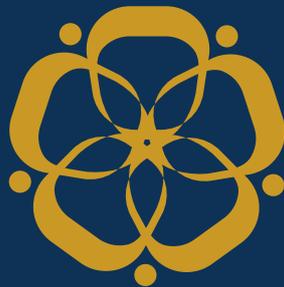




NORTHAMPTON
HIGH SCHOOL



Old Girls' Newsletter
2018

Welcome

It doesn't seem very long since I was putting together the 2017 edition of the OGA Newsletter but it appears it has reached that time of year again! Once again, we are indebted to the Girls' Day School Trust, under whose auspices the High School is run, for the printing and distribution of this Newsletter.

In last year's edition I wrote that Mrs Jo Fitzroy-Ezzy, who helped me enormously during the years she was at the School, was leaving. She was replaced by her able assistant, Mrs Amanda Wilmot, now Director of Marketing and Admissions, and I would like to thank her very much for all the help she has given me. Amanda has allowed me to use the articles that she has produced for the various school events, added the pictures, arranged for it to be formatted and liaised with the Trust over the printing. She has also taken over the database and continued the work started by Jo with the celebrations for the 140th Anniversary of the founding of the School.

At the launch of the 1878 Society, I gave a talk detailing the history of the School – for most of which I am indebted to the book, *The First 100 Years*, written jointly by Miss Mona Harrison and Mrs Paulina Nichol – and I thought it might be appropriate to include a précis of that here.

The School first opened its doors to pupils in September 1878 with the first site being in Abington Street, later taken over by the Nationwide Building Society. By the autumn of 1879, the name of the school was the same as the building - The Clevedon School, Abington Street. The fees were one guinea (21 shillings) a term for children under 12 and twenty eight shillings for children over 12. It was now advertised under the name of Clevedon Hall Church High School. Under its headmistress, Miss Waldron, the school numbers grew steadily and so did its reputation in the town.

Over the years, Northampton High School has had some very generous benefactors and the first of these was Mr Richard Phipps, who donated one thousand pounds to improve the Abington Street premises in 1898. The name of the school was then changed to Northampton High School for Girls. In December 1890, Miss Waldron left to become Headmistress of Birkenhead High School and Miss Alice Straker was appointed as her successor. The next few years were hard ones – the numbers began to drop and by 1909 the situation was very serious. The school was on the point of closing in 1910 when it was granted a stay of execution until 1913. At the end of the summer term in 1912,

Miss Straker retired at the age of 58. She had been its headmistress for 21 years and without her unceasing efforts it would have been closed long before. It was Miss Straker who introduced the school's motto 'The Utmost for the Highest'. Unfortunately, possibly due to the strain of her last anxious years as Headmistress, Miss Straker died in 1916 at the relatively early age of 61.

The next headmistress, Miss Elizabeth Mary Wallace. Miss Wallace was the first headmistress of the High School to have the equivalent of an honours degree. When the new term started in September 1912, she lost no time in tackling the many problems facing the High School of which the most pressing was that of finding new premises that would meet the requirements of the Board of Education. After considerable efforts by many people, enough money had been raised to guarantee staff salaries for 3 years and there was sufficient confidence in the future to take out a lease on Castillian House, at the corner of Castillian Street and Dergate, for 5 years from 1914. For girls, the future seemed brighter now than it had ever been. The long battle for higher education had been largely won, more careers were open to them and physical training had greatly improved their health. Skirts could be worn well above the ankle even by 18 year olds and mixed bathing was permitted at all seaside resorts!

In 1933, the School celebrated Miss Wallace's 21 years as its headmistress and on Commemoration Day, the Old Girls provided a cake with twenty one candles and presented her with a gold watch. She, in turn, presented the school with a striking clock. This stood in the front hall at 44 Dergate until 1992 when it was moved to the entrance hall at Hardingstone. It was then moved to the Edward Cripps Room by the library where the archive and memorabilia is now stored; it is now in the Head's Study, where it attracts many comments from girls, staff and visitors.

In July 1936, Miss Wallace wrote her letter of resignation to the Governors – this was publicly announced on Speech Day, 10 October 1936, and she retired at the end of the summer term 1937. In Miss Wallace's last year were 195 girls, only 7 more than at the Inspection in 1929, but more than twice the number attending in first term at Castilian House. The Wallace Prize for Head Girl was created in her memory.

Her successor was Miss Ruth Mary Marsden, appointed in 1936 at age 36. She was an Honours Mathematics graduate from Westfield College, London. To the girls who were at school in the autumn of 1937, she came like a breath of fresh air.

In 1938, the school celebrated its 60th Anniversary and, at Old Girls weekend in July, Miss Wallace returned

to cut a cake with 60 candles which bore the inscription 'The Utmost for the Highest'.

Two garden fetes were organised by Miss Marsden in the summer term to raise funds for the most pressing building requirement – a new hall. Most of the building plans had to be put in abeyance during the war years, but in 1941 another house in Derngate called Towerfield, came up for sale and it was bought by the governors for the Junior department. In 1943, the number of pupils rose to 420 with 22 members of staff. The most important newcomer to join the staff was Mrs Lydia Mary Gee. Mrs Gee had come to Northampton as an evacuee teacher with Kilburn High School and was billeted with Miss Marsden. However, when the majority of the girls returned to London, Mrs Gee remained. Her degree was in Mathematics but she had lived in South America and her Spanish was excellent. She had been teaching Spanish in London but, despite offers from Roedean and the boy's public school in Cheltenham, she decided to stay with Miss Marsden and take over the Sixth Form at the High School. She introduced Spanish as an advanced study and was responsible for the high reputation gained by the school in this field. She was a towering personality and her influence on the girls was remarkable. She was very unconventional and in later years she used to hold her Sixth Form Spanish lessons in the café by the Derngate bus station, now the Derngate Theatre.

Under the provision of a new Education bill that became law in 1944, Northampton High School was awarded Direct Grant Status. This meant that there were free places for girls of the town, provided they reached the required academic standard. One of the other provisions of this Act that I found amazing was that when a woman teacher married she must be allowed to retain her post after marriage if she wished to. The number of married women on the staff rose from 1944 onwards.

In 1947, Spring Hill in Cliftonville was bought and this allowed the school to be reorganised into 3 sections. Spring Hill was for girls from age 3 to 9, Towerfield housed those from 9 to 11 and then what became known as 'The Main School' taught those from 11 to 19. Plans had been drawn up and the ground cleared in preparation for the next phase of the building programme. It had not been thought possible to start another major addition to the premises so soon after the first and this would not have happened but for a further benefaction by Mr Humphrey Cripps, later Sir Humphrey. The governors wished to put on record their deep appreciation of this latest generous gift and decided that the new building was to be called 'The Cripps Block'.

The numbers in Miss Marsden's first year were under 200; now they were over 700. There were five girls in the Sixth Form – when she left there were 105. Mrs Gee died in 1970 at the age of 73 – Miss Marsden lived on well into her 80s, retiring to Sussex where her sister lived. A portrait of Mrs Gee by Brian Organ was unveiled six months before her death and this, together with a bronze head of Miss Marsden, is in the Edward Cripps room. Both of these works were commissioned by the Marsden-Gee Foundation, a Trust formed after Miss Marsden's retirement by parents and friends of the School. The foundation was also responsible for the funding of two prizes - the Marsden-Gee prizes for Arts and the Marsden-Gee prize for Science are awarded to the two girls with the best A Level results in these areas.

The final cog in the plan to own most of the south side of Derngate was the purchase of No 78, Mackintosh House. In May of this year, as part of the 140th celebrations, an 1878 Reception was held at what is now the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Museum. It seemed strange to remember that I once taught Maths lessons in the upper room – now renovated as the bedroom it once was.

At Speech Day in 1986, Miss Lightburne announced that an anonymous donor had purchased a considerable number of acres of land in Hardingstone to build a complete new school, to house all the girls from the ages of 3 to 18 on the same site, together with a purpose built sports complex. This was an amazing gift that turned out to be yet another from the Cripps Foundation. Sir Humphrey Cripps' son, Mr Edward Cripps, was appointed to oversee the project.

Miss Lightburne retired in 1988 and the Governors appointed Mrs Linda Mayne – the first married woman to be Headmistress. The Sports Complex was opened in 1990 and in September 1992, the whole of Spring Hill, Towerfield and the Main School moved to their new premises in Hardingstone. Spring Hill and Towerfield became The Junior School and the Main School changed its name to The Senior School.

The status of the School changed again in 2007 when it joined the Girls' Day School Trust, on the retirement of Mrs Mayne. The next Head to be appointed was Mrs Sarah Dixon, who had experience of the GDST and saw the School through the next phase of its development. Finally, the present Head, Dr Helen Stringer, took over the reins when Mrs Dixon retired in 2015.

The School organised a very successful and enjoyable get together for staff and girls to celebrate 25 years at the Hardingstone site last year.

There is an overview of the events held for the 140th Anniversary celebrations later in the Newsletter.

By Carolyn White

School News

Examination Results 2018



At GCSE 61% of girls gained 5 or more Grades 7 to 9, which are equivalent to A or A*, with 43% gaining 7 or more grades 7 to 9.

Dr Stringer said "This is the time when the girls receive the reward for the hard work and energy they have put into their studies over the last two

years and more. At the time of seismic change in the public examination system, which has led to a much publicised narrowing down of breadth and choice for students, our girls have continued to pursue and excel at a broad and ambitious range of subjects and I have been delighted to see them doing themselves proud in creative and practical subjects as well as multiple languages, the humanities and the core, including triple science. From here, they can look ahead with confidence not only to the adventures of the Sixth Form but also the opportunities of life. That confidence, a hallmark of High School students, is nurtured by the staff whose ambition for each individual girl matches their passion for teaching and learning.

Congratulations to all of the girls on their outstanding results and warmest thanks to all colleagues for their contribution to the girls' success."



At A Level 38% gained at least one A* with 5 students achieving at least 3 A*s. 100% of the girls obtained a pass grade in all of their subjects.

Dr Stringer said "A levels are, above all, a passport to the next stage of life's journey and, with the hugely impressive

grades they have earned, the girls will find doors opening for them. In today's dynamic, globalised higher education and employment scene, excellent examination grades, vital though they are, are just the basic currency. Beyond that, a portfolio of additional skills and experiences help to set each High School student apart from the mainstream, whether that is an AS Level in Film, an Elective in Politics, a global MOOC or an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), to name but a few of the myriad possibilities. I have been particularly impressed by the quality of work done by the girls in the EPQ this year, with 51% of grades at A* or A – as well as by the extraordinary contribution they have made to their local communities through volunteering and social action.

Behind the girls' success, and key to it, there is a whole community of dedicated professionals, teachers and support staff. Their inspiration, expertise and care create the atmosphere in which girls learn and grow, in the knowledge that all things are possible. Results day is about celebrating that collective success."

School Charity donation presented to the Cynthia Spencer Hospice

As you will be aware, the School focuses strongly on raising money for charity and during the last academic year the staff were delighted to support the Cynthia Spencer Hospice as their chosen charity. The money was raised by various fundraising events throughout the year and they were delighted to meet representatives from the Hospice to hear about what a difference donations make, and hand over a cheque for £1900.



Departmental Achievements

Celebrating Global Citizenship: Green light for the School's Erasmus+ project!

Over two years of planning and collaboration between Northampton High School, the German exchange school, Johanna-Decker-Gymnasium, Altanlanos Iskola Gimnazium in Budapest, Rigas Valsts Vacu Gimnazija in Riga and Gondensino – E.E.P in Porto, culminated at the beginning of September when Mrs Hill, Head of Languages Faculty, heard that their application for a project entitled 'Creativity and Digital Competences – Prerequisites for the World of Work in the 21st Century' had been approved and funding awarded. This project will provide staff and pupils in the five schools with exciting opportunities to work together over the next two years, with teacher conferences in Amberg,

Bavaria and Porto, and conferences for students from each school together with accompanying staff, taking place in Budapest in October 2018, and in Riga in October 2019. The final conference of the two year project will be held at Northampton High School in April 2020.

Students and staff from the five partner schools will have the opportunity to collaborate in a number of workshops, presentations and external visits, whilst exploring the challenges and possibilities of the world of work in the 21st Century, at the same time developing their own digital competence and creativity.



The Arts Festival gave the department an opportunity to celebrate the School's 140th Birthday by creating a new exhibition space, showing mixed media architecture studies from U4 girls, alongside their etchings, which focused on buildings in Northampton. Charlotte Dykes, Rosie Kelly and Zahra Al-Najjar enjoyed successes within the University of Northampton's Schools Art Prizes: Rosie winning First Prize

Creative and Performing Arts

in Painting, Charlotte Second Prize in Drawing and Zahra Third Prize in Fashion and Textiles. This competition includes entries across The Midlands and East of England so the School is very proud of all the girls who took part.

The Fashion and Textiles department continues to grow creatively and in student numbers. The GCSE textiles projects were original and varied, ranging from a costume design for Miss Havisham in Great Expectations by Sophie Morrison to outfits inspired by Japanese street style by Evie Roberts.

Competition success was celebrated with Megan Watts in U5 being shortlisted for the finals of Young Designer UK for her coat design: Megan was invited to spend a day with industry professionals to discuss her GCSE project work and learn about career opportunities.

Two students have chosen to pursue careers within fashion design and have been successful in progressing onto prestigious degree courses, both having received unconditional offers during the interview and portfolio process. Zahra Al-Najjar has chosen to study Fashion Design at Kingston University and Phoebe Abbott, also Fashion Design, at Birmingham City University.

English and Film



This year witnessed continued cause for celebration in creative writing, with Holly Barry commended for her beautifully poignant poem, *Grief Carries Bluebells in His Pocket*, in the Year 10 and 11 category of the GDST's Laurie Magnus poetry competition. Further glory was achieved in the

GDST's creative writing competition, this year on the theme of 'ambition', with Georgia Lockey as Joint Winner in the Year 7, 8 and 9 category for her short story *A Dark Shadow*, while Julia Wardley-Kershaw was Winner in the Year 12 and 13 category with *The Night's Conquest*. Perhaps it is no surprise then, that such a wave of creativity has found a natural outlet in *Backchat: A Creative Review* from Northampton High School. Led by an editorial team of students, two full editions were published last academic year, featuring poetry, short stories, interviews, news and reviews.

The School is fortunate enough to host regular author visits and this year they welcomed Robin Stevens, author of the *Murder Most Unladylike* series, to talk to students about her experiences as a writer. Credited with reinventing the boarding school novel, Robin is hugely popular with the girls at the School, who gave her a very warm reception.

In March, AS Film students visited Artem Studios in London, where Paul Gorrie showed students how live action special effects became magical moments in films such as *Paddington 2*, *Hot Fuzz* and *Call the Midwife*. Phoebe Abbott and Ezri Mannion got to break down barriers by shattering 'glass'.

Feature film director Harry Michell spoke to students in October, as he was in pre-production for his new film, *Ilkley*, starring Derek Jacobi and Roger Allam. Harry gave tips on getting into the film industry and was particularly encouraging of young women taking senior roles in film direction, writing and cinematography. A link with Screen Northants has led to work experience opportunities. In December, a professional film crew used the school for the BSL/Channel 4 television drama *Reverberations*, which gave Amelia Simpson the chance to shadow the director and for Leila Shahin to work with the make-up team. Ruth Purser and Leila joined the production team for Screen Northants' *Macbeth*, filmed in Northampton during the winter.

Success in national competitions this year has been spectacular. Amelia Simpson won first place in the 70/30 campaign for her film promoting the fight to eliminate child abuse. A cheque for £500 was presented to Amelia by The Wave Trust at a showcase at the Errol Flynn Cinema in May. Amelia and Ruth's *The Leading Lady* won the Royal Shakespeare Company's Film Challenge and they were invited to a panel discussion and showing at the Barbican in November. The Northampton High Film Competition took the 100th Anniversary of Universal Suffrage as its inspiration, considering how the world would be different if the Suffragettes had failed to win the vote. The winners engaged with dilemmas facing young women today: Amelia, Ruth and Ezri's *Her* considered the loneliness of isolation, Katie Maybin's *What Would Life Be Like?* examined the tragic consequences of extreme gender discrimination and Laura Charles' *Suffragette Saviours* explored the consequences of altering a key Suffragette event. Her has been shortlisted for the Cambridge Film Festival.

Humanities

Enterprise activities have been an important part of the Business and Economics year. Two groups of entrepreneurial Upper Thirds took part in the national Tenner Challenge, seeing how much return they could make from an initial start-up fund of £10. The Sixth Form Social Enterprise groups worked with local charities to collect donations of essential items for new-born babies in low income families, raised money for the Northampton Hope Centre by marketing themed snacks at the school's production of *The Sound of Music* and worked with a Milton Keynes charity to help feed the homeless. On top of this, the girls tirelessly volunteered at various organisations to work towards the University of Northampton's Changemaker Award.

Geography students participated in a cross-curricular international visit to Geneva with the Physics department, visiting the CERN facility as well as the United Nations, in order to learn about its pivotal role in maintaining the current global order. The students also visited the rapidly receding Lang glacier, witnessing clearly the impacts of climate change.



There has been continued development of the Sixth Form Politics Elective with the annual Westminster trip now firmly established. There have also been two separate Q&A sessions with MPs and, as a result, three girls arranged work experience in Westminster. Politics and International Relations courses at university have grown in popularity, with four students (Erin Barton, Francesca Cook, Alix Langford and Shefali Nandhra) choosing this route.

There was cause for celebration in the Theology and Philosophy department as Emma Bird went off to read Philosophy at Cambridge and two other students, Sally Croker and Zahrah Hussein, chose to read Law, in part inspired by their study of ethics and, particularly, topics such as utilitarianism and medical ethics. The department also enjoyed their annual trip with the L5 in the summer term to Bhaktivedanta Manor, a sanctuary for ISKCON (International Society of Krishna Consciousness).

Languages

Last March was a particularly busy time in the French department, with both the Normandy Trip and the Montpellier home stay. Although the Normandy trip is well established, this year's L4 were the first to experience the new cultural day in Le Havre. This new addition to the itinerary enabled girls to discover the MuMa, the modern art museum, thus giving a new cross-curricular dimension to an already well-rounded trip. Students enjoyed pushing the limits of their comfort zones while exploring this UNESCO listed city and its architecture, destroyed during the Second World War and which is a tribute to Auguste Perret's modern take on architecture.

In the first week of the Easter holidays, KS4 and KS5 girls headed to Montpellier for a home stay visit, which included morning lessons in a language school and cultural activities each afternoon. Girls were challenged every step of the way, whether that was through the total immersion in the target language in their lessons, in the activities designed to send them out and about around Montpellier interviewing the local population, the journeys to and from school on public transport and the evenings spent en famille. The girls embraced all these challenges and returned to school bolder and more competent in French as a result.

As part of her eTwinning initiative, Mrs Diez worked with U3 girls in French on a project with schools in Greece, France, Spain, Ukraine, Slovakia and Slovenia. The theme of the project was kindness and inclusion and it promoted the use of foreign languages for communication. Entitled Don't judge a person by their face, this project won two awards: Best EU project on inclusion, and a Recognition for the Federation of Children's Books Story Month Award.



A highlight of the year in Classics was the trip to hear internationally renowned classicist, Director of the British School in Rome and leader of the Herculaneum Conservation Project, Dr Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, speak about his research. Studies were also enriched by an expanding lunchtime lecture programme, so that, in addition to the annual talks on Classics, Art and Philosophy by Mr Laubscher and Miss Robinson, they were able to welcome Ms Heimfeld to give a multi-disciplinary talk on Euripides's Medea and its transmission into modernist film and literature. This was particularly interesting for the L5 Greek club, who had been studying an adapted version of Medea alongside beginners' language activities. In addition, they welcomed Dr Angeliki Roumpou who gave them a thrilling lecture on Virgil's Aeneid and its links to Augustan propaganda. Classics also enthusiastically embraced the School's hosting of the GDST Languages Festival, and U4 snatched victory in the drama competition with their rendition of Little Red Riding Hood. They were also pleased to celebrate the achievements of Anya Douras, Ella McManus, Amelia Naylor and Jessica Scrimshaw, who will take up University places at UCL, Leeds and Warwick to read Classics.

Science and Mathematics

In Biology this year, the highlights have often involved a link with another area. In June, U3 went to Salcey Forest for an outdoor education day. Half the day was spent doing biological investigations and fieldwork on the ecology of forests, while the other half was spent working creatively to explore an issue using problem-solving skills. Pupils produced films, songs and poems as they grappled with the dilemma of conserving natural spaces like forests and providing much-needed housing for the growing human population. The L4 visited Whipsnade Zoo to see examples of animal adaptations, comparing herbivores and carnivores. At the same time, the girls were challenged to think about the ethics of zoos and whether the good work that is done there in education, conservation and caring for animals justifies keeping them in captivity away from their natural habitats.

The Biology Olympiad gives our A Level students the chance to compete with the best sixth form biologists



in the country. This year our girls achieved excellent results, with Silver medals awarded to Ella Ashton and Idil Mohamed, and Bronze awarded to Annabel Green. Serene Batson-Patel, Francesca Cook, Alice Morgan and Mona Rahnama all achieved Highly Commended and Jessica Carter Commended.

In May, four L4 students - Megan Allen, Amy Jenkins, Olivia Russell and Lucy Stringfellow - travelled to the University of Leicester to attend the Salters' Festival of Chemistry. The challenge involved solving a murder mystery and identifying the prime suspect. Two practical experiments were undertaken, one using chromatography to analyse the ink found at the crime scene, and the other testing a white powder for its pH properties. The High School team came away with First Prize for the second year in a row.

A highlight of the year in Mathematics was a trip by U4 to Bletchley Park. The students looked at the history of the mathematical pioneers of codebreaking and explored the idea of cyphers. Alexandra Daley took this idea further and competed for a second time in the National Cypher Challenge coming Joint First in the A cipher and 57th out of 850 entrants in the B cipher (which was aimed at GCSE and A Level students). There was success both in the senior team Maths Challenge, where the High School team came fourth, and in the various individual Maths Challenges, where Hannah Goddard and Ruby Howard followed their success in the Intermediate Maths Challenge by competing in the Pink Kangaroo. Emma Bird, Tamsin Mathewman and Caitlin Urquhart also gained Distinctions in the Maths Olympiad for Girls, a competition that we had not been entered before.

The year brought many opportunities to see Physics in action, with trips to The Rutherford Appleton Laboratory,

The Big Bang Fair, The Manufacturing Technology Centre's Women in Engineering Day, and The Space Centre. The School's Engineering Society has thrived this year with the number of attendees more than doubling. As well as regular events of Materials Masterclasses and visiting speakers such as Kate Goldup (2nd year Aeronautical Engineering, Bristol University), Rebekka Price (1st year Engineering, Nottingham University), and Karen Holland (Engineer and designer of cameras for NASA), EngSoc has expanded this year with many new initiatives. Students have studied the physics of rockets, culminating in the building of a solid fuel propelled rocket with built-in parachute to aid descent. The Sixth Form students in EngSoc have also reached out to younger girls this year, running an Engineering Project club for L4 pupils, which has had a very competitive element.

A Level Psychology students attended a Psychology in Action conference to broaden their knowledge of the subject beyond the confines of the A Level specification. They heard from distinguished psychologists from a range of fields, from criminal psychology to dance psychology. 6.2 students conducted their own independent research project, investigating an array of phenomena such as bystander behaviour and the link between facial symmetry and attractiveness. They then presented their findings at the first Psychology department's poster conference.

Sport

This has been a most exciting year in the faculty with some phenomenal results and events. The netball teams have been outstanding, winning the county tournaments at U14, U15 and U16 and representing the region at U14 and U16, as well as the Senior netball team winning the GDST Plate competition. In hockey, the U11, U13 and U16 teams all reached the regional finals. However the highlight was, without a doubt, the performance of the U14 team at the GDST residential tournament in Bath where, despite all

the odds, they finished as winners after very tense and exciting penalty shuffles. In badminton, U14 and U16 teams were again county champions, representing the county at the regional finals where they finished fourth and sixth respectively. In swimming, the U13 team qualified for the IAPS National Finals, where there were some superb individual swims. In the first year of competition for some time, the Equestrian team - and more specifically the 90cm team - reached the national finals and performed brilliantly.





Turning to summer sports, the girls enjoyed their first full year for all year groups in cricket and enjoyed the first GDST Select XI vs. the MCC. They were delighted that the school captain, Abigail Passmore, was named GDST captain for the match and kept wicket, showing her skills throughout. In tennis, both the U13 and U15 teams again became division champions and have progressed to the next round. In athletics, success was dominated by individual performances, most notably Georgina Forde-Wells who became county, district and regional champion having cleared 1m 65 in the high jump, thus securing a place in the National Final team. Here she again jumped well reaching the final eight, which is a superb achievement.

In addition to team performances, the year has been marked by some big events. Sports Day had a 'new look' and the comradeship between Senior and Junior pupils was wonderful. The Year 4 Enrichment and Disability Sport Awareness Day was eye opening and inspiring; the group, led by Ellie Robinson, took part in a wide variety of sports. All pupils thoroughly enjoyed trying wheelchair rugby and meeting players from the Northampton Saints Wheelchair Rugby team. As is customary, a lively and entertaining Sports Presentation Evening was held, where guests Karen Pickering and Jamal Forde-Robinson inspired everyone with their stories.

The success of Ellie Robinson in the Commonwealth Games was celebrated as well as the high standard of all teams and individual performers, both in and out of school

The school year ended with a new event for the faculty: the Gymnastics and Dance Extravaganza. All girls in the Junior School had the opportunity to perform along with many Senior School girls. The event showed the girls at their most daring and lively.

Over the summer, 40 girls travelled to South Africa for a two-week hockey and netball tour. In an immersive programme, they played matches against four different schools in both sports, stayed with local families at two of the schools, enjoyed a game drive, visited the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria, Boulders Beach, Simon's Town, the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Point, before finally taking a boat trip to see seals. So much was packed into the time but, without doubt, the most memorable for all the students and staff was the tour of a township and visit to a kindergarten; seeing the living conditions and the disparity between areas in such close proximity will stay with the girls for a long time.



Staff Updates



A number of teachers left the School at the end of the academic year. Mrs Russell completed her temporary contract with Year 2. Mrs James has taken up a new post as Head of Modern Languages at Wellingborough Prep and Miss Orvoen has taken up the reins as Subject Leader for French. Mrs Greenbank and Mrs Revie both left after 14 years of service in the Junior School to relocate to Cheltenham and Lincolnshire respectively. Mrs Holland also retired from her post as Subject Leader for Classics. At the end of 15 years of service to the School, she had the great pleasure of seeing a record number of applicants for Classics courses at university progressing this year. Miss Mason, who is familiar to all, has taken up the mantle as Subject Leader. Mrs Bleech completed 16 years of service in the Junior School, most recently working with Years 5 and 6 and establishing the Junior science lab. She is looking forward to having the flexibility to pursue a number of different projects in the future.

Finally, in July the School bade farewell to Miss Margareto, who has served the School for 16 years, most recently as Head of Pastoral Care and Special Educational Needs Coordinator, as a member of the extended Senior Leadership Team. Miss Margareto is keen to explore new professional pathways and we wish her well.

A number of new members of staff were welcomed to the School. Mrs Sinclair and Miss Scott-Evans join the Junior School staff. Mrs German has been appointed to the Music department, Mrs Flanagan to the Chemistry department, Mrs Perry to Languages and Miss Monks to Classics. Mrs Beezley was appointed to the post of Learning Enhancement Coordinator, which incorporates the SENCO responsibilities. Miss Gibbard, an Alumna of the High School, joins the Sports Faculty as a Graduate Sports Assistant.

Miss Farrar has taken up the post of Receptionist in the Senior School to replace Mrs Furniss, who has been appointed Out-of-Hours Manager. Mrs Currier has been promoted to the post of Chef. Miss Bannister and Mrs McGuinness have joined our cleaning team. Ms Gallyot returns to the High School as a Science Technician and she is joined by Mrs Burgess-Wilson.

Mr Jamie Lane and Mr Stephen Chown stepped down at the end of the year as members of the School Governing Board at the end of their tenure as Board members. Dr Stringer would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for their generous service to the School over the last 5 years. Their places on the Board have been taken by Mr Zafir Bhatti, MD of Nabida Care Management, and Mrs Carole Stronach, Senior Manager for Global Real Estate at Avon.

Retirements

In July, Dr Carr retired from the Chemistry department after 12 years' service at the School, culminating in a pleasing first prize at the Salter's Chemistry Festival.

Mrs Miller, who is synonymous with music in the Junior School, retired after 26 years of service. Starting when the Hardingstone site was opened, she has built the vibrant Junior music programme into what it is today.

As usual, these retirements were marked by a card and a cheque from the Old Girls and Associates to thank them for their loyal service to the School. These were presented at the end of year staff lunch. Both Dr Carr and Mrs Miller have written a few words, looking back on their time at the High School and sharing some of their plans for the future.

Dr Neil Carr

"On joining the NHS Staff in September 2006, my introduction was dramatic when on the very first day (a staff training day), Mrs Mayne announced that after almost 20 years as Headteacher she was leaving. A second surprise soon followed when I found myself in front of an U4 class teaching Biology even though I had been employed to teach Chemistry. This caused me a lot of amusement as I'd never studied the subject even at GCSE level. Looking back, maybe I learnt more than the pupils!

My time at the High School was a wonderful experience. I had previously spent 20 years working in industry as a material scientist, but found teaching to be a very refreshing change and rewarding career. The staff were always a great help in times of difficulty and their humour was much appreciated. As the years passed, my main focus was on teaching Chemistry, but there were occasional departures into Physics and Biology (again!), all of which were highly enjoyable and stimulating. My experiences of Parents' Evenings were also very positive, and I can honestly say that they all passed without incident, not a single problem in a dozen years.

The summer of 2017 saw a makeover in the Science Faculty with the introduction of large area flat screen TVs. If you ever pass by the Chemistry Department (S7 and S8) take a look at the seats. I had to fight quite hard for the strong yellow colour, which was chosen to match the Bunsen burner gas taps!

Staff charity functions were always good fun. Performing in the Main Hall with the 'Wild Things' rock band and dancing with Mrs Hill were definitely highlights. Numerous school trips to a variety of destinations were also very enjoyable, interesting and educational.

So what of the future? Retirement has been taken a few years early with the idea that whilst body and mind are still reasonably intact, playing a bit more golf and travelling to far-flung destinations should still be feasible. For example, Easter Island and Hawaii are just a couple of places on the short list. A trip to Sweden for the Northern Lights is already booked in for next year and having just returned from a fantastic trip to the Galapagos Islands and Ecuador, more travel is definitely a must. Country walks are most enjoyable, so it will be nice to explore Northamptonshire and the other UK counties a bit more. Guitar practice must not be ignored either. Book reading too. Not forgetting trips to the gym! Maybe a bit of Chemistry in there would be rather good as well. Also, I know very little of my family tree, so genealogy

is something that is of interest. My mother always told me as a child that we were related to the young heroine Grace Darling, who saved many lives in a shipping disaster off the Northumberland Farne Islands in 1838. I have never seen any evidence of the link, but it would be fun trying to find it!

Thanks to everyone at the High School for a fabulous 12 years".

Mrs Kate Miller

"It seems only yesterday that I became a part of the Junior School team. I quickly realised that I had joined more than just a school, but a community with a caring family spirit. And after 26 years I feel very lucky to have worked with such lovely colleagues, dedicated to the girls, and who have been such good friends and supported me over the years.

I shall take away with me the wonderful sound of the girls' singing and my orchestras and jazz bands down the years. Other special memories are, of course, the Queen's visit to open the school, the 50th Anniversary of VE day when we all had a concert and street party in the front playground and the 2012 diamond jubilee concert and picnic. I will also treasure all the fun working together with staff and girls on the numerous shows and concerts. I have done too many to count, and feel privileged to have worked with such enthusiastic, hardworking girls.

You always want to stay "just one more year" to see the next group of girls through to the end of their time in Year 6, but now I feel the time is right for me to stop. I shall keep up with my private pupils at home and enjoy spending more time with my family".

My thanks go to Neil Carr and Kate Miller for their contributions.

Obituary

Sadly, just before the Newsletter was due to go off to the printers, we heard of the death of Mrs Pat Perrett. Mrs Perrett was the Head of Spring Hill before Mrs Wendy Nugent and we are all sorry to hear this news. Our thoughts go to her family and friends.

140th Anniversary Celebrations

140 Years Old – a memorable birthday year!



Big birthdays should always be a cause for celebration and this year – the 140th birthday year for Northampton High School GDST – is no exception. Earlier this year, we shared our ambitious programme of events to mark this special anniversary, and it is now time to report on an

amazing year as we reflect on our final event - a Gala Concert at All Saints' Church, the School's former spiritual home. Our concert featured girls and staff from the High School, performing alongside Concert Master and violinist, David Le Page, and Rebecca von Lipinski, Opera Soprano, with the internationally renowned Orchestra of the Swan.

A packed audience inside All Saints' Church was left awestruck, treated to more than a dozen musical pieces, which included magnificent performances from High School students Thea Deacon, Helena Thomas and Natasha Wilcockson, all under the watchful eye of our Director of Music, Mr Nathan, who did a stellar job in orchestrating the proceedings.

Our Birthday Receptions in May and September took us to buildings in Derngate, which were the school's previous home: 78 Derngate (Charles Rennie Mackintosh House - the only home he designed in England) - and 44 Derngate (courtesy of The Dental Practice). These events were wonderful opportunities to reconnect with many

distinguished Alumnae and to express our appreciation to many friends of the School. It was fascinating to go down memory lane with Alumnae as they tried to reconstruct their old



haunts in the buildings and delightful to see that many of the treasured features of school were still there!

The Anniversary Charity Ball in June, kindly organised by the Friends of Northampton High School, was a huge success, with parents and staff coming together in splendid surroundings at the Marriott Hotel for a glamorous mix of dining, dancing and entertainment, raising over £2,000 for Cynthia Spencer Hospice.

Our extended Arts Festival, in late June, attracted record numbers of visitors, bringing together a Literary Festival, (with poetry showcase and food focus), Music Recital, Cinema Private View, a full-scale Musical (*The Sound of Music*), and a Dance and Gymnastics Extravaganza, alongside the customary Arts Invitational, in an exuberant demonstration of the rich artistic life of the School. We were delighted to welcome authors Annie Gray, Monica Withrington and Robin Stevens to share the secrets of their writing lives with us and, in our cinema showcase, we were able to celebrate the successes of our student filmmakers in national competitions (including private viewings at the Northampton Filmhouse and the Barbican).

Highlights of the year have been threefold: firstly, the excited looks on the faces of our pupils as they gathered in the Hall on 2 May (the birthday itself) to cut a cake and receive a present (as for all good birthdays). Secondly, the conversations with scores of people (Alumnae, parents and staff) sharing their own particular stories of what the High School means to them; and finally, the connections made with many neighbours and associates of the School, including many from the business community, who value the High School as a centre of educational excellence, as an employer, customer or resource.

Consolidating old friendships, broadening our horizons, having fun - it has been quite a year!



News of two Junior School projects

The Old Girls and Associates fund was set up with a legacy by two former members of staff, specifically for music and the arts. Over the years, money has been given to these departments to enrich the girls' experiences in these areas of the curriculum. Artists in Residence, frames for the girls' work to be displayed around the School, musical instruments and music lessons are a few examples of how

this money has been spent. This year, money was given to the Junior School for workshops in Textiles in two different areas. The workshops were planned and delivered by Mrs Jane Stock, a past member of the Junior School staff, and she has written the following two articles describing the activities that the girls took part in.

140 Challenge

As part of the 140th Anniversary Celebrations, the girls in Key Stage 2 took part in a fundraising event for a local charity, KidsAid. Over the course of a day, the girls worked with Jane Stock, Vicky Dacre and four volunteer parents. The challenge for the girls and the adult helpers was to make 140 separate items celebrating 140 years of the School, which could then be sold for charity.

The girls made greeting cards and lavender bags to sell in aid of KidsAid, which provides creative therapeutic support for children and young people who have suffered any form of trauma. The girls designed and assembled greetings

cards using a range of old maps, patterned papers and templates to design and make lavender bags with a variety of fabrics and embellishments.

By the end of the day a total of 147 items had been made! The girls developed their design skills and hand stitching while some were particularly keen on using the sewing machines. The cards and lavender bags were sold to parents and visitors to the School, raising a total of £224 for KidsAid. The girls were enthusiastic and creative and should be very proud of their efforts to raise money for this excellent charity.

Artists in Residence – Textile Workshops

As part of the celebrations of the High School's 140th Anniversary, the girls in Key Stage 2 of the Junior School participated in three days of textile workshops. The activities took place during the annual Arts Festival in June.

During the three days, the girls learnt how to print onto fabric with silk and Thermofax screens, print using cyanotype fabric and stitch in the Japanese Sashiko style. Together they created some bunting with the School dates, 1878 – 2018, as well as twelve new framed pictures for the Junior School and a large blue and white banner for the entrance hall. Each of these incorporated the many skills learnt during the workshops.

The banner features elements of the new school badge and is worked in blue and white – colours familiar to all High School girls. The girls approached the tasks with great enthusiasm and it was a pleasure to see their skills and confidence develop over the time that they spent in the workshops.

The Junior School is grateful to the Old Girls and Associates for funding the project from their Music and Art Fund.



140th Anniversary Reunion Lunch

Exactly 140 former NHS pupils and staff attended the School's Annual Reunion Lunch at the end of January 2018, which was the start of the School's 140th Anniversary celebrations.

The lunch was a great success with alumnae attending from such faraway places as Durham, Bristol, Stirling and even Germany. The event offered the former pupils members of staff the opportunity to meet and catch up with old friends, and help to launch an exciting year of celebrations. Some groups come back year after year but for others it was their first time at this event. There was much reminiscing among the older 'old girls', particularly about their memories of Derngate. The 'dungeons' and the penny buns featured regularly in conversations, together with remembrances of the more eccentric members of staff! There was a lot of laughter and the occasion was enjoyed by all who attended.



Annual Reunion Lunch 2019

The date of our next Annual Reunion Lunch is Saturday 26 January. As usual, the School's Catering Manager, Mrs McCue, will be providing an extensive buffet lunch, excellent value at £12 a head. Mrs McCue and her staff give up their time for us and we really appreciate the efforts that they go to in order to produce an amazing array of food.

Last year was the first time that we had offered the opportunity of booking online and about half of the people attending took advantage of booking this way.

If the School has your email address then you will already have received an email from the School's Director of Marketing and Admissions, Amanda Wilmot, alerting you to the date. There is still the opportunity of applying for tickets by filling in the accompanying form or the form attached to the email and returning it to the School. If you wish to receive tickets then please include a stamped addressed envelope. The deadline for applying for tickets is **Monday 14 January 2019.**

And finally...

Every year there are quite a few returned Newsletters. Please let the School have your changes of address. If you would like to receive the Alumnae and Friends' Newsletter from the School by email then please let the School have your email address. Email addresses are really useful anyway as they often change less frequently than postal addresses. We appreciate that there is a lot to remember when you move house and the OGA may not be at the top of your list! So, if you have an email address, please email Amanda - her email address is in the Useful Contacts at the end.

This Newsletter is sent out as a hard copy by post as we have many more postal addresses than email addresses and we want to contact as many of you as possible. Unfortunately, for administration reasons, it is not possible to send some by email and some by post. It will be available on the website, along with the application form to join the Association.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the lunch on Saturday 26 January 2019, and it would be greatly appreciated if you could apply for tickets in plenty of time. Once again, the deadline is **Monday 14 January, 2019.**

Committee

2018/2019 Committee Members

Mrs Vicky Dacre

Mrs Ellie Doak

Mrs Alex Down (Staff Liaison)

Mr John Glover

Mrs Margaret Green

Mrs Monica Hartgrove

Mrs Lisa Howe

Mrs Dawn Powell

Mrs Anne Rodwell (Secretary)

Mrs Jane Stock (Archivist)

Dr Helen Stringer (Headmistress)

Mrs Carolyn White (Chair and Newsletter editor)

Mrs Steph Caswell-White (Treasurer)

Mrs Amanda Wilmot (Director of Marketing and Admissions)

Useful Contacts

Contact details

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For general enquiries concerning the School:

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