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## Old Girls Society | *Newsletter 2022*

### **Presidents Report**

I hope my message finds you and your families safe and well.

I am delighted to let you know that, as promised, we will be holding our OGS Luncheon again this year. In order for this to go ahead we will be holding it at Newcastle Golf Club on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022, as School is still not allowing external events to be held on the premises due to Covid.

I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible as I hand over the role of President to Shirley [Boyle nee Bennion] and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Orme Girls Society Committee and School for all their support during the past 5 years.

With best wishes to you all.

**Helen Owen [nee Jeffels]**



### **News from the Editor**

The pandemic still carries on affecting us with School still not open for visitors so the Committee has been meeting on an informal basis at Whitmore Tea Rooms every few months

for coffee. We manage to get an average of about 10 each time but just live in hope that we will be able to resume both the meetings and the annual Lunch in school soon.

We held a very successful auction in the New Year of a schoolgirl figure that had been donated by Carolyn Casserley and also another donated by Sylvia Littlechild who is a member of the Committee. We thank them both for their generosity. We had bids from all over the country from the far north of Scotland to the South of England. All the unsuccessful ones have been put on a list just in case we are offered another one.

It was a shame that we were only able to reach OG's who were online but we had a very good response from former pupils, some of whom had been trying to buy one of the figures for some time. The common comment was 'I wish I had bought one when they were first issued'!

A short time ago I was able to purchase on ebay a copy of The Board of Education Report of Inspection of Orme Girls' School, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire held on 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June 1933. It makes very interesting reading and the first thing it says is 'that is confidential and may not be published save by express direction of the competent authority of the School'. So what is it doing on ebay being sold by a dealer in Derbyshire? And where has it been all these years?

I also found a postcard of a watercolour of the school by G Fernyhough. This came from Crail in Fife and was part of a Newcastle Series sold by Bagguleys of Newcastle [where we used to buy all the books etc. we needed].

I haven't received as many items of news this year and the obituaries are mainly local OG's



taken from the Sentinel. My problem now being that I only recognise names from my era so depend on the school and friends to notify me.

The ON Society has a new President – Nick Carter – who, I am sure, you may remember from your time at school if you were in the Cadets.

## Obituaries

We send our condolences to the family and friends of the following Old Girls:-

**Kathleen Mary Kemp** died October 9<sup>th</sup> aged 93.

**Wendy Hollins** died November 11<sup>th</sup> 2021 aged 78. She was at school in the 1950s and she taught maths at the School for many years. Wendy was Treasurer of the OGS and kept a tight rein on our expenses. Gillian Boughey [Salmon 1946-54] attended as Wendy was a cousin. 'It was a lovely service. There were about two dozen people there. The present school Staff were well represented. I met an American lady who taught English [Jean Bell]. I also met Mary [Ball] who gave the Eulogy. It was the best eulogy I've ever listened to. She spoke of the school trips abroad that she and Wendy had arranged and also read some Facebook comments from former pupils.'

**Sylvia Keen** died 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2022 aged 83. Daughter Jane is a former pupil

**Ann Ball [Dofsky]** died February 2022. Mother of Sally, Louise, James and Kate. Kate Smith [1981-1988] informed Shirley Boyle

**Gabrielle Beard [Phillips 1936-1944]** died 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022. We will miss Gabrielle, she had a phenomenal memory of her time at school and wrote some articles for us in past newsletters. She grew up in Tean near Cheadle and had to travel to school by train, getting to know the girls not only from Tean but also Blythe Bridge and all stations on the route and could name them all. Gabrielle was one of a group of OG's

who set up the Archives, meeting in Caroline Davis' home to try to sort out what we had managed to find in school and our own memorabilia. Both she and Miss Ruth Bennett were the mainstay of this mammoth undertaking. Gabrielle spent her life teaching deaf and hard-of-hearing children and was Head of the Mount School in Penkhull for many years.

**Barbara Wootton [Jervis 1940's]** died April 2022. Barbara's daughter Katie emailed me after the funeral to thank Ann Whitmore and myself for attending the funeral service and to say she has joined the OGS Facebook page in memory of her Mum although she did not go to the Orme.

**Anne Smith [Sherrat]**. Janet Dawson sent me the news that Anne had died after we had been to a Committee meeting and I had asked if anyone had any news for me. 'It struck me when I got home, that probably you won't have had any obituary information for Anne, who died on 15<sup>th</sup> May this year. I can give you a bit of information from her funeral card, as I went with David Dunlop and Margaret Gleave.

Anne was 78 when she died, which puts her starting year at the Orme as 1955. I started in 1956 and she was in the year above me. She attended Royal Holloway, University of London and read History. She taught at Stoke Sixth Form College [I'm not sure of other appointments before that but one might have been Brownhills]. She also had several stints at NULS, where she became not only a colleague but a dear friend. She leaves a husband, Ian, sons James and David and two grandchildren.

The death was announced **of Dr David Cohen** who was the Chairman of Governors for many years. The obituary in the Sentinel reads 'Lifelong scientist and scholar, alumnus of Pembroke College Cambridge. Registrar Emeritus of Keele University.'



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Many of you will remember Dr Cohen at Founders Day and Prize Giving.

We send our condolences to his wife and his daughter Esther [1977-1984].

## News

### **Chris Smith [Porter alias 'Bubbles']**

corresponded after seeing the auction details in the last newsletter:-

My husband and I came up here to Scotland fishing for many years, then it got expensive to pay for fishing, and accommodation, so we bought a cottage in the village belonging to the Queen! Actually the Crown Estate, who manage all her estates. When I finished work we moved up completely, (in 2001), and bought a bigger place in the same village, (Fochabers). Unfortunately Alan died 5 years later, but I love it here, and am very settled. Fochabers is where Baxter's soups are made, on the east coast between Aberdeen and Inverness. I'm still salmon fishing on the river Spey, and my grandsons have a tackle and fishing trip business on the river Dee.

My mother was a hairdresser, and thought it a good idea to perm my hair for my new school. Within a few weeks we'd been swimming in the baths, (where else?), and my hair became an enormous afro; hence Bubbles. Even the Mistresses called me that. I'm still in touch with a couple of my class-mates, and I'm still Bubbles. We've had some very hot days, and are praying for rain. I'm fishing on the Spey next week, with some friends coming up from Staffordshire. With so little water in the river, and the prospect of a heat wave, they may as well stay home tearing pound notes up in their living room. The only redeeming feature is it's such a beautiful part of the world we can sit on the river bank and relive past catches and calamities, of which there are many of each. Now you've read my biography!

**Theresa Perkins [Cliff 1958-1965]** emailed after the Figure auction: 'I spoke to cousin **Margaret Fieldhouse [Cliff]** yesterday and she remembered you and dancing in Newcastle [at the June White dancing school in Merrial Street on a Saturday night] with everyone. And all going for coffee afterwards [at the Nell Gwynne café]. She paints, drives and belongs to an amazing club by the river in Henley. Mary Berry is a member. There are lots of groups within the club. Margaret is still in the aviators as Bill built his own plane and they used to fly to the Isle of Wight in it to visit her in laws.'



### **Ann Sutton [1945-1952]** writes:-

Thank you so much for sending me the Orme news. I am 86 now, but Orme days seem to be only yesterday, and I could draw a map of Stubbs' Walk, about whose flora and fauna I was obsessed. One thing puzzles me: when did the house names change? I was in Stuart. Others were Tudor etc.

I can, at this ripe age, report recent success in my world of art. After Art School, I have worked all my life in weaving. Thoroughly immersed in it and its combination of Art and Maths. These, by chance, were the only two subjects in which I FAILED at O-level [That might encourage someone?]

Anyway, I wrote about it, did a 5 part series for BBC TV "The Craft of the Weaver" 1980, and have taught it at all levels, including Royal College of Art. I have designed woven textiles for industry, including Early's of Witney, and Ralph



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Lauren. I wrote 9 books on the subject and have lectured all over the world.

But because the art world never saw weaving as an acceptable medium, I was always a designer or an unsold artist until 2019 when Tate Modern put on an exhibition: 'Anni Albers', when the artists and gallery owners saw the light. I am now represented by a fine gallery, [an exhibition is being planned for late 2012] and Tate Modern purchased four of my works.

A documentary has been made over the last two years, and will be previewed in mid -August.

The message of the documentary is, I hear, "It's never too late". Look at my website [www.annsutton.org](http://www.annsutton.org) And it all started at The Orme.

Thank you.

**Professor Ann Sutton MBE**



This email came after the last newsletter was sent out:

You may not be the right person for me to approach, but a friend recently forwarded me the message about the OGS newsletter as my mother was a pupil at OGS so yours is the only contact I have. In clearing my mother's house now that she has gone into a care home, we have come across a couple of photos of women who I assume were teachers in my grandmother's day and I wonder whether the school would like them for the archive. If I should be in touch with somebody else, perhaps

you could let me have contact details or forward this email to them. The photos are of Miss Grimes and Miss Hopkirk. They are quite small photos and not in brilliant condition. There is also a small cloth embroidered OGS badge. My grandmother **was Bertha Clough, born 1887** and would have been at the school round about the turn of the century. I'd be happy to post them on if they are of interest.

### **Rosemary Cole**

In future emails Rosemary wrote:-

'I'll certainly send them to you. I can let you have a bit more about my grandmother and her sister who was also at the school, likewise my mother and aunt. I think I may have a bit she wrote about her time at school, so I'll see if I can find that before I send her basic details.

I was interested in reading the latest newsletter as I had heard my mother mention Hilda John, who wrote the report about Vera Brittain coming to award prizes. She may also remember the lady of 102 who has died and I'll mention the names to her next time I visit. She has dementia but may remember more about her school days than recent times.

My friend is Judith Rhodes whose mother came to OGS in 1939 as a Kindertransport refugee and stayed with my grandparents for a couple of weeks before going to live with the Hawthorns. Judith visited the school fairly recently to talk about her mother, I believe.'

Subsequently Rosemary wrote:-

I have posted the photos off today, so I hope you receive them in a few days. Four members of my family attended OGS and I give a little bit about each one, but mostly about Bertha who was the one who kept the photographs. I note that my mother kept a copy of the OGS Newsletter for 1998 in which she had underlined the bit "Miss Powell [the head when my grandmother was there] organised lectures on Art together with Miss Hopkirk."



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What my grandmother wrote on two different occasions do not quite tally as regards dates so I have left it vague.

The first of my family to go to OGS was **Alice Clough (1885-1940)**. She was the daughter of the headmaster of St Michael's School, Stone. Her mother died in 1899 and she stayed at home for a short time to help look after the family before going to the Orme Girls' School at the age of 14 and staying until she was 18 and had passed the Senior Cambridge Examinations. Thereafter she taught for a short time at private schools in Aberystwyth and Evesham before going back home and I think doing some occasional tutoring. She was killed in 1940, being knocked over by a lorry in the blackout and suffering a fracture to the base of her skull.

My grandmother **Bertha Clough (1887-1980)** also went to the school at age 14 and stayed until she'd passed the Senior Cambridge Examinations in December 1905. The subjects were arithmetic, gospel, English language and literature, French, German, geometry, botany and freehand drawing. She told me that she had wanted to go to Cambridge to study botany but her father couldn't afford to send her as well as educate her two brothers. A report from 1903 shows she was 1st in a class of 29. She became a certificated teacher and was at St Michael's School, Stone, from 1907 until she married in 1912. She married Robert Goodill and lived in Hanley for a few years and did some supply teaching for the Stoke-on-Trent Education Authority until August 1916.

My mother **Joan Goodill (1917 - )** attended OGS for her secondary career and went on to read French at Reading University, graduating in 1940. (She appears on the honours board at the school). She married Gerald Heath in 1946.

My aunt **Audrey Goodill (1921-1977)** was the final member of the family to go to the school. She went to secretarial college, worked for a company in the City of London for a while and married Everard Brewester.

I have a rather attractive certificate from 1905 to say that Bertha Goodill had never been absent, never been late and was excellent in conduct and order, signed by F E Kitchener and Margaret Powell. I have tried to scan it, but my printer isn't working correctly at the moment.

My mother used to receive the Castilian, but she doesn't really read these days (she's 103) so I don't think it is worthwhile sending a copy for her. I would like to see any article you produce relating to the photographs, however. Thank you for the offer.

Then, sadly, we received this email:-  
The information I gave you about my mother, Joan Goodill, is now out of date. She died on 25 August at the age of 103, so her dates are now 1917-2021.

I have taken out some extracts from the **1932 School Report** mentioned above. The School was founded in 1876 of course and it is interesting to see the progress that had been made in the 56 years to 1932 and compare it to 1988 when a lot of you would have been there.

There were 459 girls on the Register, of whom 90 were under 11, 332 between 11 and 16 and 37 over 16. Owing to the financial depression the number of girls over 16 was lower than it had been for some time. [Don't forget that this was at a time when most children left school at 13 or 14.]

The average leaving age was 17 which was very high. During the previous three years seven girls had gone onto university with two winning major County Scholarships with one also winning a State Scholarship. Thirty six entered Training Colleges for teachers and about fifty trained for clerical employment. An increasing number entered the nursing profession. An interesting record of the careers of former pupils had been compiled – one Old Girl had become Deputy-Governor of Aylesbury Prison while another was an M.P. for one of the Divisions of Staffordshire.



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The total number of girls in the School holding Free Places was 206 which was nearly 50%.

On Premises and Equipment it says that 'The old buildings provide an excellent Library [which also serves as a dining room], a Housecraft room, an Art room, a laboratory and nine classrooms of which only three will take a full class of 30 girls. The new wing, connected by a covered way, includes a large hall-gymnasium, with changing room and shower baths, another laboratory six classrooms and a small Prefects' room. With the provision of outside accommodation for the two parallel Fifth Forms, and at present this is arranged at a neighbouring Sunday School, there is just sufficient accommodation for a three form entry school, i.e. for an annual entry of about 90 girls. The three forms Preparatory to the Main School course are accommodated in three of the small classrooms.'

It goes on to say that the playing fields are shared with the Boys School as before. Some additional land was purchased to replace that used for the building of the new wing to provide more space for the increasing numbers.

There were 22 full time teachers as well as the Head Mistress and one Visiting Music teacher.

It goes on to analyse and comment on all the Departments and gives helpful ideas to improve the teaching. It also mentions that the Old Girls Society has been in existence for many years and holds one meeting each term. It has made fascinating reading!

Please keep sending me your news and views, I hope that you have enjoyed reading the memories of those who took the trouble to send them in this year. I thank them for their contributions.

Maureen Leese [Kelsall 1944-1954]

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