



KIDDERMINSTER HIGH SCHOOL

**O.G.A.
NEWSLETTER 2000**

FROM THE EDITOR

A new Millennium. A new Century. What new wonders will be revealed as the century unfolds? What changes and challenges are ahead of us, and are we equipped to face these changes?

I believe we are. We have had plenty of practice. Throughout our lives during the past century we experienced constant changes. Lily Perry has lived through them all. The world today is a very different place from the one into which she was born 100 years ago. In the midst of all the turmoil and change there emerged an oasis of comparative peace and calm — namely Kidderminster Girls' High School. In any discussion between Old Girls, the same conclusions are inevitably reached: that we were taught by some very able staff and received a sound, basic education, and whatever its restrictions and limitations we were undoubtedly imbued with the power to think and to act independently, enabling us to adapt to the many varied situations in which we find ourselves.

There is a common bond of experience and fellowship among Old Girls, linking different generations and crossing the continents. This was brought home to me when in November, my husband and I realised a long cherished dream of visiting New Zealand. A beautiful country. It surpassed all our expectations. I could fill the whole book with my experiences but I must — as frequently told in the past — “keep to the subject matter under discussion!”.

Once the news of our impending trip filtered out, the Old Girls' grapevine swung into action, and we were offered help and hospitality from all over the islands - from people we had never even met. What a welcome we received from them all.

On North Island we had a delightful stay with Margaret Greenway (1929-40) in Kati Kati. A lovely lady. It was such an inspiration to be with her. Later, on South Island we stayed with Linda (née Mann) and David Cox (an Old

Wolvernian) at their home in Oxford near Christchurch. We spent many happy and hilarious hours in their company. The greatest highlight of this visit was the Reunion organised by Linda. I was astonished to find quite a posse of former High School pupils living in that area comprising Linda's own mother Irene Hoedemakers (née Shutt), Jennifer James (née Oakes), plus an amazing apparition clad in the old school uniform complete with gym tunic and white girdle, and school purse containing bun money in florins and threepenny bits. This proved to be Diana Gooseman (née Slater). Pat Collins (née Yarrington) had hoped to be present but was otherwise engaged in organising a craft exhibition. We raised a toast to the Old School with a resounding *Gratias Hodie Agimus*. Of course there was much sifting through old memories and photographs, and a great deal of laughter from the ladies present with considerable bemusement from their assorted husbands. It felt quite surreal to be sitting in a garden on the other side of the world on a hot sunny November day, reliving those past school days. Jennifer hopes to be in England in July 2000, and Linda possibly in 2001.

These younger couples had emigrated to New Zealand many years ago and must have found life quite a challenge. Real pioneering stuff, because New Zealand was not nearly so well developed forty years ago.

It was sad to leave these friends, but The Network still had one treat in store for us. Jennifer Morris (née Astill) had alerted her daughter Louise, so shortly before returning home for Christmas we were able to spend some time in Te Kuiti with Louise, Steve and their enchanting daughter Laura, who were busy running about delivering their home-grown Christmas trees and decorating a float for the Santa Parade.

Altogether, an exhilarating few weeks, which we hope to repeat as soon as possible (be warned Kiwis!).

So, borrowing a phrase from Edward Fitzgerald, what of the “unborn tomorrows”? Why fret about them? It is good to reminisce about the old days. Our futures are built on past experiences, but we cannot live in the past. Those days were not all as golden as they appear in memory, and I should not like to have to hand over my automatic washing machine, or lose my central heating. Is the thought of e-mail, the Internet and dot.com any more scaring than the sound of droves of German bombers passing overhead, or the threat of nuclear war? I think not. Innovations are not all bad! The new technology can be quite exciting. We shall survive, learn new skills and adapt, and who knows — I might yet live to plant my feet on the moon, taking a KHS time capsule of course!

FUND IN MEMORY OF MISS RENWICK

Donations of £1,600 made by Miss Renwick's family, friends, and former members of KHS will be used to restore the fountain and small pool in the rose garden by Hillgrove House. The second phase of the sixth form building, which is nearing completion and the Rural Science area are adjacent to the garden, and the Headteacher and Miss Renwick's family felt that making it again a pleasant, peaceful haven in a busy school would be a fitting memorial.

Editor's Note. All those of us who enjoyed the privilege of using this sixth form retreat, will be delighted at this news.

NEWS OF OLD GIRLS

A NOTABLE BIRTHDAY— Warm congratulations to **Lily Perry (née Ingram)** who celebrated her 100th birthday on 21st March 2000. She now lives at Lickhill Manor Nursing Home, Stourport.

BIRTH—To **Louise Edwards (née Cooper)** a daughter Elizabeth Josephine, on 26th May 1999.

DEATHS

Miss Maltby (Mrs Lisney). d.1996 who taught Latin and Greek 1939-44.

Miss D. C. Everett d. July 1999, who taught Maths. and Sciences from 1945-1973 and also served as Deputy Headmistress.

Kathleen Duignan d. July 1999. **Eileen Hayes (née Tipper)** d. 1997.

Monica Sharpe (née Vincent) d. Jan. 1999.

Frances Smith (née Hill) d. Aug. 1999.

Lucy Tomlinson (née Laing) d. 1999.

Edith Worton (née Perrins) d. June 1999. **Kath Phillips** d. Oct. 1999.

Dorothy Sanders (née Insell) d. Oct 1999.

Joan Peden (née Webster) d. Dec. 1999.

Margaret Christopher d. Mar. 2000.

Freda Hadland (née Bond) d. Feb 2000

Nellie Hill (née Kench) d. Jan. 2000.

Marjorie Price (née Green) d. Mar. 2000, the mother of Deryn Chatwin.

News of Old Girls trickles in from many sources— newspaper cuttings, radio reports, from friends, relatives and from individual members.

In the Express and Star in October 1999 appeared a photograph of **Sheila Bishop (née Nash)** planting a black pear tree in the grounds of Hartlebury Castle, a millennium gift from her W.I.

In The Shuttle on 11th November came a report of research undertaken by **Margaret Phelan** with Philip Smith O.B.E. into the history of the marble plaque at New Meeting Church and of the thirteen young church goers who died during the First World War. The results of their research, a 27 page document has been placed in the Imperial War Museum.

Another press cutting shows a bronzed and athletic, indomitable **Eileen Shirley (née Greaves)** 1934-42 together with her husband Tim, while on a 170 miles + sponsored walk in Italy. This included the ascent of Monte Amiata (5702ft), covered in deep snow, a walk along the stones laid by the Romans to the Via Cassia Antica, ending at the Vatican. As Eileen comments, “Not bad for over 70 year olds.” Eileen also reports that a **1934—42 reunion** will be held on 6th May 2000 at which some fifteen Old Girls hope to be present. **Mrs Gethin** will be guest of honour.

The bi-monthly luncheon group comprising girls who left KHS in the early 1950’s continues to enjoy meeting at various local hostleries. We were all very saddened by the sudden death of our good friend Margaret Christopher, who will be sorely missed.

Catherine Parkes (née Hobbs) 1974-81 reports that there was a year reunion in May ’99 for pupils of her

Stop Press: **Susan Dobson** 1954-56 moved to Uganda with her family. She now lives at 4, Uplands, Bedford, MK41 8EG and would love to hear from people in her year, eg. Madelaine Wisdom.

generation, which also included Old Boys from King Charles I and Queen Elizabeth I schools. (These three grammar schools were amalgamated in 1977).

Margaret Phelan met **Marjorie Copeland (née Amphlett)** in Kidderminster in April. Marjorie is recovering from a recent operation, and sends her greetings to the O.G.A. Margaret's sister-in-law, **Mary Pugh (née Downing)**, who is one of our oldest members, will shortly be leaving the area to be nearer her daughter Jane in the south. She also recently met **Joy Crosher (née Mason)** who now lives in Somerleyton Avenue in Miss Renwick's former home.

Linda Cox (née Mann) 1955-60 has lived in New Zealand since 1967, with her husband David. They have a son Stephen now working as an anaesthetic technician in Burton on Trent, and a daughter Samantha who has her own catering business. Linda is very involved with Woolcraft and Spinning. She has become an acknowledged expert in this field and is presently convenor for the National Festival April 2000, her third such festival. She is also Canterbury delegate to the N.Z. Spinning, Weaving, & Woolcraft Society. Linda's mother **Irene Hoedemakers (née Shutt)** also KHS 1929-34 moved to New Zealand a few years ago and has recently celebrated her 80th birthday.

Alice Bennett (née Cookson) 1967-74 is still farming at Madresfield. She has recently opened a riding school. Farming is depressed at the moment but the market for Bennett's ice cream continues to grow.

Jenny Filby (1964-72) works in the Leisure industry but is also qualified as a garden designer and is involved in the National Gardens Scheme. She has just had a local history book published.

Barbara Freeman (née Woodroffe) 1950-53 lives in Stourbridge. She is widowed and has three children all now happily settled in their own lives—some providing her with grandchildren!

Mary Johnson (née Bradley) 1948-55 is a Governor of Windmill Middle School at Stourport, and is liaison officer for the Wyre Forest talking newspaper, treasurer of the Stourport Choral and Operatic Society, and is involved with the Wolverley and Cookley Historical Society. Mary's sister Pat Bradley lives in New Zealand (another Kiwi!).

Mary Painter (née Coney) 1929-40 visited Kidderminster in September, in time to attend our A.G.M. Mary reports that her husband John is an Old Boy of KHS, having attended the Kindergarten from 1926-29! **Sarah Bryson (née Gibson)** is a "Bank Nurse" in the Oxford and Banbury area. She is married to a G.P. and has two young sons. Her mother **Hazel Gibson (née Gasson)** has moved to live in Spain, so Sarah no longer has family in Kidderminster.

Frances Chadwick (née Lane) 1963-71 lives in Cheadle, Staffs. with her husband Martin—formerly an Anglican Priest—and daughters Mary and Ann. Frances is coordinator of a Supported Volunteering project in Staffordshire Moorlands, finding and maintaining voluntary work opportunities for people with disabilities or experience of mental illness. She is a Guider in her spare time and obtained her Camper's Licence in 1997.

Anita Bateman (née Liddell) 1949-56 has sent in a fascinating document entitled 'In Great-Grandfather's Footsteps'. Anita decided that, as a retirement hobby, she would research her family history, little knowing that it would lead her to India and Australia. She was following the trail of her great-grandfather Stephen Liddell, who came from a long line of nailmakers in Bromsgrove. When the nail trade began to decline, Stephen enlisted in the 55th. Regt. of Foot in Birmingham in 1862. After various researches, Anita found herself following his route from Calcutta up to the Khyber Pass and back to Delhi. She went by overnight sleeper to Allahabad on the Amritsar Mail Train, with all its crowds, noise, dirt and hawkers of strange food. The

account of Anita's travels makes gripping reading. I thoroughly recommend a read of the full story. Anita can be contacted on: 01299 266072.

Gwen Gregory (née Norris) 1935-39 is in contact with **Muriel Brunold (née Jenks)** who lives in Surrey. They are seeking news of **Hilda Burrows** and **Margaret Shaddock**. Can you help? Gwen's address is:- *'Highgate', 6 Moor Hall Drive, Stourport. DY13 8SG.*

THE SINGLE SUPPLEMENT. **Margaret Phelan** has highlighted the dilemma faced by those holidaying alone and faced with having to pay sizeable supplements or with sharing a room with a stranger. Perhaps like-minded Old Girls could share holidays or journeys? Margaret has made this offer. "I would be happy to compile a list of people who would like to find another to go on holiday with. If you are interested please send me your holiday ideas. I'll not take any responsibility beyond enabling wannabe travellers to meet others of like mind—with O.G.A. members there is a good chance of common ground. I'm also putting together a list of Travel Firms which do cater for the single holidaymaker, not many so far but they aren't all University Halls with Saga, good as these are. Let me know if you are interested and please send an s.a.e. to: *10, Stewart Court, Kidderminster, DY10 1UR. Telephone: 01562 751386.*

O.G.A. COMMITTEE

<i>Chairman</i>	Beryl Bedford (former teacher)
<i>Minutes Sec.</i>	Yvonne Ward (née Simon)
<i>Assistant Sec.</i>	Mary Wehner (née Crane)
<i>Treasurer</i>	May Phillips (née Tuck)
<i>Flower Fund</i>	Rosemarie Moore (née Brockway) and Elisabeth Robinson (née Wrigglesworth)
<i>Catering</i>	Elisabeth Robinson
<i>Editor of Newsletter</i>	Sheila Kirk (née Ryder)
<i>Members</i>	Sheila Garlick, Peggy Guest (née Summers),

Margaret Phelan (née Pugh),
 Gloria Phillips (née Galloway)
Ex Officio Marjorie Rivers (née Elcock) Group 4
 Patricia Nash (née Harris) Group 5
Co-opted Rosemary Gibbs—Former Secretary
 Barbara Chalmers (née French)—Former
 Secretary

O.G.A. FLOWER FUND.

Items for ~~Elisabeth Robinson~~ *Elisabeth Robinson* Newsletter should be sent to ~~Rosemarie Moore~~ *Rosemarie Moore* (W562 107546), assisted by ~~Mary Jarvis~~ *Mary Jarvis*, continue their good work in visiting or contacting Old Girls who are ill or celebrating special birthdays, with gifts of flowers, chocolates or tokens. Their company and good wishes are always most welcome as shown by the many grateful letters received. Our thanks are due to Liz and Rosemarie for organising these visits on our behalf, and to all those who contribute to the fund.

FUTURE EVENTS

- Fri. 15/9/2000 - 7.30pm. Annual General Meeting followed by light refreshments.
- Fri. 3/11/2000 - 7.30pm. From San Carlos to St.Dunstan's - talk by Mr T. Bullingham, blinded in the Falklands War. Coffee and biscuits.
- Fri. 16/3/2001 - 7.30pm. Illustrated talk about the Titanic by Mr P. Betterton. Coffee and biscuits.
- Fri. 18/5/2001 - 7.00pm. Guided Walk at Bodenham Arboretum, Wolverlev.