



Northampton High School Alumnae News 2020-21

Welcome



How does one even begin to sum up the academic years 2019-2021? A time in which we - and, indeed, much of the world - faced lockdown and disruption. Most significantly for any school, the cancellation of national examinations in May and June was a first for all and a significant

challenge for the students and colleagues affected. Writing as I do, over twelve months after we first went into lockdown, it is hard to remember that the start of the 2019/20 academic year was 'normal'. Normal, that is, excepting the full Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspection a few weeks into the Autumn Term. This was expected but rigorous, examining our compliance with the Independent School Standards Regulations and assessing our Educational Quality (EQ). An inspection in which full compliance was confirmed and we received the highest possible grading of 'Excellent' for the two strands of EQ: 'the quality of pupils' academic and other achievements', and 'the quality of pupils' personal development'.

More importantly, though, the inspection report really captured the essence of the school, stating that pupils 'demonstrate a high level of self-understanding, self-confidence, self-discipline and resilience', that they show 'extremely positive attitudes to learning' and 'a strong appreciation and respect for the diverse cultures represented within the school community'. These are the attributes and the spirit of the school that have allowed us to stand strong in the face of adversity in recent months and I truly believe that the resilience and the adaptability that our students have shown this year has been a reflection of both the current support and the wider legacy of the school. This is something that we have all contributed towards in our time, and of which we can be justly proud.

Last year, I introduced myself to you as the Acting Head of Northampton High School and I was delighted to meet several of you at the OGA lunch in January 2020. Soon afterwards, I successfully applied for the substantive position and was appointed on 16 March 2020, five days before we went into lockdown. It is with some irony and yet no flippancy that I say that I am, I hope, one of a very few Heads who has spent their first week in position preparing to close the school! On entering lockdown, we immediately had to learn a new way of working and of learning. I cannot praise enough the spirit of the entire community in adjusting to this: the steep learning curves that were to be the use of systems for some, 'Zooming' for others and remote teaching and learning for all. Guided Home Learning (GHL) became a necessity: a way of working in which students and staff connect remotely from their own homes during lockdown or, at other times, when one or other needs to self-isolate. Following the first period of lockdown, we were one of only a few schools that were able to fully open our Junior School doors, and it was



an absolute pleasure to see the beaming faces of the girls as they physically reconnected with their peers for the first time in weeks. With examinations cancelled, our own teachers and those from across the GDST engaged our students in a range of masterclasses which gave them access to information on over 80 subjects, ranging from Epigenetics, Human Evolution and Animal Behaviour, to Language Evolution, The Birth of

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Modernism and Theories of Myth. Year 13 (6.2) students were given the opportunity to focus on preparation for university and they undertook real-world training, including courses in Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Fashion Design and Scriptwriting.

Many of these courses will continue this summer term, giving each of our students in Years 10 to 13 (Lower Fifth to 6.2) the opportunity to connect, learn and share ideas with students in GDST schools across the United Kingdom and to further enrich an already packed curriculum. With so much on offer, it is little wonder that each of our leavers took a different route at the end of last year. Subjects ranged from History of Art and English Literature to Engineering, Ecology and Economics, Dentistry, Medicine, Veterinary Science, Fine Art and Law with Criminology.

The start of the current academic year saw a return to school for all, albeit to a different way of working and of being. With some not having set foot inside the building for almost six months, the entire community reunited and the inconvenience of face coverings, social distancing and 'bubbles' was well and truly counteracted by the joy of being together.

Very sadly, this spirit was dampened somewhat by the news that our Head of Junior School, Mr Chris Bailey, had been diagnosed with terminal cancer of the pancreas and liver at the end of September. Chris was appointed at the same time as me and, in his short tenure, he has injected energy and professionalism into

the Junior School that will forever leave a mark. Chris sadly lost his short yet courageous battle at the end of March 2021; the School community will forever remember him.

Not surprisingly, the whole school got behind 'Challenge 24', Pancreatic Cancer UK's fundraising campaign in recognition of the fact that 24 people in the UK die of this disease each day. As a result, we raised a record-breaking £8,600 for the charity during Pancreatic Cancer Awareness month in November 2020.

We talk of a smile not reaching the eyes, but we have all learned to smile with our eyes in recent times and to show expression and emotion beyond the physical mask. This is a positive in a difficult time, and I do not underestimate the journey that we have all been on: the losses, the challenges and the hardships that many have endured and the adjustments that we have all had to make. There is much to look forward to, though, on both a local and a national level, and I very much look forward to reporting a very different situation to you next year and to seeing you in person at the OGA lunch in January 2022. In the meantime, the spirit of Northampton High School lives on, and I thank you all for being a part of this.

Mrs Caroline Petryszak
Headmistress

My School Memories by Anne Fine

Originally published in GDST Girl For Life 2020/21, with the kind permission of Anne Fine and GDST

Anne Fine is one of Britain's most distinguished writers for both adults and children.

In addition to winning numerous awards and being twice voted Children's Author of the Year, Anne was Children's Laureate from 2001-2003. During this time she set up www.myhome-library.org, a website that offers a host of freshly designed and freely downloadable modern bookplates to enthuse young readers to form their own home libraries from the second hand books around them. She also

published three classic anthologies of poetry for different ages called A Shame to Miss 1, 2 & 3.

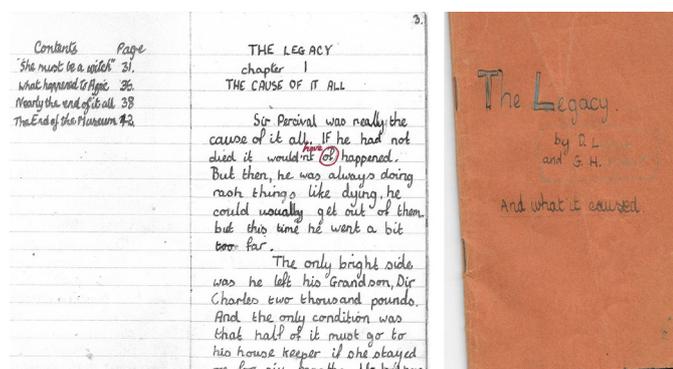
Anne has published eight highly acclaimed black comedies for adults, and her work has been translated into 40 languages. In 2003, she was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and awarded an OBE. Anne has two daughters and seven grandchildren, and lives in County Durham.

My School Memories by Anne Fine

Author and former Children's Laureate Anne Fine looks back on her days at Northampton High School in the 1950s and 1960s.

"I came from a plain post-war primary school in Hampshire. Ushered into Towerfield, an annexe house on Derngate, halfway through term, I walked into a room crammed with the sort of wooden desks I'd only seen in old school story illustrations. Framed pictures hung on the walls and full length drapes - can they really have been velvet? - were half drawn against the sun. The girls were moaning about their reading book. (Bevis, by Richard Jefferies.) "So boring! Just goes on and on!" And my first thought was, 'How can they sit in such a lovely room and be so ungrateful?'

I fell in love even before I'd seen the curious basement where we bought our buns, the magic garden with its hidden places, the large stone goldfish trough. I hadn't thought a school could be like this. My interview had been terrifying. "Yo soy yo y mi circunstancia," Miss Marsden said. "What language might that be?" I'd guessed at twenty or more before she finally told me it was Spanish, so was convinced I'd failed. (The trauma ran so deep that, when the equally formidable Mrs Gee repeated the Ortega y Gasset quote over five years later, I recognised the sound of the words at once.) But I'd been an inventive language guesser. Miss Marsden let me in.



I loved the work - so calm, so orderly. Moving to the main school, warm Mrs Davies taught English and let me and Gillian Herbert read out chapters of our shared opus *The Legacy*, and *What it Caused*. Miss Sinton scared me rigid, but I'm forever grateful for all the chunks of Shakespeare I still know by heart. I took *Extra Speech* from Mrs Nichol, which was another poem learned every week, enriching everything since. I once stopped Miss Morgan and her gravity-defying hair as she walked past my desk. "Could I be a writer?" "Oh, yes," she said. "You could," as if it were far from a compliment. Still, I remember tucking the thought away...



I was madly jealous of Alicia Jolles. So pretty, so clever, and prone to fits of such merriment she would be ordered from the room till she'd composed herself. I'd never seen confidence like it. I'm sure it was wanting to outdo Alicia that kept me working so hard.

Was Miss Marsden truly as strait-laced as she appeared? After Elizabeth Manningham-Buller, later Director General of MI5, left us for Benenden, she sent a letter back, care of the school. Summoned to slide it from the envelope and read it aloud, I came to the words, "And how is the Old Bag?" and magicked it into, "And best wishes to Miss Marsden." But it was years before I realised that, behind those prim lips, she was probably amusing herself at my expense.

At fifteen I had to drop English to study Spanish, and I'm not sorry about that. It means I come at writing freestyle, with readability my only watchword, and only one inner critical voice: my own. Spanish A level in two years was hugely demanding. Countless hours learning vocabulary and endless struggles through Harmer & Norton's grammar book. (I still have mine.) Mrs Gee sat with her legs spread comfortably under the table, exposing her unfashionable bloomers, as she talked of her passions: Lorca, Picasso, Spanish Architecture. I spent whole weeks writing essays in Spanish, once without a single mistake! And what did she write at the end? 'Prefiero que dejas esta afectación de la e griega.' (I'd like you to drop this affectation of writing open Greek e's.) I think of it each time I see a child dot an i with a smiley face or a heart. That habit wouldn't have lasted long at Northampton High School for Girls. But I'm so glad I did."

Book news from old friends



We always love to hear good news stories from our former students, and find out how our alumnae are excelling in their chosen studies and careers since leaving the High School. The past year has proven to be a difficult time for all of us, but one former Northampton High School pupil has made the most of her time in lockdown, and penned a children's book to help children understand the current COVID crisis.

Charlie Golding, who now resides in Australia, was inspired to write her book after receiving questions on the global pandemic from her three children over the past year. 'When the world went inside' follows the life of Theo, who is unhappy at the thought of not being allowed to enjoy his favourite hobbies such as camping, visiting his Granny and having sleepovers – all due to

the pandemic. The book acts as a conversation starter between parents and children to talk about the virus, whilst also offering reassurance that there is an end, and we are on our way to getting there.

Charlie commented, "I'm a big believer in levelling with kids and talking to them in an honest and age appropriate way. I want to get families talking. I want to remove the fear of the virus. And now...I want to give families the resource to teach their children how to stay safe away from their parent's watchful eyes. I'm not an author. I'm not a teacher. Although I'm now all of those things. I'm a mum, sometimes hanging on by the skin of her teeth – on a mission to help."

A fantastic personal achievement by Charlie, and we are all proud to hear of her success. We hope to welcome Charlie virtually into school in their near future to talk to our younger students about the book and its message; if you would like to find out more about it yourself, please go to <https://www.whentheworldwentinsidebook.co.uk/>.

Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York, reads the book: <https://youtu.be/AB0hFcaCEbI> and here, Charlie talks to children about lockdown: <https://youtu.be/Vyjmv-CaOhFY>

Are you a writer? Get in touch and tell us about your news at alum@nhs.gdst.net.

Reunion Lunch connects lifelong friendships

January 2020 feels like a long time ago now – almost a different era (certainly pre-COVID), however the memories made at the last annual Alumnae Reunion Lunch endure. Understandably, the prospect of a Reunion Lunch this year was just not possible, however we are already making plans for another event for January 2022, and we will really look forward to reconnecting after the passing of another year.

It was wonderful to welcome over 130 alumnae and friends of Northampton High – from both the Derrigate and the Hardingstone sites – assembled for the annual Alumnae Reunion Lunch in January 2020. Former members of staff, pupils and friends of the school delighted in catching up, making for a lively exchange of memories which, for some, were some 50 years hence, affirming that friendships

forged in one's school days really do stand the test of time. The school's Catering team served a delicious lunch that was thoroughly enjoyed by all. "This event just gets better each year", commented one former staff member, a sentiment echoed by many of the guests.

The lunch is a key component of our alumnae programme, which celebrates association with the school. The Northampton High alumnae are part of the GDST alumnae network, spanning the world and every professional sector. With over 70,000 members, the GDST network offers a professional community unlike any other.

Sincere thanks go to all for making this a treasured highlight of the alumnae calendar, and special appreciation for the committee of dedicated ladies on the OGA Committee.

Reunion Lunch: January 2020 Photos



Staff Farewells 2020

We said goodbye to a number of colleagues at the end of the academic year and, as they left, asked them to share with us their abiding memory, their next steps and a message to all students. Colleagues and students also commented, and I share these messages with you here:



Katie James



Anna Roworth



Pauline Hawkins



James Loveday



Catriona German



Alicia Diez



Gill Williams



Kate Monks



Natalie Williamson

Miss Anna Roworth left us after a 1-year placement in the PE department: "I have really enjoyed my time at Northampton, the pupils are fantastic and it's been a successful year of sport. I really enjoyed the GDST rallies and the Condover weekend." My next steps... "I am starting my teacher training in Milton Keynes in September."

Nurse Pauline Hawkins left us after two years at Northampton High School: "I feel honoured to have been able to play a small part in looking after the wellbeing of the students and staff and I will miss everyone at NHS. After all, it is the people that make the memories."

Mr James Loveday left us after three years at Northampton High School but remains within the GDST: I will treasure all the creative and mature ideas you shared in TP discussions and Junior School has been brilliant with all the dancing (DJ Lovin' it!) and even dressing up as a Sugar Plum Fairy for work. I still remember my first November Awards Evening and being in awe of a school that actually celebrates the accomplishments of young women. That might sound daft but don't take that sort of recognition for granted in the rest of the world and continue to fight for it when you leave."

Miss Kate Monks left us after two years in the Classics department: noticed or take for granted. I could give examples from U3 right up to 6.2 but the genuine fascination the U4 had with the drains at Bath showed me both how much the Romans, and the students, can still surprise me."

Miss Katie James left us after a 1-year placement in the PE department: "From my GCSE practical students working tirelessly to improve, to some of the Year 5s acing their swimming dives, Year 6s that learnt to work the ball into the D at Condover Hall, those that attend clubs every week without fail and everyone that I teach that gives 110% every lesson. These are my favourite memories of how ace you all are."

Mrs Natalie Williamson left us after three years in the PE department: What an amazing school NHS is! I will always hold fond memories of my time with you all. Goodbye and best wishes to all the staff and pupils!"

Mrs Catriona German left the classroom after two years at Northampton High, but will remain with us a peripatetic teacher and to run the Ladies' Choir: "The 140th celebratory concert showcased the school brilliantly. Pupils of all ages performed with the Ladies' Choir and the Orchestra of the Swan. I loved the informative assemblies written by Dr. Stringer. Assemblies provide many opportunities to practise public speaking: I am always impressed by the girls' performances."

Mrs Gill Williams bade a sad farewell, retiring after a truly impressive 17 years in the Humanities faculty: My abiding memory... "There are too many memories to mention after 17 years, but the overwhelming and abiding feeling that I take with me is one of great affection for the whole school community."

Señora Alicia Diez left us after three years in the Languages faculty: "I will take with me many incredible memories, from chanting verbs together, to eating Spanish turrón at Christmas or cooking a paella in Granada!"

Remembering well-loved characters of the past



Mrs Gee portrait by Bryan Organ

Mrs Lydia Mary Gee was a great personality on the staff of Northampton High School and had a tremendous influence on the girls she taught from the early 1940s until her retirement in 1964.

Mrs Gee arrived in Northampton as an evacuee teacher with the Brondesbury and Kilburn High School in 1943. The London school shared the Derngate buildings with the High School. Mrs Gee was billeted on the Headmistress Miss Marsden and the two became firm friends. When the majority of the evacuees returned to London Mrs Gee decided to stay at the High School and continue her career there.

Mrs Gee's degree was in Mathematics but having lived in South America and Spain her Spanish was excellent. She began teaching Spanish to the girls in her own time and the interest she engendered led to the introduction of the subject at advanced level.

Through her great skill in the Spanish language, and her idiosyncratic teaching style, the school developed a national reputation for the high standard of Spanish teaching with increasing numbers of girls taking the subject at university.

Miss Marsden offered the post of Head of the Sixth Form to Mrs Gee in the mid-1940s, thereby securing the services of a talented and charismatic teacher who was to lead the modern languages teaching at the High School for twenty years.

Mrs Gee was appointed Deputy Head of the school in 1947. In the Inspection Report of the school that year the high standard of Modern Languages was recognised and praised. There are many stories of Mrs Gee's rather eccentric style of teaching. Miss Harrison, who went on to become Head of Science, wrote of her own interview at the school with Miss Marsden.

"I was impressed by the garden, and quite enjoyed the interview - and I was intrigued when Miss Marsden sent me to the Derngate Café to see Mrs Gee, who was teaching Spanish to the Sixth Form over cups of coffee and smoking a Woodbine as she did so!"

One fascinating, but little known aspect of Mrs Gee's history is the time she spent in Spain at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. Along with Bronwen Lloyd-Williams she was sent by the Friends' Service Council to the north of Spain in the spring of 1937 to explore the possibilities for Quaker relief work in the area. Mrs Gee had previously been working in Barcelona and Southern Spain.

Along with supervising famine relief in the area Mrs Gee was a part of the organisation dedicated to bringing Spanish children, to live in safety, in England. She may well have been a passenger on the SS Habana which brought nearly 4000 children from Northern Spain to England.

The children left for Britain on the SS Habana on 21st May 1937. Each child had a cardboard hexagonal disk with an identification number and the words 'Expedición a Inglaterra' printed on it. The ship, built to carry around 800 passengers, carried more than 3860 children, 95 teachers, 120 helpers, 15 Catholic priests and 2 British doctors. The children were crammed into the boat, and slept where they could, even in the lifeboats. The journey was extremely rough in the Bay of Biscay and most of the children and staff were seasick. The Basque children were the biggest influx of refugees that this country had ever had.

Mrs Gee believed that the best way to get as much out of life was to put as much as possible into it and encouraged her girls to learn about the history of art and architecture, to read the newspapers and to listen to talks on the BBC Third Programme.

When Miss Marsden and Mrs Gee retired a Trust was established by parents and friends of the school to honour their work and commitment to the school. The Marsden Gee Trust has provided funding for the purchase of paintings and sculptures for the school as well as prizes for science and arts.

Sources:

The First Hundred Years A History of Northampton High School by P.D.Nichol
www.refugeehistory.org
www.havenseast.org

Staff News

It is wonderful to welcome alumnae back to the school, and we were delighted that Natalie Bodily (née Burridge, 1991 to 1998) joined us in September 2020 as Executive Assistant to the Headmistress.



"Having left Northampton High School in the summer of 1998, I often reminisced about my school days with fondness, thinking of the beautiful Derngate buildings and how I felt on my first day in senior school, to the excitement as school transitioned to the 'sparkly' new site in Hardingstone, not forgetting the friendships, knowledge and experiences I gained along the way.

Now in role as Executive Assistant to the Headmistress, it's been wonderful to return to school this September! The great atmosphere and strong sense of community is the same as I remember from decades ago, but the school has evolved and offers everything and more in terms of education, pastoral provision, life experiences and friendships. I'm looking forward to the challenges of the role and school life and still can't quite believe I've now been into the Headmistress' office..."

Archives

Our thanks go to our team of archivists who carefully log and curate all of the items in our Archives, held in the Edward Cripps Room (ECR). We would like to also thank Kay Morison (was Kathleen Rollinson) for donating a school photograph to our collection, Jan Pickup (nee Janet Thompson) for her hockey stick

and Miss Mason for the whole school photograph from 1996. Should you have any Northampton High School items that you would like to rehome, please do contact us at alum@nhs.gdst.net.

Retirement News



We were sorry to say 'see you soon' to **Dr Helen Stringer**, Headmistress from 2015, who retired in the summer 2020, having completed a year's secondment to Oxford High School in 2019/20.

"'Beginnings matter' was always one of my mantras (and my colleagues will give a wry smile of recognition at this, I am sure). 'Endings matter' too, of course, and that is why I hope, in this brief piece, to compensate in some small way for the fact that my time at Northampton High ended in an unexpected and rather peremptory fashion. Though Harold Macmillan possibly never said what was attributed to him, 'events, dear boy, events' do possess immense disruptive power, as the current pandemic has shown. The cancellation of plans to mark the completion of my time as Headmistress at Northampton High is just one tiny casualty of the disruption brought by COVID-19.

Writing this, as I sit in my study in Galloway, surrounded by books (much in need of reading), looking out on the garden (much in need of weeding) and, beyond, glimpsing a view of the hills (much in need

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of walking), I cannot help but feel torn between my delight in my new surroundings and preoccupations, and a certain ruefulness at contemplating all that I have left behind.

Above all, though, my message in these few words is one of gratitude for all that the High School gave me in my time as Headmistress. I vividly remember the feeling of recognition I experienced when I spent the day visiting the school during the recruitment process and thinking to myself on the journey home, 'it is as if I know this school already. I hope I get the chance to lead it.' And I did - a piece of luck.

Doing the job fulfilled those expectations and I felt, from the first moment, that I 'fitted' the High School. Getting to know the school community - students, staff, parents, governors and alumnae - was one of the major pleasures of the role. The tea parties and fireside chats



stand out as glowing memories of connection, when we explored the full gamut of topics and emotions, and often ended up either laughing or going away with a book to read or film to see. By my definition, that is community.

It was important to me to be able to share in any and every part of school life. I have always regretted the fact that, the more responsibility I gained in school, the less teaching I was able to do, and I was doubly fortunate in having such an exceptional (and supportive) department and faculty at Northampton to work amongst for the small amount of teaching I did. As Headmistress, though, I was able to experience teaching in other subjects and learn to appreciate more fully the range of skills needed to teach Art, Music or PE, say - so different from teaching History. Being a witness, simply that, to the brilliance of others in their natural milieu was one of the great joys of the role.

An average day (no such thing) might take me from the Nursery to the Sports Centre via the Drama Studio, involve me in discussions about every topic under the educational sun, from admissions to UCAS via buildings, curriculum, food and money, and bring dozens of people to my door.

Goethe said: 'One ought, every day at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture...' And that sums up well the essence of what was most memorable and rewarding about working with the students and my colleagues at the High School. (Goethe added '... and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words.' I hope that I did that too from time to time - I certainly heard more than a few.)

The world of school trips, concerts, plays and reunions - of Amberg, Erasmus+, Outward Bound, Shropshire, the 140th Birthday, the OGA Reunions, to name just a few examples among many - seems light years away now, alas. Looking back, I realise how fortunate I was to be able to share in those experiences and fill my memory books with unforgettable moments.

As Headmistress, I was also in the unique position of being able to see at close hand the work of every member of the extended school community and my task of valediction here would not be complete without paying tribute to my colleagues on the Senior Leadership Team, whose dedication powered the school along, and to all the staff, among whom it was a privilege to work. Behind the scenes, as it were, Deirdre Newham, as Chair of the School Governing Board, was always an invaluable source of support and wise counsel and the OGA Committee gave extraordinary service, connecting past and present generations of students, with Alex Down and Amanda Wilmot playing a crucial role in this endeavour within school.

School life is like a fast-flowing river and the present, mixed as it is with difficulties as well as joys, rushes on into the future. I watch from a distance, in the full knowledge that the school's many friends and well-wishers will see it safely through hard times into good.

How to conclude? One of my former Northampton colleagues recently made me a gift of a quotation from Dr Seuss. I realised that I could not do better for my parting line:

'Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened.'

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Another farewell was to **Mrs Gill Williams**, who retired after 17 years on the teaching team.

"There are too many memories to recount after 17 years at the school in a variety of teaching roles, from English, History, Drama, Classics, Classical Civilisation, History of Art, Geography and even a tennis lesson in an emergency! I have so enjoyed passing on my love of words and history to students and it has been just as rewarding when a student gets excited about participating in a "blind date" lesson on the suitors of Elizabeth 1, as finding out that former student had gained a place to read History at Merton College. She said that it had fuelled her interest and curiosity; that's what we hope for in a lesson.

I don't think that we truly know how special a place is until it is time to leave it. We are blessed with a lovely working environment here, appreciative students, but more importantly a wonderful staff - colleagues in every part of the school who are friendly, professional, clever and funny. "That is you, that is!"

I've been inspired by my colleagues over the years and have been supported on a professional level, but also at a personal level on several occasions, none more so than when I married Mike, nearly three years ago. Colleagues in the Humanities Faculty decorated the E corridor for a wedding, provided a celebration lunch and dressed up for a hen party (wigs and dresses for the men of course - any excuse!) and embarrassingly bundled me off to assembly to hear loud and good wishes from the whole school.



Everyone wore a hen party sash and it really made me smile when Helen Stringer said that she just remembered to take her sash off before an important meeting with some parents.

So, what next? I have several interests to pursue. I hope to take up my fine art again, or perhaps revisit my interest in Old English place names, hug the grandchildren (eventually!), travel to see my son in Australia again (I hope!), get back to playing tennis and also spend time on the narrowboat with Mike. I've recently found a new word: "coddiwomple". It means "to travel in a purposeful manner towards a vague destination" and I think that's what you can do on the water. I shall certainly miss the excellent banter though and the thoughtful random discussions in the staff room. Missing you already, wishing you all the best in these challenging times and remembering you with great affection."

Obituaries

During 2020 we sadly said farewell to a number of former teachers at the school and numerous loved alumnae.

Margaret Wills née Bamford, aged 97, and **Barbara Semple**, aged 92. M

Miss Mollie Mayhew (1925-2019) was admired by so many High School pupils and staff. She was a talented and inspiring teacher of dance to thousands of young girls during her long career. She had high expectations for her pupils and was always firm, fair and immaculately dressed. She was associated with the High School as a pupil, a parent, a teacher and a grandmother for over 60 years.

Mollie was born in Northampton on the 25 October 1925 to Augustus and Winifred Mayhew. As a child she attended Northampton High School for Girls and began dancing classes at the age of four at the Phyllis James School of Dancing. Mollie's name can be seen in one of the school registers from the early 1930s held in the School Archives.

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Mollie became a member of the Royal Academy of Dancing. She was asked to join the International Ballet School but the outbreak of war in 1939 prevented her from fulfilling this ambition. In 1941, at the age of just sixteen, she opened the Mollie Mayhew School of Dancing in the Manchester Unity Church Hall in Northampton. The school quickly became a great success with its reputation spreading and the number of pupils increasing.

Keeping her professional name, Miss Mayhew, she was elected Chair of the Midland Region of the Royal Academy, a position she held for a number of years. She became a Life Member of the Academy and was presented with the President's Award for commitment to dance.

In 1961, Miss Mayhew was invited to produce a Christmas show for an English school in Calcutta and so, with her eldest daughter Belinda, she spent two months in India producing and choreographing a production that involved the entire school. The show was a great success and Miss Mayhew returned to Calcutta to produce and choreograph another show

High School friends were saddened to learn of the death, earlier this year, of **Miss Jennifer Mollard** who taught English, was a Sixth Form Tutor and coordinated Oxbridge entrance at the School from 1984 until her retirement.

Miss Mollard, also known as Mrs Barry-Murray away from the High School, was an unusual person who defied easy classification. A highly educated and first rate academic, she combined huge intellectual discipline and rigour with intrepid curiosity. The breadth and depth of her knowledge was extraordinary, and her historical, cultural and aesthetic horizons extended far beyond the boundaries of European civilisation prompting her to travel widely, to Africa, the Middle East and India amongst other places,

Though ending her working life in the English Department at Northampton High School, Miss Mollard had lived other lives, training as a lawyer in London, living in Africa as well as teaching in prestigious UK schools such as City of London Boys. For many years she enjoyed living in rural

in 1963. In 1981 she joined the staff of Northampton High School where she continued to teach until 2003. Her lessons became an important feature of the weekly timetable for girls from the age of four. This continued on to the Senior School for those girls who chose to develop their skills through the ballet examination system. The considerable benefits of ballet being taught from an early age were clear to all of the teachers at the High School. The young girls learnt to listen and to follow instructions and in doing so they gained a sense of self discipline, poise, grace and coordination.

Miss Mayhew retired from the High School in 2003 and will be remembered as a teacher with a great love of her subject and a desire to impart this to her pupils. She had extremely high standards and was an inspiration to so many young people, several of whom have gone on to enjoy a career in dance and the theatre as a result of her enthusiasm and training.

Jane Stock

Northamptonshire whilst also spending time at her London house allowing her full access to the Arts and much else of interest to be found in the Capital. Miss Mollard was a very private person who presented herself formally and could appear reserved, austere and even formidable at times. However, she could also be extremely kind, and had a wonderful, if occasionally dark, sense of humour. She was a skilled conversationalist who added considerable value to social occasions and could be great fun. She had a passionate sense of social justice and fairness, and in a quiet, unheralded way did important things to make the world a better place.

Miss Mollard's colleagues and many of her students, particularly those whom she taught at A Level or helped achieve Oxbridge entrance, will remember her with fondness and gratitude. She contributed a great deal to the life and success of the School community when she was a part of it, and to the richness of its heritage in perpetuity. May she rest in peace.

John Glover

Obituaries

Sadly, earlier this year, we were informed of the death of **Mrs Rosamund Durham**. Ros joined the school in September 1966 as Head of the Geography Department, spending all her teaching life at the High School on the Dergate site. The Geography Department was situated in the Cripps Block, together with the Art Rooms, the kitchens and the Dining Room. Ros retired in August 1992 just as the School was about to move to Hardingstone.

Rather ironically, all the time she was working in the centre of Northampton she lived in Hardingstone and then, some years later, moved into a house built on the site of the old school! She had a long and active retirement and will be remembered fondly by all those girls that she taught during her twenty six years at the High School.

Carolyn White

Contact Us

For changes of address, alumna updates, all alumnae queries and contributions to the newsletter, please contact:

Email: alum@nhs.gdst.net or alternatively write to:

Alumnae Relations, Northampton High School, Newport Pagnell Road, Hardingstone, Northampton, NN4 6UU

Tel: 01604 765765

Website: Update your details by emailing alum@nhs.gdst.net or by completing this online form: <https://www.northamptonhigh.co.uk/alumnae/contact-details/>

LinkedIn is commonly referred to as the 'professional' social media network – best known for its role in networking opportunities, professional development tips, and business updates. We have recently set up an official LinkedIn for the school. Our LinkedIn group is a professional channel and allows us to grow our school's connections across different alumnae, parents, and staff.

We invite you to connect with the Northampton High School GDST group on LinkedIn. You can also link our LinkedIn profile to your employment history. Many thanks and look forward to welcoming you to the LinkedIn community!



Facebook: Follow us on Facebook **@Northampton-High**. There is also a very active alumnae group account for those who attended the Dergate site: **@NorthamptonHighforGirls,Dergate**.

If you would like to share any notices about your own alumnae events or meet ups, please let us know and we can post the information on the Facebook pages for you.

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvV07k-pn4JVNHIM9SfW4cZQ>

Introducing **GDST Life** - The GDST's alumnae network is now live online, giving its members access to unrivalled personal and professional connections, a host of new networking opportunities, mentoring support, events, news and resources, groups and societies and much, much more - for life.

Join GDST Life today: <https://www.gdstlife.aluminate.net/groups/northamptonhighalumnae>