



The Edgbaston High School for Girls Old Girls' Association Magazine

Laurel Leaves



Message from the Headmistress

Life is very busy as always at EHS. The girls continue to be a source of great pride and delight to us all and we work together towards the future success of the school.

This year has been the year of our building project. The work has been extensive and has caused quite a lot of disruption to school life. We have had endless fire alarms; so many that we have not had to have the regulation planned evacuations. However the end is in sight and as I write the school is literally full of builders working towards their deadline of 22 December. Once all is complete we will have an open house to which you will be invited to come and have a look around. (see more on p11)

I have enjoyed our OGA functions this year, particularly the OGA Annual General Meeting in the summer, which is always a lovely event

in Prep Hall looking out onto the terrace - and one year the weather may even be good enough to have drinks outside!

I would like to thank the OGA for their support and kindness. It is always a pleasure to meet EHS girls and to note the characteristics of true EHS girls that are passed through the generations.

With best wishes,
Ruth Weeks

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2010 Message from the OGA



We hope you enjoy this year's Laurel Leaves, which as usual includes news from old girls' birthdays

and wedding celebrations plus a special feature on girls who have received funding through the Initiative Awards and the Kathleen Elliott Travel Scholarship. We also keep up to date with the sterling hard work of Anne Howarth and the Sixth Form Enrichment Group in working through the School Archives.

At the Summer Supper, we said a fond farewell to a number of staff, who are now Honorary members of the OGA. These included Theresa Norris, who was Deputy Head of Prep, and responsible for many of the Prep productions over the years. Also Dr Francis Cook, Head of Physics; and Dr Christine Brown, Head of Classics; Georgina Taylor, Matron; and Sophie Gough, who taught violin. Laura Bartlett and Penny Birt were our guests at the supper - it was lovely to see them and reminisce.

This year also saw three key members of the School's team leave us - Rebekah Lowe, Director of Marketing; Sarah Ellingham, Registrar; and Sue Perry, School Secretary. All three were hugely supportive and their help with the

OGA was so valuable. I would like to personally thank them for their commitment and wish them well.

Helen Holmes

A big thank you to Helen Holmes who at the summer AGM stood down after a year as Chairman. Helen has done a fantastic job in updating Laurel Leaves incorporating the school colours and even designing a new logo for the Association. She has also added to the school website, the OGA Forum, where OGA members can add messages and contact other members. For Helen the past year has been one of juggling family commitments as both her parents were in hospital for an extended period, at the same time her husband broke his shoulder and was unable to drive. With two active sons this was a very busy time. We are very glad she has agreed to stay on the committee and continue to produce Laurel Leaves.

Due to unforeseen circumstances we were unable to confirm the appointment of Chairman which we hope will be resolved in the New Year.

During the past year I have been the OGA representative on the Development Appeal Committee, chaired by Sybil Thomas, which started with the 135th Birthday Lunch in January. About ninety Old Girls and Staff gathered for what proved to be a most enjoyable day. There was much catching up of news over coffee. Guests were

able to discover the additions to School life that have been made over the years and to witness, first hand, the exciting new building project. We hope you have all received a brochure about the new developments and will come to School to see the finished building. The new frontage considerably enhances the Westbourne Road aspect of the school.

Most recently the Appeal Committee together with the school, the OGA and the EHS Parents Association held a very successful Christmas Fair. The Octagon was overflowing with stalls and visitors. Members of the OGA manned the Cake Stall selling cakes brought in by Lower School children who had been let off homework the evening before. Needless to say we were inundated with wonderfully decorated cakes.

Our next OGA event is the Summer Supper on Thursday June 16th 2011 when there will be an opportunity to see the new library, the sixth form centre and all the other developments – do hope to see you there.

Anne Howarth



Old Girls 40th Birthday Reunion at School

With our fortieth milestone birthdays fast approaching another school reunion was in order. Recent Facebook connections had enabled many of us to get back in touch with each other, with a few dodgy old school photographs making an appearance, but there's no replacement for catching up in person. We were fortunate that the school offered the Prep School Hall as a venue for our get together and the catering team fed and watered us beautifully. Some of us hadn't seen each other since leaving school, over twenty years ago, but incredibly none of us had changed at all (well maybe Justine's

hair is now a shade pinker). We all had a fantastic time, catching up on news, reminiscing on past exploits and touring our way around the school – another staircase has appeared since our days but we could locate most of our old stomping grounds. And of course, more embarrassing photographs were shared – the age of the shoulder pads and perms will haunt us forever!



Class of '89 (maiden names) Back row: Justine Page, Ruth Sutton, Sarah Mitchell, Rosemary Hallam, Lucy Hughes, Anna Lefever. Front Row: Meryl Sharpe, Sam Missett, Rebecca Tilsley, Claire Carmalt, Sarah Missett



Edgbaston High School Old Girls' Association Committee 2010-11

President

Dr Ruth Weeks

Vice Presidents

Miss V. R. Belton (1976-1987)

Mrs S. J. Horsman (1987-1997)

Miss E. M. Mullenger (1998-2006)

Past Chairman

Helen Holmes (1980-1985)

Secretary

Diane Hirst (1947-1961)

Laurel Leaves

Helen Holmes (1980-1985)

Past Staff Representative

Stella Pinkess (1946-1960)

Staff Representative

Anna Stanley (left 1989)

General Committee

Celia Bell (left 1971)

Anne Howarth (1954-1961)

Ronnie Shoebottom (left 1968)

Legal Advisor

Miss S. Thomas (1961-1972)



Sixth Form Enrichment School Archives

Celeste Morton (right) and Francesca Wernham

One of the options for sixth form enrichment among the array of exciting things to do on a Wednesday afternoon is researching the school archives. Originally housed in a box room on the second floor, the archives have travelled around the school. Most documents are now being stored in cupboards under the hall stage and special items, until the building development, in two display cabinets in what was the conference room. This opportunity to delve into the school's past has been enthusiastically undertaken by two sixth formers, Francesca Wernham and Celeste Morton.



Francesca started at EHS when she was two and a half. She remembers the checked overall and the importance of her own peg. She continued into Prep where she was appointed Head Girl. One of her responsibilities as Head Girl was when the electric school bell broke, she had to rush out of lessons in order to ring a hand bell to denote

the end of every lesson. In the sixth form she is studying Early Modern History, Latin, Mathematics and Art. The sixth form has helped her to become more independent and to be able to map out her future career pathway. She is hoping to study History with a view to becoming a teacher. She has offers from Durham, Cardiff and Sussex.

Celeste Morton started at EHS in Year 6. She is studying Modern History, English, Art and Spanish. She is hoping to go on to study Graphic Design preceded by an Art Foundation course. She has always

been interested in Art from the time when she lost her school jumper and was able to identify it in lost property because of the pattern of paint stains which matched those on her school skirt. She feels the Sixth Form, as well as improving her organisational skills and self motivation, has also helped her to dress better and from Speech Day to be able to walk in high heels. When initially choosing their enrichment courses in Year 12, it was Fran who was very keen to take the archive option but fearing she might be the only one she persuaded Celeste who was sitting next to her to also put her name down.

In the last year they have researched the life of one of the earliest teachers, Miss Edith Coombe, who went on to become a missionary in China and was later killed in the Boxer Rebellion trying to defend her pupils.

Keen to add to the archival records they have spent time investigating the original letters and reports about school during the Second World War, particularly when the school returned from its evacuation to Stroud and how everyone coped with day to day life during the Blitz. To find out more they conducted a taped interview with Lady Brown, wife of the School's President. Patricia Good, as she was then, was one of only a few girls who boarded at school during the war. She remembers how the headmistress, Miss Casswell, who was indomitable in keeping the school going, was so kind to the boarders. During air raids they had to shelter in the school

cellars, hastily converted by Whelan the caretaker. This interview will now be part of the archives.

Armed with their knowledge of life at school in the war, Fran and Celeste took on the roles of two Old Girls who had left school to take up important jobs helping the war effort. Suitably dressed, Celeste in army uniform in her role as a driver of senior army staff and Fran in a smart costume as someone working at Bletchley Park cracking the German codes they spent an afternoon entertaining Year 6 who had been studying the second world war in History. When asked questions they responded in character finding the questions quite challenging, particularly "How does the Enigma machine work?" Fortunately studying mathematics Fran was quite able to provide a satisfactory answer. Year 6 were also able to dress up in old school uniforms including boaters or felt hats, camel coats and of course

brown leather gloves. Obviously their performance in these roles was so convincing that Year 6 girls now in Year 7 continue to call them by their fictional names Edith and Betty. They have both worked so well together and undertaken all the tasks with such enthusiasm that they have done a great deal to raise the profile of the importance of the archives to the school today.

Archives are of course a continuous record of the school and EHS is always delighted to have donations of any items of life at school, such as school reports, items of clothing and photographs, all of which help to bring to life EHS through its one hundred and thirty five years right up to the present day.

Anne Howarth

The Old Girls' Association welcomes its new members

Olivia Ash
Lavanya Asirvatham
Emma Bates
Savannah Bennett
Miriam Bleetman
Stephanie Bostock
Rosanna Bovenzi
Laura Cartwright
Elizabeth Case
Samantha Cobb
Evelyn Costigan
Martha Davies
Bette Dillon-Parkin
Rebecca Dimitrov
Samantha Doogood
Suzanne El-Shazly
Sarah English

Rebecca Evans
Ellen Ewer
Catherine Fox
Sophie Francis-Cansfield
Martha Gendy
Sophie George
Sophie Glover
Ayda Hajihosseini
Jessica Hashemi
Alice Higgins
Natalia Homer
Sara Hussain
Katherine Jacks
Anne Jefferies (née Walker)
Rebecca Johnson
Georgina Kiely
Rachel Kitchen

Alice Lee
Sarah Milford
Katie-Maria Moen
Olivia Moore
Lily Moroney
Merna Muharib
Helen Myatt
Kate Nicholls
Lucy Nightingale
Kirinjeet Nijjar
Shona Patel-Mehta
Elisabeth Paul
Harkiet Paul
Emily Peddle
Corinne Pincher
Elizabeth Reece
Brogan Ross

Rosalyn Sansom
Asmaeossadat Shirazi
Sai Bavane Sivayogaiswaran
Kathryn Smith
Kate Sparrow
Helen Tatlow
Lyndsey Thomas
Charlotte Towers
Rosalind Turner
Francesca Vincent
Sunisha Viridi
Chloe Walford
Eleanor Wasserberg
Deborak White
Sabah Yaqoob



Initiative Awards 2010 and Kathleen Elliott Travel Scholarship

Each year the Old Girls' Association and the Friends of Edgbaston High School award girls funding to help them towards achieving a personal aim.

Last year the Old Girls awarded funding via the Kathleen Elliott Travel Scholarship, set up many years ago to help girls in their travels.

This year, EHS's current Head Girl, Helen Roberts was awarded funding to help her to travel to Romania on a charity expedition.

'The Kili Girls', Rachel Bleetman, Chloe Smith, Laura Kennea and Stephanie Bache were helped in their climb of Kilimanjaro.

Sarah Elphinston used her award to visit a Zimbabwe-based charity.

And Ella Peterman worked in India before starting University in September.

These five pages show how wisely the girls used their Awards, and what they learned from their experiences.



On August 21st 2010, I travelled to a place called Slatina in Romania to spend some time working with disadvantaged children. I stayed in rented apartments along with 19 other volunteers. The children we cared for were mainly from gypsy villages around Slatina. Most of them lived with a grandparent or just other children, in houses which were built by hand and were very basic. The houses had no toilet, water had to be fetched from a well and there were often 13 or more people staying in one house.

The children continued to make me smile throughout my time there. Their laughter and love for each other was amazing. During our stay we played lots of England vs Romania football - which we obviously lost - every time. We did lots of arts and crafts, including trying to paint the children's faces, but somehow we always managed to return home covered in much more paint than them!

The experiences I had and the friends I made were incredible and I am already planning another trip out there next summer. I will be hoping to do some fundraising before I go and so would greatly appreciate any donations. The money does go to a fantastic cause: to keep all the children healthy and smiling. Thank you in advance.

Helen Roberts



7 days and 7 blisters later ... 4 EHS girls reached the top of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest point in Africa.

As far as summer holidays go, travelling with your best friends to Africa to climb a mountain for 7 days, with no showers, straighteners or satin sheets, is pretty unusual. However, 4 girls from year 12 at EHS did just this to raise money for the West Midlands Air Ambulance Service.

Mount Kilimanjaro is the tallest free-standing mountain in the world, peaking at 5895m above sea level; but this didn't frighten us. After planning the climb for over a year and fundraising tirelessly over this period, we finally arrived in Africa with trembling hands and a roaring determination. The first 5 days were mostly uphill, through rainforest, desert and rocky terrain and whilst we thought we were doing rather

well ... we saw our 15 porters carrying 20kg worth of suitcases, tents and cooking equipment on their heads ... running past us. We pushed on and during the very early hours of the 5th morning we started our walk to the summit. Temperatures dropped to minus 20 degrees, it was pitch black (this is because if you saw what you were climbing ... you would gather some intelligence and not do it) and we walked until 9am where we reached the Uhuru peak. Luckily, there is a signal at the top of Kilimanjaro and so we all managed to rack up huge phone bills to boast to the whole world where we were!

After such excitement, we remembered one thing ... we still had to get down. So we spent the next 2 days walking/falling down until we reached the gate. After a tearful goodbye to our incredible guides and porters and playing the tourist by buying the t shirt,

we headed back to the hotel for our first shower in a week! We have never appreciated beds, showers and toilets so much! We spent the next two days at an African safari which was fantastic and despite the car breaking down right next to the angry hippos we had an incredible time and were very sad to be leaving.

This climb was very important to one member of our group in particular as we were raising money for the West Midlands Air Ambulance Service who saved her sister after a car crash and so we are continuing to fundraise for the charity. We have held a car wash, a cake sale, a non-uniform day and a ball in late September as the final event. Our friends and families have been donating money online at www.justgiving.com/climbkilimanjaro2010 and we would appreciate any donations as this is such a worthy cause.

Rachel Bleetman, Chloe Smith,
Laura Kennea and Stephanie Bache



In October Sarah Elphinston, accompanied by her mother, used the Initiative Award funds to embark on a visit to see the work of a Zimbabwe-based charity and here she relays her experiences.

The time spent in the very rural village of Gokwe, where the 'St Agnes' charity is based, was eye-opening. It was unbelievable to see how under-developed the village was; pumping their water up from the ground, their experience of frequent electricity cuts, sand-based roads, no pavements and no proper shopping places, to mention a few things! It was exactly like something described in a geography text book with people still living in mud huts, and long drops (holes in the ground) as toilets. It was mesmerizing to think how we live in the west: there really is a great contrast between the two worlds.

The premises that the charity was based on was almost like a mini complex with a convent, orphanage, junior and nursery school, health centre, healing centre, clothes-making workshop, church and many gardens. The charity is extremely resourceful as it is able to be self-sufficient: the gardens provide their food and the clothes-making centre makes school uniforms. The nuns from the convent help to run the orphanage, healing and health centre.



The charity is in the process of building a girls' high school to cater for older girls in secondary education up to A2 level. Their vision is that it will be like Edgbaston High School, with a uniform of the same colour! They also hope to cater for boarders in the near future. This is the very worthwhile project that Edgbaston High School is going to help under the campaign name 'Buy a Brick!' to help raise funds for the building materials to create these classroom blocks.

When we visited the school they put on a spectacular show, showing us a range of activities, such as a drama based on infidelity, which was absolutely incredible; their English was so clear and their acting knocked spots off many a school drama production here in the U.K! The dance they performed with dumbbells was very unique and so typical of the African culture! Last but not least was their singing, which had the beautiful harmonies that we frequently see in African singing enhanced

by the enthusiasm and excellent musical training of the children, all accompanied by African drumming of course!

The school has around 700 students and is the most popular and successful school in the area. It was great to see that they do not want to be totally reliant on handouts - they wish to use any donated funds to help themselves. They were also very proud to show us what they had bought with the money they had raised from organising a non-uniform day: the funds raised bought sports clothes for the children, a generator to provide electricity when power cuts happen and much other equipment to benefit their school. One of the classrooms which really made an impression on me was the ICT room which had only three computers to be shared between 45 pupils in a class - that is a ratio of 15 pupils to one computer! And to think we grumble if the icon we 'click' doesn't connect straight away!

We spent each day visiting each of these different projects to find out their history, how they are being run, funded and the benefits that they will provide to the local community. On one day we set off to visit a

school that was being built. To get there we travelled in the back of a flat-bed vehicle down a very bumpy red-sand track road for what seemed like hours! Eventually we found the foundations of the school, which had only just been started and was comprised of only the bare structure with wooden poles and a thatched roof in place. A meeting was called, where the Head Villager shouted to all the nearby villagers to come. We started the meeting with about four people and then slowly but surely more and more villagers turned up until by the end of the meeting there were about 20 people - a perfect example of 'African timing' how laid back everyone there is!

The villagers showed so much faith that this school would eventually be completed and even if it would not benefit them directly they saw the vision of the school as being a benefit for their children and their children's children and so on.

When in Bulawayo we visited a number of projects such as 'Family Impact', and an Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) run Christian school which administers a special scheme enabling underprivileged children,

particularly from orphanages, to attend. This was particularly touching for both my mum and me as she had helped to set up an ACE school which I attended in my early education.

One of the charities that really stood out for me was 'Precious Lives', run by a husband and wife team, for whom I have much respect. Their charity seeks to help girls who live on the streets, many of whom are involved in prostitution, to provide a better future and for those who have babies to keep them. Sadly, many of their babies born are as a result of rape or simply those born out of wedlock. Precious Lives helps the girls, who can be as young as 14, to get their lives back on track by providing them with employment opportunities so that they can support themselves and their babies. They were a really inspirational couple with all the self sacrifice that they made!

One of the strongest messages that came across during my stay in Zimbabwe was how so many of the people we met were willing to sacrifice so much of themselves and what little they had for others. For

them it was not about helping the largest number of people: they do it even if it's just for one person, which is so personal, and is so unlike Britain and much of the western cultures, that can be overly concerned with personal gain.

Another touching moment of the trip was not just being treated to special displays but just playing simple hand-clapping with the children. It was so magical seeing the joy that we brought to them through these very basic games.

During my visit I was able to learn about the fragile political situation in Zimbabwe which gave me such an insight to their whole culture and my own general knowledge. My overall experience was very challenging with many lessons learnt, especially the art of patience and waiting! Although this trip was not amazing in the way that most people will have expected it to be, it was amazing in a different way as it allowed me to experience so many different things and show me a whole other way of life. My experience will stay with me for a very long time; you only have to ask my mum!

Sarah Elphinston



On January 17th 2010 I arrived in the manic and bustling city of Jaipur, India; tired, dazed and in extreme culture shock.

It seemed an age since I had booked the trip a year earlier, but here I was at last standing in the crazy streets full of vendors of every kind, constantly merging lanes of overtaking traffic with all sorts of animals and people weaving throughout.

I had signed up to stay in India with a volunteer and travel company called i-to-i. I read about the Theatre and Education project taking place in Jaipur and instantly knew it was the one for me.

It took several days to acclimatise to the sights and smells (!) of India (one of the country's charms being that it manages to surprise you at every turn) but once I did, I immediately fell in love with the magical country.

Initially I taught in four different schools, either with another volunteer or by myself. I taught and played drama

have so much fun in the rehearsals and how excited and enthusiastic they became when working towards the play.

I will never forget arriving in school on our first morning in Jaipur. My friend and I were told that we would be observing a drama class, so that we could pick up some ideas and start teaching the next day. Of course, in true Indian style, this did not go to plan. Five minutes into the lesson, the teacher simply turned round to look at us, beckoning us to 'teach'. With no lesson plan or idea of the children's capabilities, we had been thrown straight in at the deep end. This, combined with the fact that the children could not speak very good English, proved quite a difficult task! However we soon learnt the tricks of the trade and improved our teaching styles, adapting to the different ages and capabilities of the children we taught and even picked up some Hindi, the local language. I quickly learnt that Indians are known for their spontaneity and this

I spent my last week in Jaipur teaching English in a tiny slum school. This was, by far, the most rewarding experience during my time in India. I felt humbled walking into the school's tiny, dusty classroom and being met by smiling, bright and eager faces. The children arrived at school each day, proudly wearing their pristine uniforms, beaming with enthusiasm for the day ahead. It saddens me to think how we in the UK take our education for granted and how these children are so grateful for the opportunity to go to school with little or no equipment or facilities.

After I completed the project, I used the rest of the money I had saved up and earned for the trip and went travelling with friends I met in Jaipur. I visited many cities and towns; seeing and experiencing the wonders that are India. My lasting memory of India was its people. Without a doubt they are the most hospitable, friendly and



games with the children, encouraging them to use their creativity and imagination, build on teamwork and develop their confidence. The games were extremely successful in allowing the children to have fun and have a well deserved break from the constant pressures they faced in other subjects. In several of the schools I also co-wrote and directed plays with the children. It was very rewarding watching the children

would not be the last time I would be thrown into situations unknowingly - the most nerve racking was being made to give an impromptu speech in front of 500 people!

All of these experiences really helped to develop my confidence and stood me in good stead for the rest of my teaching time, such as taking a drama class of adults older than myself, a few weeks later.

humble people I have ever met. I made some friends for life in India and have unforgettable memories.

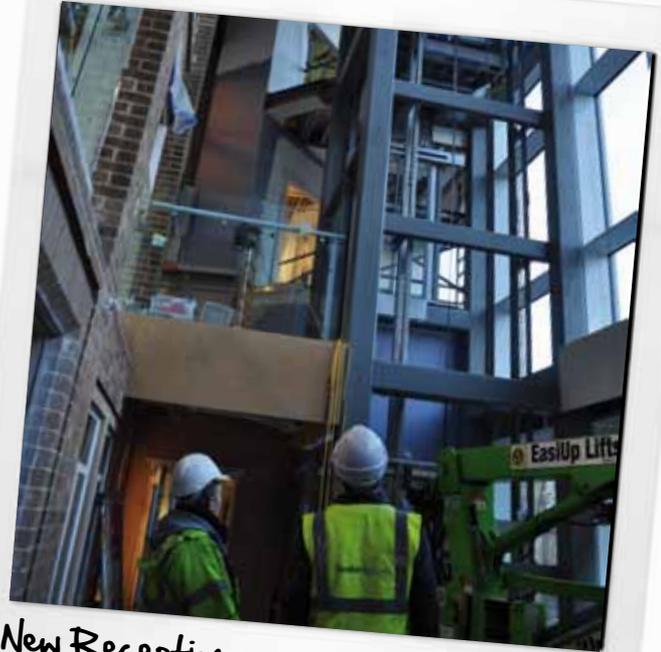
My India trip finished in Mumbai in May and I returned to England - experiencing a reverse culture shock with England's calmness!

Ella Peterman
EHS Leaver 2009

School Development



Front aspect of new lobby area at Main Reception on Westbourne Road



New Reception area, mezzanine floor and glass elevator shaft to the Sixth Form centre above



Ongoing work from front aspect



Time Capsule Burial in July 2010

Old Girls' News

Amy Erhorn (née Turner) got married this year on September 11th at Dissington Hall in Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne. There were five old girls at the wedding!



Back row from left to right:
Amy's younger sister and bridesmaid
Frances Turner, Deborah Newman,
and Anna Sutcliffe.

Front row from left to right:
Claire Bowman, Amy Erhorn and
new husband Dr. Stephen Erhorn.



Miss Mullenger sent a photograph from the reception of Roma Das Gupta's marriage to Richard Brogden, August 2010.

EHS girls attending were Celine Southall, Alice Tanner, Lara Fatah and Rinku Banga.

Congratulations to
Gwendolen
Foster-Smith
(née Steeds)
100 this year

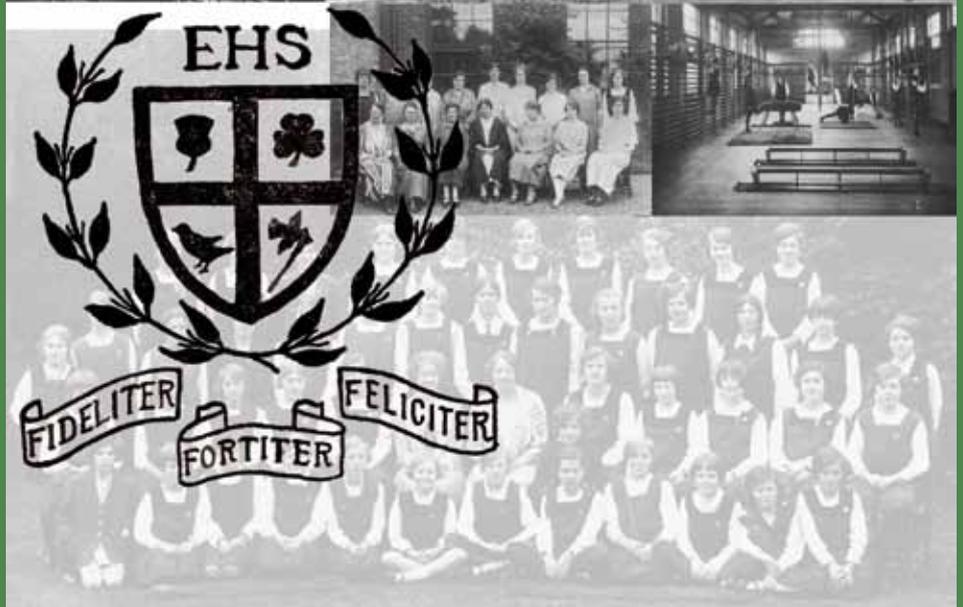
Gwendolen Joan Foster-Smith was born on the 8th December 1910 and started at EHS in 1920.



Her family lived in Barnsley Road Edgbaston and she numbered among her school friends, the Cadburys and the Chamberlains. She met Neville Chamberlain at Dorothy Chamberlain's Christmas party when he showed all the children his orchid collection in his greenhouses. She remembers the then Headmistress Miss Tarleton Young as being very elegant and aristocratic. Her successor Miss Collier, Gwendolen thought was much more down to earth and took a great interest in her pupils.

At school she was introduced to Laurence Binyon, the poet who knew her as "Cousin Sophie Lloyd's granddaughter", Sophie Lloyd being a descendent of Charles Lloyd of Birmingham.

Gwendolen's first job after leaving school was at the BBC in



Broad Street. She worked for the general manager, Percy Edgar who is remembered for starting Children's Hour from Birmingham with "Uncle Pat".

In June 1932 she married Harry Foster Smith who had received the Military Cross in the First World War. Until they returned to the Midlands in 1947 her married life was spent in Brazil, Colombia and Canada. They eventually moved to Anglesey in the 1960s where Gwendolen continues to live now.

The two sixth formers Francesca Wernham and Celeste Morton designed this birthday card using original photographs from the

archives to send to Gwendolen as congratulations from all at EHS, past and present.



EHS's Little Soap Star

Just like eating vegetables you've grown yourself there is something similarly satisfying about using a hand made bar of soap that you have either made yourself or know exactly where it's come from... Not only that – but soap made by a company so open it lets you see the entire process cover to cover in pictures, follow their day to day goings-on on Facebook and Twitter and if that's not good enough, then a place that willingly throws open its workshop doors and not only invites you to witness the procedure and teaches you how to make it yourself....

Quite simply, Emma Heathcote-James (EHS 1980-1995) is on a mission to get the world using old fashioned synthetic free soap again... as she says "our skin is our biggest organ and we need to look after it! The thing is, it's not complicated – any skincare regime should start with 100% pure soap" – and the good news is, an old girl has created just that - along with the choice to either buy it or as she says "if you can make a cake, then, without doubt you can make your own Little batches of cold processed soap".

Good green skincare should use a few synthetic products as possible – horrified once she learnt what the ingredients were on the backs of her favourite products, Emma set about getting back to basics. A good cleanser is olive oil – pure and simple... you don't need anything added to it – just a bottle of pure olive oil.... "We developed a solid version of it and our 100% Extra Virgin Olive Oil bar is a perfect

cleanser, lather it up, rub into your face and use a cotton pad to help remove eye makeup and bobs your uncle". The same with the other soaps – all rich in top grade oils they are all perfect to lather up and use as a shaving foam for legs and underarms..."

Living in an old 15th century cottage in the village square of Bretforton, South Worcestershire the Little Soap School naturally evolved as an arm to Emma's Little Soap Company which she founded back in 2008. Converted outhouses form the Little Workshop at the back of the cottage, and The Fleece Inn next door but one offers the perfect pit stop for a hearty lunch in front of a roaring log fire... as Emma said, "everything just came together so naturally and we're now on the map for an alternative team bonding day as well as for individuals or friends who fancy a luxury day in the countryside being let loose with all my oils and kit learning how to make their own batches to take home with them." If you have an arty lean then all the better as soap making is often described as the blending of chemistry and art so only the sky becomes your limit in terms of the endless possibilities for creating recipes, textures, natural colours and blends. Emma's journey has gone from whipping up various

concoctions on her Aga for family and friends (and indeed their pets!) to creating the eco-friendly Little Soap Company in 2008. "I created it as a distraction to get me off the laptop and put my stamp on something which was my own" she mused "too many contracts I'd help turn other businesses around with my PR hat on and was tired of having my creative juices restricted and ideas stopped by a group of board members... I wanted free reign." And that free reign has meant her brand of handmade ethical bars now line the shelves of one of the UK's leading supermarkets and is spreading up and down the country. "Within just six months of trading, we were taken on by our six nearest Waitrose branches in Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, and we've now spread further afield to include Wolverhampton and of course Harborne which of course is my old stomping ground."



Destinations of 2010 Leavers

When Waitrose decided to stock Little Soap, Emma was immediately classed as one of their Local Heroes - an accolade in itself but also Little Soap was only the second company to be taken on within their first 12 months of trading. But not one to put all her eggs in one basket, Little really has gone large and is now stocked in local National Trust properties as well as making bespoke bars for Aga, organic skincare companies and eco-friendly hotel chains.

“‘Carpe diem’ is something I live by - life is what you make it and I have always insisted business can be fun - who would have thought you could do so much with a bar of home made soap...?!” And who would - from doing travelling souk style “ladies that lunch” shows amid stately homes one day, to teaching a brewery how she makes their bespoke beer soap the next, to delivering to a trendy deli or simply making the products by hand, or spending a day boxing and labelling, to teaching, to going into schools and talking about it, mentoring YE groups, to providing demo’s and hosting alternative office party soap workshops or just doing the usual marketing and admin no two days are ever the same.... “It’s just a case of having firm faith of making things happen - and so long as you wake up with fire in your belly, a smile on your face and a want to get out of bed and work work work on your dream then it means you’re doing the right thing” says Emma, “and everything I learnt in those four walls of EHS are most definitely the foundation stones of Little!”

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Name	Destination
Abigail Wright	Aberystwyth, University of Wales
Roseanna Boventi	University of Bedford
Merna Muharib	University of Birmingham
Harkiet Pau	University of Birmingham
Sunisha Viridi	University of Birmingham
Sabah Yaqoobi	University of Birmingham
Catherine Fox	Birmingham, Newnham College
Rachel Kitchen	University of Brighton
Rosalind Turner	University of Bristol
Chloe Walford	University of Bristol
Sophie George	Bristol, University of West of England
Alice Higgins	University of Cambridge
Ellen Ewer	Cardiff University
Katherine Jacks	University of Durham
Roshina Ruth Iqbal	University of East Anglia
Kate Nicholls	Edinburgh, University of St Andrews
Sophie Francis-Cansfield	University of Glasgow
Deborah White	University of Glasgow
Anisah Shoaib	University of Huddersfield
Kirinjeet Nijjar	Kent, Medway School of Pharmacy
Jessica Hashemi	University of Leeds
Brogan Ross	Leeds College of Art
Olivia Ash	Leeds Metropolitan University
Rachel Hendrickse	Leeds Metropolitan University
Helen Myatt	University of Liverpool
Kate Canavan Sparrow	University of Liverpool
Katie-Maria Moen	London, University of Arts
Ayda Hajihosseainloo	London, University College
Riman Khangure	London, King’s College (University of London)
Alice Daeun Lee	London, King’s College (University of London)
Elizabeth Reece	London, Queen Mary University of London
Asmaeossadat Shirazi	London, Queen Mary University of London
Elisabeth Paul	London, Royal Holloway College, University of London
Sarah Milford	University of Manchester
Josie Smith	University of Manchester
Stephanie Bostock	Manchester Metropolitan University
Lyndsey Thomas	University of Middlesex
Sai Bavane Sivayogaiswaran	University of Northampton
Rebecca Johnson	University of Nottingham
Georgina Kiely	University of Nottingham
Lavanya Asirvatham	Nottingham Trent University
Martha Davies	Nottingham Trent University
Natalia Homer	Nottingham Trent University
Shona Patel-Mehta	Nottingham Trent University
Olivia Thomas	Nottingham Trent University
Helen Tatlow	Oxford University
Martha Gendy	Paris, Institut d’Ecoles Politiques de Paris
Emma-Louise Bates	Shropshire, Harper Adams University College
Charlotte Smith	University of Southampton
Sara Hussain	University of Warwick
Elizabeth Case	University of Worcester
Sophie Glover	University of Worcester



Obituaries

Mike Birks – died 3rd March, 2010, aged 62 years

In September 1977, LV15 lined up outside room 9 for their first English lesson with the new (male - shock, horror!) teacher who'd just arrived – Mr Birks. On entering the room, we could see from the way the desks were arranged around the edges of the room, all facing inwards, (not the usual paired, 'facing forwards' arrangement) that he was going to be different! And he certainly was! In recent conversations I have had at Old Girls' gatherings, words like, 'inspirational,' 'unique,' 'caring,' and 'brilliant' have been used by other former pupils about this teacher who was hard to miss or ignore. He regularly directed lessons from unusual places in the room – perched on a pointy radiator, balanced on a narrow window ledge, rocking on a chair or just pacing round, unnervingly stopping on your shoulder (and obviously pulling faces behind you because classmates opposite would guffaw!!!) No, he was definitely one of a kind!

Lessons were rarely boring; he made light work of our 'O' Level texts, 'Julius Caesar' and 'Lord of the Flies,' and got our creative brains working in a number of original ways. We had to write the biography of an anonymous lady, step by step, based on only the very bare bones of information which we had to 'flesh out' with detail. In class, we discussed various possibilities for these facts, including 'racy' information (she was caught bathing nude in a lake in London!) - that soon got us talking! Yes, he was original!

He praised individuality and I remember his reading out aloud a vivid description about a girl falling off her horse and 'dripping mud like melted chocolate onto the ground,' written by my best friend, Patricia Ridsdale! On another occasion, the class seemed unusually bored with the 'O' level material we were working on. Mr Birks was clearly frustrated with our lack lustre mood and suddenly exploded, 'Short of

turning cartwheels around the room, there's nothing more I can do to make this interesting. Just make an effort to look interested- PLEASE!' Certainly one of a kind..! But we did get good 'O' level results with his guidance and, on reflection, we must have been grateful!

Then there were the stage productions – I was very lucky that Mike Birks heard some of my musical compositions. In UV, he was going to produce 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' but none of us 'O' level pupils were allowed to be in it. Being a gifted pianist himself, he decided to have music in his play, and I was lucky enough to be chosen to write it. It was for choir, piano and flute, and I remember coming into school during the Easter holiday to record it. We all saw him in a different light that day – away from textbooks, sharing his passion for music.

Mike helped me discover that I had a gift for English, and his conscientious guidance took me through 'A' Level to study the subject at University. He inspired me to become an English teacher myself, but to continue composing music. I always wondered how he had discovered his passion & gift for teaching; in later correspondence, I did pose that question. His response was that he had 'always wanted to be a teacher,' that he'd 'tried other jobs – none worked! Not enough magic.' I have come to understand exactly what he meant!!!!

After I left EHS, Mike became a dear friend to me, and then to my family. He came to our wedding, to dinner and kept in touch through the 33 years since those teenage days in room 9! Two years ago, he came to the Town Hall to the premiere of my musical work, 'The Magic Jigsaw,' where my daughter, Bethany, sang solo – he was happy, thrilled and proud – a lovely way to remember him.

He remained an intensely private man to the end, but I was able to speak with him by phone a couple of weeks before he died; it was to tell him that Bethany had been awarded a place to start at EHS this last September. 'Your life has come round in a huge circle,' he observed, 'and you'll enjoy going back to EHS again.'

How right he was – it's wonderful to be back, this time as a parent. How sad it is that we can't share any of the times ahead with him!

Lindsay Lucas

Two former members of Prep Staff died in 2010. Mrs Irene Moss passed away last August at the splendid age of 93. She taught the second form (now year 5) from 1970 to 1982. Mrs Moss had previously been a Civil Servant, and also spent some years at home with her two children. She therefore qualified as a teacher "late in life" and her post at EHS was her first and only one. She is well remembered for her great interest and talent in the areas of drama and poetry. She produced many plays with the children and also took a large part in the Prep Poetry (reciting) Competition, a popular annual event. We are told that she also wrote poetry.

Another nonagenarian, Mrs Stella Brittle died at the age of 91 last January. She taught the 1 Uppers (Year 4) from 1971 to 1977 and many staff and children have a recollection of her splendid attire when she appeared as Mrs Tiggywinkle at the Prep party to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the School!

Diane Hirst

Dr Joan Gray died in January 2010, having attended EHS from 1931-1937.

Miss Maisie Harris who died earlier this year taught at EHS from the 1950s to the 1980s. She will be remembered as a sincere teacher of Religious Education, whose enjoyment of her subject came over in her lessons. Her strong faith was reflected in her choice of end of term readings, when we learnt about women of faith such as Gladys Aylward. Interested in foreign travel Miss Harris was a member of staff on several of the school holidays abroad organised by Mrs Ridsdale. In retirement she was able to indulge this interest and travel widely, often coming into school to tell the staff all about her trips.

Heather Inglis (née Shilton) died suddenly on 6th March 2010. Heather attended EHS from 1943 -1947.

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