

LAUREL LEAVES



The Edgbaston High School
Old Girls' Association Magazine

Summer 2023

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CO CHAIRS' MESSAGE



“ We look forward to the next few months...
Lizzie and Anne ”

Hello everyone and welcome to the Summer 2023 edition of Laurel Leaves.

The last year seems to have passed very quickly! We have been able to resume events and activities which took place before the Covid crisis.

In March, we held our annual 'Open House' event. Sadly this coincided with a rail strike, but we still welcomed a diverse range of former pupils who were intrigued to look around the school and see how it has changed.

In July, we held a new event, our Family Fun Day and Netball Tournament. Ex-pupils attended and enjoyed a lively game of netball, umpired by PE teacher Sara Hewison, followed by a picnic, drinks and a theme typical of EHS - cakes!

One of the most exciting things which has taken place this year has been the decision, taken at the AGM, to change the name of the organisation to EHS Laurels. Read the separate article in this edition which explains the rationale behind this decision.

We look forward to the next few months when we will be enjoying a drinks event in London at the end of August and a reunion for the leavers of 2013 at the end of September.

Very best wishes to all
Anne Lacey and Lizzie Hartley-Lever

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADMISTRESS



Someone asked me recently whether we were EHS, Edgbaston High School, or Edgbaston High School for Girls. My reply was that we were all of them because it isn't about the name, it is about the people; it is the people that make our school such a fantastic place to belong.

However, to use our full name, Edgbaston High School for Girls, is always a privilege as it speaks to the 147 years of history in educating and empowering young women; we are a fantastic school, but then you do not need me to tell you that. The community of students and teachers, past and present is phenomenally strong. Time after time we have come together to celebrate, to innovate, to support and to hold each other in the light through difficult times.

I know this because I am fortunate enough to experience it every day. And I am always confident that whatever the time of the year, or

what our community is experiencing the girls and staff will welcome guests, speak with authenticity and warmth, and show how impressive they are. So, when the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) called one morning in March to tell me that we were going to be inspected, I was not worried. We had been expecting it as it was a year overdue and although my stomach did hit the floor momentarily (no-one likes to be put under the microscope) that did not last long. There is never a dull moment at EHS, and I knew that the inspectors would see what I see all the time - an engaging, funny, warm, intelligent, articulate and inclusive community.

I do not need eight external people to tell me how brilliant my school is, but sometimes it is nice to have validation of what we do. Not only were we compliant in all eight areas that are inspected, including safeguarding and leadership, the quality of the Pupils' academic and other achievements was judged to be 'Excellent' and the quality of the Pupils' Personal Development was also judged to be 'Excellent'. The headline judgements were as follows:

- Pupils are extremely articulate and enjoy expressing themselves in and out of the classroom.
- Pupils' excellent progress is encouraged by well-established and highly effective individual support systems including from their peers.
- Pupils show outstanding communication skills and a highly positive and successful emphasis on collaborative learning.
- Pupils actively support each other in a collaborative atmosphere, respecting and recognising individual differences and needs.
- Pupils are warmly inclusive in all aspects of school life, appreciating and celebrating the diversity of their community.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of self-confidence, self-awareness and resilience.

The report goes through in detail what our pupils from Westbourne to the Sixth Form achieve in multiple areas, and the words do speak to all ages. Reading the report made my heart soar, as it was a school that I instantly recognised. It spoke of how the pupils demonstrate extensive subject knowledge and understanding across the different areas of learning, that their academic achievement is excellent, that they are excellent

communicators, comfortable in the digital world, and are highly effective learners who rapidly develop a wide array of study skills. It also spoke of their enthusiasm for opportunities beyond the curriculum to stretch themselves intellectually, their eagerness to learn and a willingness to use their initiative.

Of particular importance to me is the personal development of the pupils. I subscribe to the view of our first headmistress, Miss Cooper, who said that school is not simply about gaining knowledge, but of understanding the responsibility we must have to all in society, both locally and globally. So, I was doubly glad to see that the inspectors acknowledged that EHS pupils of all ages develop high levels of self-confidence, are self-reflective, show strong resilience, have well developed decision-making skills, care for one another, and have excellent social awareness.

The report also spoke of their appreciation for the many opportunities to take on one of the many leadership positions, and are naturally inclusive, demonstrating an excellent breadth in their understanding of diversity.

Throughout the years, teachers have challenged students both inside and outside of lessons, to instill in them the love of learning that is necessary to be independent, creative, aspirational and intellectually curious. After four years at Edgbaston High School for Girls I now know hundreds of current and past pupils and when a girl leaves EHS she is ready for whatever she wants to do next. I can confidently say that they have, and will continue to become, the caring leaders of the future.

Clare Macro

OGA COMMITTEE

President

Mrs Clare Macro, Headmistress

Vice Presidents

Dr R A Weeks (former Headmistress, 2006-2019)

Miss E M Mullenger (former Headmistress, 1998-2006)

Mrs S J Wakefield née Horsman (former Headmistress, 1987-1997)

Co-Chairs

Elizabeth Hartley-Lever (1998-2009) and Anne Lacey (staff, 1992-2018)

Secretary

Lesley Bowler (1969-1980)

Treasurer

Lindsay Lucas (née Farnath, 1973-1981)

Past Staff Representative

Stella Pinkess (1946-1960)

General Committee

Priti Bansel-Branch (née Bansel, 1985-1997)

Chris Evans (staff, 1998-2017)

Sophie Glover (2010)

Sally Hartley (Head of Prep School)

Anne Howarth (née Stirling, 1954-1961)

Elizabeth Hughes (nee Case, 2003-2010)

Sarah Learmonth (1993-2009)

Jennifer Powell (née Mayhew, 1999-2009)

Caroline Sprackman (née Wall, 1998-2003)

Legal Advisor

Miss S Thomas (1961-1972)

Production of 'Laurel Leaves' publication

Helen Holmes (née Maros, 1980-1985)

A SECOND CAREER?

I retired from being Head of Religious Studies at EHS in 2012, after 13 very happy years. It had long been a dream of my husband and I to 'do something useful' when we finished paid employment and at the age of 60, with our four children settled, we left them and our (then) five grandchildren and set out for Mozambique in October the same year.

We had a two year assignment with Wycliffe Bible Translators, an organisation which does literacy work amongst people whose language is transmitted orally rather than in written form. Part of the work is to write these languages down and then teach people to read them. This involves producing material for use in schools as well as translating the Bible itself.

For two years we worked on a centre in Nampula, Mozambique. This was built as a centre to train Mozambican translators how to do their work and also served as a hospitality unit for missionaries who worked in the area. My main responsibility was for the housing units and for catering. Thankfully I had a team of Mozambicans to do the cleaning and cooking although I was always glad to work alongside them. I also began to do some observation of the translation work and taught on one of the courses that we ran. Towards the end of the two years it became clear that although we thought we were finishing in November 2014 nobody else did! My role changed. I was asked to become a translation consultant. This meant checking, in my case, the translations that the Mozambican translators were doing. I said no. However, after I had been asked the same question three times I started my own training journey. Some of you may understand that better if you read the story of Gideon's fleece in the Bible.

Now based in the UK for family reasons, I undertook distance learning courses and attended other training in Dallas, Nairobi and Zambia. This eventually led to me being 'certified' and I began working with three teams in Mozambique, initially travelling but then during lockdown working with them on Zoom. They



translated the Bible from Portuguese to their mother tongue and then someone else translated what they had written back into Portuguese. I checked this against the Hebrew or Greek depending on whether it was the Old or New Testament and then asked questions to check they were using the correct word. Their mother tongues tend to have a less varied vocabulary!



In January 2022 I received my 10 year service certificate - that is not bad going for a two year assignment! It has been a challenging but rewarding ten years. When I reached the age of 70 I decided to retire again and have now finished with the translation work although I do still have a lot of contact with the wonderful Mozambicans that I worked with.

A little late for a second career perhaps - or maybe food for thought?

Cheryl Lund (1999-2012)

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

Since leaving EHS in 2017, my aviation journey has been non-stop and I've had to face and overcome many hurdles along the way. I left Sixth Form determined to become a commercial airline pilot, being the first girl from EHS to have chosen this career.

I first expressed an interest in aviation when I was thirteen after discovering the television programme 'Air Crash Investigation'. I was fascinated by how aircraft fly. No relatives were involved in aviation, so breaking the news to them was met with a lot of comedic confusion as to where this interest originated! My mum took me to 'Pilot's Careers Live Heathrow' when I was fifteen, gifting me a simulator experience for my birthday; I have been fixated ever since! I took my first step towards my professional aviation career in my final year of sixth form, taking on an Extended Project Qualification titled 'What Is The Most Likely Theory for the Disappearance of Malaysia Airlines MH370'. This was met with great praise, achieving an A* and the 'Best EPQ' award. At this moment, I realised



that aviation was something that I not only enjoyed but in which I was also skilled.

I decided to study Avionic Systems with Pilot Studies at the University of Liverpool. This course perfectly balanced technical aviation with the practicalities of flying. Indeed, in my first year, I experienced the controls of a real aircraft. This was both an unforgettable experience and an indescribable feeling.

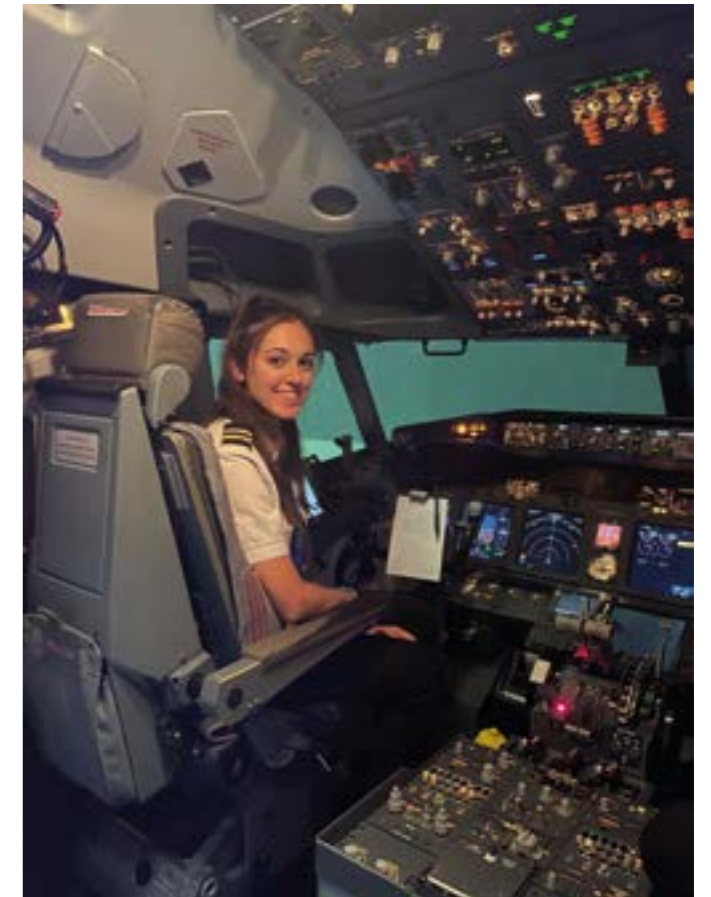
My second year took this one step further; I joined Liverpool University Air Squadron (UAS) which taught me what life in the Royal Air Force could be like. I



volunteered at air shows, experiencing aerobatic flying as well as rotary and multi-engine aircraft. Towards the end of my second year, I landed my first airline job with Thomas Cook, entering a Mentored Pilot Programme. Sadly, this was not to last, and I lost this job just one week before training commenced. Liverpool generously allowed me to return and continue my studies. I commenced my Final Year Project, which was simply titled 'Finding MH370'. The project involved the complicated process of creating a code to investigate various factors and scenarios surrounding the case.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I completed the latter part of university in Birmingham. I was due to begin pilot school after completing university, however, this was postponed. During this time, I went back to my first love, music, having played various instruments throughout my time at EHS and having composed music aged fourteen on the piano. My album, 'Chords Over Complexity', was released the day before I moved to Spain to begin pilot training.

This began in a classroom, learning all things aviation, from weather to air law, the physics of flying to the human biological effects of flying. After completing thirteen written exams, practical training began. Single-engine training came first, including simulators and real flying. From my first solo flight to your first navigation, I encountered something new every day! Multi-engine training was a step up, with the fundamentals of single-engine flying incorporated into every lesson. I achieved my commercial pilot's license, along with my instrument rating, within a month of each other; fast-paced would be an understatement! The final parts of training focused on recovery from unusual attitudes, including one month's training in a commercial simulator where I learned the importance of crew cooperation. These last parts of my training



truly transported me back to my time in UAS, and the first simulator I flew when I was still in school. I left FTEJerez with a European License, however, due to complications with Brexit, my situation was very complex, meaning I had to repeat my ground school exams to obtain a UK License. Upon obtaining my first full-time job within aviation with Flybe as an Operations Control Centre Controller, based in Birmingham, I began studying for my ground school examinations again. The collapse of Flybe was not the first time I had experienced a job loss, and it felt no less upsetting than the first time. I remained tenacious, landing a similar job at Virgin Atlantic, but this time with long-haul flights. My job is what you imagine Mission Control at NASA to be like but with planes instead of rockets!

After finishing my exams and releasing my piano single 'Relative Bearings', an ode to my time at flight school, I earned my UK License, meaning I could fly aircraft in my home country. Shortly afterwards, I landed my first 'official' commercial flying job at easyJet, flying the Airbus A320 family, which I will begin training for in August! I remain determined to enter the working world of Air Crash Investigation someday and solve the mystery of MH370.

I hope my story shows that no matter how many hurdles you face, there is always a way to fly over them, even if this seems impossible. Never let stereotypes deter you from pursuing your dreams. Remain determined, dedicated and driven, always.

Nadia Ismail (2010-2016)

WARM WELCOME AT OPEN HOUSE



We held our annual Open House in the newly refurbished Sixth Form Centre on Saturday 18 March.

Regrettably one of the frequent rail strikes that had plagued the start of the year fell on the day of our event, with many people who had confirmed their attendance suddenly unable to come along.

This did not dampen spirits however and those of us who were in attendance made the most of the event (and the extra cake). We were delighted to welcome Old Girls from a wide range of years; for some it was their first time returning since leaving EHS and for others it was a chance to have their annual catch up with all things EHS over a cup of tea and a home-baked treat.

Thank you to everyone who attended - it was wonderful to see you all! We will hold a similar 'coffee morning' style event in spring 2024 so do look out for details later in the year.



STAFF LEAVERS

David Berman

David joined the school in October 2006. As Head of Science, I remember being told not to worry because he had a collection of vacuum cleaners! This was the beginning of one of David's prime skills, mending and fixing. If a microscope broke David could repair it - the same went for all sorts of bits and pieces. How did we manage without him?! As a result of this David always had a wealth of technology old and new in various states of repair. This led one Sixth Former to comment on a school trip to the Large Hadron Collider that the seven-storey high mish-mash of wires and circuit boards in one of the particle detectors "looks just like Mr Berman's office".

David was also the key instigator for the establishment of audio-visual resources in the Octagon. He set up a formidable tech team and encouraged pupils to learn how to use video cameras and edit presentations.

As well as all of this, David found time to teach some Physics lessons. An invaluable member of the Science department, David taught Physics to all year groups with his lively manner of banter and enthusiasm. David was key in the development of the 10m long 'human pendulum' in the Octagon, something put in place as part of an initiative to encourage pupils to take their Sixth Form studies further.

David will be missed for his contribution to school life and we wish him well for his retirement. We wonder if he is taking orders for mending electrical gadgets?

Anne Lacey and Jacob Sabotig

Sarah Flitter

A wise man once said, and I know Sarah will be able to tell you who he was, "What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others." This perfectly encapsulates Sarah's legacy to EHS and all who have gone before.

Sarah is a true scholar. In her 13 years at the school she has inspired so many students not only to learn about the Classical world but more importantly to believe in their own abilities. She has an immense

intellect which she has so generously, yet with the utmost humility, shared with pupils and colleagues alike. She has believed in every girl she has taught and drawn out their individual talent.

Anyone who has had the privilege of being taught by Sarah will appreciate her sheer mass of knowledge across all spheres: literature, language, history, music (although probably not IT) and the ability she has to draw connections. However it says so much of Sarah's own character that she considers herself the privileged one. She once remarked that the privilege of teaching is being able to play a small part in the development of the girls' confidence, optimism and resilience.

We wish Sarah the very best for her new chapter and we know she will make the very most of it. It will however be a huge loss for the school and department. Sarah has been the key driving force for Classical Greek since its inception, which has been such an important offering for the girls; and so many pupils have benefitted from her scholarship and careful tutelage. She will be sorely missed.

Sarah Rees

Diane Graham

Diane joined EHS as a Psychology teacher in 2008. She soon introduced Sociology as an AS subject and became head of Sociology and Psychology in 2015. Her many other roles have included Charities Co-ordinator, Extended Project Qualification Co-ordinator and Deputy Head of Sixth Form.

Pupils enjoyed Diane's lively and interesting lessons and found her to be a supportive and encouraging teacher who motivated them to achieve their best.

Diane's colleagues could not have wished for a more supportive, knowledgeable, and kind co-worker. As well as being an excellent teacher she has been a good friend to her colleagues and always up for a laugh.

Diane may be retiring from EHS but she will certainly remain busy as she is currently studying for a Masters in Psychodynamic Counselling. She will be greatly missed and we wish her every success for the future.

Jenny Forrest

Kirsty McAlister

Kirsty's determination to enrich the girls' education through Classics has driven her on to develop, innovate and evolve the Classics department. Under her leadership the department has gone from strength to strength. She has a great capacity to think critically and contribute positively to help move things forwards. Kirsty has approached all she has done with kindness and compassion, without losing her rigour and high standards, continually going above and beyond. She has mentored pupils and colleagues to achieve their full potential, led many trips both in the UK and overseas, but most of all instilled a sense of fun (and love of cake) in the Department.

Since Kirsty joined EHS in 2016 she has been a positive, hardworking colleague forging great relationships and collaborating across departments. She has a deep love of her subject and great ability to inspire.

We wish her every success in her new role and knowing the impact she has more widely in the Classical world trust that it will not be too long before we see her at the next Ovid lecture.

Sarah Rees

Diane Graham at the Staff Leavers Presentation



EXPLORING HELLENS

The retired staff continue to keep busy. Recently a group of them visited the historic Hellens Manor in Ledbury for a guided tour.

As a fine example of a Tudor/Jacobean manor house it was a fascinating trip as the building spanned a long period of time and had seen many different historical periods. Internally the house looks like a home, as if someone could live there now, with impressive paintings and furniture. The building has an association with both Queen Mary Tudor and the Civil War. Of course, we made time for some light refreshments at the end of our day out!



Committee Meetings Dates

Autumn Term
Tuesday 26 September 2023
Tuesday 21 November 2023

Spring Term
Tuesday 27 February 2024

Summer Term
Tuesday 7 May 2024

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



NAME THE TEACHER

With school days behind them and the daily routine taking more of a leisurely pace, former staff make time for regular meet ups. Pictured is one the latest gatherings, this time for coffee in Birmingham. Can you put a name to all the faces?



A LIFETIME'S ACHIEVEMENT

The Senior School's Sports Personality of the Year ceremony is always a fantastic occasion. Borrowed from the BBC's very successful format, each year this event seeks to recognise and celebrate the sportswomen of EHS. Amongst the accolades that celebrate the achievement of our talented pupils there is also the special Lifetime Achievement Award.

This award is now presented annually to a member of our school alumnae who has actively participated in sport during their time at school, but also someone who continues to make a positive contribution to sport after leaving EHS. This person demonstrates the Team EHS spirit of commitment, enthusiasm and leadership post leaving school, and continues to work actively in sport, in their career, in a voluntary capacity or as a leader in their community. They will promote and inspire people to participate in sport or support individuals to lead healthy, active lifestyles. We are delighted to hear that Penny Speer was chosen as the recipient of this year's Lifetime Achievement Award. PE teacher Sophie Vann made the announcement on the night.



Mrs Speer: what a legend. You are a dedicated and inspirational sports leader who inspired me to become a PE teacher myself



"As I asked around for some information about the recipient of this evening's award, I was surprised by the sheer number of people who remember being taught by this individual, including teaching Miss Vann swimming! - yes, I know - that old!

"In her own school days she was known for her seriously competitive EHS spirit and simply never tolerated being on the losing side!

"After leaving school she committed herself to a life in sport as a Gymnastics coach and PE teacher, supporting others to discover the joy of taking part. She is fiercely loyal and continues to contribute as a community Gymnastics coach and one day I'm sure she will turn up on the actual BBC Sports Personality as the unsung Hero of her community."

Former pupils have written the following:

"Mrs Speer you were my first PE teacher. You championed commitment, sportsmanship and participation alongside a, no train, no play ethos amongst your school teams. Congratulations on your lifetime achievement award, it is very much deserved."

"Mrs Speer: what a legend. From my early days of sport being part of Streetly Gym club getting my first badge to my own final days at EHS. Thank you for giving me so many opportunities, including gaining a place on the England rounders team. You are a dedicated and inspirational sports leader who inspired me to become a PE teacher myself."

And finally, the words of colleagues:

"Penny is a force to be reckoned with and I loved teaching with her. She is an incredible teacher, coach, colleague and friend. I have never met anyone quite so organised and tidy. Her gymnastics cupboard was a sight to behold and woe betide anyone to mess it up!

"Penny you are passionate that every student should reach their potential and the teams that you have coached here at EHS and the wider community are still achieving success because of the foundations you have laid."

Congratulations Penny on a very well deserved award.



NETBALL AND FAMILY FUN DAY

Well, I finally got my way!
EHS held their first netball match for Old EHS girls and staff, and what a day!

Luckily, the weather held and following the Old Girls AGM we all moved over to the netball courts.

We began by warming up in true EHS fashion using the same drills that were used at school! There were enough of us for two full teams with Mrs Hewison taking on the role of umpire. I even managed to play a couple of games myself, although I suffered later...! The games were very friendly whilst at the same time competitive, and I had a fabulous time meeting up with EHS leavers many of whom I have not seen since they left school.

Following the game, we moved back over to the school field where we ate our picnics, drank Pimm's while the children played on the Bouncy Castle and followed the Gruffalo trail.

It really was a lovely day, and I am sure that everyone enjoyed themselves. Keep a look out next year when we hope to do both netball and rounders!

The next event is drinks in London on Saturday August 26th. We are meeting at the canal side wine bar Gas Station, near Kings Cross station at 4.00 - 7.00pm for drinks (first drink will be free.) Hope to see you there!

Chris Evans, former Head of PE



FAREWELL, YEAR 13

The OGA hosted a special event in Senior School Library to bid farewell to Year 13 students ahead of study leave.

They were treated to some cupcakes as Anne Lacey gave a brief introduction to the Old Girls' Association and the long-lasting benefits of membership. They were joined by one of our newest Committee members, Caroline Sprackman, who gave her perspective on the OGA and what it means to her. We hope that all students will enjoy their membership of the OGA and we wish them well in their future endeavours. We can't wait to hear where life takes them and look forward to welcoming them back to school in the near future.



TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF



We have been considering a change in name for the OGA for a while and at the recent AGM the decision was made by a unanimous vote to change from the 'EHS Old Girls' Association' to the 'EHS Laurels Association' or more informally, 'The Laurels'.

EHS was originally housed at the junction of Harborne Road and Hagley Road but within two years had doubled in size and moved to The Laurels at 280 Hagley Road. In the early Sixties, EHS moved to its current Westbourne Road site. The building on Hagley Road is where the link with the name Laurels comes from. The laurel leaf can be found in many areas of school - used as a motif in the school's visual branding, lending its name to the OGA magazine and the recently launched Laurel Award - not to mention the connotations of the traditional laurel wreath symbol and its association with success and honour.

Why change the name? We decided that the word 'old' was not appropriate. Each year we welcome into the association pupils who have left the school, many of whom are below 20 years of age, and we feel that the

term 'old' is unappealing and not quite as welcoming as it could be! We also wish our organisation to be totally inclusive and in modern times the term 'girls' is not always relevant. We shall refer to 'Old Girls' of the school as 'Laurels'.

Look out for our new logo coming in the next academic year!

Entrance Hall of 'The Laurels' c 1931



DRINKS IN THE CITY

Come and have a drink on us!

The Old Girls' Association will be holding a drinks event in London on **Saturday 26 August** and we'd love to see you there. This is an opportunity to meet up with fellow Old Girls in the city at a lovely wine bar called The Gas Station, near King's Cross. **First drink free!** The event will be held from **4.00 - 7.00pm**. It is relaxed and very informal so do drop in at any time.

Bring your EHS friends or do pop along by yourself; our Co-Chairs will be there to welcome you as well as this event's main organiser, Louise Della Pesca (née Venables, Old Girl 2004), and everyone is really friendly! There is no charge for this event but we'd like to gauge numbers - please confirm

your attendance via link in the news article on the OGA section of the school website. We hope to see you there.

We plan to hold more events of this nature in other towns and cities across the UK - look out for more information over the coming months and let us know if you're interested.



Old Girls Reunited

Don't forget to check your inbox for our e-newsletter Old Girls Reunited. The newsletter is usually sent out to subscribers at least once every half term and brings you all the latest OGA news and events. Not a subscriber? Sign up by sending an email to oldgirls@edgbastonhigh.co.uk along with your full name (and maiden name if applicable) and your years at EHS.

Let's Get Social

Look out for our new Instagram page, coming soon!



Stay in Touch

Have we got your correct details recorded? Please ensure you update us with your contact details - name, address, contact number and email address by sending an email to oldgirls@edgbastonhigh.co.uk

“Meg Boiling (née Gardiner)

I attended EHS from 1998-2005.

In July 2022, I married my partner, Lucy Boiling, in a ceremony overlooking the sea in Studland Bay, Dorset. My parents have now moved away from Edgbaston and live down in Dorset and Lucy spent most of her childhood down there so we felt very lucky to get married there too.

Lucy and I met playing rugby at Wimbledon RFC and felt very lucky to celebrate our wedding with four EHS Old Girls and their partners (from left to right) - George Oakley, Laws Broomhall, Anna Smith (née Jones) and Sian Knoyle (née Simpson).

The sun shone for us and we enjoyed a weekend of celebrations!



“Gillian Whittaker

At 93, having recovered from breaking a vertebrae in her spine and now up to eye injection number 71 to help combat macular degeneration, we are pleased to report our dearest Mum, Gillian Mary Whittaker (née Bird), is still very active, cheerful and full of life.

She goes to weekly keep fit sessions and often accompanies my Dad (who will be 93 in June), on walks with the three year old spaniel they do doggie day care for. Mum was a pupil at EHS from 1935 to 1946 and taught in Westbourne from 1977 to 1986.

We are so very lucky to still have both our parents. “Amazing” is a word most often used to describe them. They still live in the same house we grew up in on the Moor Pool Estate, Harborne and the attached photograph shows them sitting with Edgbaston MP Preet Gill, having unveiled a bench on the Coronation weekend, which was installed to commemorate the life of Queen Elizabeth II.

Best wishes to all EHS Old Girls.

Julie Hill (née Whittaker) EHS 1964 - 1976
Caroline Whittaker EHS 1962 - 1974



Each year, at the end of the Summer Term, the school has the opportunity to celebrate all that the Year 6 girls have achieved throughout their time in Prep and to bid them a formal farewell. It has become a tradition to hold a special Year 6 Leavers' Celebration in the marquee at the playing fields and this year's event took place on Tuesday 4 July in perfect summer weather.

Several prizes recognising both academic and personal achievement were presented with the inclusion of a new award this year.

The school was delighted to welcome Rachel Selby, an Old Girl of EHS, who shared her memories of school days from over 50 years ago. She then presented the Pat Muffett Creative Achievement Award in memory of Pat, a much-loved and respected Prep teacher who had taught her needlework.

A staunch supporter of the OGA over recent years, Pat loved EHS and played a pivotal role in the development of hundreds of pupils during her time on the teaching staff. Pat would have recently celebrated her 100th birthday and the naming of an award in her honour is a fitting tribute to someone who left such an indelible mark on so many others. We thank her family once again for the award.

Rachel Selby and Lesley Watkins with the prize recipient



FALLEN LEAVES

Pat Muffett 13 July 1923 – 10 December 2022

Pat was born on July 13th 1923 at 222 Broad Street, in large accommodation over the shop of S. Ward Ltd, Ham and Bacon Curers. This is next door to where Lee Longland's is today. Pat was the youngest of 6 children - Arthur, Mary, Maurice, Isobel and David.

In September 1928 Pat, aged 5, went to school at the Church of England College in Calthorpe Road. In 1930 the family moved to 5 Farquhar Road - she wrote, perhaps you are interested to know, it was bought for £1,300! Mary, Issy and Pat stayed there for 50 years.

After obtaining her school certificate in July 1940, at the age of 17, she returned to Farquhar Road. She then went to Westhill College in Selly Oak to pursue her first teaching diploma for kindergarten children - under the auspices of the Froebel Foundation. This three year course taught that 'play' is the foundation of early childhood learning. It preceded the similar, and eventually much more popular, Montessori method - but shared many of the same theories. However, the Froebel diploma was not recognised by the state schools. So Pat was fast tracked through obtaining the state qualification in just a year.

In September 1944, she started teaching at the boys' prep school, Stanley House, on the Bristol Road. Then in 1950 Pat started in the prep department at Edgbaston High School, where she taught until she retired in 1983. This was two years after Mary, Issy and she downsized from Farquhar Road to 211 Quinton Road.

It was when Pat was still very young that her father first took her to "The Villa". Her love of football was deep and her support, devotion, and passion for Aston Villa were strong.

Pat recalled that she was about 5 or 6 when she first remembered going to Pwllheli for the family's annual holiday. She said those early years were taken up with simple summer pursuits, swimming, sandcastles, tennis and, when wet, cards. This was the start of Pat's lifelong love of Wales.

In addition to Pat's love for Wales - she, Mary and Issy travelled extensively in the Scottish Highlands

and Islands. In addition to frequent visits to Wales to stay with friends from the Pwllheli days, she travelled to the USA to visit with the families of US Army personnel who, during the war, the family had entertained at Farquhar Road.



Since Pat died I've received numerous letters, emails, and WhatsApp messages about the influence Pat had on some of her girls and the women they became. Using modern parlance I'd say that she was instilling in them "girl power". I went to look this up, to ensure I was correct and the definition I found was women's empowerment, independence, confidence and strength. She had all those virtues and encouraged them in "her girls".

It was when I received a phone call from a 77 year old, who'd been in Pat's first class at Edgbaston High School, that it became apparent to me that there were so many memories of Pat I just couldn't keep them all to myself. I asked my sister, Louise, to gather them to be shared.

Pat left a selection of poems from which to choose to read at her funeral service, and this is the one I feel is most appropriate:

You can shed tears that she is gone,
Or you can smile because she has lived,
You can close your eyes and pray that she will come back,
Or you can open your eyes and see all that she has left.
Your heart can be empty because you can't see her
Or you can be full of the love that you shared.
You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday,
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.
You can remember her and only that she is gone
Or you can cherish her memory and let it live on.
You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back,
Or you can do what she would want; open your eyes, love, and go on.

Pat's funeral was held on February 3rd 2023 at St George's Church, Edgbaston.

Excerpts from the eulogy delivered by Amanda Boswell, niece of Pat.

Martha Hayday

The kind of teacher who was so very rare that you only come across someone like her once in your lifetime. The kind of teacher you never, ever forget. The kind of teacher you will think about, long after she has taught you, because she said this, or did that, because she made you feel this, or made you smile with that. She was the kind of teacher who you always wanted to make proud of you. And you never wanted to let her down. Why? Because she had always helped you, helped you when you needed it most, helped you at your worst and when you didn't know where else to go, when no one else was there, she was, and because she never let you down you never wanted to let her down either. Every relationship she had was built upon this foundation and is at the heart of why she is so incredibly special to those she taught. If you came across Miss Hayday and Miss Hayday came across you, you should consider yourself very lucky and blessed indeed.

Loved and respected by every girl she taught, mentored and guided, every room would light up with smiles, fun and laughter whenever she walked in. Her teaching classroom would fizz with excitement and anticipation of what was to follow and she would dream up the most imaginative and extraordinary ways to teach the seemingly most ordinary of topics. Learning, Miss Hayday determined, was to always be both meaningful and yet also fun. Her classroom reflected this and you could walk by, hearing, seeing and feeling the buzz that was in there, and were often left wondering just how she did it. And whilst teaching the meaning of life from every religious and philosophical perspective, she and the girls enjoyed every single minute of it. One of the things that the girls loved the most was that she made it her mission to make girls think. Think for themselves. Think outside of the box. Think beyond the obvious. Think about other people. Think about things in a way they had never, ever thought about things before. And that was why everyone loved her lessons, her unique style and ultimately her, because just when you thought you had worked it all out, she made you think again.

Miss Hayday loved everything about EHS. She believed in its ethos and she often talked about



never being able to leave here as she would miss it far too much. But she also said this had to be kept a secret as it sounded too sentimental and if the girls ever found out, it might affect her credibility and popularity rating! You see, she had a wicked sense of humour too and the most mischievous Hayday smile. She was always ready with a funny anecdote, witty one liner, random odd fact or sarcastic quip to entertain the girls at every possible opportunity. The stories I hear about what happened in that Religious Studies classroom delight and surprise me every time and I often think, only Martha could get away with that.

Miss Hayday was fearless and loved every challenge and every opportunity that school gave her. But her favourite role of all, and one in which I and countless others so admired her, was as Head of Year. She dealt with every question, issue and teenage girl problem that you could think of in her typically cool, calm and considered manner. Her superpower was giving the girls her never ending time, always making time to see them, no matter how busy her day was looking. She earned their respect by always listening, always being there, always making them feel that they had a voice and always offering her support. Sometimes she would call this "tough love" but she could read situations so well that you knew in the end she was giving them exactly the advice and guidance they needed.

Her time and words of wisdom did not stop with just the girls either. Everyone loved being with her, staff included. The revolving chair next to her desk in the staff room was pretty much occupied 24/7 by someone in "The Hayday Fan Club". Telling those funny stories, sharing obscure facts, talking about the football and sometimes taking on ridiculous dares, she loved being a team player. However, she also listened to staff without judgement, gave wise perspective, shared unbiased advice and offered a little tough love to them too.

She had this special gift of making everyone she worked with feel heard, valued and understood and that no matter what the problem was, somehow, it would be ok.

This 'Hayday magic' is special, it's rare and she is missed beyond words.

Siobhan O'Hare

FALLEN LEAVES

Hilary Bartlett

When Hilary joined the staff at EHS in 1979 as Head of German she already had experience both of working in industry and teaching in Germany which gave her a broad appreciation of the wider world.

Hilary's career at EHS was marked by her great enthusiasm for the teaching of both German and French and her commitment to her students, ensuring that they enjoyed the opportunity to learn other languages and reached their full potential academically. In her teaching Hilary adopted a range of strategies and methods to ensure that learning a language should not be considered a daunting prospect but instead be exciting and pleasurable. To further this aim Hilary organised exchange visits to German schools to give pupils the opportunity to live with German families and attend local schools. The reciprocal visits were always much anticipated and EHS pupils enjoyed hosting the German students, both in their homes and in school.

Hilary was a trusted and popular colleague. Staff remember her vibrant personality and generous spirit and the energy with which she approached life. Hilary's outlook was always positive and she would go out of her way to help fellow colleagues. From personal experience I can say that she befriended me when I joined the staff as a new Head of Department feeling slightly overwhelmed! In addition, Hilary was efficient and organised; for many years she acted as Assistant Senior Teacher and, in this role, could often be found with her clipboard in hand sorting out an administrative problem!



It was fortunate that Hilary was able to enjoy a long retirement: she and her husband had the opportunity to travel widely, including memorable trips to Australia and the USA as well as frequent visits to Germany. Hilary could also spend more time on her garden, which was one of her passions. She was a stalwart member of Moseley in Bloom and opened her garden each year. In addition, Hilary enjoyed music and regularly attended CBSO and Ex Cathedra concerts. As someone who was very sociable and enjoyed trying new restaurants, Hilary organised lunches for former EHS colleagues twice a year and in this way maintained her ties with the school.

Hilary will be sadly missed by all who knew her, both her former colleagues and the many EHS students whose life she influenced during her dedicated teaching career.

Rowena Richardson