



The Edgbaston High School for Girls Old Girls' Association Magazine

Laurel Leaves



A new Headmistress for EHS

It is a great pleasure to write a few words for Laurel Leaves. Since arriving at EHS last term I have been overwhelmed by the warm welcome given to me by pupils past and present, parents and staff. EHS is indeed a very special school which has a warm heart and an all encompassing ethos.



In this my first letter to you I thought you might like to know a little about me. As you may be aware I was born in Sutton Coldfield and was educated at Birmingham University. I left Birmingham after completing my PhD and returning now is very much like coming home, and in the nicest possible way I feel as if I have been at EHS for a long time. I have two daughters who were educated at Haberdashers` Monmouth a single sex school, my eldest daughter has just started work in Cheltenham as a junior doctor and my youngest is studying medicine at Nottingham University. My husband works abroad in Belgium 4 days a week; he has a very sociable career in the brewing industry! I have joined EHS following my first headship at Redland High School for Girls in Bristol.

following year I was amazed at how many people had Edgbaston connections. Friends and colleagues all seem to have a sister, mother, aunt who either went to or taught at the school. All speak with much fondness and affection of their time at EHS.

I very much look forward to working with the Old Girls Association and have already enjoyed supper with the committee and a working breakfast where Lucy Ladbrooke gave an excellent talk on Events Management to our current Sixth Form. Two very enjoyable events.

I was appointed to the post of Headmistress in May 2005. In the

Contents

Chariman's Message	P2
Lara Fatah in Iraq	P4
Welcome New Old Girls	P5
Art and Design at EHS	P6
Outstanding Woman in Business	P8
News from Old Girls	P9
My 'Leap' to Cape Town	P10
Miss Mullenger's Retirement	P12
Obituaries	P12

Chairman's Message 2006



They say that “bad pennies” have a habit of turning up again, well I hope you will not feel that about my return as Chairman, taking over from Diana Harris who has been chairman for two years and is now working away from Birmingham. I would like to thank Diana very much on behalf of the Association, she has done a great deal to move the Association forward most notably producing last year’s new look magazine with the well known name Laurel Leaves and increasing the number of recipients of the joint Old Girls and Friends Initiative Award which this year goes to four girls who left this year, Megan Woods, Louise Best, Harriet Borg-Bartolo and Chloe Leadbetter and Sian Simpson who left the previous year.

In the summer the school said a fond farewell to Miss Mullenger who has been Headmistress since January 1998. As Headmistress she has overseen considerable changes not only to the buildings with the opening of the magnificent Octagon but also to a changed look for the girls with a new school uniform combining the first school colour of navy with green. Miss Mullenger will also be remembered for her professional drama productions, her musical interest and ability coupled with a love of Italy and for her exhortation to the girls at the

beginning of every school holiday to focus on the three Rs that is of course Reading, Radio 4 and Relaxation. It was therefore fitting that our AGM and OGA farewell supper reflected Miss Mullenger’s love of Italy with an Italian theme for the food, decorations and a musical interlude with singing from members of staff Anna Stockton, also an Old Girl, and Declan Kelly accompanied by Heather Howell. We were delighted to be able to present Miss Mullenger, with a garden parasol which we hope she can enjoy sitting under on sunny days, sipping a glass of chilled Italian prosecco and remembering happy times at EHS.

As Diana mentioned last year the school has very nobly taken over the management of our existing data base and is in the process of transferring all the data to a new version, our thanks to Rebekah Lowe, School Director of Marketing and Admissions and her assistant Annelle Scott. This data base will enable us to extract details of members who left school at the same time or who live close to each other or to identify family members. This kind of information will make it much easier for you and for us to organise year reunions or regional reunions. We are already planning regional reunions and we are very grateful to Miss Mullenger who has undertaken to initiate the first one in Bristol and to Salma Khan who

is planning to be the organiser in London.

In September we were delighted to welcome the new Headmistress, Dr. Ruth Weeks, a biochemist, who completed her degree and doctorate at Birmingham University so is very familiar with Edgbaston. We hope she will be very happy at EHS. The committee all enjoyed meeting her informally at a committee dinner in the newly refurbished Dirty Duck in Harborne in October.

The meetings this year have been varied and interesting. In March the charity dinner held in school was in aid of QARANC Fund for Nurses and our guest speaker was Old Girl Caroline Whittaker daughter of another Old Girl Gillian Whittaker. Caroline had been the Commanding Officer of the Nursing Squadron in Field Hospital 202 in Iraq. Her very vivid descriptions of running a hospital in searing temperatures in the desert illustrated with slides reminded us all of the very difficult conditions the armed forces are facing.

The AGM and Farewell to Miss Mullenger was very well attended and everyone enjoyed the Italian theme from food to entertainment as already mentioned. At the AGM it was agreed that the life membership should be increased from £35 to £50 for the next seven years and that

from September 2007, £10 would be added to the summer term bill of girls in year 7 continuing each year until they left in year 13 or if they left before the end of the sixth form making up the amount to £70 which would then be the life membership subscription, there would of course continue to be an opt out clause as there has been previously but we do hope all girls will join the OGA. Our autumn meeting was held in the Prep Hall and although a small gathering the occasion was very much enjoyed by everyone. An excellent curry provided by the school domestic bursar, Steve Watson who has provided delicious food for all our events this year, got things off to a hot start and the demonstration of Christmas flower decorations by three ladies from Eloquent Flowers was most original but perfectly possible for us all to try out and quite different from the usual traditional ideas.

Our next event is a private viewing with drinks and light refreshments in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, 6.00 to 8.00pm on Thursday March 29th. The evening is open to all members and their friends and to EHS parents through the Friends Association and to Members of Council. The evening will commence with a short talk about the paintings with a tour of the galleries followed by a reception in the foyer. The Barber Institute is one of Birmingham's little known gems, housing a unique private collection of valuable paintings. We do hope you will be able to come to this special event.

The summer meeting and our AGM will be held in school on Thursday June 14th when Kate Williams who completed her degree and doctorate at Oxford and has recently published a book on Emma Hamilton, will give a talk.

Our proposed event for the autumn is to be a joint venture with the

Friends of EHS at the moment still in the planning stages but likely to be a country fair of hand made and quality goods.

We do feel there are many ways the Old Girls can become involved in the continuing life of the school and in partnership with the school the OGA are looking at ways of developing bursaries to give the opportunity for girls to take up a place at EHS and benefit from the excellent education offered. The breakfast meetings started last year are also a way of Old Girls giving talks on their career paths such as the meeting held in October when Lucy Ladbrooke a former head girl spoke inspiringly about her work as an events manager with Cadburys. Work experience placements have also been offered by Old Girls working in Birmingham. If you have any ideas please do let us know and do visit the school web site at www.edgbastonhigh.bham.sch.uk

Finally I would like to thank all members of the committee for their hard work, enthusiasm and support at events, particularly treasurer Penny Speer, secretary Diane Hirst and Helen Holmes who has compiled this newsletter. Also a special thank you to those members retiring from the committee, Liz Taylor who after many years on the committee including a term as chairman, Sue Robinson who has been the staff representative on the committee and also to Jill Siddall who remains on the committee but has retired from the role of minutes secretary. We do all feel that as we enter a new era for the school that the OGA and the school are in good heart and that we are looking forward to a continued close working partnership with the school and enthusiastically renewing contacts between friends made during their very happy school days at EHS.

Anne Howarth

Edgbaston High School Old Girls' Association Committee 2006-7

President

Dr. Ruth Weeks

Vice Presidents

Miss V. R. Belton (1976-1987)

Mrs. S. J. Horsman (1987-1997)

Miss E. M. Mullenger (1998-2006)

Chairman

Anne Howarth (1954-1961)

Past Chairman

Diana Harris (1961-1977)

Treasurer

Penny Speer (1951-1962)

Secretary

Diane Hirst (1947-1961)

Laurel Leaves

Helen Holmes (1980-1985)

Past Staff Representative

Ruth Carter (left 1979)

School Archivist

Stella Pinkess (1946-1960)

General Committee

Ronnie Shoebottom (1954-1968)

Celia Bell (left 1971)

Jill Siddall (1956-1962)

Judy Metcalfe (left 1987)

Lara Fatah (left 2001)

Co- Opted Member

Lucy Ladbrooke (left 1995)

Legal Advisor

Miss S. Thomas (1961-1972)



Lara Fatah in Iraq

Since March I have been working as a journalist in Iraq, which is not as scary as it sounds, honestly. I am based in the Kurdish city of Sulaimania which is in the north of Iraq. The Kurdish region is now a separate federal entity within Iraq and the security situation is infinitely better than the tragic situation in the rest of the country.

I am the deputy editor of SOMA, an English language newspaper based in the city of Sulaimania – we cover primarily Kurdish affairs and of course Iraq as a whole. The paper is the most widely read English paper in the country, with our readers being made up from diplomats, the US and British army, politicians and an increasing number of Kurds and other Iraqis.

The staff of the paper is relatively small which means that I cover a wide range of stories, from interviewing important political players such as the Kurdish Prime Minister, Finance Minister and so on to trekking up mountains (OK, only some of them were mountains the others were very steep hills) to see newly discovered dinosaur bones and ancient Sassanian monuments. While for the most part the challenge of writing and editing keeps me more than busy, I do find time in the evenings to read the news. I read the English news on one of the national channels, 'Kurdsat'. I started working there as a news editor and reporter before gaining a regular spot as a newsreader.

The first time I was asked to read the news was extremely nerve wracking, all I could think was that quite literally millions would be watching, not only is it one of the most



watched channels in Iraq and the region but it is beamed via satellite into the homes of most expatriate Kurds across the world. The advice to speak slower with good diction and to breathe well brought me mind of many choir practices at EHS, but it certainly helps, while the head of news always says that no matter what happens just be charming and all will be fine. As tempting as it is I have so far resisted the urge to shout 'hello mum' or laugh at inappropriate moments – which for some reason seems to increase when the camera starts rolling.

Working in Iraq, does however pose some problems, the working culture is very different to the West, I think they actually drink about ten times more tea than the British, every task requires tea before, during and after! There is also a slightly different attitude towards deadlines too, most think that they can infinitely be put back, getting commissioned articles can be like getting water from a stone; but I like to think they are getting better at that although it has become a standard joke to ask whether I want it done to my time or Kurdish time.

While the problems can niggle, especially on deadline day, the opportunity to witness and document momentous political and social change in the region far outweighs the problems and it has made for a very exciting and challenging year.

Sixth Form

Alice Cooper, the first Headmistress of EHS, from 1875-1895 said,

"A Sixth Form should be something more than a sixth class in a school and you may not take the name until you are worthy of it."

Today, the Sixth Form, which has over 110 students, represents the culmination of the girls' school career offering the opportunity to achieve academic goals, to contribute to school and community life and to learn new, sometimes unexpected, skills.

Most Old Girls would not recognise the beautiful, newly refurbished common room, with its buzz of happy chatter and clinking of coffee cups.



40 Year Reunion

Would all those who left EHS in 1967 and who would be interested in attending a reunion lunch plus optional overnight stay at a conference centre, former royal hunting lodge in the Reading area, on 14/15 September 2007 please contact Frida Davies (nee Wilson) at fmd@xenonrecords.co.uk or telephone 0208 203 1227 asap.

1959/1961 Leavers Meet in Bath



There was good response to this get-together (termed a "mini reunion") held in April 2006. Jennifer Howarth, now Howe, but there isn't too much difference, had lived in Bath for the previous ten years

or so and was shortly to relocate to London, which she has now done, due to her husband's post as director of Radio 4 Drama. They had a large and beautiful house in Lansdowne Road, the ideal place to start the proceedings with coffee and biscuits. Unfortunately, very little of the large and beautiful house was seen, as few O.G.s seemed willing to progress beyond the kitchen! Any movement might have meant a momentary cessation of the chat which would have been a tragedy, so it was amongst the culinary effects that the twenty or so of us stayed until it was time to walk down to the centre of Bath where a table had been booked at Woods Restaurant.

Going wasn't a problem as it was downhill all the way, and a lovely Spring day, to boot.

One or two others joined us at the restaurant and we had three tables in an area separate from the main restaurant which was ideal. The menu choice was good and the prices reasonable. In her usual bossy way, Diane insisted that everyone changed tables for the dessert and coffee; the usual chaos following this type of decree ensued.....

At around 3oclock we "split", a few going straight off by train, but others who'd left cars chez Jen, returned there, with a certain amount of puffing and panting, as the steep hill was climbed. Most of us went back in for cups of tea (how *elderly*, but then we are *Old Girls*). Somehow, at this stage, the conversation (of which one focus had previously been "How many Penalty Points have you had?"surely EHS girls don't get *those!*) turned to The Archers; it seems we are all avid listeners and were pumping Jeremy Howe for the low-down on future episodes! But his lips were sealed.

Finally, we bade farewell to our hosts and returned in varying directions homewards. It had been a great day and thanks are due to Jennifer and Jeremy whose hospitality made it possible.

Diane Hurst

The Old Girls' Association welcomes its new members

Catherine Elisabeth Alton
Alexandra Elizabeth Avern
Stella Louise Best
Malini Bhattacharyya
Naomi Elizabeth Blizzard
Harriet Borg-Bartolo
Laura Claire Brookes
Christine Cartwright
Anahita Chouhan
Emma Chi Ling Chung
Helen Jayne Clarke
Victoria Clutterbuck
Lucy Victoria Cole
Natalie Constantine
Jemima Louise Cox
Tanya Deb
Philippa Dickinson
Alice Elizabeth Donaldson

Stephanie Louise Duncan
Mae Eastwood
Ashley Ayuk Etti
Natasha Champak Ganatra
Katie Elizabeth Glover
Emma Daina Grindulis
Anna Louise Hall
Florence Harper-Benson
Nicola Jayne Hicks
Sabaah Shaheena Hussain
Mary Elizabeth Jack
Nicola Barbara James
Lucy Elisabeth Jones
Min Jung Kang
Joanna Elizabeth Keen
Sophia Khanna
Justine Laura Kinney
Stavrini Koumi

Sophie Alexandra Laitner
Chloe Leadbetter
Joanne Learmonth
Sarah Jean Lucas
Rosie Elizabeth Maguire
Jessica Katie Marchant
Anna Catherine Martin
Julia Frances Mason
Sarah Elizabeth May
Siddiqa Mehrli
Charlotte Rose Morby
Kelsey Victoria Moyce
Sharanpal Kaur Nagra
Miriam Namih
Sameena Kaur Nijjer
Amy Elizabeth Noakes
Sheridan Dale Okey
Suprina Kaur Palak

Hannah Victoria Parker
Anusha Patel
Jennifer Louise Peggie
Melissa Louise Sands
Sharnaz Adeeba Shahid
Annabel Smith
Lucy Stockton
Elizabeth Rachel Stone
Alexandra Holland Swartz
Nadina Tinsley
Adefikayo Titiloye
Fatema Walje
Emma Louise Walker
Claire Louise Walsh
Megan Sahara Wood
Sahrish Yousaf



Art and Design at EHS

written by Helen Holmes

Last summer, for the first time in twenty one years, I found myself walking along the main hallway at EHS. The sound of my shoes on the parqué floor, children happily chatting and the faint smell of chocolate concrete and custard, brought back so many happy memories of the early 1980s – crowding into the hall for assembly; rushing down the salmon pink stairs to get to the front of the dinner queue; the sage green uniform and brown shoes; sunny afternoons playing rounders down at the field....

Duran Duran and Wham were my favourite pop groups – I listened to their LPs on my record player and called myself a New Romantic! “Who shot JR?” was the question on everyone’s lips.



I was visiting school to talk to Mr Dukes, the new Head of Art at EHS, and indeed the same Mr Dukes that taught me all those years ago and influenced my chosen career path of graphic designer. Art at EHS has changed beyond all recognition over the last twenty years – the small dark art room at the back of school, with its traditional wooden tables and paint splattered stools has been replaced by a purpose-built, beautiful, light and airy room equipped with state of the art computers and the latest design software integrated into the workspace, together with a screen printing and painting area. The changes have been driven by Martin Dukes, who joined the school in 1984, after a brief spell working at the George Dixon School. He is trained in Graphic Design, having studied at Kidderminster College and Wolverhampton Polytechnic, gaining

a BA in Visual Communications and then a PGCE from Birmingham. Mr Dukes told me how the art and design facilities have made a huge difference to the teaching of the subject. The girls are now able to integrate their skills in photography, texture, pattern and typography, together with traditional painting and drawing, to gain the best possible aesthetic outcome. Indeed two girls received outstanding results in their Art A levels last year – two of the top five in the country.

The workspace facilitates a great atmosphere in the art room – the girls seem eager to learn, bouncing ideas off each other whilst talking about influential artistic styles. Much of this enthusiasm is down to Mr Dukes himself – his easy-going teaching style and praise for the girls’ work, gives encouragement and confidence, allowing them to go that extra mile and make a good piece of work, superb. He hasn’t changed at all!



Art Class 1985



Top 5 Marks in the Country

Hannah Parker and Nicola James, both recent EHS leavers, obtained exceptional A Level results in Art and Design. We are very proud to report that they both achieved grades within the top five in the country.



Nicola feels very privileged to have had the opportunity to study art at EHS, and told us about the amazing facilities, which we believe are unique to the school. She especially enjoyed screen-printing, graphic design and textured art, and is thankful to all the staff for the tips and tricks that assisted her during her studies. The happy and inspirational atmosphere in the art room, not only fired the imagination but made the subject fun and exciting. Nicola is now studying Geography at Bristol University and is thoroughly enjoying the experience.



Hannah told us how she loved her art group, "it was so dynamic, with all the girls having different styles of working." The relaxed atmosphere of the art room meant that they could bounce ideas off each other and therefore progress their work with confidence. Hannah used to be a self-confessed computerphobe, until Mr Dukes stepped in, with his Graphic Design training! By the end of the sixth form she felt comfortable with design software and actually quite enjoyed using PCs. Hannah is currently studying English Literature at

Cardiff University – the course covers a broad range of modules and she loves studying in such a beautiful city.

Hannah's mum, Hazel Parker née Hodgeskin-Brown was also a student at EHS, between 1968 and 1975. Hazel remembers school with fondness, and particularly enjoyed the Botanic Gardens being just next door. She is, of course, a very proud mum, especially as she struggled with her own A Levels due to a bout of Glandular Fever.

We wish both girls well, and hope to report on their progress over the next year, in the next edition of Laurel Leaves.

Samples of Nicola and Hannah's A Level work



Top five

Tanya Deb has gained excellent A Level examination results, achieving A grades in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Music, and also scored one of the top five marks in the country in both Biology and Maths. She is currently studying Medicine at the prestigious Trinity College, Oxford.

Tanya joined EHS in year 10, after moving into the area from Cardiff. She immediately found both staff and students to be welcoming and friendly. Although the other girls in her class had existing friendship groups, Tanya was made to feel like part of the community straight away. *"At EHS there's a great relationship between staff and students,"* Tanya told us. *"The atmosphere is lovely."*

Tanya had always been interested in medicine as a career and therefore concentrated on the sciences in the sixth form, but took music as a fourth subject purely because she enjoyed it, and it added a little variety to her subjects. She plays the violin and hopes there will be opportunities to further develop her music skills at University.

Trinity College was Tanya's first choice of University because it has the same atmosphere that she has become used to at EHS – friendly, integrated and welcoming.



"Outstanding Woman in Business"

Robyn Jones has built a £54 million organisation in just fifteen years, and in doing so, has set new standards for food in the workplace. Charlton House, which she co-founded with her husband, Tim, in July 1991, is now the largest independent contract caterer in the UK. The company employs 1,400 nationwide, and clients include Her Majesty's Treasury, the National Assembly for Wales and the corporate headquarters of BUPA, Sony and Network Rail.



In September this year, Robyn Jones was named the Credit Suisse Outstanding Woman in Business at the National Business Awards. Charlton House was also named Food Service Caterer of the Year 2006 at The Catey Awards, the industry's equivalent to the Oscars.

Robyn has come a long way since her days at Edgbaston High School, which she remembers fondly.

"I have some very happy memories of my time at Edgbaston High School. My mother taught English at the school when my two sisters and I were there, from 1966-1972. I feel that the school has given me an excellent grounding and a sense of confidence which has helped me in my business activities."

After leaving Edgbaston High School, the family moved to Derbyshire where Robyn completed an OND in Hotel Catering & Institutional Management. She landed her first job as a school dinner lady and steadily worked her way up the career ladder.

In the summer of 1991, disaster struck; Robyn was made redundant from her position as General Manager with Higgs and Hill plc. It was at the height of a recession, and Robyn and Tim had just taken on a larger mortgage.

Although a big blow to her confidence, it was the catalyst she needed to start her own business. She established Charlton House on a weekly Government Enterprise Allowance of just £50 and her £2,500 redundancy cheque.

The vision for the company at that stage was to gain three clients. The rest, as they say, is history. Throughout – and despite – the phenomenal success of the company, Robyn has remained caring, conscientious and approachable. As a mother of two young children, Tabitha (10) and Blake (7), she manages to balance her home and business life, and even finds time to bake the children's birthday cakes herself!

News from Old Girls

Christina Hitchcock reports that she lived in Perth, Australia from 1994 to 2003 with her Australian husband and took exams in Australian migration law to become a Registered Migration Agent in 2003. She has been living in Suffolk since October 2003 and runs a small business as a Migration Agent, which organises visas to Australia for clients all over the UK. She has a daughter, Alexandra who was born on 25 February 2004 and a son, Toby who was born on 28 May 2006.

Josephine Finlay (née White) 1965 - 1972 after leaving Oxford, met her husband Ian in 1974, and since then has travelled the world extensively for several months each year – mainly during the winter to avoid the cold weather here! These trips have included many to Sri Lanka, the Caribbean, Nepal (for the superb trekking in the Himalayas), and to Indonesia where they now own two properties on the magical island of Bali. In 1987 they established their own business, which specialises in selling top quality handmade silver jewellery, exotic woodcarvings and furniture which they buy directly from the makers themselves during their travels abroad. The items are sold where they live in North Devon, and through their website. However, her particular interest has been Yoga which she has practised since 1980. In 1989 she established a local evening class which ran for 10 years, and since then has been teaching yoga around southwest England and abroad. During the last few years her focus has been upon guiding students during weekend and week-long yoga events. These workshops incorporate Ayurvedic lifestyle principles and specific breathing techniques (pranayama) together with therapeutic/restorative yoga practices – all very much needed in the current western way of life!

Serretta Lloyd 1986 - 1993 studied for a degree at Cardiff Institute for which she received a BA (Hons) in Hotel Management (1 year of which was spent living and working in Guernsey). She then went travelling and

worked in Australia and New Zealand for nearly a year. When she returned she worked for the Millenium Chain of Hotels for a year and then decided she wanted to do something different and went through a Sales Recruitment Agency in Cheltenham and got a job near Cheltenham for Group 4 Systems as a Sales Consultant covering the Midlands and South West of the Country consulting blue chip companies of their Security requirements. Her biggest accolade was selling a whole Security system worth £150,000 to a Young Offenders prison in Manchester. She stayed with Group 4 for nearly four years, and then left to work for ADT Fire and Security as a System Sales consultant. She was promoted last year as a Service Sales Manager looking after a team of eight people across the Midlands with a budget of £0.8 million. She has found her niche.

Ekta Sharma (née Kaur) left EHS in 1999 to complete her A-levels at Abbey College and then went on to University of Wolverhampton to obtain a Law Degree LLB (Hons). She took a two year break, where she travelled up and down England and to the States, mainly New York. The objective of these travels was to gain as much work experience in the legal field as she could and also to have an opportunity to travel at the same time, as she had always regretted not taking a gap year. She recently, 10 July

2005, got married to Mr Anoop Sharma, who she had been with for three years prior. He works for Electronic Trading in Goldman Sachs and they are very happy. She is now living in London and has been accepted to endeavour on the LPC (Legal Practice Course) at the College of Law, London.

Alison Shaw (née Moir) 1956 - 1964 has just retired after 18 years as Secretary of the Mulberry Bush School in Oxfordshire, a very special school for emotionally disturbed primary age children. Ever since moving to Standlake in 1972 she has been very involved with the local Church and over the past six years has been involved in training with the Diocese of Oxford which culminated in achieving a Certificate in Ministry through Oxford Brookes University in 2005. This was her first academic qualification since her A Levels! She is a Lay Pastoral Minister of her local Church in Standlake. Two of her three children live in the States, so much of her retirement is going to be spent flying “across the pond” to see her (so far) three grandchildren over there.

Lucy Walker 1991 - 1998 graduated from De Montfort University, Leicester in 2003 with a BA (Hons) Law and Media. She is now engaged to Graeme, who she met in her first year at university and she made the move to live in Poole in Dorset in October 2005. She is now an Account Manager for a magazine printer, after learning the print trade in direct mail in Leicester.

1966/7 EHS Leavers' Lunch

Lois Burley (née Ward) hosted a Late Summer Lunch Party at her home in Moseley, Birmingham for former classmates who left EHS in 1966/67. Gathered around the table are (left to right) Sue Bowen Jones, Frida Davies (née Wilson), Maggie Gough (née Ellis), Ruth Thomson (née Walton), Sue White (née Buchanan), Jennie Tipper (née Cutler), Matty Thacker (née Pusey) and Davina Pearce (née Quayle).



My 'Leap' to Cape Town

written by Sian Simpson

Following an informative assembly about her travels in South Africa, conducted by Miss Mullenger, I became aware of the existence of Leap School. Her tremendous enthusiasm about this unique school in Cape Town sparked my interest, to do voluntary work as part of my Gap year. I discussed my proposed plan with my mum, and as peculiar as it seemed at the time, the suggestion of having a shared experience to South Africa became somewhat of a family affair; she decided to come with me!

Before we knew it, our long awaited visit to Leap had arrived. Nerves were replaced by excitement of what lay ahead. Leap School exists to address a need of providing higher level education to children aged 14-20 years from nearby impoverished Langa Township and other disadvantaged communities. In 2004 Leap had 72 students and on our arrival in 2006 over 150 students had been enrolled.

We were advised to make a visit to Langa (meaning Sunshine), the township that so many pupils call home. From Cape Town airport it is a community that runs parallel to the motorway and comprises of a complex mix of accommodation, from squatter camps, to flats to privately owned houses, although the majority live in shacks of corrugated iron sheets and wood. Most have the



Sian with her Mum

benefit of electricity, although they share communal toilets and water. A very stark and shocking sight, yet important to enable us to put into context the family background of the children.

Our regular assistance in the school Library, involved cataloguing books both manually and on the computer, repairing and reorganizing books into what became an accessible system. It was whilst in the Library that my mum became acquainted with a class of grade 10's who at the time were studying 'Boy' by Roald Dahl. Having read recently the very same book, mum became involved in class discussions about the Welsh aspects of the story, and the children keenly asked her to teach them some phrases. From that day on, we were both greeted in the morning with 'Bore da' and in the afternoon with 'Prynhawn da' and 'Hwyl' before the

weekend. They all became known as the 'Welsh' class in which they took a great pride.

Having expressed an interest in helping at a crèche in Guguletu Township, we spent a day there. On our arrival 29 children were being supervised by one volunteer carer. Her colleague had to attend a meeting so together we held the fort. We helped entertain the children who were between 1-4 years old; this involved various songs, dances and stories. The crèche itself was barely adequate but a much safer environment than the township itself. Mum at one point was feeding five hungry children who were standing around her like chicks with their mouths wide open. Once they had food in their bellies all seemed well for them to sleep, so we cleared up and were collected shortly afterwards.





Destinations of 2006 Leavers

During our stay, we understood that the children not only struggle with poor housing but sadly having visited Langa, we saw the poverty, and also become very aware of the family difficulties that many suffer. Single parents and orphans were common along with the blight of HIV, T.B., alcohol abuse and drug dependency. Life there is far from easy – school for the majority was a much needed safe environment. My feelings of affection towards Leap had grown to such an extent that I truly felt a part of their ‘family’ and the prospect of leaving them, saddened me. However it is now, having returned home, that I can reminisce on South Africa as being the most valuable adventure I have ever undertaken. I have broadened my social outlook on life, and put my life in perspective. I recognize now that our appreciation of good health and surroundings is ultimately the most important thing, and should never be taken for granted.

I look back on the energy and enjoyment demonstrated during the Marathon Rowing day in July 2005, and not only do I feel proud about participating in such a momentous event, but also it was the importance our ‘spirit of Togetherness’ as a school on that day which undoubtedly will support the development of Leap School’s future. I also recognize the value of Edgbaston’s link with Leap School, a link which should be both celebrated and maintained. I hope to remain in contact with Leap, as it has been an unforgettable journey, and I thank everyone who supported me during my extraordinary time there.

Name	Destination	Course
Catherine Alton	University of Nottingham	Civil Engineering
Louise Best	University of Durham	Mathematics
Malini Bhattavharyya	University of Manchester	Ancient History
Harriet Borg-Bartolo	University of Newcastle	Business Management
Laura Brookes	University of Birmingham	Sport and Exercise Sciences
Imogen Chapman	St Martin’s College of Art	Art Foundation Course
Anahita Chouhan	University of the Arts, London	Art Foundation Course
Emma Chung	Oxford Brookes University	Cities – Environment, Design and Development
Helen Clarke	Royal Holloway College, London	Drama and Theatre Studies
Victoria Clutterbuck	University of Bristol	French and German
Natalie Constantine	London School of Economics	Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method
Jemima Cox	University College, London	Psychology
Tanya Deb	Trinity College, Oxford	Medicine
Alice Donaldson	University of Liverpool	Nursing
Stephanie Duncan	Newnham College, Cambridge	History
Ashley Etti	University of Nottingham	Philosophy
Natasha Ganatra	De Montfort University	Pharmacy
Katie Glover	University of Nottingham	Management Studies with Spanish
Emma Grindulis	University of Leeds	Geography
Anna Hall	Leeds Metropolitan University	Psychology and Sociology
Nicola Hicks	University of Manchester	Music
Mary Jack	University of Cardiff	Medicine
Nicola James	University of Bristol	Geography
Lucy Jones	University of Nottingham	Nursing Science
Sophia Khanna	Queen Mary, London	English
Justine Kinney	Loughborough University	Psychology
Stavrini Koumi	University of Birmingham	English
Chloe Leadbetter	University of Bristol	Psychology
Joanne Learmonth	University of Bristol	French and Spanish
Jessica Marchant	University of Birmingham	English
Anna Martin	University of Leeds	Sociology
Julia Mason	University of Newcastle	Combined Studies
Siddiqa Mehrali	University of Durham	Modern Languages
Charlotte Morby	Nottingham Trent University	Fashion and Textile Management
Sharanpal Nagra	Cardiff University	Applied Business Management
Miriam Namih	University of Birmingham	Medicine
Joleen O’Hagan	Wolverhampton University	Psychology
Suprina Palak	University of Leicester	Management Studies
Hannah Parker	Cardiff University	English Literature
Jennifer Peggie	University of Leeds	Philosophy and Politics
Elizabeth Stone	University of Nottingham	Nursing Science
Alexandra Swartz	University of Manchester	Languages and Social Sciences
Adefikayo Titiloye	University of Manchester	Medicine
Fatema Walji	University of Birmingham	Medicine
Emma Walker	Manchester Metropolitan University	Retail Marketing Management
Claire Walsh	University of Bristol	Physics and Philosophy
Megan Wood	Homerton College, Cambridge	Education Studies with Music
Sahrish Yousaf	King’s College, London	Mathematics with Management and Finance



Dear Old Girls of EHS,

I am writing to thank all of you who contributed to the magnificent garden umbrella, with its stand and cover, which the Old Girls' Association presented to me on my retirement this summer. It is a wonderful and most generous gift and a timely incentive to design and plant part of the garden around it!

Thank you also for the many cards and good wishes – and most of all, for a memorable evening on June 16th with its Italian theme, and lovely programme of song. The detailed planning and all the work which went into this occasion are so appreciated.

The Summer term seemed to be one long round of meals, receptions and speeches! Mostly, one only retires once, so I was determined to enjoy it all. Thus far, I have been so busy that I am considering retiring from retirement!

It gave me great pleasure to be able to hand over to Dr Weeks, to someone who is such a committed enthusiast for girls' schools and so strongly in touch with the distinctive character and ethos of EHS. As a Vice-President of the Association I am intending to be active in supporting and promoting it. I am delighted that the regular Breakfast Club meetings with the Sixth Form are now well-established in school. I look forward to being at the inaugural meeting of the first of the proposed Regional EHS OGA Groups in Bristol in the Spring term. Contact, reunion, mutual support and career networking will be important functions of these groups with, in true EHS fashion, some food, wine and fun!

Please give your support to this invitation and to other proposed



regional meetings and help to keep EHS at the forefront of girls' education. As last year's Head Girl and Deputy quoted to me in our final assembly:

"Every limit is a beginning as well as an ending. Who can quit young lives after being long in company with them, and not desire to know what befell them in their after-years?"

(George Eliot: 'Middlemarch')

Exactly so for me – and for most of us, I imagine.

It was a privilege to be Headmistress of EHS and a great pleasure to know, or to meet, so many of you. I am delighted and honoured to have been made a Life Member and to be able to act as a Vice-President of the Association. Diana and Anne have been hugely supportive of new ventures such as the Breakfast Club and regional initiatives. I wish the OGA great success in all its activities.

With affection and good wishes,
Elizabeth Mullenger

Obituaries

Barbara Collingwood (née Tatham), passed away on 21st August aged 93. She was at Edgbaston High School more than 70 years ago, around the time 1926-1928. She went on to St Felix, Southwold, and later to Westfield College, then part of London University. She spoke fondly of her time at the school.

Mrs Gwendoline Davis (née Weale), at EHS from 1943-1950 has sadly passed away.

Emma Kemm passed away on the 6th September 2006.

Christine Russell (née Plevin) born 30th August 1940, died of a brain tumour on 2nd July 2006. She attended Edgbaston High School, from where she went on an exchange visit to Germany, and made lifelong friendships with a German family. After graduating in French and German at Cambridge she taught at Bedford and then for many years in Eastbourne. When pupils wished to study subjects which weren't on the school's curriculum, such as ethics, philosophy and economics, she taught herself these subjects so that she could provide individual coaching. She retired at the age of 50, and then went to Nepal where she set up a GAP organisation and negotiated to have it registered as a NGO. For many years she supported three schools in Nepal, buying land, giving money for building, creating a mortgage fund for teacher's housing, and sponsoring children. Christine was very much impressed by the spirituality of a Hindu family that she had stayed with, and that set her on a path of exploration which eventually resulted in her joining a Quaker Meeting in 1997. She was an enthusiastic traveller, birdwatcher, and environmentalist, but in her final years her greatest love was music, especially that of the baroque period.

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