THE QUEEN'S SCHOOL
ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

2023

Introduction

Throughout this year and last, we have experienced significant changes that have shaped our journey. We began by mourning the loss of two remarkable individuals: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and our beloved former headmistress, Di Skilbeck, whose influence extended far beyond the Queen's family, touching countless lives. Amidst these moments of sorrow, we found joy in celebrating the 75th anniversary of Nedham House, bringing together current and former students in a special assembly to pay tribute to its enduring legacy. As we embrace change, we also bid farewell to our esteemed Alumni Manager, Clare Holland, who leaves behind a legacy of unwavering dedication and tireless efforts in nurturing our strong alumni network.

75th reunion at Nedham office

In February 2023, The Queen's School witnessed a heartwarming gathering as students, faculty, and former students came together to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Nedham House. A large group of alumni were invited back to Nedham House, where they gathered with Lower School girls and staff for a special celebration assembly. Among the distinguished guests were individuals who had the privilege of being the very first pupils to walk through its doors 75 years ago. Additionally, in attendance were the three grand-daughters of **Phyllis Brown**, the generous benefactor who purchased the house for the School back in 1948.

Annual reunion 2023

We welcomed back former pupils for our joyous Annual Reunion, hosted this year at our Lower School's Nedham House. We were delighted to see so many of you, with a special welcome to our leavers of years ending in '3', who celebrated their big milestones. There was much excitement on the day, as old friends caught up, shared memories, and toured familiar halls, evoking a deep sense of nostalgia and community. It was a remarkable celebration of enduring friendships and the lasting impact of Queen's.

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Welcoming leavers of 2023

We welcomed the leavers of 2023 to our alumni community on Friday 15 September at our Michaelmas Supper. It was a pleasure to host you.

We hope you enjoyed it as much as us, an opportunity to meet with your school friends and some teachers and of course Mrs W-W. Thanks to Chef John and his team too for preparing and serving such lovely food. I hope that you enjoyed your night out in Chester too.

If you know of any friends who, unfortunately, couldn't attend, please ask them to contact me at school with their personal email address so I can stay in touch with you all.

Leavers' day was also an unforgettable celebration, filled with laughter, camaraderie, and a touch of mischief! The students bid farewell to the School in style, donning a myriad of creative and colourful fancy dress costumes. They enjoyed the traditional bouncy castle and ice cream van, amidst plenty of hijinks, including a water pistol fight; creating memories that they would cherish forever.

With our very best wishes for your plans for this year.

Commemoration

The Queen's School 2023 Commemoration Service celebrated 145 years of education. This year we were delighted to enjoy a speech by Fiona Hagdrup (Pennington) '85, who spoke about being aware of bias, including the importance of having an open mind, making mistakes, and approaching things with a long-term viewpoint. The service concluded with our Year 13 students as The Queen's School alumni of 2023, leading Year 3 pupils, who will be our alumni of 2033 out of the Nave.

Cathedral Christmas Carol Service

It was lovely to see such a large group of alumni in the Cathedral for our traditional service of lessons and carols, and then to gather in the Refectory for coffee and mince pies. Old friends reunited, stories were swapped, and promises were made to meet again soon. This year our Cathedral Carol Service will be held on 13 December 2023. We would love to see you there and will forward more information soon so we can welcome you to the event.

Prize Giving 2023

Alumna **Janine Turner (Flamank) '75** returned to school as our special guest speaker for our Prize Giving ceremony last Friday. In addition to presenting the awards, Janine delivered a wonderful speech to our pupils all about 'inspiration'. She shared her experiences of her time at Queen's and how she discovered her love of languages here. Janine recalled an early French lesson when all students were given a piece of white paper and asked to repeat "around the rugged rock the ragged rascal ran" with the intention of only using the French pronunciation of the letter 'r' which if done correctly, meant the paper remained still (one to try at home)! Her experience of learning German at the age of 13 secured her belief that languages and culture were enjoyable, inspiring, and necessary. I think we would all agree with the sentiments expressed by John le Carré to Janine when he said that learning a language is like an act of friendship, and the decision to teach a language an act of generosity, a promise to kindle a flame that you hope will never go out.

Prize Giving 2022 was delayed slightly in recognition of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth

Alumna **Nicola Kiely '15** returned to the School as a guest speaker for our Prize Giving ceremony in September 2022. In addition to delivering a speech and presenting the awards, Nicola delivered a captivating talk to our Sixth Form girls, sharing her experiences as an Audit Associate at KPMG and her remarkable journey as a national lacrosse player for Ireland.

Alumni news

Former Head Girl **Alexandra McDonald '19** recently competed at Henley Women's Regatta for the last time as Captain of the King's College London crew. She has the honour of being the decorated captain of a KCL rowing team. Alexandra's crew qualified for the knockout stages and only lost to the eventual winners, Oxford Brookes. Alexandra has taken her final degree exams this summer, after reading History at KCL, and is now looking forward to postgraduate study in Contemporary Chinese Studies at Oxford University, and plans to continue her rowing career there.

Alumnae **Vrishali Shetty** and **Anushka Goel**, who have both recently completed their first year at university, visited Queen's to collect certificates and to chat with our Head of Careers, Mrs Dawson, about their respective courses: Medicine at The University of Edinburgh and Economics at Newcastle University. It was heartening to hear how many of their year group they are still in regular touch with! Our Alumni are truly a wonderful community.

Alumnae sisters **Hannah** and **Charlie MacDonald** started their university journeys together this year, after older sister Charlie spent a very successful gap year working in the film industry. Mrs Dawson was delighted to see Charlie's name on the credits for the new Indiana Jones film, especially after she found out about Charlie's lunchtimes spent with Harrison Ford, Antonia Banderas and Phoebe Waller-Bridge, no less!

Charlie continues in September into her second year at University College London studying Comparative Literature, while younger sister Hannah has finished her first year at Keele studying Criminology and was thrilled to have been selected to spend the summer at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington to study civil rights. Exciting times for both!

Role models to inspire

We were delighted to invite back alumnae **Zoe Thornton-Reid '18** and **Kat Lewis '13** in presenting their career paths to our Year 11 and 12 as part of a Quest Careers' afternoon. Zoe left Queen's to study Speech and Language Therapy at Newcastle University and now works at Maelor Hospital. Kat studied at Durham and went into a career in Management Consultancy, but more recently is training to become a Barrister.

Meet the Team

Jane Archibald
Director of External Relations

Hayley McDonnell
Alumni Manager

Amy Lewis
External Relations Office Assistant

A word from our new Alumni Manager...

As the recently appointed Alumni Relations Manager, I am delighted to pick up the mantle from Clare Holland and continue to develop the opportunities to connect.

With you at the forefront of my mind, I am planning a two-fold approach:

How can The Queen's School alumnae help you? What would you like to read or see?
How can you help the Queen's School and students?

I have posted on The Queen's School Alumni Facebook group some suggestions and am grateful for all (and more) responses.

Similarly, I have sent an email to all on our database to garner responses.

Please do share any news updates or more to alumni@thequeenschool.co.uk

Class of '73

It was a pleasure to host alumnae from the Class of '73 for their 50 year reunion.

Everyone enjoyed the tour around the school, the opportunities to see changes and those parts still in situ, reminisce about teachers, lessons, friendships, headmistresses and more. The round of applause received in our virtual boardroom was the icing on the cake as our guests discovered more about the opportunities it brings to our pupils today.

Talking of cakes, those enjoyed in the hall were delightful, thanks to Chef John, and a cup of tea or a tipple ensured the afternoon ended on a high!

The ladies enjoyed an evening meal and overnight stay at a local hotel too. We look forward to welcoming you back at The Queen's School very soon.

Miss Di Skilbeck

We commemorated and celebrated the life of Miss **Diana Skilbeck**, who passed away on 4th March 2023, at a memorial service at her local church. Her coffin was then transported on the Gifford, a boat that she once helped to save and restore, along the Shropshire Union Canal before she was cremated. At Queen's we remember her outstanding contribution to education in the country, particularly in her role as president of the Boat Museum Society of Ellesmere Port.

Mrs Sarah Osborne (Purcell) '78

passed away in April 2023. Sarah was a former pupil at Queen's before going on to study Mathematics and Psychology at Bedford College, London. She then returned to Queen's to teach Maths here from 1986 until 2020. Always generous with her time and expertise, Sarah worked tirelessly to bring out the best in all her pupils.

We remember...

Cynthia Jones (Moulds) '53 passed away on 15 November 2021. After leaving school, Cynthia went to medical school at Liverpool University and obtained diplomas in Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Anaesthetics. In 1967 her and her husband Peter welcomed a baby girl, Helen. Cynthia was a lifelong painter, from the age of eight through to the 'noughties. She loved her garden and her dogs and, after retirement, was an active member of the local Methodist Church.

Valerie Maunder (Hopper) '79 died suddenly on 16 June 2022 at home, aged 60. She is survived by her husband John and their children, Jessica, Joe and Sophie.

Elizabeth Lunn '76 passed away on 19 July 2023. Liz was an intelligent, hardworking and deeply caring woman who played a huge role in the Queen's community, as an alumna, parent and Chairman of Governors. She is survived by her husband David and children, Jennifer and Michael. She was instrumental in organising and getting in touch with her year group regarding reunions. In honour of her, it was agreed at her funeral (by about ten in number) that they would all make a real effort to attend the 50 year reunion in 2026. The family are also arranging a memorial service which no doubt some more of our year who live further afield will attend.

Elisabeth Glen Ralph (Bracken) '60 passed away on 29 August 2023. Upon leaving Queen's, Elisabeth was awarded a BA (Hons) from London University and went on to teach German at secondary and sixth form level for many years. Married for 53 years, she leaves her husband John, two sons and two granddaughters.

Pamela Stanley, who taught Maths at Queen's for 14 years, passed away surrounded by family.

The Right Honourable **Ann Clwyd (Lewis) '56** died peacefully at her home in Cardiff on 21 July 2023, with her family and cats around her. She is remembered as a formidable journalist, MEP and, for over 34 years, Labour MP for Cynon Valley. Ann was an inspiration to many with her campaigning and support of Human Rights and International Women's Rights, including her introduction of the Female Genital Mutilation Bill. She embodied the spirit, character, fortitude and principled nature of a Queen's girl.

Sheila Douglas (Williams) '51 passed peacefully away on 8 September 2023. Sheila was a big supporter of the 'old girls' and her daughter Lesley was a pupil at Queen's in the 1970's.

Read our 2023 copy of Have Mynde

Supporting the School

To make a donation to any of our Queen's projects, such as the new Astroturf, the 150 for 150 Bursary Campaign, or simply to make a donation in memoriam, please scan this QR code.

Any contributions are hugely appreciated and will make a real difference to The Queen's School.

Q150 FOR 150

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