



## KIDDERMINSTER HIGH SCHOOL

### O.G.A. NEWSLETTER 2007

#### FUTURE EVENTS

**Saturday 15/9/2007 11a.m.** A.G.M. followed by lunch at The Hundred House, Great Witley.

**Fri. 14/3/2008 7.30p.m** "With Pleasure," entertainment organized by Shiela Hodges. Please contact her by 1/12/2007 if you would like to take part.(01562 823274).

**Sat. 13/9/2008 11.00a.m.** A.G.M.followed by lunch at The Hundred House, Great Witley.

*Unless otherwise stated, meetings are at King Charles I High School (formerly KHS.) Car park entrance via Comberton Road. If attending a meeting, please notify Beryl Bedford two weeks beforehand. **Address:** 80 Holmcroft Rd. Kidderminster DY10 3AG Tel.01562 752997.*

## FROM THE EDITOR

My father knew very little Latin, but had a few stock phrases - all too frequently quoted - one of these being, "*We are all ageing at the rate of 24 hours per diem.*" This used to impress me greatly, until I learnt some Latin myself and realized that it was just a nonsense phrase – but oh how true it is! The years fly by all too quickly. This was brought home to me forcibly recently when my KHS year group (1946-53) held a "60 Years On" reunion. **Sixty years** since we took our first tentative steps through the portals of KHS? Could it really be true? Well, yes, afraid so. **Sue Moore** reports on this momentous day on page 5.

Other groups holding reunions were the 1959-66 cohort, celebrating their 40 years since leaving KHS. See **Jane Randall's** report on page 6, and the Group of 48, see report from Mary Wehner P.4

Without a doubt, **Pride of Place** this year goes to **MARY PUGH** (nee Downing) who celebrated her **100<sup>th</sup> birthday** earlier this year. Mary is probably now the oldest Old Girl of KHS.

**Margaret Phelan** (nee Pugh) sent this report:

"On Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> April relatives and friends gathered at the Priory Hotel, Wareham, Dorset to celebrate Mary's birthday. Among others present who were also Old Girls of the school were her daughter **Jane Randall**, who with her husband Kevin had organized the lunch, her niece **Pamela Metcraft** (nee Busby), and **Margaret Phelan** (nee Pugh), sister-in-law. Mary's arrival at the Hotel was in splendid and unique style, for she arrived in the sidecar of a Matchless Motorcycle combination, driven by her son-in-law Kevin. Mary's smiles were almost as bright as the beautifully restored bike and sidecar. Mary always asks for news of the OGA whenever we chat."

**CONGRATULATIONS, MARY, AND EVERY GOOD WISH FROM KHS OGA.**

## IN MEMORIAM.

**Sadly, we say farewell to a number of friends.**

**Barbara Chalmers** (nee French) died 1/1/2007 aged 89.

Secretary of the OGA 1956-86 and Committee member at other times from 1938 and after her retirement as Secretary.

**Susan Laird** (nee Hambling) d. 2004

**Sheila Harrold** (nee Price) d. 14/1/2007

**Eileen Joan Harvey** (nee Pagett) (known as Peggy at KHS)  
d. 25/3/2007

**Eva Landon** d.16/7/2006

**Mary Southall** d. 10/6/2006

**Margaret Walker (nee Sambrooke)** d. 19/1/2007

**Lorna Wilcox** (nee Harrison) d. 20/5/2006

## OGA FLOWER FUND

We are very grateful to **Rosemarie Moore (Tel. 01562 67546)** and **Elisabeth Robinson (01562 750891)**, who continue their invaluable work in administering this scheme on our behalf, in spite of having many other calls on their time. They have been very busy over the past year, assisted by other members, with an increased number of visits to Old Girls with gifts of flowers, cards, or tokens.

*The fund is generously supported by Old Girls. If you hear of anyone who is ill or bereaved, and would appreciate a visit, please contact Rosemarie or Liz.*

*Ed's. note :When recuperating following an operation recently, it was such a treat to be visited by Rosemarie Moore and Peggy Guest, bearing beautiful flowers and cheering company. Thank you, OGA, your generosity and thoughtfulness are much appreciated .Sheila.*

## REUNION REUNION REUNION

### THE K.H.S. 1948 GROUP'S PENULTIMATE REUNION

The K.H.S.1948 Group has decided that, as 60 years will have elapsed since we took our School Certificate, it would be prudent to hold our last official Reunion in April 2008. After that we plan to meet more informally and we'll consider the position again when we reach 100.

Our first reunion was held when we were all 50. We had a splendid 'do' at the Lenchford Hotel, although we felt timid on arrival and were each anxious not to go in first. But when we met we found that our characters had not changed over the 34 years and it was not long before we felt that we were back in Upper V again. What an evening we had! Ten years later, when we were 60, we met again. This time it was an afternoon and evening 'do', which included a tour of the School – we were taken aback by the changes – and afternoon tea in the old Domestic Science Room. In the evening we had dinner at the Birche in Shelsey Beauchamp, when Mrs. Hudson, Mrs Crossland and Mrs. Gethin joined us. Miss Everett was ill and unable to come. The Forrest twins recounted their world-wide experiences, while Ann Pritchard, from Canada, told us about being a make-up artist to the famous.

"Perhaps we'd better leave it ten years again," we thought. So we met five years later for lunch at the School, when Miss Everett did join us. Now we meet annually for coffee, lunch and tea. There were 18 of us at this year's reunion at the Hundred House, including Mary Whight from Jersey, Gloria Wright(nee Deubert) from Rutland, and Joan Greenhill(nee Richards) from Sidmouth. Mrs.Hudson entertained us with her memories of K.H.S., and we in turn spoke of our 'retirement' activities. Most of us are still very active and do voluntary work in the community. It certainly seems that the Community Spirit instilled in us sixty years ago at K.H.S. still flourishes. GRATIAS HODIE AGIMUS.

*Mary Webner June 2007.*

## “60 Years On” Reunion Luncheon

*Report by Sue Moore*

Back in the mists of time, on 11 September 1946, a group of apprehensive girls who had just passed the second year of the 11+ exam, crossed the threshold of Kidderminster High School for Girls, joining the few pupils who had entered the school as juniors, but who also had to pass the 11+ before being admitted to the newly designated State Grammar School.

Almost to the day, we celebrated the entrance to our Alma Mater at a "60 Years On" Reunion Luncheon held at Grafton Manor, Bromsgrove on 21 September 2006. Twenty-five 'Old Girls', some travelling from far afield, attended and there were welcome messages from others who were unable to be with us. We were delighted that **Mrs. Phyllis Hudson** (nee Stoker) graced our celebration as guest of honour. Considering we were all over 70 we wore our years well and it was great meeting up with schoolfellows, some not seen since we left KHS all those years ago.

After a very good lunch **Sheila Kirk** (nee Ryder) welcomed everyone. She was appropriately clad in the green of Clare House - motto *Semper Fidelis*, and claimed that she is the only one who can remember their House motto! Can anyone disprove this? She introduced our esteemed guest of honour, who regaled us with memories of her early years at KHS. She arrived for interview, in January 1947, after a very difficult journey through the snow of one of the worst winters of C20th. She recalled memories of her experiences as a young teacher, having joined the staff in September 1947, and let us into glimpses of life on the other side of the staffroom door!

**Diana Sanders** (nee Grove) entertained us with a selection from her repertoire of humorous poems many alluding to life as we know it! Our grateful thanks to **Elisabeth Robinson** (nee Wrigglesworth) **Sheila Kirk**, **Sheila Bishop** (nee Nash) and **Mary Jordan** (nee Jarvis) for organising a very successful and enjoyable event.

**It is hoped to arrange a meeting again in 2008, possibly at the same venue which, being close to the M5 and M42 is relatively accessible to people from all over the country.**

## **KHS 1959 - 1966 Cohort Reunion Weekend 17-18 June 2006**

We met for dinner on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June, at the Granary, Shenstone. We had come from all points of the compass in England. Each appearance at the doorway was greeted with shrieks and cries of recognition, as old friends met again, some for the first time for 40 years. The hubbub grew, and the handsome young waiter became seriously flustered by all these 'ladies in their prime' acting like schoolchildren! We clustered at two round tables for an excellent meal, chatted ever more loudly, drank quite a lot of wine, changed places, more chat, more wine, more teasing the staff, louder hubbub, and a few photos. It was all so interesting. The characters at school remained the characters that evening – the sensible level-headed ones ditto – it was a good mix. Some were grandparents, some still fancy free, many had faced, or were still coming to terms with difficulties or loss.

We parted with many tearful and sincere promises to keep in touch. It had been 12 years since the only previous reunion, and we agreed that after another 5 it would be good to do it again.

A few hardy survivors of the night before, some new blood, and four former staff members –Mrs Hudson (nee Stoker),Mrs Torode( 3T form teacher when our cohort entered KHS),Brenda Kay, then Miss Colby, and Mrs Margaret Tarr, met up on Sunday at Lorna Smart's (nee Howson) lovely house near Redditch for coffee and a delicious lunch. As befits an occasion organised by the former Head Girl and 'supervised' by the indomitable Mrs Hudson (Miss Stoker), once a terror to at least some of us, it was hugely enjoyable, and allowed us to reminisce at leisure, with memories helped by a school photo or two! All in all, a weekend of lovely memories and friendship .

**PS – If this reaches anybody who might be interested in a future reunion, please email me, Jane Randall, (nee Pugh,) at:  
[jane@cc-bc-randall.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:jane@cc-bc-randall.freeserve.co.uk)**

## NEWS OF OLD GIRLS

**Naomi Bishop** (1971-77 and KC 1 1977-8), daughter of Sheila Bishop (nee Nash) (1946-51), gave the address and presented prizes at King Charles I School Speech Day on 23/3/2007. She is the Assistant Editor of BBC Midlands Today.

**Gillian Carter** (1968-75) is reliving her school days from her exercise books, log book and essay on the year's reading.

**Betty Caswell** (nee Edwards) (1942-49) has published her 14<sup>th</sup> book entitled "Looking back at Cookley 1950s and 1960s."

**Jane Cooper** (1968-75) is a Consultant in Public Health Medicine with NHS Ayrshire and Arran. She previously worked in Zimbabwe, for UNICEF in North East Kenya and for Medecins sans Frontieres in Uganda and Sudan. Her sister **Julie** (1970-77) gained a B.Sc in Agriculture at University College, Bangor, and a Cert.Ed(F.E.) at Wolverhampton Polytechnic. She married a fellow graduate, Andrew Edwards and they farm near Market Drayton.

**Alice Cookson** (nee Bennett (1967-74) enjoyed the reunion of her year organised by **Alison Hargreaves**, where they celebrated (or bemoaned) their half century birthdays and shared memories of the wonderful education they received at KHS. Early Years Education continues to be an inspiring career. The launch of the Childcare Bill took her to the House of Commons to meet Maurice Smith, Head of Ofsted, who then escorted her to the House of Lords for her continued education. Later in the year, he gave them a visit at Madresfield, where they had to endure very invasive Press coverage by the Daily Mirror. This summer will see Bennetts open an ice cream shop on their farm. They manufacture the ice cream on the farm and pride themselves on the 48 hour transition from cow's udder to ice cream tub!

**Mary Cross** (nee Vincent) (1942-49) lives in Devizes and is busy with U3A, the church and her 10 grandchildren.

Her brother **Noel Vincent** (KHS Kindergarten in the early 1940s) is retired and lives near Liverpool. He still does some broadcasting on religious programmes such as “Thought for The Day.”

**Mary Gill** (1924-31) is still in regular correspondence with **Eunice Williams** (nee Vercoe) in Toronto, Canada.

**Rosemary Donnan** (nee Watkiss) (1962-69) has been building a primary school in Kenya since 1999 and it now has 6 classrooms and 30 sponsored children. She visits yearly and in 2006 set up a literacy programme in a leper community in Msambweni near Mombasa. Her husband is a doctor and does health care courses when out there.

**Anne Sly** (1962-69) went out with them in 2004.

**Jenny Filby** (1964-72) has settled into rural life in North Norfolk, having organised her village’s Scarecrow Festival, Open Gardens Day and Pumpkin Growing Competition. She still works three days a week investigating serious complaints against local authorities, but enjoys the luxury of working from home.

**Heather Flack** (1957-64) is the leader of a project researching 20 properties in Wribbenhall to discover how the area developed especially during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

*Ed: Report based on articles in the Kidderminster Shuttle, as was the following :*

**Lindsey Granger** (1968-73) and her sister Wendy Rawlins took part in the Cancer Research UK Cycle India Challenge in February 2007 and raised £8,300. Lindsey had to help teach Wendy to ride a bike before they could begin training! Lindsey had breast cancer seven years ago. In October 2004 she did the Great Wall Walk in China for Cancer Research, raising £8,500. *Ed: What an inspiration.*

**Shirley Keays** (nee Green) (1943-53) is still well and active, doing daily yoga, singing with the Nottingham Bach Choir, working hard for Cancer Research UK and running a local cancer support group which she founded 5 years ago.



**Ann Oakes**(nee Crowther) (1945-57) was the longest ever member of Clent House, being a founder member and the only Clent girl in her Kindergarten year to make it to the Upper VI. She and her husband live in Merseyside. She has a busy teaching practice, preparing singers for music college etc. Last September she brought her Youth Chamber Choir to sing in St. Leonard's, Ribbesford, and All Saints, Wilden. In 2005 she celebrated her Ruby Wedding Anniversary with a 30 strong dinner party for close family and friends at which there were 5 ex- KHS girls—Ann, plus Susan Gardner, Maralyn Gardner(nee Cartwright), Patricia Kenwick and Jo-Ann Darwell (nee Bayliss).

Ann is regularly down in Wolverley at her cousin Sue's house, and they would love to meet up with anyone who remembers them.

**Wendy Ray**(1959-64), after giving up hockey, joined Kidderminster Golf Club and was Ladies' Captain during 2004. She now works for West Mercia Constabulary as a civilian attached to Redditch Police Station.

**Hazel Pattison**(nee Fearnall) (1961-68) emailed in to say that she had been lent a copy of the 2006 Newsletter, which she found interesting but was disappointed not to find news about any of her year group.

*Ed's Note: I can only include news if I receive it!*

Hazel would like to make contact with **Ann Hatton** who was in form "S" and to hear from any other contemporaries.

**Miss Bedford** reports that, thanks to the fantastic OGA network, **Muriel Hein** (nee Taylor) who lives in Calgary, has made contact with **Sibyl Rogers**(nee Squires). Sibyl left KHS in 1945, gained a Diploma in dance teaching, emigrated to Canada and set up a dancing school in Calgary. *Ed: Yes, Sibyl is spelt correctly.*

Sibyl's sister **Isobel** is the only woman commemorated on the Kidderminster town War Memorial which is to be restored. Sibyl has lent a photograph of Isobel for inclusion in the booklet which will be produced in due course. Isobel died in a flying accident in July 1945 while serving as a Petty Officer in the WRNS Fleet Air Arm. She left KHS in 1939.

**Elizabeth Watt**(nee Gale) (1952-58)reports that she, **Ann Dodd**(nee Lacy), **Janet Baker**(nee Davies)and **Beryl Bedford** were present on a misty October day, 2006,at the unveiling ceremony of a fountain in the grounds of Bewdley Museum. Tony Williams commissioned it in memory of his late wife **Madeline**(nee Morris) who died in 2001. Madeline was a Wyre Forest Tourist Information Officer from 1988 until 1998. She was instrumental in setting up Bewdley and Kidderminster visitor centres and introduced new ideas which resulted in Bewdley TIC winning the English Tourist Board's "England for Excellence" regional award in 1991, 1992, 1993 and 1995. In 1991 and 1992 Bewdley was runner up in the National competition involving more than 600 TICs. **Madeline** was a pupil at KHS 1952 -1959.

**Val Vaughan**(nee Dewick) (1946-51) celebrated 50 years of marriage in October 2006. Her husband Bob went to King Charles I Grammar School (1944-51) They have 2 daughters and 2 granddaughters.

**Margaret Phelan** reports that she recently met **Jane Abrahams** (nee Dare), who was at KHS possibly in the early 60s. She and her husband kept the Post Office in Broadwaters until it closed, and have been the moving force in the conservation of the old Mill Wheel, and the restoration and reclamation of the area, and the establishment of the Broadwaters Conservation Group.

**Eileen Shirley** (nee Greaves) (1934-42)

At the March OGA meeting, in the programme "The Old Girls At Home" Mary Wehner (nee Crane) (1937-50) and Pat Gale(not an O.G.) included an extract from Eileen's "The Trouble with the Blackout" written in the style of Shakespeare and published in the K.H.S magazine April 1940.

This reminded Eileen of K.H.S's involvement with Captain White and the Ship Adoption Society. He took part in a schools' broadcast called "A Tramp Skipper's Job in Wartime." Eileen was lucky enough to be chosen to take part. It was rare then for members of the public to take part, and it was an experience to go to Broadcasting House. She kept touch with Captain White after leaving school and quite soon after the war, when she was in London, his ship was in Surrey docks

and she was invited for a meal. They had just come back from Canada and as there was still food rationing here, it was an unusually good spread. She kept in touch, via Christmas cards mainly, after he retired to South Wales and until he died.

The original idea behind Ship Adoption was for the crew to write about the places they visited and the cargoes they carried, for geography lessons, with Miss Hunt the geography teacher being in charge. During the war of course, the ship's movements and cargoes were secret, so such information could not be divulged. However some level of correspondence was maintained.

**Linda Peters** (nee Johnson-Newell), who lives in Spain with her husband Mick, is in touch with Mrs. Hudson, and sent a chatty letter, enthusing about the warmth and sunshine and outlining the events in their busy lives. They have been exploring different regions of Spain, sometimes on foot, sometimes by coach or by cycle. Linda attends a weekly art class, keep-fit, and enjoys gardening – though bemoans the fact that things grow so quickly out there, including the bugs!

## **FROM THE EDITOR**

### **A FANTASTIC NEW CAREER OPPORTUNITY**

**Do you have literary aspirations? Do you crave to see yourself in print? Did Miss Whitaker tell you that one day you would become a famous writer? (I fell for that one!!) If so, now is your big chance!**

**The 2008 newsletter will be my tenth as Editor, incredible though it seems. I shall then DEFINITELY and IRREVOCABLY close my Reporter's Note Book for the last time and hand over to a new Editor. It is time for a new regime, possibly a new style. So please think about this seriously, do not hesitate. It is not too onerous a task, but involves a flurry of activity from about Easter to June.**

**Please speak to me or to Miss Bedford when you have decided.**

## O.G.A. COMMITTEE 2006-7

<i>Chairman</i>	Beryl Bedford (former teacher).
<i>Secretary</i>	Beryl Bedford helped by Alison Hargreaves and Rosemarie Moore (née Brockway).
<i>Assistant Sec.</i>	Mary Wehner (née Crane).
<i>Treasurer</i>	Shirley Whiteside (née Hall).
<i>Members</i>	Alison Hargreaves May Phillips (nee Tuck) Meriel Williams (nee Greaves) Janette Woolley(nee Ricketts)
<i>Flower Fund</i>	Rosemarie Moore (née Brockway) and Elisabeth Robinson (née Wrigglesworth).
<i>Catering</i>	Elisabeth Robinson.
<i>Ex Officio</i>	Patricia Nash (née Harris) Group 5.

***Newsletter Editor* Sheila Kirk (née Ryder), to whom all items for inclusion in the Newsletter should be sent, at:-**

***'West Fortune', Ashford Carbonell, Ludlow, SY8 4DB.  
Telephone 01584 831257.  
E-mail : [sheila@rkstudio.demon.co.uk](mailto:sheila@rkstudio.demon.co.uk)***