



# Laurel Leaves

THE EDGBASTON HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS  
OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE

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*Do you recognise  
any of these EHS Girls?*

see page 15 for the Class of 1962 Reunion



# Chairman's *Message*



*Welcome, to Laurel Leaves.*

I hope, like myself, you look forward to the latest issue arriving at your door and that it brings a smile to your face, with news of fellow Old Girls.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed articles and photographs, detailing careers, life events and reunions. Thanks also go to the school staff and Helen Holmes for compiling it together for us, creating such an interesting and bright addition.

The EHS OGA has enjoyed several events throughout the year, beginning with an Open House afternoon at the end of February. It was a wonderful occasion with Old Girls bringing their families to the school and groups of past pupils coming together to seek out haunts from their school days. The sound of happy chatter filled the halls and following its success we are hoping to repeat the event in 2017. By this time, the new extension to Prep will be finished, creating a spacious library and art room, so there will be even more for everyone to explore.

The Summer Supper AGM was as enjoyable as ever. Guests were treated to a very entertaining talk by Her



Honour Judge Sybil Thomas as well as a delicious meal.

The final gathering took place at the beginning of December. Margaret Harper, former Head of Music at the school, brought together her choir to perform for an audience of Old Girls and staff.

More can be read about each of these functions within this magazine.

In June, we look forward to Sally Fussell (Bruce-Payne) being our guest of honour at the next summer event. Sally has enjoyed a fantastic career as a mezzo-soprano singer, working

around the world and we look forward to hearing about her life since she left EHS.

We are keen to welcome as many of you as possible to future events so please ensure we have all of your correct details to help us to achieve this. Following us on Facebook is an ideal way to receive up-to-date information about events, times and dates.

In addition to gatherings, the Old Girls' Association is also in the fortunate position to offer funding for projects undertaken by current pupils through the Initiative Award Scheme. This year we have supported Pavandeep Uppal who is spending a year in Cambodia, undertaking medical volunteering work before she heads off to university. We wish her well on this journey.

Please remember to keep in touch with us, we love to be able to share your news.

*Wishing everybody a happy and healthy 2016.*

*Anna Stanley (née Lefever)*

## Message from the Headmistress

*It is always a great pleasure to meet Old Girls and to read about their lives in Laurel Leaves.*

This year we have had some super Old Girls events. I particularly enjoyed Carols and Canapés and the speech by Sybil Thomas at the annual supper where she gave a speech about judges' wigs and EHS cake!

Spending time with Old Girls brings home to me the importance of being an Edgbaston girl, the standards, morals, education and above all the joy of life and the sense of fun. Old Girls and current pupils have so much in common and so much to celebrate in their success and the ongoing success of the school.

*Dr Ruth Weeks*



# Stay in touch

**Contact Details:** If you have recently changed your address or wish to update your records, perhaps to include your email address or contact telephone number, then please do get in contact to let us know. In addition, we are always delighted to hear about your news - career development, engagements, marriages and births. If you have any news of special interest that you would like featured in a future issue of Laurel Leaves or if you would like to simply update us on what you have been doing, then please do contact us.

**Send an email** to [oldgirls@edgbastonhigh.co.uk](mailto:oldgirls@edgbastonhigh.co.uk), **telephone** 0121 454 5831 or write to the School by post marked 'OGA'.

**Old Girls Reunited:** Don't forget 'Old Girls Reunited' the termly e-newsletter for EHS Old Girls. Visit the Old Girls' Association section of the school website to sign up for this free email service.



**Follow us on Facebook:** Did you know? Edgbaston High School OGA is now on Facebook! Follow us on our page 'EHS OGA' for news and updates about forthcoming events. Please do share this with your fellow Old Girls.

## Save the date!

### 50 year reunion for Class of '66

#### How many boxes can you tick?

- Were you a pupil at EHS between 1953 and 1966?
- Do you remember stew and stodge?
- Did you wear a panama hat and a tie and have you avoided wearing green ever since?
- Do you recall what the entrance hall at "the old school" looked like?
- Did Miss Robinson check your skirt length?
- Did you love/ loathe the black skin on the rice pudding?
- Were you a tiny bit scared of Miss Ashton?
- Can you hum Fideliter, Fortiter, Feliciter?
- Would you like to meet a group of people you probably won't recognise but are bound to remember?

If you can answer yes to these questions, then it's time we all got together again, in true VE day spirit, while we still can!

OGA is planning a 50 year reunion at EHS for anyone who left in the summer of 1966, or who would have done if they had stayed on through Senior School.

It will be a day event from 11.00am - 4.00pm with coffee and chat, celebration lunch and tours of the school and we'd love to see as many of you as possible so don't be shy - we ALL look 50 years older!

More details to follow. To register your interest, please contact Rebecca Rolland OGA: [oldgirls@edgbastonhigh.co.uk](mailto:oldgirls@edgbastonhigh.co.uk)

**Penny Searley (nee Williams):**  
[pennysearley@gmail.com](mailto:pennysearley@gmail.com) Mobile 07881 785686

## Edgbaston High School Old Girls' Association *Committee 2015-16*

### President

Dr Ruth Weeks

### Vice-Presidents

Mrs S. J. Horsman (1987-1997)

Miss E. M. Mullenger (1998-2006)

### Chairman

Anna Stanley (1982-1989)

### Past Chairman

Celia Bell (1964-1971)

### Secretary

Diane Hirst (1947-1961)

### Past Staff Representative

Stella Pinkess (1946-1960)

### Current Staff Representatives

Lesley Bowler (1969 - 1978)

Sally Hartley

### General Committee

Laura Banks (1979-1990)

Lindsay Lucas (1973-1981)

Leyla Ogan (1989-1994)

Anne Howarth (1954-1961)

### Laurel Leaves

Helen Holmes (1980-1985)

### Legal Advisor

Miss S. Thomas (1961-1972)

# Speech Day 2015

*welcoming Aimée Presswood*



*Aimée Presswood*

*On Friday 6 November, members of the School's Governing Body, parents, teachers and students all gathered for our Speech Day in the University of Birmingham's Great Hall in order to celebrate our GCSE and A Level success and to present the A2 certificates to our Year 14 students whom we were delighted to welcome back.*

Music was provided by the Senior and Chamber choirs and addresses were made by Sir Dominic Cadbury, Mr Jeremy Payne, Dr Weeks, Head Girl Hanna and her deputies Chloe and Lucy and guest speaker Aimée

Presswood. Aimée left EHS and went on to achieve a First Class honours degree from Manchester University, and embark upon her career as a professional soprano singer. Aimée delivered an inspiring and thought-provoking speech and we were lucky enough to ask Aimée some questions about her life and she shared with us some of the wisdom she has gained at such a young age.

**To what extent do you think growing up in Hong Kong and South Africa shaped where you are today?**

I think travelling around a lot made

me learn to adapt quickly and become more confident; it also instilled in me a sense of adventure and a love of travelling. Travelling is vital because it opens your eyes and allows you to relate to others around you. Growing up in different cultures certainly opened my mind.

**How do you think your ambition in music has shaped who you are?**

Music is very competitive and therefore it requires constant practice, self-reflection and constant honing of skills; therefore, it's always driving you to become better.

**What kind of music do you enjoy listening to on a daily basis?**

A wide variety: lots of opera, early Jazz (Dixie), 80s electro pop, 70s funk and country music. Oh, and Beyoncé!

**Do you prefer to sing as part of a choir or as a soloist? How do these experiences differ for you?**

Ultimately, I am more likely to pursue a career as a soloist. However, the two experiences are completely different and I love the feeling that a finished product is the result of a corporate effort and it is feeding off people in the moment, in a subtle way.

**Was music a direction you were eager to continue from a young age and how does an interest in music differ from actually studying Music to degree level?**

I always enjoyed music from a young age but often thought of studying other things such as Art or Literature; sometimes I even thought of not going to university at all. When I was at university, my degree was varied and ranged from learning Composition and Music History to transcribing music sources.

**Pieces such as Mahler's Fourth Symphony are originally in German, has pursuing music caused you to be interested in languages?**

As a singer yes; you have to learn more languages because you need to attend rehearsals in different languages. Most of the music I study is in Italian and German because there is a need for expression in songs.

**What are your plans for the future? Where would you like to see yourself in five years?**

My plans for the future involve a lot more technical exploration with my own voice. This means more lessons and more practice. I hope to do my Masters at Music College and hope

to begin a role in an opera company, as well as travel to America, climb Mount Kilimanjaro and perfect my Italian.

**What is your opinion on the current music industry; do you feel that as a generation, we don't appreciate the classical world as much as we should?**

Classical music isn't for everyone; however, it unfairly has a bad image. It's up to classical musicians to eradicate stuffiness and aspects of tradition that puts people off. The greatest shame is that people believe all classical music is similar but it encompasses everything; there's a lot of variety in classical music that needs to be explored.

**Have you ever had any embarrassing experiences such as forgetting your words and if so, how did you overcome these?**

So many times! One of them was in an audition for an opera in London and all I had to sing was 4 lines in Italian, I walked in and forgot 3 out of 4 lines and ended in the wrong key, unsurprisingly, I didn't get the job. Also a few of us were singing Schumann at university and we all sang a few songs from a song cycle

and shared a folder. I slotted my photocopies in, however, when I turned the page I realised they were in the wrong order and had to sing "la la la la".

**How did EHS enthuse and encourage you to pursue music?**

EHS gave me a hunger to discover more about the subject. I would like to thank Ms Harper, Ms Stocks and Ms Howell for all their care and affection. EHS encouraged me to take on roles in different musicals and they were wonderful and of brilliant quality. I carry great memories from the Sound of Music and Grease. Ultimately, there were many extracurricular opportunities which allowed me to flourish.

Aimée's speech has certainly inspired many to follow their dreams and reminded us that it is not only academic achievement that needs recognising; there are many talented professionals working in the fields of Sport, Art, Music, and Dance to name but a few. We'd like to thank Aimée for taking the time to talk to us, and for delivering such a tremendous speech.

*Tara Baaj and Ellenor Blake  
Sixth Form Committee*

*Dr Ruth Weeks, Aimée Presswood and Jeremy Payne*



# Entrepreneur of the Year

*At the annual Hereford & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce Business Awards, Emma Heathcote-James won the prestigious Entrepreneur of the Year award for Little Soap Company. Emma commented "What an amazing milestone and pause for recognition for what has been a tough 18 months. It's also been a huge amount of fun building something I really passionately care about! A huge thanks to the Chambers and also The Worcestershire Ambassadors for sponsoring it. My aim, as every box states, 'is to make pure, natural soap accessible to all.'"*

The Little Soap Company have launched the first organic bar soap to line the shelves of Waitrose, Booths, Sainsbury's and Tesco along with new additional lines into Sainsbury's and Boots, one of which, unbeknownst to them, was shortlisted for the Free From Skincare Awards at the Love Natural, Love Organic Show in July. The fact that they made the shortlist, nestled amid the big brands is an accolade in itself.

On top of all this, Emma has a pretty idyllic workshop and offices in

Broadway on the Upper High Street where they still make the artisan handmade range and have added some new workshop courses to their array. Oh and the old kitchen table where it all started had to be there too, that's where tea, coffee and M'Hencha is served at the start of every Little Soap School!

Now, without the support of many people, the Little Soap Company would be in a very different place to where it is now. A big shout out to Goldman Sachs 10KSB programme at Aston University Business School -

Emma will forever be thankful to Professor Mark Hart et al for challenging her and most of all opening her eyes to turn a kitchen table one-woman-band to become a global player.

For Emma, this award and shortlist are really in recognition of many key players and support figures around the past couple of years, and indeed to her supporters over the past six years.

Emma Heathcote-James



## Little Soap Company gang hot-footing it for charity

*To celebrate another contract to create an exclusive range for Waitrose, Emma Heathcote-James decided to take her Little Soap Company team on a Fire Walk - leading them over 1,000°C red-hot wood embers (hot enough to melt aluminium apparently - she did ensure their Office Manager Pip took off her toe ring!)*

Following in the steps of many firewalkers before them (including Oprah Winfrey who declared it as "one of the most incredible experiences of my life") it's often used as a rite of passage, or test of an individual's strength and courage!

It was certainly bonding, especially as they compared hot spots and little blisters (now deemed their trophies!) over a glass of fizz at the end of

the night. As Emma said, there was something very empowering being stood in front of the walk with your head screaming "no - this is ridiculous" and finding the courage to step out onto the glowing embers anyway. And the madness did have some reasoning behind it - they helped raise over £10,000 for charity... Watch out world - they can do anything now!

Emma, who spoke last year at Speech Day, founded the business back in 2008 and is the first (and only) company to produce organic soap to supermarkets nationally. The offices and artisan workshop (where they still make the handmade ranges) is based on the Upper High Street in Broadway where they also run a handful of different luxury Little Soap School day courses.



*It sometimes feels like I've travelled so far and for so long since leaving EHS, but in fact it's only been two years since I finished Sixth Form.*

I currently study Chinese at Oxford University, where we are thrown headlong into the baffling language, history and culture of the world's most populous country even though before arriving at Oxford I'd never spoken a word of Mandarin in my life. My parents both moved to England from Hong Kong when they were quite small, and I was born and brought up in Birmingham. It's a challenge – but certainly not one that doesn't reap rewards.

The second year of the course is spent abroad in Beijing. While here, as well as being overwhelmed with a wide range of elements of Chinese culture, the biggest thing I've been grateful for is an opportunity to meet some really interesting people. I therefore decided to set up a platform where all their interesting stories can be shared and told communally. The result was my new site, All Abroad ([www.all-abroad.co](http://www.all-abroad.co)) which contains articles from language students all over the world, currently on their year abroad

# All Abroad



with the opportunity to really live and experience the cultures that they study throughout their degree.

There's no doubt that my studies at EHS instilled in me a lifelong love of languages and other cultures. What's great is receiving all the pieces

from other people who have similar sentiments. I'd therefore be very grateful if anybody who is interested might take a look at any of the articles there, or get in touch with suggestions and comments. Thank you!

*Serena Chang*



*PK University*

# Destination of 2015 Leavers



Abbas, Maya	Nursing	Liverpool University
Abuteir, Chloe		Applying 2016
Ager, Zoe	Food Development and Innovation	University College, Birmingham
Ahmed, Nyilla	Geography	Salford University
Ahmed, Safia		Applying 2016
Akhtar, Sabira	Business and Politics	Aston University
Baghdadi, Leila	Psychology	Sheffield Hallam University (2016)
Bailey, Georgina		Applying 2016
Barrington, Charlotte	Geography	University of Southampton
Bateman, Leonora	Systems Analyst Apprenticeship	Hewlett Packard
Bhargav, Amba	Biology	Royal Holloway, University of London
Boss, Katherine	Nursing	University of Birmingham
Burns, Eleanor	Liberal Arts	Los Angeles University
Carrington Danielle	Law	Trinity College, University of Cambridge
Davies, Imogen		Applying 2016
Dhaliwal, Simran	Geography and Urban and Regional Planning	University of Birmingham
Downing, Jemima	Child Nursing	University of the West of England (2016)
England Kerr, Abbie	English	University of Bristol
Fattorini, Anna-Lucia		Gap Year
Fox, Ruth	Politics and International Relations	University of Manchester
Hall, Emma	English with Study in North America	University of Exeter
Harrold, Lydia	Combined Honours in Social Sciences	University of Durham
Hullait, Kimren	Geography with year abroad	University of Birmingham
Hulton Tess	Classical Archaeology and Ancient History	Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford
Hyland-Estevez Nathalie	Contemporary Chinese Studies with International Relations	University of Nottingham
Joannou, Elle		Applying 2016
Johal, Manreet	Optometry	Plymouth university
Jones, Ellen	History	University of Bristol
Kailey, Sumandeep		Applying 2016
Kainth, Harsharan	History	King's College, University of London
Kalirai, Syrandeep	Government and Economics	London School of Economics
Khanna, Georgia		Applying 2016
Lynn Sophie	Nursing	University of Birmingham
Marshall, Anna	Marine Biology	University of Southampton (2016)
Marshall, Rose	Law	Trinity Hall College, University of Cambridge
Meacham, Bethany	Built Environment	Oxford Brookes University
Mooney, Florence	Philosophy	University of Sheffield
Mooney, Henrietta	Fashion Management	Nottingham Trent University
Mudhar, Hurkeerit		Applying 2016

Nash, Emily	Graphic Design	Manchester Metropolitan University
Niaz, Maria	Accounting and Finance	Wolverhampton University
O'Connor, Hannah	Business and Management with Business Placement	University of Durham
O'Connor, Niamh	Psychology	Newcastle University
Pawar, Harvinder	Biological Sciences	University College, London
Rahman, Maryam	Business Management	Manchester Metropolitan University
Rai, Harpreet	Economics	University of Birmingham
Ralston, Jenny	Bakery and Confectionary Technology	University College, Birmingham
Sharp, Nicolle	Civil Engineering	University of Birmingham
Shirley-Priest, Harriet	Modern Languages	University of Birmingham
Smith, Jody	Music	Royal Northern College of Music
Smith, Natasha		Gap Year
Stedman, Kate	Integrated Mechanical and Electrical Engineering	Bath University
Sultan, Hafsa	English	King's College, University of London
Thomas, Charis	Arabic and a Modern European Language	University of Manchester (2016)
Tozer, Rebecca	History	University of York
Uppal, Pavandeep	Medicine	Kings College, University of London
Voice, Rhianna		Applying 2016
Wade, Kiera	English with Creative Writing	Keele University
Watson, Kira	Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies	University of Manchester
Wilkie, Gemma	Engineering	University of Liverpool
Williamson, Hayley	Physiotherapy	Teeside University
Wilson, Jessica		Applying 2016
Wouhra, Romi	Business, Management and Marketing	Worcester University
Zaidi, Hiyah	Religious Studies and Philosophy	Wolverhampton University
Zardoshti, Anahita	Physics	University of Manchester



# The Early Years of Science Education at Edgbaston High School for Girls

*From 1876 to 1920*



*Hannah Stanton*

*When Edgbaston High School was founded in 1876, it was the intention that it would provide a new method and better standard of girls' education than what was commonly available.*

Herbert Spencer in *Education, Intellectual, Moral and Physical* (1861) points out two main criticisms with mainstream girls' education: firstly, that *"use is subordinated to display"*; for example, girls are taught Italian and German so that they can sing songs in those languages, or simply because the knowledge is thought ladylike. Secondly, he criticises the method by which girls are taught, with *"her memory crammed with words, and names,*

*and dates, and her reflective faculties scarcely in the slightest degree exercised."* Among other things, he proposed that this be combated by the teaching of science, specifically physiology and psychology. Of course, it wasn't unprecedented for girls to be taught science; Miss Cooper, the first headmistress of the school, was herself a Bio-chemist. Upon opening, Edgbaston High taught **'the Elements of Physical Science'** and **'Physical Science (especially Physiology as applied to Health)'** (Girls' Public Day School Company curriculum), and throughout the years the range of scientific subjects taught grew, and passion for science, which started out as an important part of the School's

foundation (despite the comment made by the school discussion society in 1888 that *"everyone is not very much interested in electricity"*, at least), remains such to this day.

This is evident as even in the 1880s more girls went on to study medicine at university than one might expect (although they were not awarded degrees, but rather diplomas), and an article in *Laurel Leaves* in 1909 suggesting and commenting on suitable careers for women included medicine. The girls themselves did expect to have careers: around 1910, a group of girls aged about eleven or twelve were asked to write an essay about what they wanted to be when they grew up, with most wanting to

become doctors or nurses. The only ambition that was met with shock by the rest of the class was one girl's dream of a happy marriage and home- this future with the 'contented fireside', or the prospect of marriage, had not crossed the minds of many of the girls. The majority of girls studying medicine would go on to careers concerning childbirth and maternity, although this was not a professional impediment: in 1892 one girl was made head of Clapham Maternity after studying anatomy at the London School of Medicine for Women. Notably, around the end of the First World War there is an increase in girls studying medicine, presumably because of the need for women to take over men's jobs while they fought in the war; many of the men didn't come back. This sudden decrease in male workforce, predictably enough, resulted in a drastic increase in female representation in the workplace, as in 1918 an all-female works laboratory is described and promoted in *Laurel Leaves*.

Another field influenced by the wars was Physical Training. As one student at Bedford Physical Training College, presumably an old girl, is quick to point out when she writes a letter describing the course published in *Laurel Leaves* in 1906, it isn't composed of having Games all day, but involves a lot of study of chemistry and anatomy. The necessity for Physical Training was brought to the nation's attention during the First World War, when it was discovered that many men were very unfit. Although it was studied by a few girls before 1914, there is an increase towards the end of and after the war.

The interest in science outside of lessons was strong, with the introduction of the Natural Science Society (originally

named Field Club) in 1904 which grew in size until had to be divided into 4 smaller groups five years later. The activities of the Natural Science Society were quite unusual for the time, meeting every so often to read papers and go on excursions to sites of geological, botanical or zoological interest. There was also an instance of a group of Sixth Form girls in 1887 discovering that the Upper Fifth were studying tadpoles, while "we have to content ourselves with paleontological researches," a fact which was "extremely annoying to us," and deciding to conduct their own investigation. This is not the only example of an independent experiment, although maybe it was one of the more successful ones; in EHS's boarding days (somewhere between 1896 and World War Two, likely to be before 1899) two girls caused a nasty accident in a lab trying to distil eucalyptus leaves in their free time. One can only hope the one who had to clean it up appreciated their passion for scientific investigation! The standard of the teaching seemed to improve as a rule over time. In 1908, the lab-there being only one- was not large enough to accommodate an entire class at once, and therefore

half the class will do practical work while the other half write, and halfway through the lesson they swap. The inspector's report states, "It is hopeless to expect work of any value to be done under such conditions." Lab space seems to remain a problem for a long time until in 1938 it is described simply as "small but well equipped." The teachers are of a good standard, although it would seem that for the science department to be regarded as satisfactory, it is not necessary for every teacher to be qualified in any science, and when the head of science has to assist her two teachers, one qualified in chemistry and physics and the other in biology, as is the case in 1938, this is relatively uncommon and makes for an "unusually good" department. Generally, the younger classes are taught by a form mistress who need not have any experience in teaching science.

Although up until the early 1920s, the only public exam choices in science (on the Oxford and Cambridge Joint Board) were botany, which was by far the more popular, and geology (this introduced in 1907), a wide range of other topics within the broad subject of science. These included

natural history, physiography, zoology and hygiene, as well as biology, chemistry and physics. With this width of study, the "vigorous and stimulating" teaching and the EHS girl's inclination to do exactly what the world thinks she can't, it is small wonder that so many girls chose to go into a profession that was (and to some extent still is) so prejudiced against women.

*Hannah Stanton Year 12  
December 2014*

#### References

Sources: *Laurel Leaves* 1881-1924  
*Inspector's reports* 1908, 1914, 1922, 1928, 1938  
*Edgbaston High School History* 1876-1976, Janet Whitcut



*Hannah Stanton and Anne Lacey*

# Old Girls' News

**Isabel Lovett**  
(née Regan)  
left 2002

Isabel and her husband Ferdinand have a baby boy, named Cassius Louis Lovett. He was born on 14 July 2015.



**Daniella Gause**  
(née Batley)  
left 1993

My love for travel and languages began in childhood. My mother is Brazilian and because of my father's work, we were able to spend a lot of time in Latin America. My favourite subject at Edgbaston High was Spanish and I went on to study Hispanic and Latin American Studies at Bristol University. I spent time living in

Spain and Portugal and after completing my degree moved to Germany for a year.

When I returned to England, I worked at FDI World Dental Federation organising international dental shows and then at London Chamber of Commerce organising trade missions to Eastern Europe. Travel has been in my blood for a long time. I moved back to Birmingham around seven years ago and until recently worked in the Translations and Language Services Department at The Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce.

At the age of 40 and having spent the last 18 years working for someone else, I decided to use my experience and take the plunge and set up my own travel business. I now work under the umbrella of the successful company Travel Counsellors.

As a Travel Counsellor, I provide a personal and one-to-one travel service. I get to know my customers well in order to find them the perfect holiday and am available at times to suit them. I can organise cruises, weekend breaks, business trips, ski trips, car hire, transfers, excursions, honeymoons, weddings abroad and much more. I have access to hundreds

of suppliers. Please do contact me if you need help with any travel arrangements. I will do all the hard work for you! Some of my existing clients are Edgbaston High Old Girls!

Email:  
[daniella.gause@travelcounsellors.com](mailto:daniella.gause@travelcounsellors.com)

## Kathleen Elliot Award

*The award this year has gone to Anna Marshall.*

Anne is undertaking a gap year where she is travelling to Australia to take the PADI Scuba Diving Qualification which she will put to good use when she starts university in 2016 studying Marine Biology.

## Old Girl Secures Fellowship with National Youth Choir

*Our warmest congratulations to Old Girl Aimée Presswood (2011). Aimée recently passed a rigorous audition process and beat off stiff competition to gain one of the inaugural National Youth Choir of Great Britain (NYCGB) Choral Fellowships.*

The NYCGB launched a brand new professional programme to help create the most highly-skilled and multi-talented choral singers in the

UK. The year-long Fellowship will provide eight singers between the ages of 22 and 25 with extensive training in performance, ensemble work, musical leadership and pedagogy to enable them to become outstanding performers and educators, equipped for a successful career in choral music. Aimée successfully navigated a three-round audition process, which ran at locations around the UK from November 2014 - January 2015, testing over 50 singers' individual

vocal ability and ensemble skills with a wide range of exercises and challenges.

Launching in September 2015, the programme will offer the Fellowship octet a total of 50 paid days of training over the course of the year including concert work (both as a part of the 24-strong National Youth Chamber Choir and independently), recording projects, tours, teaching and workshop engagements. We shall watch Aimée's career with interest. See Aimée's page on the Fellowship website:

<https://www.nycgb.org.uk/about-nycgb/fellowship/meet-the-fellows/aimée-presswood>

# EHS Open House *event*

*Saturday 28 February saw EHS and the OGA opening its doors to past pupils and their families. The Open House event was organised to enable guests to wander freely around the school, reminisce about their school days, seek out old haunts and marvel at the recent changes to the buildings.*

Some ladies used the opportunity to meet up with old school chums, some even arriving wearing items of their old school uniform! Others enjoyed acting as guides for their husbands and children.

The archive wall was a destination for many, eyes poring over the images, scouring for familiar faces. The new Sixth Form centre also proved a popular draw, not only for an exploration of the surroundings and facilities but also for the delicious tea and cakes laid on by the catering department (and a comfy sofa or two for weary feet and spouses).

As expected by an EHS event, the afternoon was marked by happy



chatter echoing through the corridors. It proved to be a really enjoyable few hours for the 75 Old Girls who attended.

Due to the popularity of the occasion, we hope to run a similar event in the coming years. Prep school has undergone major refurbishment over the last 12 months, which will no doubt be an additional and interesting draw for girls who attended this department.



# The Old Girls' Association *welcomes its new members*

## **Year 11 Leavers**

BILLS, Laura  
BURTON, Emily  
CHEUNG, Jerry  
CHEZA, Charlotte  
CLARKE, Rhia  
DANJAUL, Sunya  
GHATTAURA, Dilbir  
GILL, Isobel  
GLENNON, Ashlyn  
HOLYOAKE, Georgina  
JAIN, Lakshya  
KHERA, Reena  
LUESLEY, Megan  
MAROK, Syona  
MCGUIRK, Tara J  
NAG, Anisha  
SALL, Amnish  
SAMRA, Meena  
SOHAL, Jaya

## **Year 12 Leavers**

TAHHAN, Sedrah

## **Year 13 Leavers**

ABBAS, Maya  
ABUTEIR, Chloe  
AGER, Zoe  
AHMED, Nyilla  
AHMED, Safia  
AKHTAR, Sabira  
BAGHDADI, Leila  
BAILEY, Georgina  
BARRINGTON, Charlotte  
BATEMAN, Leonora  
BHARGAV, Amba  
BOSS, Katherine  
BURNS, Eleanor  
DAVIES, Imogen  
DHALIWAL, Simran  
DOWNING, Jemima  
ENGLAND KERR, Abbie

FATTORINI, Anna-Lucia  
FOX, Ruth  
HALL, Emma  
HARROLD, Lydia  
HULLAIT, Kimren  
HYLAND-ESTÉVEZ, Nathalie  
JOANNOU, Elle  
JOHAL, Manreet  
JONES, Ellen  
KAILEY, Sumandeep  
KAINTH, Harsharan K  
KALIRAI, Syrandeep  
KHANNA, Georgia  
MARSHALL, Anna  
MARSHALL, Rose  
MEACHAM, Bethany  
MICAEL, Rebecca  
MOONEY, Florence  
NIAZ, Maria  
O'CONNOR, Hannah  
O'CONNOR, Niamh  
PAWAR, Harvinder  
RAHMAN, Maryam  
RAI, Harpreet  
RALSTON, Jenny  
SHARP, Nicolle  
SHIRLEY-PRIEST, Harriet  
SMITH, Jody  
SMITH, Natasha  
STEDMAN, Kate  
SULTAN, Hafsa  
THOMAS, Charis  
TOZER, Rebecca  
UPPAL, Pavandeep  
VOICE, Rhianna  
WADE, Kiera  
WATSON, Kira  
WILSON, Jessica  
WOODWARD, Freya  
WOUHRA, Romi  
ZAIDI, Hiyah  
ZARDOSHTI, Anahita



## **Veronica Day Retired 1983**

Veronica's daughter Nicola, informed us of the death of Veronica Day on 13 July 2015. She held the post of Head of the English Department at EHS for a number of years and retired in 1983. There was a Thanksgiving Service for Veronica's life at St Alphege Church, Solihull on 20 August.

"I am an 'Old Girl' and also teach Reception girls at EHS (in Westbourne). In the seventies, Mrs Day was my English and Form teacher. I remember her being

# Reunion for the class of 1962

*The older you become the more difficult it is to organize a school reunion and to locate old girls, but you can see from these happy photos that we triumphed, largely thanks to sterling detective work by Vivian Fuller (née Beale).*

On April 25th about thirty 1962 leavers, travelling from America and France as well as from all over the United Kingdom, gathered at the school for a delightful day

of reminiscence, good food and a fascinating tour of the school buildings. We were the last year to complete our education in the old Hagley Road buildings so for many this was their first visit to the Westbourne Road site. The new Sixth Form Centre was much admired and the mural was pored over with many exclamations of delight as old friends were recognized. We had a great day and enjoyed rekindling old friendships.

*Jill Brierley née Monkhouse*



## Obituaries



a kind and caring person who always wanted the best for her pupils. She had a lovely sense of humour and wonderful accent. This was particularly evident when she was discussing 'Twelfth Night' or George Orwell's '1984'. Even now, they remind me of her!"

*Lesley Bowler*

Mrs Day retired after nine years, seven as Head of the English Department, during which she committed herself wholeheartedly to the interests of the School both in the teaching of her subject and in many extracurricular activities which she supported.

*Laurel Leaves 1984*

### **Anne Earl** **Left School 1986**

The OGA was notified of the death of Anne Earl by daughter Harriet. Mrs Earl taught Classics at EHS in the 1980s and 1990s. A memorial service was held on Sunday 2 August 2015. Mrs Earl left EHS in 1986 to take up a post alongside her husband in Dulwich.

### **Rosemary Janet Cliffe** **(née Morton)**

Rosemary's husband Eric informed us of the death of Rosemary on 9 November

2014, in North Wales, aged 80. Rosemary went on to study at Girton College Cambridge having gained a scholarship to read mathematics. After graduation she worked as a statistician with the Medical Research Council in Oxford and later she taught mathematics at Nottingham Girls' High School.

### **Patricia Aldbury** **at school 1928-1937**

Michael Aldbury informed us of the death of Patricia on 22 January 2015, aged 95.

# Carols & Canapés

*Sunday, 6 December 2015*

*Following on from the success of last year, Margaret Harper put a call out to Old Girls to gather together again as a choir.*

Unfortunately many of the university students hadn't finished for the term so numbers were down on last year but Margaret needn't have worried, that true EHS spirit shone through and she soon whipped the ladies into shape. From memory, as a pupil, we would spend weeks rehearsing for the Christmas season, preparing for the end of term carol concert. However, within a matter of hours, Margaret

had the choir singing eight festive tunes, each in three parts! Those volunteered for solos rose to the challenge, producing beautiful, pitch perfect sounds. All too soon, the time for rehearsals had ended and there was just a brief opportunity to freshen up while the OGA committee spirited in to transform the hall into a festive candlelit scene.

The evening kicked off with an hour of drinks and canapés, providing a lovely setting for the audience (a mix of Old Girls and staff) and singers to mingle, catching up on news. In

addition, two stalls were run, selling knitted crafts and Phoenix cards, both raising money for charity; these proved a big hit with everyone. The choir performance then began, with the programme also incorporating opportunities for rousing audience participation. The singing was interspersed with seasonal readings, kindly selected by Elizabeth Mullenger.

It was a lovely atmosphere throughout the evening and everyone departed with a warm Christmassy glow, (but maybe that was just the mulled wine).





# Our Annual *OGA Summer Supper*



*This year's occasion tracked the usual format: guests arrived for pre-dinner drinks, enthusiastically greeting friends from the past with hoots of delight, followed with three hours of almost incessant chatter, catching up on news and reminiscing about escapades from days gone by.*

The evening was attended by both Old Girls and staff, all of whom still clearly hold EHS in their hearts. The delicious meal was preceded by the AGM, where the attendees were given a report on the Association's year, including a review of the functions held and donations awarded.

Once again, the EHS catering department ensured that guests were well fed in the cosy surroundings of the Drama Studio. A slideshow of old photographs also proved a talking point, with friends from decades before being recognised.

After the meal, Old Girl and Her Honour Judge, Sybil Thomas spoke about her memories of school and linked these to how she progressed onto and through her impressive career path in law; clearly - understanding the importance of cake, instilled in her at school, has stood her in good stead. Her talk was both interesting and highly entertaining, finished off with a display of her old school hats!

Sadly, at the end of the evening came our goodbyes to three leaving staff: **Lauren Samson**, Prep Science teacher; **Naila Khodabukus**, Senior School Chemistry teacher; and **Eilean Barnsley**, who retires after an impressive 35 years of working tirelessly in Westbourne. We wish them all the very best and hope they return to visit us soon.

The Summer Supper, as with all of our get-togethers, is a wonderful opportunity to make new friendships. It's amazing how many you can acquire at our gatherings, so if you haven't returned to school since leaving, please don't hesitate to make 2016 the year to revisit.

We look forward to welcoming you.



*Her Honour Judge, Sybil Thomas*





*Pauline Bryan, Diane Hurst and Anne Howarth*



*Eilean Barnsley and Lesley Bowler*

# A short history of *99 words*

*It happened at Vicky Bryant's 10th birthday party on a hot and sunny Saturday afternoon. The surface of the water in the garden pool just sparkled and everybody seemed to be having such fun. After years of hopeless, teeth-chattering sessions with instructors bellowing, I suddenly discovered I could swim - and I loved it.*

Encouraged by this unexpected success, next I wanted to try diving in the new EHS pool. Almost immediately I got the hang of the horizontal 'racing' version but I longed to master the beautiful vertical take-off dive with its elegant mid-air turn. Not so fast. Miss King blew her whistle: "Liz, be careful!" she called across to me. "You're arching really dangerously, just go easy..."

Almost 50 years later I still need her warning. At the moment I'm recovering from a slipped disc, the latest of many joint and muscle injuries. These are the visible symptoms of a rare genetic collagen deficiency known as EDS or Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome.

I have the Hypermobility-type EDS which can also bring invisible internal symptoms affecting both nervous system and organ function. The first signs often occur in childhood with 'double joints' and the excessively bendy movements Miss King had spotted.

It was during my last long-haul recovery that an idea came to me which continues to be a lifeline. A neck injury had left me able to walk



around or lie down fine, but unable to sit comfortably. Talking and then reading too became painful. I needed short pieces to read, books were hopeless. I began asking the same question to all the people whose voices I most wanted to hear: "If you had breath for no more than 99 words, what would they be?" Why 99? Before this I had made films about the history and art of Islam. It had stayed with me that, according to the Qu'ran, the Creator and all of Creation – can be expressed in just 99 names. 99 words then should be enough and a comfortable length for me to be able to read. More than I could ever have imagined came back from writers, musicians, artists, friends. All words were given freely and are now collected and published. 99 pence from the sale of each book goes towards Peace Direct, working with local peacebuilders in war zones to prevent and resolve conflict.

These days I'm still receiving and collecting 99 word pieces and, despite this latest injury, just beginning now to make my first tentative but jubilant strokes back in the pool.

Thank you Vicky Bryant. Thank you Miss King. Thank you EHS.

*Liz Gray*

*Photos credit Lei Yang*



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