Boardroom

As promised in the last newsletter, here are a few of the many photos posted in the Virtual Common Room in 2015 during the closure and renovation of the school to offices for the Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust. These were taken by Graham Bradley who worked both for SMH and then for the NHS Trust.



Old



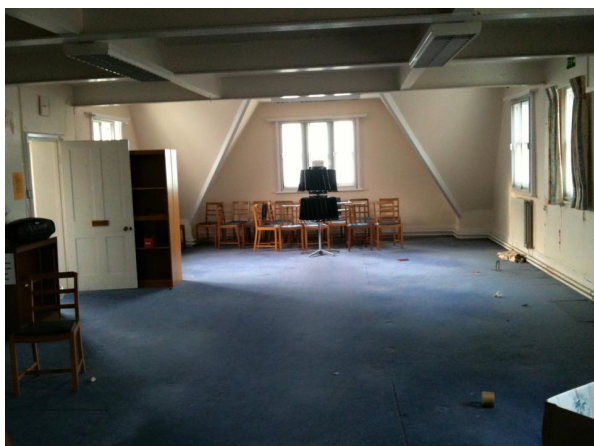
New (note stair safety edges!)



The Hall



Those loos!!



I believe this was the Library in my day



Banksy woz 'ere!

Putting on a new coat.



Some OG hanging around still?

News of Old Girls ...

I haven't had much news from anyone for this newsletter so have taken the following from the Facebook VCR so apologies to those of you who have already seen them.

Addy Balogun (Staff 2002-2009) wrote that she had had a lovely visit from her ex-student **Rita Y-H (2004-2006)** earlier in April, and had decided to take her down memory lane with a trip to SMH / The Sussex Hospital.



Sue Burroughes (Anker) 1960-1964 has written: We'd all been looking forward to it for ages.....there had been lots of planning and rejigging of dates but, at last, Wednesday 19th April 2017 arrived.....our much anticipated meet-up in London! Seven of us ex-Hillary House boarders from the very early 1960s, all of whom shared the same dorms, converged upon Bibendum in Chelsea for a lovely lunch and yet another wonderful reunion. This year was extra special, as we managed to locate our seventh member (who had not been present at any of our previous get-togethers), now living in Texas, and she made the trip over for the occasion. So, what with **Penny Tuturea (Westlake) 1962-1966** from the States, **Diana Kay (Badger) 1960-?** from Holland, **Penny Ibbs (Buckland) 1960-1965** from Wiltshire, **Liz Johnson-Barrett 1959-1965** from London, **Moira Campbell (Munro) 19??-19??** from Derbyshire, **Felicity Kemp 1959-1965** from Surrey and me from Warwickshire, the group was now complete. As ever, our conversations flowed, as if we had never been apart. It was great fun leafing through an old autograph book, loose photographs and two of those long, rolled-up black and white school photos, trying to spot ourselves (and not always succeeding!). Many hours later, but all too soon, the time came to go our separate ways again, but we parted in the sure knowledge that we shall do it all again ere long.....



For anyone interested in the stained-glass window behind the group, **Sue** told us that the restaurant is situated in what used to be the Michelin tyre factory on the Fulham Road. If you Google Bibendum London or Claude Bosi at Bibendum, you will also see pictures of the fabulous art deco exterior. The property is owned by Terence Conran and there is The Conran Shop on the ground floor. It is a listed building and the whole Michelin theme runs right the way through. The stained-glass windows are original. Can recommend this venue to one and all!

If you are getting together with your old SMH friends, do please send me details and photos and you too can see your names in lights!

Down Memory Lane

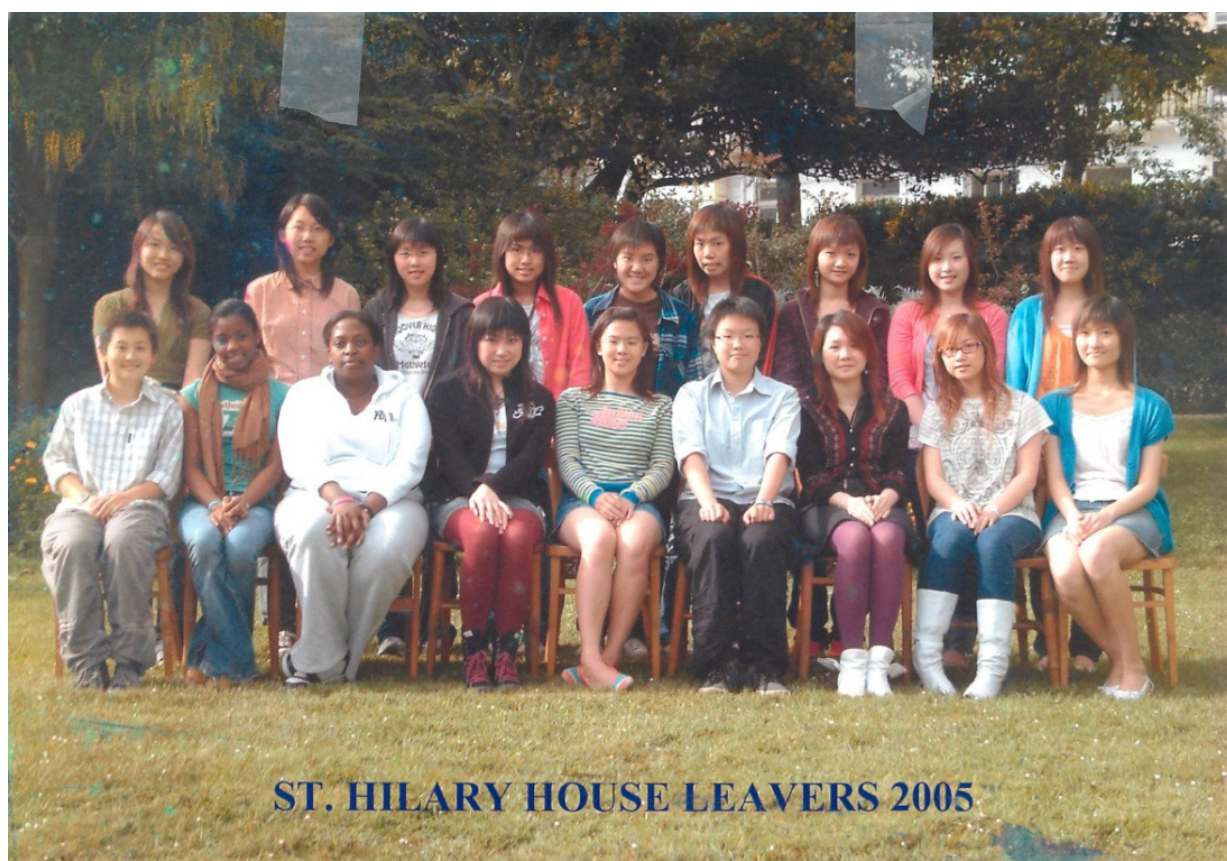


Was this an open air play in the school grounds? No it was the role-play day at Ightham Mote – and apparently, it was a very memorable day! Not, as you would imagine, because of the wonderful opportunity to dress up in costumes and have an afternoon out of school at beautiful Ightham Mote living the Tudor experience. No, it was truly memorable because on the way back to Brighton the coach broke down somewhere on the top of Ashdown Forest! Being in the pre-mobile phone era I gather that residents of a nearby dwelling were visited by a noble Tudor man aka **Mike Wells (Staff 1979-2009)**, who kindly let him make a call to the coach depot in Brighton. A replacement coach was promised to be despatched as soon as possible. Meanwhile, with a coach-load of girls and staff to keep occupied, the pupils were let out to grass in a nearby field while **Mike** and another teacher flagged down a car and got a lift to a local village store, where they emptied the shelves of crisps and drinks. You can only wonder what passers-by thought as everyone had to remain in costume, normal clothing having been left at school!! In Shakespearian speak, All's Well That Ends Well, and a replacement bus eventually arrived driven by the Manager himself as he couldn't find another driver. Everyone was safely delivered back to SMH, albeit about four hours late, to relieved, waiting parents and staff.

Sorry, no names for the photos – do let me know if you were there. I am assuming that **Mike Wells** is in the middle of the back row in the photo below because it's a man with a beard! (Sorry **Mike**!)



Here is another little memento from more recent times. Again, I have no names so do let me know if you know! I think these group photos are a lovely keepsake – sadly we didn't have them in my day – and they are far less wieldy than the long photos!



Many thanks to **Heather Watters (Bruce Merrie) 1981-1987** for these photos from her own photo album: Starting off with Open Day circa 1986?



Geraldine, Anne and Joanna Royce



L-R **Heather Watters**, Amanda Bisset, Karen, Front: **Elly Maconochie (Royce) 1980-1986**



Sally Dixon (Stringer), Dr Dixon and Mike Wells – all members of staff

Back row - Karen, not sure who's under the cap, Penny, **Elly Maconochie**, **Vicky Johnson (Davis) 1979-1987**, **Tracey Scott (Baker) 1980-1987**, Alison

Front row - ??, **Heather Watters**, Amanda Bissett, Vicki

(Apologies if I have got Vicky and Vicki the wrong way around – I just guessed! – and I don't have any surnames of the other girls named



Many thanks to **Emma Thomas (Davies) 1982-1991** for this small selection of photos from the many that she has recently posted in the VCR.



L-R: Abigail Steer, ?? , Jennifer Clarke 1982-1991, Mireille Dupire (Bass) 1982-1991, Emma T, Claire Grinyer 1984-1991
FR: Justine Bowman 1986-1991, Anna Glover

SMHAsh Hits Poll Winners Party Dec 1991
presented by MC Albert Knight and
Mireille Dupire, Claire Grinyer, Jennifer Clarke, Catherine Lowe

Roger Roser (Staff) 1982-1989 as Timmy Mallett



Jennifer Juniper – **Jennifer Clarke, Chris Ellison 1983-1991, Sasha Tresidder (Kofman) 1985-1991**



Lynne Richardson as Gazza



Madonna aka Mona Kassim



L-R: **Claire Grinyer**, Claire Tickner, **Tony Jay (Staff) 1984-1989**, Yani? **Emma T**

All I can say is – good on **Dr Dixon, Mike, Roger** and **Tony**! You certainly look like you have thoroughly engaged! I cannot imagine the only male teacher we had in my day – Mr Crichton who taught Physics and Chemistry - being such fun!

SMHA Virtual Common Room

As we have recently welcomed the 313th old girl/staff member to the VCR (just over 40% of the Association membership) we are keen, as readers know, to encourage as many OGs as possible to network through our Facebook Group, SMHA Virtual Common Room, where girls from 20-80 pop in for a virtual cuppa and a chat, to look at photos and share memories. We were very pleased, back in February, to find that a former student whose school days had not been the happiest, found and reconnected with several of her cohorts who were genuinely delighted to be back in touch with her and completely turned round unhappy memories.

We also know that Facebook is not for everyone and encourage anyone who reads this but really cannot face it (pun intended – maybe) but who wants to get back in touch with her former friends to ask for our help! Penny (pennyharrison55@btinternet.com) is permanently logged into the database and will gladly help out. At the beginning of March she sent a list of those who attended in 1960-1970 to one Old Girl and also gave her some tips about using the database on the website. This is leading to a whole new set of reconnections and perhaps – who knows – even a small reunion?

So if you are unable to work the database on the website / understand the guide which is lodged with it, or are not able to access the website for any reason please do drop her a line and she will do her best to assist you.

Mystery Photos #1

Can anyone throw any light on these two photos? The first looks like the cast from a Star Trek drama. Is the photo below from the same production? Does anyone know any dates or who is featured? Answers (hopefully!) next time with more mystery photos.



AND FINALLY, JUST A REMINDER ...

For those of you who have been inspired to have a delve into the website - the Association website is www.smhassociation.org

Logon: smhmember
Password: elliott18362009

If you have any trouble logging in do please contact me.

Well that about wraps this newsletter up. The Summer one will be out in July – closing date for anything you would like included is 30 June (and I do hope I hear something from you!)

Best wishes

Jane

Jane Watson (Amherst-Clark 1963-1971)



Email: secretary@smhassociation.org
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