THE QUEEN'S SCHOOL
ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

2019

CAREER CONNECTIONS

The Queen's School Alumni Office, City Walls Road, Chester CH1 2NN e alumni@thequeensschool.co.uk t 01244 312078
Edited by Clare Holland (Witter) '88, Alumni Officer

Career Connections

We're so pleased about the connections we've made between alumni and current Queen's girls up to 2018, and are even more excited about new Careers events and programmes planned for 2019!

The front cover shows a selection of alumnae and students who have been involved.

Please don't be offended if your profile is not featured (newsletter photo editing and gaining permissions are notoriously difficult jobs!) but thanks go from me personally to every single alumna who has conversed, mentored, interviewed, visited, contributed or donated to The Queen's School via The Alumni Office.

If you'd like to get involved with Careers, University, Industry, Bursary or Archive contributions or advice, please don't hesitate to get in touch via telephone or email; or 'The Queen's School, Chester Alumni' on Facebook, @QSChesterAlumni on Twitter, or 'The Queen's School, Chester Alumnae' on LinkedIn; and look out for the launch of our new alumni database later in the year.

I always enjoy hearing from you and look forward to all those connections yet to be made!

Clare Holland (Witter) '88 - Alumni Officer

Oxbridge Life

Last December saw our second biennial Oxbridge Life seminar, designed to enable Queen's girls to make an exceptionally well-informed decision about considering Oxford or Cambridge universities.

Over coffee and croissants, Year 12 students Scarlett and Melody met and interviewed **Chloe Bransby '16,** Economics and Management, Worcester College, Oxford; **Felicity Hudson '18,** English, St Edmund Hall, Oxford; **Áine Jackson '12,** Music, Worcester College, Oxford; and **Veronica Patrick (Davies) '78,** PPE, St Hilda's College, Oxford.

The room was then filled with many more Year 11 and 12 girls who spent an enjoyable hour listening to the alumnae smashing stereotypes, giving fantastic advice and illuminating the reality of the progression from Queen's to Oxbridge.

Scarlett and Melody's interviews are now a valuable resource for students researching the process of applying, and also form the basis of new alumnae case studies for our growing collection. Why not take a look and maybe contribute your own? www.thequeensschool.co.uk/alumni/alumnae-case-studies.

> **"It's like I have never left. It's so amazing because this is where it all started for me"**

Belle Voci

There was a buzz of excitement around the school last March as we received a special visit and performance from stars of the ITV1 hit show *The Voice*, 'Belle Voci'.

Sophie Rohan '10 returned to the birthplace of her singing career and delivered a stunning performance with partner Emily Burnett.

It was lovely to hear from Sophie about her time at school and how support from Queen's teachers helped build her confidence to get her where she is today. After taking questions from the girls, Sophie and Emily posed for numerous pictures with them.

Sophie said: "It's like I have never left. It's so amazing because this is where it all started for me and it is because of this school that I got into music so it is really quite special. My first music teacher ever was Mrs Clayton who is still teaching here. I am really lucky to have such a close relationship with Queen's because lots of people do not have that with their school. I have so many fond memories of school so it was really important to me to come back, and I would like to give back a little and encourage some of the students here now to follow their dreams."

Reunion news

Michaelmas Supper 2018

The overriding message to our youngest alumnae from our new Headmistress at the Michaelmas Supper was that the friendships they have made here at Queen's will be ones that endure throughout their lives.

Mrs Sue Wallace-Woodroffe and Alumni Officer Clare Holland (Witter) '88 jointly welcomed the Leavers of 2018 at a drinks reception on the 'Q' followed by a lovely two-course dinner.

Many of the girls had met Mrs Wallace-Woodroffe at Prize Giving that afternoon and were pleased to see her embracing the celebratory spirit of this evening party where staff and alumnae mingle and together enjoy their first proper social event.

The Michaelmas Supper is a key moment, always a little reflective but mostly about looking forward, and we're always so excited to hear about the girls' plans for the future - whether they comprise foreign travel, university study, or work or volunteering projects.

The '18 leavers were reminded however that the years will fly by, and before they know it, they will be receiving invitations to reunions at which we know for sure we'll hear about their appreciation of the relationships forged during their time at Queen's as well as the education received.

Prize Giving ceremony

We were proud to welcome Rebecca Wright '93 as speaker at our annual Prize Giving ceremony at Chester Cathedral.

Rebecca spoke warmly about her time at School and engagingly about her life since leaving. Following Queen's, her passion for literature took her to Oxford followed by a doctorate and spell at Harvard studying law before a career as an international human rights lawyer and a UK criminal barrister.

She spoke from the heart both in the Cathedral and earlier in School to a group of aspiring lawyers about her own role models, about failure and how it is a necessary part of life and about the importance of self-belief and standing one's ground.

Of particular note was the first presentation, to **Zoe Thornton-Reid '18,** of the Brina Marks Prize, a beautifully crafted box designed in memory of Brina to contain the accumulating stories of the contributions to the world of the girls who receive it.

The Annual Summer Reunion 2018

We welcomed back former pupils for the traditional Summer Reunion on one of those scorching days of 2018, and were pleased to see so many of our 'Golden Girls' from 1968 return to school after 50 years, as well as large groups from 1978 and 1988, all keen to catch up with old friends, share memories and tour the school.

'Old girls' from 1955 through to 1960 were also part of this special event and the school was buzzing with excitement and nostalgia. After school many of us braved the race day crowds and went on to enjoy further celebrations in Chester, revisiting old haunts and discovering new.

1988 Friends Reunited

2008 Leavers

We always love welcoming back Queen's alumnae, and the women who left 10 years ago are usually particularly fun groups to host as it's often their first visit back to School.

The alumnae of 2008 had no problem finding their way in through what some still think of as the 'new' glass front entrance but were struck by updates and changes in the chemistry labs and dining room in particular. They were hugely impressed by the Pre-U Art exhibition, with several commenting on the outstanding standard. It was amusing to watch them raise glasses of fizz in the dining room and common rooms as they reminisced and told anecdotes, and delightful to see them chatting to former teachers, **Mrs Irene Jones, Mrs Viv Carpenter, Mrs Alison Carter, Mrs Bev Edwards** and **Mrs Janet O'Donnell** who called in to catch up. These early evening drinks at Queen's were only a prelude to their meal and night out in Chester which promised to be a vibrant and fun event. We hope they enjoyed the whole occasion and come back soon!

The Christmas Carol Service and Refectory Lunch

It was a bumper year for alumni attendance at our Christmas Carol Service as we celebrated 140 years as a centre of excellence for teaching and developing girls to be the best they can be.

The Chester Cathedral event is always a favourite for many as the whole School joins as one to celebrate the festive period. Reception pupils performed their nativity scenes with confidence, the Chamber Choir and Young Voices Choir sounded beautiful, our readers were superb and Canon Jane Brooke, who is also a governor, gave a wonderful blessing. Afterwards a large number of alumnae gathered in the Cathedral Refectory for lunch and coffee, enjoying the opportunity to have a proper catch up before continuing their own personal Christmas preparations.

Alumni News

■ It was lovely to read the interview in TES Online with **Beth Allen (Tweddle) '03** in which she spoke about her favourite teacher, **Mrs Mornie Jones - Biology.**

■ **Jenny Barcroft '08,** who is now a registrar doctor in London, was awarded the Gold Medal as she became a surgeon and a full member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

■ A blue plaque has been installed in Chester Town Hall to commemorate the achievements of **Louisa Phyllis Brown (Humfrey) 1895.** As well as a Queen's alumna, Phyllis was Chester's first woman mayor, served as Chairman of the Board of Governors for many years and was one of The Queen's School's most generous benefactors. She also happens to be the great-grandmother of:

■ **Elizabeth Brooks (Barrow) '97** whose novel 'Call of the Curlew' was published in June 2018.

■ Congratulations to wildlife photographer **Sue Flood '83** who has had 12 of her images used on the new First Day Covers for the British Antarctic Territories.

■ **Lisa Hallam '05** is a GP trainee in Shropshire. We are grateful for the valuable support that she, and **Mrs Sîan Chafer** and **Mrs Irene Jones** are offering in the Queen's Archive.

■ **Ruth Hoare '15** sang in a world première performance at the Royal Albert Hall marking 100 years since the end of the First World War. It was a poignant evening for Ruth as the concert involved her great, great-uncle's violin being played in a specially composed symphony.

■ **Chloe Hughes '15** is currently studying at London College of Fashion but last year also worked on the creative for the video of the UK Number One song by Calvin Harris and Dua Lipa, 'One Kiss'!

■ **Chiara Lisowski '05** spoke bravely about her experience of domestic abuse at a TEDx event in Maastricht. Her powerful talk is available to watch on YouTube.

■ It was fantastic to welcome back alumna **Giselle Parker '97** last November to speak to our Year 12 Business students about her story of combining two passions – dance and business. Giselle is the CEO of Dame Darcey Bussell's DDMIX business and together they took office staff at school by surprise when they stopped to pose for selfies outside!

■ Lovely to see some of the 1976 leavers keeping in touch and sharing memories. They caught up at the Pant Yr Ochain in October and had a great time. They are hoping to be getting together again in the spring. (Using maiden names this group comprised **Janet Rait, Cathy Walter, Shirley Ann Rydeard '77, Alison Woolf, Elizabeth Pulman, Belinda Caddock** and **Elizabeth Lunn.**)

We remember

- **Paula Betteridge '67** on 29th September 2018 after a long battle with throat cancer.
- **Elizabeth Clarke (Davies) '60** in Summer 2018.
- **Margaret Cox (Macdonald) '51** on 4th March 2018. After Queen's, Margaret embarked on a career in the teaching of Domestic Science. Before an exchange year in New Zealand, detailed lesson plans for the classes she was leaving behind resulted in the first edition of *O Level Cookery*. After her return to the UK, Margaret was appointed Home Economics Adviser to three London boroughs.
- **Miss Elinor Edwards** (pictured) is remembered with great fondness by very many of us. She passed away peacefully in her nursing home in Wrexham on 20th January 2019. Teaching at Queen's for the vast majority of her career from the early 1950s until 1988, she was an astute, thoughtful and well-loved maths teacher and deputy headmistress. To commemorate her memory, gifts to The Queen's School Bursary Fund are very much appreciated, and we are provisionally planning a Chester memorial service for alumni. Please do get in touch for more information about the event or contributions: www.thequeensschool.co.uk/news/remembering-miss-elinor-edwards
- **Miss Shirley Hayes** on 17th August 2018. Shirley was a pupil in the post-war years and then returned as a young teacher of Domestic Science. Her main domain was the ground floor of the Science Block, which had been built in the 60s. Here she taught cookery to generations of girls. Needlework, especially lace-making, was her passion and after she left Queen's, she continued to teach lace. As Domestic Science changed to Home Economics, she also taught girls to think about budgeting for a household - which she considered a very pertinent skill.
- **Josephine Klein '44** on 13th November 2018. Leading psychotherapist who was always grateful for the support given which enabled her to attend The Queen's School as a young refugee.
- **Miss Daphne Luff,** peacefully, aged 89 years, on 4th July 2018. The Queen's School is very grateful for Miss Luff's generous donation to The Bursary Fund which will help benefit future generations of girls.
- **Rita Morgan (Linley) '57** in December 2018
- **Victoria Park (Arden) '69** sadly and unexpectedly in March 2018.
- **Yvonne Walker (Woodhead)** peacefully, after a long illness, in Australia on 8th October 2018.

The Queen's School Commemoration

Alumni Officer Clare Holland (Witter) '88 gave the following speech to the congregation:

Almost exactly one hundred and forty years ago, on May 1st 1878, not very far away from here at a house on Lower Watergate Street, a nervous new headmistress, Miss Constance Holdich, opened the doors of our school for the very first time.

Almost forty years ago, in September 1978, again not so very far away, in a house on the Liverpool Road, a nervous new pupil, wearing a rather itchy red knitted hat, walked through the doors of our school for the very first time.

In those early days, Miss Holdich was apparently "much impressed by the docility of Chester girls in comparison with (the) London girls" she had taught previously. I'm not sure that being docile is a trait we encourage in Queen's girls nowadays, but at least it meant that our first headmistress apparently never had any trouble with the children! (I'm not sure I never gave any trouble - but I don't think it was too much!)

Now here we are in 2018, and those I've just mentioned are only two of a number of special occurrences, both global and Queen's, that occurred in years ending in 8. Hung up in the Nave there, that many of you can see, are photo reminders of a huge event. 1918 marked of course the end of the four years of the First World War, during which the girls of The Queen's School had apparently all contributed to the war effort, with activities as diverse as picking sphagnum moss for hospital use (apparently it's a bog moss which, dried, was used for millions of wound dressings) knitting socks and stitching sandbags. Knitting, sewing and other "domestic sciences" (as they were called in my day) were for decades a principal part of the education at Queen's. But learning to thread a sewing machine was a skill I could just never get to grips with - and remembering receiving a smack (albeit in jest) for getting it wrong for the umpteenth time makes me realise just how much times have changed!

In 1928 the Equal Franchise Act was passed (giving women voting rights equal to men's) and The Queen's School celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. For that there was a week of celebrations in May - a jubilee bazaar (which I think sounds rather like a giant jumble sale); a morning of school sports; a special dinner; a peal of the Cathedral bells and a special service, with those Queen's girls then sitting right here where you Queen's girls are now. Bearing in mind that in 1928, as well as the special service in May, The Queen's School also held its Commemoration Service in October, you might be thinking that two services are rather too much of a good thing! But cathedral services are a part of Queen's, girls, and they will stay with you. You might be rather surprised to hear that in my final year at school, then called the Upper Sixth, I chose not to accompany my parents and siblings on a flight to Australia but stay and participate in the Senior Choir in my last Cathedral Christmas Service as a Queen's girl. I don't sing up there on the raised seats any more but I still find it difficult not to sing the descants to the carols!

The Diamond Jubilee - sixty years of The Queen's School - was celebrated in 1938, with all the excitement and events of 1928, but with a garden party as well. I know that a garden party has become a very attractive tradition at the Lower School, but my memories of cake eaten at the right-hand half of the Lower School which was then Nedham House, are not quite so genteel. Some of the congregation might remember the frequent power cuts of the 1970s - and one such cut meant only partial cooking of our favourite lunchtime chocolate sponge. The gooey mixture was put outside the kitchen door in buckets, intended no doubt, for the pigs. But maybe you can imagine what a horde of little girls did - it was the ultimate in licking the bowl! We had to apologise to Mrs Ogg for our behaviour - but it seemed very odd to be asked to apologise to a cook for enjoying her food!

1948 was another special year for Queen's as it was in January that year that Nedham House was opened, named after the fourth headmistress. In 1968 the building of the swimming pool was started (but that of course was the old pool, now replaced.) When I started at the Queen's junior school (in our centenary year) lessons only went on until 12.20pm on a Friday until, in Form II, we received the coveted, hand-written invitation from Miss Whitnall to stay for lunch and 'Activities.' This was a whole new world of exciting crafts and games, from baking (always honeycomb crisp) to Binca (that's cross-stitch fabric out of which we made decorated covers for our GNBs - General Note Books) and gardening (our own squares of earth) to pottery (I wonder if the kiln is still in the cellar?)

You'll remember that forty years ago I was that nervous new pupil in the red knitted hat. These hats were home-made, with only the pattern and a description of the wool colour provided by school. So you can imagine the variation in our appearance when we were all together! As we all know, mothers have a wide range of skill-sets and I'm not sure my mum's was knitting!

Anyway, ten years later, in 1988, I left The Queen's School, little appreciating then the education I had received. I do appreciate it now. And that's partly because I have two fantastic daily reminders of the qualities and standard of our amazing school. So much is different in their teenage years from the 1980s, but being Queen's girls, Isobel and Caroline remind me of the constants: the essential hopes, fears and aspirations of intelligent, educated girls remain the same.

And in my role as Alumni Officer I've met many former Queen's girls of all ages, shapes and sizes, but this notion of us all being instilled with shared values is a constant. As Lesley Cooke, last year's alumna speaker reminded us, "You will always be a part of Queen's and, more importantly, Queen's will always be a part of you."

2018 is of course a special year. We're celebrating one hundred and forty years; my Queen's contemporaries and I are meeting again to reiterate and refresh our friendships - so many of which have stood the test of time; and you Year 13 students are this year's Queen's alumnae with '18 after your names. And in 2028, when you Year 3 ladies are here, participating in this Commemoration Service as seventeen and eighteen year-olds, I'm sure you'll have fond memories of this and so many other aspects of your school life and be proud, as I am, to be a Queen's girl.

"Cathedral services are a part of Queen's, girls, and they will stay with you"

Queen's Chamber Choir alumnae of 2018

From the Headmistress

I am proud to lead a school with such energy and where value is placed on each and every girl.

The girls excelled themselves last academic year and our plan is obviously to ensure this excellent standard continues - with a firm emphasis on critical and independent thought. Prizes and exam results are important but they are only part of the journey - and that journey continues well beyond Queen's.

It is the development of the whole person which I believe will ensure our pupils achieve real and long-lasting success in their lives.

Preparing girls for life is one of our particular strengths here at Queen's and with such a warm and vibrant Queen's community, further strengthening the connections the girls have with our alumni is something I am passionate about. It is only too clear that our alumni, too, want to support current pupils.

The power of role models cannot be underestimated in a school, especially if they also have a strong connection. You will have read that in December we hosted 'Oxbridge Life', and it is this first-hand knowledge from girls who only a few years ago were sitting where our current students are now, that is of such value; your very presence inspires and motivates the girls.

Being able to share news of alumni successes is always powerful and we are currently working to build up our stock of alumni career case studies to enable our girls to be able to see the paths those before them have taken in whatever career area they are seeking to progress. We love to share real life experiences that the girls can relate to as the journeys travelled, literal and otherwise, by our former pupils enrich the entire school.

I am keen to provide an environment for the girls which encourages them to recognise they are the influencers of the future. We must strive to nurture the development of each girl into a strong, independent woman fully prepared for challenges lying ahead.

International Women's Day in March has provided an ideal opportunity for me to launch a new project - a high-tech virtual board room with full conferencing facilities - which will open in September. This facility will enable the girls to gain experience of running a project or business idea from start to finish. We are currently building links with successful women, worldwide, both within and beyond our alumni who would like to be involved as a team advisor. The boardroom will provide for each team to link with their advisor, ideally for an hour each month to present and talk through a report covering all aspects of the project - conceptual, financial, marketing, sales etc. The meetings will also allow opportunity for self-reflection and critical analysis of strengths, weaknesses, success and failure. The aim of the project is for these teams of girls to learn how to create a business plan, manage meetings, delegate tasks, present ideas, learn listening skills, consider body-language and develop assertiveness.

It was pleasing to see from our recent parents' survey that the careers advice Queen's provides was judged 'very high'. Interestingly, the pupil survey confirms the younger girls are especially interested in gaining more insight into potential career paths. I therefore want to extend and widen our range of speakers and external mentors and if you feel this is something you would like to get involved with please do get in touch via the Alumni Office. I have enjoyed meeting some of you already, and look forward to meeting many more of you in the months and years to come.

Mrs Sue Wallace-Woodroffe

"The power of role models cannot be underestimated in a school"

Alumni Events 2019

THE QUEEN'S SCHOOL COMMEMORATION SERVICE

Friday 3rd May, 2pm, Chester Cathedral

If you would like to attend please contact us for a ticket and an invitation to tea at School afterwards.

2009 LEAVERS REUNITE?

A Saturday, 5pm-7pm, The Queen's School.

Still looking for a co-ordinator and date!

If you're 2009 let us know what you think. Fizz and Nibbles £10

THE ANNUAL SUMMER REUNION

Saturday 6th July, 12 noon

A popular occasion for former pupils from both near and far to revisit School and reunite, with a warm welcome guaranteed whether you come alone or in a group.

The event cost is £22 which includes a light buffet lunch with wine and tea or coffee. Do register on the website www.thequeensschool.co.uk/alumni/reunions-and-events/annual-summer-reunion or phone the Alumni Office for card payments, or you may send a cheque payable to 'The Queen's School.'

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF MISS ELINOR EDWARDS

Saturday 6th July, 3pm, The Queen's School

A memorial event integrated into the Annual Reunion, to be held in the Gym for capacity and ease of access. Please attend either or both as you prefer. Register your interest on the website www.thequeensschool.co.uk/alumni/reunions-and-events or contact The Alumni Office. All welcome.

1969 LEAVERS AT THE ANNUAL SUMMER REUNION

Golden Anniversary Celebration! 1969 tables at lunch, tours of the school and group photos.

Guest list co-ordinated by Jan Moran (Jones.) Please get in touch to let us know you'd like to come.

1989 LEAVERS AT THE ANNUAL SUMMER REUNION

Catherine Tannahill is co-ordinating - so do get in touch with her or us.

1981 LEAVERS AT THE ANNUAL SUMMER REUNION

A table at this event as well as your March do. Instead of, or as well as? You decide!

1964 LEAVERS

Ruth Ankers (Carter) is planning a 55th anniversary reunion.

THE MICHAELMAS SUPPER

Friday 13th September 7pm for 7.30pm at school.

The 2019 Leavers will return to School for the first time since receiving their A Level results and officially becoming alumnae.

THE CATHEDRAL CAROL SERVICE AND LUNCH IN THE CATHEDRAL REFECTORY

Friday 13th December 10.45am

Take up your reserved seat for the Cathedral Carol Service and then join us in the Cathedral Refectory for an informal cafe-style lunch.

We sit at a reserved table in the Refectory, but with no seating plan so that you may stay for as long or as short a time as you wish.

We will make contact in December, sending tickets and confirming attendance, but please do get in touch to go on the list - seats in the Nave are in high demand for this event and the social afterwards is becoming quite the tradition!

CHRISTMAS CHOIR REUNION

Saturday 21st December?

It was just so magical in 2017, and we promised we'd do it again, so please consider saving the date, get in touch to go on the list of interested alumni, and we'll see what we can do!

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e alumni@thequeensschool.co.uk t 01244 312078