



NORTHAMPTON  
HIGH SCHOOL

GDST  
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

OGA Newsletter January 2024

# Alumnae News

## Welcome from The Head



It is a pleasure to write this foreword to our Alumnae Newsletter. Whether you left recently or many years ago, I hope that you look back on our school with many fond memories of the staff and students you met.

Moreover, I am sure that you will remember the profound lessons and memorable events that have played a role in shaping the individual you have become.

This edition encapsulates the essence of the past academic year, showcasing the vibrant tapestry of events at Northampton High. From the remarkable achievement of raising £2447 for our whole school charity, the Northampton Hope Centre, at our Christmas Fayre to updates on our steadfast commitment to expanding our bursary programme, reaching girls from diverse backgrounds and walks of life. I am also excited to extend a special invitation to our lively **annual Alumnae Lunch on Saturday 2 March 2024**. We look forward to welcoming you home this spring.

As you will learn from the following pages, there is always a lot going on at Northampton High. One notable event was our highly successful Speech Day in July, featuring keynote speaker Mandy Hickson. Her remarkable journey as a Tornado GR4 fast jet pilot in the Royal Air Force, with three tours of duty and 45 missions over Iraq, left an indelible mark. Mandy presented prizes to our students and shared her inspiring story which was one full of drive and determination, triumphs and setbacks. Her mantra, "Dream it. Believe it. Do it.", continues to resonate with all those who had the privilege of meeting her.

On a more sombre note, we were deeply saddened by the passing of Rev. Yvonne Chapman in September, who was a much-loved Deputy Head of Northampton High School. I had the honour of attending her funeral, paying respects for all she contributed to our school community. Her legacy will forever be cherished and her memory will always hold a special place in our hearts.

Our alumnae network is very healthy and is growing all the time. It never fails to amaze me how many inspirational women and fascinating alumnae we have within our community. A special acknowledgement to Baroness Manningham-Buller (Eliza) for her nomination as a finalist in this year's GDST Alumna of the Year award. This accolade marks the second consecutive year a Northampton High alumna has been chosen as finalists, following Professor Sasha Roseneil's nomination last year. Thank you to all those of you who have supported our two distinguished finalists by voting in this annual award.

We also really do appreciate the offers of support we receive from you to come and talk to students, offer work experience placements and mentor students. With this in mind, one of the areas we are especially keen to have more alumnae involvement is to join our School Governing Board. Taking up a role as a School Governor is not only a great way of giving something back to your local community and school – it is also a perfect opportunity to develop your professional skills, increase your experience in strategic planning and monitoring, and expand your network. We are currently recruiting new Governors with experience in one or more of the following areas: Business and Entrepreneurship, Educational Technology, Corporate Relations and Fundraising and Medical and Healthcare. If you are interested in having an initial discussion about this, please feel free to contact me directly at [head@nhs.gdst.net](mailto:head@nhs.gdst.net). I hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter and seeing how your old school is evolving. Please keep in touch. We are always keen to hear your stories.

With best wishes,

Dr May Lee | Head

Made for Girls

# Join us for our spring Alumnae Reunion Lunch



The annual Northampton High Reunion Lunch is a highlight of any year, when alumnae from both the Derngate and Hardingstone school sites get together for a delicious two-course meal and this year's Lunch will take place on **Saturday 2 March 2024 from 12.30pm to 2.30pm** in the Dining Room at the School's Hardingstone site (please enter via the Junior School entrance from 12 noon).

Ticket prices have been set at £15.00 (plus processing fee of 75p (5%) and booking fee of 15p per person). The price has been held again this year and offers excellent value. To book tickets, please click here (<https://shorturl.at/eqAS9>).

Alternatively, please send a cheque payable to Old Girls and Associates of NHS with a self-addressed envelope to Alumnae Relations, Northampton High School GDST, Newport Pagnell Road, Hardingstone, Northampton NN4 6UU for the return of a ticket, as proof of purchase.

**For any queries, please contact [alum@nhs.gdst.net](mailto:alum@nhs.gdst.net). We look forward to seeing many of our alumnae community on Saturday 2 March 2024!**

## Celebrating achievement



Summer 2023 saw the school's first Speech Day event in its new format, acknowledging the achievement and endeavour of pupils in that academic year. On 12 July 2023, Northampton High welcomed a capacity crowd into school for our

Speech Day and Prize Giving event. The special evening was an opportunity to reflect on an action-packed year and congratulate those who have shown true dedication to school life. We were honoured to be joined by keynote speaker, Mandy Hickson, former Royal Air Force pilot and Human Factors facilitator for this memorable event.

Delivering an inspiring and entertaining speech on the challenges she overcame to become a female fighter pilot, audiences were impressed by her perseverance and dedication, which led to her unique and fascinating career. Hearing her story of

resilience and success was uplifting for pupils, parents and staff, and Mandy certainly set the tone for a noteworthy evening dedicated to celebrating their achievements. Many of the awards at our Speech Day and Prize Giving celebration recognised pupils for their curiosity, perseverance, independence, risk-taking and collaboration - the school's prized intellectual characteristics.

Extending further than timetabled subjects, the celebratory event also recognised pupils for outstanding co-curricular achievements and leadership responsibilities. Reflecting on the most recent public examination results, recent alumnae were awarded the Linda Mayne Award for magnificent GCSE results, and students with excellent A Level grades received the Marsden Gee Award.

**You can read more about Mandy Hickson's exceptional journey here (<https://www.mandyhickson.com/>), and by reading 'An Officer, Not a Gentleman: The inspirational journey of a pioneering female fighter pilot', Mandy Hickson, 2020.**

# Results 2023



**A Level Results** - a striking 44% of all grades were A\* or A, 76% were graded A\*-B and 93% were graded A\*-C.

**GCSE Results** - thirteen students (18% of cohort) achieved a 'clean sweep' of A\*/A grades at GCSE. 42% of grades awarded were at grade 9/8 (A\* equivalent), in addition, 56% of students secured an impressive 6 or more GCSEs at grade 9-7.



This summer, we saw another year of very strong achievement at GCSE and A Level, despite the many challenges faced by students. Consistent with our well-established track record of superb results, this year we celebrated:

Congratulations go to each and every student, thanks to their teachers and to families for the tremendous support. The commitment and resilience of students is a testament to them all. We also pay tribute to our outstanding teachers who worked very hard and with great skill and professionalism to support our students both academically and pastorally.

Our Year 13 leavers have chosen a great variety of university destinations and courses. These leavers join the family of 100,000 GDST alumnae, spanning the world and every professional sector. To read more about the results, destinations and achievements in the last year, please read our Annual Review 2022/23 (<https://shorturl.at/acfkz>).

## Alumna of the Year nomination from Northampton High



We were delighted that Northampton High School alumna Baroness Manningham-Buller (Eliza) was nominated as a finalist in this year's annual GDST Alumna of the Year award. The prestigious accolade, previously awarded to Oscar-winning

actor Olivia Colman, fashion designer Mary Quant, and former Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis Dame Cressida Dick, recognises the many varied achievements of the GDST's alumnae, and we are thrilled that Eliza was considered for this year's award.

Baroness Manningham-Buller has enjoyed a uniquely impressive and fascinating career, which has led her to her current role as a Life Peer member of the House of Lords and Chair of the Conduct Committee. She is currently also co-president of Chatham House, a renowned Think Tank which helps governments and societies build a sustainably secure and just world. Eliza is also a retired British intelligence officer who worked in the Security Service (MI5) for more than 30 years, principally focusing on international and domestic counter-terrorism, and was Director of MI5 for some years.

Despite not the eventual awardee of the accolade, everyone at Northampton High congratulates Eliza on this amazing achievement.



# Charity Fundraising



At Northampton High, charity fundraising is central to the life of the school. It is the students who drive the fundraising and we have to be mindful of how many charity events and activities we are able to sustain as part of our calendar. Our Deputy Head Girl for Partnerships and part of the Student Senior Leadership Team (SSLT, above) - this year, Risha B in Year 12 - canvasses pupils and staff at the beginning of the year, proposing a range of local charities as potential recipients of the school's fundraising efforts for the year, with all pupils and staff voting on their preferred local charity. This year, the chosen charity is Northampton Hope Centre (<https://www.northamptonhopecentre.org.uk/>), whose work helps people experiencing disadvantage, hardship, homelessness, addiction and mental health struggles to help themselves.



As reported in High News (8 December 2023), the major event for raising funds took place on 1 December 2023 - the Annual Christmas Fayre. Our Christmas Fayre raised no less than £3,231 this year with £2,447 being donated to Northampton Hope Centre with the proceeds from the raffle, tombola, silent auction and Santa's Grotto (above).

A further £784 was raised for the school's Astroturf project from proceeds of the festive refreshments and pitch fees from the Christmas Market. Piles of shoe boxes wrapped in brightly coloured paper and decorated with personal messages were amassed recently outside the Heads of Year office, with Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils diligently preparing their boxed Christmas gifts ready to donate through Rotary to children in Moldova.

While we try to focus on whole school charity initiatives - including the Macmillan Coffee Morning, Food Bank Collections for the Trussell Trust, Children in Need, the British Legion's poppy appeal, Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day (below) in just the last few weeks - individual fundraising also takes place regularly in school, for example sales of baked goods and accessories to raise money for Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust, pre-loved clothes, freshly baked cakes and a book sale in aid of the Red Cross' humanitarian support for Israel and Palestine, amongst other important student-led initiatives. Through these charity drives, we gain a heightened sense of how fortunate we are, and learn



to reach out to each other, supporting those in need who do not have access to the life chances many of us take for granted. Autumn term's activities raised funds totalling an incredible £6,434 for a range of charitable causes! A huge thank you to our whole school community for contributing to this impressive total, but also for supporting us in our wider outreach efforts.

# Transforming lives through bursaries



Northampton High School, as a GDST school, has a proud history of providing financial assistance towards school fees, ensuring that girls from all backgrounds have been able to access an excellent all-girls education.

Today, GDST is a leading provider of bursary provision in the UK with 10% of girls in the 22 independent senior schools from Year 7 through to Year 13 receiving financial support. There are more than 430 students in GDST schools on a full 100% bursary, and over 1000 benefiting from a bursary at any one time, enabling schools to reach as many girls as possible in their local areas.

The bursary programme is built on three pillars: Finding, Funding and Flourishing. Finding involves identifying those students who will benefit from our bursary awards the most. Funding - thanks to generous donations from our supporters, we are able to reach those families and students for whom a Northampton High education would be out of reach. Every student on a bursary is given every chance to achieve their full potential and flourish. They have access to everything on offer in school ensuring that there are no obstacles to participation for bursary students.

We thank those alumnae, parents, former staff and friends of the school for their ongoing support to our fundraising efforts. All those who have made this commitment join The Minerva Circle, a special society recognising their generosity.

If you would like to find out more about supporting the Northampton High bursary fundraising efforts, or would like more information on our bursaries, please get in touch by emailing [giving@wes.gdst.net](mailto:giving@wes.gdst.net) or visiting [www.gdst.net/donate](http://www.gdst.net/donate). To read more about how lives have been transformed by bursaries, please visit here (<https://shorturl.at/dkyFI>) or read the latest edition of the philanthropy impact report (<https://shorturl.at/ORTWZ>).

## Inviting all Classics Department Alumnae!

We love the opportunity to welcome former students into school and invite them to share their experiences with our students and staff. Indeed, some of the best advice and insights come from those who were previously in the shoes of our students - whether in recent years or many years hence.

The Classics Department has a specific plea and would like to invite former students to get in touch, to help raise the profile of Classics - from A Level studies, to higher education, to jobs, placements and travels.

The Classics team are hoping to offer a range of alumnae-focussed opportunities this year, so would welcome alumnae to get in touch if happy to be involved with any of the following:

- **Online talks to Year 11/Sixth Form students about studies, job, travels and the ups and downs of life post-school**
- **Q&A sessions, e.g. "Ask A...." or "What is Uni like..." , "What is a Gap Year like..."**
- **Online profiles of where studies have taken you (both related to the Classics field and far beyond!)**
- **Face-to-face events (for example to celebrate European Day of Languages in September)**
- **Informal coffee or reunion summer picnic (potentially with former and current staff of the department)**

If you are a Classics Department alumna, we would love to hear from you at [alum@nhs.gdst.net](mailto:alum@nhs.gdst.net). If you are interested in contributing to the school's Reach Lecture Series or any school-related opportunities, please do get in touch at [alum@nhs.gdst.net](mailto:alum@nhs.gdst.net).



# Obituaries

## Rev. Yvonne Chapman



It is with great sadness that we report the peaceful passing of Reverend Yvonne Chapman, former Deputy Head of Northampton High School for many years, on 31 August 2023 at St Christopher's Care Home in

Northampton, aged 87. Miss Chapman joined the school in Derngate in 1978 and served the school until retiring in 1993. Miss Chapman will be remembered for her quiet air of authority but also for her compassion, understanding, and deep faith which was evident in her teaching and in school assemblies. Having held the Deputy Head position for 15 years, the major task in her latter years at school was to work with the property and equipment committee to prepare the way for the school move from Derngate to the current school site in Hardingstone. This she did with vision, efficiency and a great attention to detail. It was a proud day for her and the school when Queen Elizabeth II opened the new buildings in October 1992. Yvonne retired from the school the following year but she continued her keen interest in the school and its activities for the rest of her life.

Miss Chapman was a remarkable individual who made an indelible mark on Northampton High School and the lives of countless students, staff, and parents. Just some of the comments from former pupils tell the story: "An awesome lady, who inspired respect. I remember her also being tremendously supportive." "[She] was one of the most influential ladies in my life". "She embodied all that was Derngate". "An admirable role model for us to look up to". "So pleased I was able to see her in later life at the Old Girls' Reunions."

She will be remembered not only for her dedication to education but also for her unwavering commitment to nurturing young minds and shaping the future of our school community. Yvonne trained as a teacher at Brighton Teachers' Training College as a secondary modern teacher in history. Her report said, "Miss Chapman will not be a 'showy' teacher but the kind who can be trusted to get on with integrity, dignity, and good preparation."

She will be a thoroughly good influence on both pupils and staff". Miss Chapman then explored a different sense of her vocation to teach and in 1958 she enrolled for the USPG missionary training course at the College of the Ascension, Selly Oak, studying religious education and mission. Following this, she set sail on a ship from Southampton to Bombay, in the October of 1960, at the age of 25.

Over the following years Yvonne worked in a number of different schools in the Diocese of Delhi developing a new programme of religious studies, going on to be appointed Religious Education Adviser to the Bishop of Delhi. She continued her studies with a degree in Religious Studies from the Serampore University in Calcutta. By this time Yvonne could speak and teach in Hindi and she helped to co-edit two books that were published by SPCK into both Hindi and English. The Archdeacon of Delhi at the time described Yvonne as an inspirational teacher who breathed new life into the schools and churches she taught at, enabling the start of a number of new Sunday Schools in parishes where previously none had existed. He said "she had the gift of helping quite ordinary people to discover that they could teach and was tireless in her efforts to train and encourage them".

Having spent nearly ten years in India, Yvonne took teaching posts in religious studies back in the UK before joining Northampton High School in 1978. During those years at the High School, Yvonne formed a deep and lasting friendship with Sylvia Lightburne which led to them buy a shared house together in West Hunsbury. Both Yvonne and Sylvia travelled extensively in their retirement visiting Australia, Jordan, Zambia and New Zealand amongst just some of their destinations. With the priesthood opening up to the ordination of women in 1994, Yvonne trained for ordained ministry in 1995 and was ordained deacon in 1996, then ordained priest in 1997 at Peterborough Cathedral. She served in the parish of St Luke and St Francis, Duston, for six years, developing outreach in the community and became chaplain to the Mother's Union and bellringers.

Miss Chapman lived a rich and fulfilling life and will be remembered by those who knew her for her inspiration, empathy and support. She played a pivotal role in pupils' personal and academic growth, and the legacy of Rev. Yvonne Chapman will forever be etched in the annals of Northampton High School's history. Her memory will forever serve as a source of inspiration.

**Sincere thanks to Clare Gresty for permitting us to reference the eulogy for Rev. Yvonne Chapman.**

# Obituaries

## Stephanie Freeman, January 1958 - August 2023

We are sorry to report the loss in 2023 of Stephanie Freeman, who worked in the Junior School as a Classroom Assistant to Nursery and early years pupils from 1999-2005.



Stephanie is survived by her four daughters Petrina, Laura, Harriet, and Emily, who all attended the school between 1990 and 2012, her husband Dr James Freeman, and three granddaughters.

A former colleague commented, "Stephanie was always a cheerful and very positive, calm influence on the development of the younger children in the Junior School."

Stephanie's funeral was held in August 2023 but the Freeman family hopes to hold a memorial service in Northampton at a later date to celebrate Stephanie's life and lifelong love of music.

The family will publish any additional details at the tribute page (<https://stephaniefreeman.muchloved.com/>) for anyone who wants to attend. In lieu of flowers, donations to Cransley Hospice are gratefully received via the above website.

## Mrs Chris Musson

We are sorry to hear that Chris Musson, who did the eulogy for Gill Allen, died in November last year.

Mrs Chris Berry, who later became Mrs Chris Musson, taught Biology, Human Biology and PSHE at the High School for many years, and was an excellent teacher as shown by her first class examination results. She had a good rapport with the girls, who enjoyed her lessons. She was very supportive to girls who were struggling for any reason and several of these have commented that they would not have been successful in their examinations without her help.

Chris was very down to earth with everything she did, and made friends with girls and staff easily. 'She was such a great teacher', 'I have never forgotten how kind Mrs Berry was', and there have been many lovely comments about her on the school website.

She often accompanied Gill Allen (nee Williams) on school trips to foreign parts which were thoroughly enjoyed by all in the group. Chris was a great lover of sport, especially tennis, which she continued to play in her retirement.

Chris continued to lead a very busy life after leaving the High School, which she maintained until very recently. Even her beloved family members could find it difficult to find a time to visit her. She was a lovely lady and will be sorely missed by many.

**Sincere thanks to Gwyn Powell and Carolyn White for their memories of Chris.**

# Obituaries

## Gill Allen

Mrs Gill Allen worked at Northampton High for 37 years with three Headmistresses – Miss Marsden, Miss Lightburne and Mrs Mayne. Starting in 1961, young, fresh out of college, Mrs Allen was Head of PE and also taught geography.

Hockey was probably Gill's favourite sport, but in 1961 hockey at the High School was not as straightforward as it is now. Although there were tennis and netball courts at the Derngate site there was no space for a hockey field. So, pupils were required to make their own way to the Racecourse for the lesson. Changing facilities were minimal and on a winter's day, this could be challenging! The school later purchased some land in Abington Vale, and Yorks coaches transported the girls and staff to the playing fields there. Miss Williams met her husband, Mick Allen, through this connection.

Mrs Allen's geography lessons were memorable - if about France, there were croissants, baguettes, pâté, crème caramel to sample. Her organisation was unforgettable too, and she organised the panoramic school photos, the school's centenary celebrations, speech days, buffets, after school events and Queen Elizabeth II's visit to the school when it moved to Hardingstone. When in Derngate, every September Gill organised for the whole school to walk to church to give thanks for the new school year, as well as arranging the walk to the Mounts swimming baths for the school swimming gala – somewhat reminiscent of St Trinians! Mrs Allen arranged for the school to travel on three cruises through the Independent Girls' School Association, arranged ski trips for pupils, coach trips abroad and at home for staff and friends.

Gill was also an active church warden, using her organisational skills to great effect for her famous parish lunches and teas. Her logistical talents and hosting skills were enjoyed at many a friend and family gathering. Gill was a huge asset to Carolyn White and the Old Girls' Association, and together, Carolyn and Gill planned the first January Reunion Lunch and the committee catered for it themselves. Carolyn fondly remembers, 'Gill did two fresh salmon and several lasagnes and the rest of the committee did the salads and the puddings. To start with there were probably less than 40 people attending so this was quite manageable. However, as the numbers grew steadily, this became harder and harder work. One year Gill was unable to attend and so it fell to me to do the salmon and lasagne. I never thought to order the salmon, and when the Tesco stores at both Weston Favell and Mere Way had no fresh salmon on Friday evening, I was at my wits end! I think I must have got them from Wellingborough in the end but I'm afraid that was the end of the self-catering effort.'

At Gill's funeral, Chris Musson (nee Berry) spoke of their 51 years of friendship and their many shared holidays, 'Gill produced booklets and information about the places to visit. Mick and I were tested about our knowledge, but usually we failed! We went to South Africa, South America, China, New Zealand to name but a few.' She concluded, 'Gill was a formidable person; she spoke her mind and she was, above all, a superb human being and friend.'

**Sincere thanks to Mick Allen and Caroline Rugg (nee Berry) for allowing us to reference the eulogy that Chris wrote, and to Carolyn White for her memories of Gill.**

**Our thoughts are with the bereaved families.**



# Authors in our midst



Authors within our alumnae community have been generous in providing copies of their published works as gratefully received additions to our school library. One such recent gift was from alumna Sally Kettle (1988-1995) who visited us to donate a copy of 'Dear Rebel', the latest in the 'Rebel Girls' series, which includes 125+ women sharing their secrets to taking on the world.

Sally Kettle, trainer, coach, speaker and author, who has recently been appointed Deputy Chief Guide - supporting the work of Girlguiding - has written a number of books and has visited us in the past to deliver fascinating talks to our students. She has accomplished many goals and has undertaken a number of challenges in her life so far – one being rowing 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean east to west, twice! Sally contributes to this new Rebel Girls book, talking about this particular challenge and giving her insights into making it happen.

**If you would like to share with us any of your published work or other notable achievements, please do get in touch at [alum@nhs.gdst.net](mailto:alum@nhs.gdst.net).**



This term, we have been delighted to feature a special book as part of our 'Book of the Week' series; the first book in the Flambards Trilogy written by K.M Peyton, an alum of Northampton High School.

The story begins when a young girl, Christina is sent to live with her uncle and two sons in their country house, Flambards. Christina finds her uncle remote and the change in her life unsettling but she develops a passion for horses and riding, also forming a solid friendship with her cousin Will. Set before the advent of the First World War, the series captures the rapid social change which began at this time.

Kathy Peyton began her career after attending art school, as a teacher at Northampton High School where she taught for three years. As a writer she was prolific, winning the Guardina Prize for the Flambards Trilogy and won the prestigious Carnegie Medal for The Edge of the Cloud, the second book in that sequence.

Still writing and riding well into her eighties Kathy was inspiring on many levels; her books will be enjoyed by young girls for many years to come and of course, we have copies of her books in the Senior Library.

## Calling all Old Girls!

## Contact us



The committee is looking for new members to join our small team. We meet two or three times a year, mostly to plan the Old Girls' Lunch; we then arrive early on the morning of the lunch to set up for the event. Anyone local who would like to become part of the team is very welcome, as some members of the committee have decided to step down after many years of service. We would love to hear from you.

**Please contact Alex Down by email [a.down@nhs.gdst.net](mailto:a.down@nhs.gdst.net) or by phone 01604 765765. Looking forward to hearing from you.**

You can read more about Northampton High's news by browsing weekly editions of the school's newsletters, Junior News and High News (<https://shorturl.at/vFLR6>), as well as visiting our news section of the website (<https://shorturl.at/noH26>). Follow us on:

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/northamptonhigh](https://facebook.com/northamptonhigh)  
**X:** [twitter.com/northamptonhigh](https://twitter.com/northamptonhigh)  
**Instagram:** [instagram.com/northamptonhigh](https://instagram.com/northamptonhigh)  
**Linkedin:** [linkedin.com/school/69642524](https://linkedin.com/school/69642524)

In order to reduce reliance on paper and postage, we invite all members of our community to migrate to email as a means of communication, where possible. If you have an email address you can share with us, please let us know via [alum@nhs.gdst.net](mailto:alum@nhs.gdst.net), providing your full name, any previous names, and years at Northampton High. This will help us to meet our sustainability goals while optimising our communications with you.







## *Northampton High School*

Newport Pagnell Road  
Hardingstone  
Northampton  
NN4 6UU

[www.northamptonhigh.co.uk](http://www.northamptonhigh.co.uk)  
01604 765765  
[nhsadmin@nhs.gdst.net](mailto:nhsadmin@nhs.gdst.net)

A limited company registered on England no. 6400C  
A registered charity no. 306983

## *We are Made for Girls*

January 2024