



**Westcliff High School for Girls**  
**Old Girls Association**  
**CENTENARY NEWSLETTER**  
**2019-20**



Please note that the WHOGA Annual Luncheon that usually take place in October has unfortunately been cancelled this year due to Covid-19. We hope we can welcome you back to WHSG as soon as government guidelines allow us to and we will circulate details as soon as we are able to.

During such challenging times, we hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones safe and well and we trust that you will enjoy reading this Centenary Special Newsletter.

## Welcome from The Headteacher



This foreword is being written during one of the most extraordinary times in our school's/country's history. We are meant to be half-way through celebrating our school's centenary, but this has been interrupted by the dreadful Covid-19 pandemic which has cost so many lives in our country. I know a lot of our members will have been self-isolating for a long time, and this will have been a real challenge mentally and physically. I hope you are well and remain so. We must look forward to better days ahead.

Our school's centenary should have been our main focus, but many events have had to be cancelled, including this year's WHOGA Lunch. We will try to rearrange this as soon as it is safe to do so.

During this year we have been delighted that local author Judith Williams has been producing a book to celebrate our centenary year. In fact it's two books – one about the school's history, the other with your memories and anecdotes. Both will be available soon and I hope you will want to get your copies for posterity.

You will know that as a result of the pandemic, all schools were required to close from March 23rd. At WHSG we were well prepared and introduced remote learning based on Google's learning platform. Many staff have undertaken lessons using video-conferencing and all pupils have been telephoned at least once each week to monitor their progress and wellbeing. During June we were required to start bringing Year 10 and Year 12 pupils back into school. It was good to see them.

All the pupils we have spoken to want to return to school. It has been a challenging period for them and us.

At school I am pleased to let you know that work is underway to complete the top floor of our new East Wing; this will become our main facility for teaching Art, and the whole wing will be dedicated to Art, Design and Technology.

Last summer we replaced the school's boilers (for heating). This year we have secured funding to replace all the hot and cold water pipes and all the radiators. It seems there is always something to do in a building that has an age, but we hope we always do these projects sympathetically.

Until we meet again!

Take care  
Paul Hayman

## WHOGA Funds Centenary Mosaic



As part of the centenary celebrations, local mosaic artist Paul Siggins was commissioned to create a mosaic to commemorate such an important milestone for WHSG.

The WHOGA Committee unanimously agreed to fund the mosaic which is going to be installed on the exterior of the building for all to enjoy.

A selection of pupils from Year 8 were invited to a workshop where they learnt the art of mosaic and enjoyed gluing the small glass tiles into place onto our specially designed piece. The day coincided with a Governor visit whom all enjoyed seeing the work in progress and the opportunity to glue in some pieces themselves.

The completed piece will be permanently fixed to the exterior of the East Wing for all pupils, staff and visitors to enjoy and will no doubt form part of the school's history for the next 100 years!

Lucy Lock, Fundraising Manager at WHSG said "We are extremely grateful to the Westcliff High Old Girls Association who have kindly funded this exciting project. The design was based on the winning entry from Trinny Gough in Year 10 to design a Centenary logo for the school and shows a pupil from 1920 standing alongside a pupil from 2020".

### **Joint Garden Party with Westcliff High School For Boys - Saturday 19th June 2021**

Save the date for this joint Garden Party to celebrate 100 years of Westcliff High School For Girls and Westcliff High School For Boys. Taking place in the main field at WHSB, all are welcome to soak up the atmosphere at this family friendly event and join us for the celebrations. There will be a variety of stalls, a programme of events showcasing the talented pupils from both schools and tours will also be available. There will also be a display of classic and vintage vehicles, refreshments, and fun inflatables for our younger guests to enjoy.

Full timings and schedule to follow but please note the date for now.



## WHSG Centenary Ball – now celebrating 101 years of WHSG!

Saturday 22nd May 2021

The Boundary, Southend

£60 per person or £500 for a table of 10



The Centenary Ball scheduled for May 2nd 2020 had to be postponed for reasons that need no explanation. Rather than cancel it completely, we have set a new date for Saturday 22nd May 2021 by which time we very much hope that we will be able to celebrate this special milestone with our wonderful school community.

Taking place at Southend's hottest new venue, The Boundary, this black tie event includes live entertainment, a drinks reception and a delicious 3 course meal. Past pupils and their families, parents of current pupils and staff are all welcome to join us for what promises to be a fantastic evening which is kindly sponsored by BTMK Solicitors.

Whilst we appreciate it is very difficult to make plans in the current situation, please do get in touch if you are interested so that we can ensure you are kept informed of the details. Tickets are £60pp or a table of 10 £500. Contact [st-lucy.lock@whsg.info](mailto:st-lucy.lock@whsg.info) for full details.

### **Centenary Books Set to be Real Page Turners!**

We are extremely grateful to local author and past pupil Judith Williams who has worked tirelessly over the last year researching not one but two books to commemorate the Centenary.

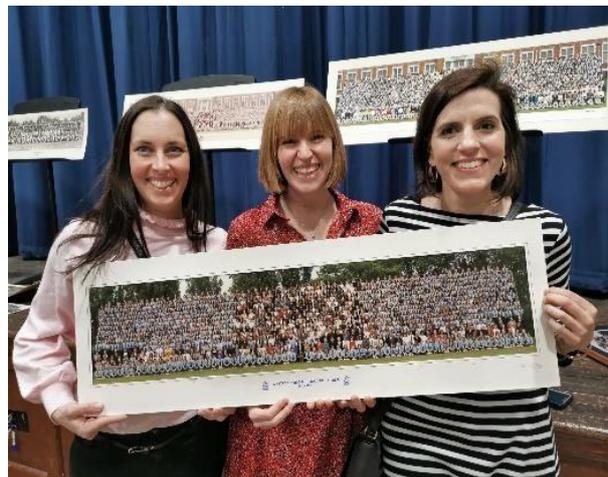
“**Fide et Fortitudine: 100 Years of Westcliff High School for Girls**” recounts the school’s journey through the eyes of pupils and teachers from when it first opened in 1920 to becoming the successful grammar school it is today. Including beautiful archive photos from across the decades, it’s a must read for any past pupil who will no doubt be able to connect with much of the content and enjoy reflecting on the history of our much loved school.

Judith has also compiled “**Voices of Westcliff High School for Girls**” which is a book containing memories taken from interviews with teachers and pupils.

Both books will be available from mid September with the final details being arranged at the time of going to press. To ensure you don’t miss out, email [st-lucy.lock@whsg.info](mailto:st-lucy.lock@whsg.info) for further information and details of how you can order your copies.

Sincere thanks to Judith Williams for taking on such a huge task and to everyone who has been in touch with their contributions.

## Cen-tea-nary Celebrations with Centenarian at Westcliff High School For Girls



Past pupils enjoyed taking a step back in time at the sell-out Centenary Afternoon Tea. Fortunately, the event took place just before lockdown where guests enjoyed an afternoon of free-flowing tea served by Sixth Formers and delicious food prepared by the PTA. Guests were then able to browse the display of archive photos before taking a tour of the school.

Guests ranged from current Year 7 pupils, who form the 100th intake for the school, to past pupils representing all the decades. Centenarian Peggy Hazell was the most senior past pupil aged 102 who was joined by her two granddaughters whom also attended WHSG. It was a privilege to welcome them all back and it was most impressive that Peggy was instantly able to identify herself in the 1931 school photo which was on display!

It was fantastic to see so many pupils from past and present join us to celebrate such an important milestone in the history of the school. We are most grateful to the PTA for helping with the refreshments and our team of Sixth Form Prefects who did a sterling job as waiters, waitresses and tour guides. We are also thankful to our catering suppliers Rayners and Thomas Ridley who donated cakes and sandwiches which enabled us to keep costs to a bare minimum. A number of guests were reunited with friends they hadn't seen since their school days and there was such a wonderful atmosphere in the room.

We hope to hold another Afternoon Tea in Spring 2021 so watch this space for details.



**Photos: Top left – Peggy Hazell with granddaughters Felicity Hazell and Verity Bridge, Top Right – Past pupils Keely Shaw, Katie Monk and Katie Fontana Jennings enjoyed finding themselves in an old school photo. Bottom left – Sixth Formers Olivia Bateman and Keshvi Shah in the new uniform.**

## WESTCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS PAST PUPILS

### **Calling all Past Pupils of Westcliff High School for Girls!**

We will shortly be launching our WHSG Alumni Community, a fantastic new online community that will help us communicate with you more effectively.

Our new online community will help us send news stories and updates from the school including interviews with past pupils. It will enable us to send invitations to events and reunions within our school community that may be of interest to you and will give you the opportunity to share stories and join discussions with each other. Most importantly, it keeps you in control of your consent preferences as to how you would like to keep in touch with us and will help us manage the communications more efficiently.

You will shortly receive an email inviting you to join the Alumni community whereby you can add your contact details and set your communication preferences. We can't wait to share this fantastic new resource with you all and look forward to you joining our online community.

If you haven't already done so, please send your email address to [pastpupils@whsg.info](mailto:pastpupils@whsg.info) or [Lesley.woodward1@btinternet.com](mailto:Lesley.woodward1@btinternet.com) so we can ensure you continue to receive newsletters and are invited to join this exciting new online community. We would be most grateful if you can also encourage any past pupils you are still in touch with to do the same.

If you haven't got an email address and would prefer to receive a paper copy of this newsletter, please do call 01702 476 026 so that we can update our records.

Also please follow WHSG Past Pupil on Facebook!

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**Doreen Sporle (Moss):** 1941-1948:-

Memories of Westcliff High School for Girls: I was evacuated from West Leigh School in 1940, first to the village of Kniveton, near Ashbourne in Derbyshire, we were then moved to Brailsford and attended the village school where teachers were Wests Leigh staff. I sat the scholarship in Derby and then travelled on the single track railway via Buxton to Westcliff High at Chapel-en-le Frith in September 1941. We lived at Whitestones a large house in the village for a few days and then Sheila Gilmore and I were billeted with and looked after so well by the Misses Wright. Sadly this only lasted for 6 weeks as I think now they were called up into the forces, we were never told and automatically thought we had done something wrong.

After a few more moves about 10 of us lived very happily at Eaves Hall, a house on the hill somewhere near Bank Hall, the senior WHSG. We had a long race down the hill to school each morning to Frith Knoll, the school for the 1st and 2nd years which was near the main road in the village.

A strange memory of Frith Knoll was of Miss White the gym mistress. The only apparatus she had were a few forms and a wooden box, she would sing out as I ran down the room 'bouncy, bouncy, bouncy, until I leapt over the box and then announced to the class 'I will call Doreen that from now on because she doesn't, 'Bounce' that was and she called me 'Bounce' until I left school. Sounds so odd now and I didn't know anyone else with a staff nickname!

Evacuation finally ended in September 1942 and I returned to my Grandma's in Westcliff as my parents were still away for another 6 weeks. School and pupils gradually settled, what an experience, such a large school compared with Frith Knoll. We became used to air raid sirens, when one sounded we proceeded in very orderly manner down to the reinforced basement where we all had our place and waited there until the all clear sounded, that was normal school life.

Before entering the 3rd year, 3 of form 2a2 including me, spent our summer holidays having a crash course of Latin with a teacher, Miss Clifford. This was in one of our homes and was to prepare us for moving up into 3 Remove when we returned to school. I gathered later that the scholastic level of the form was not high enough for us to be classed as an A form! Except for the wonderful friends I made I know I would have benefitted being left in 2a2!

Experience at home was a little odd, we had a Morrison Shelter (a large iron framed table) in the front room that my brother and I could sleep under. However, if we heard a 'doodle bug' flying bomb coming, no mistaking it (throb, throb, throb) the whole family would leap up the stairs to see it until one night its engine stopped near us. You have never seen a family rush down the stairs so fast and into that shelter. That bomb demolished St Barnabas church in Hadleigh less than a mile from our home. How fortunate we were compared with the constant bombing other areas had earlier in the war.

The sadness came to us when Miss Wilkinson the headmistress announced at assembly one morning that one of our pupils had been killed the day before in Rayleigh, I can't remember now whether by a bomb or rocket. We must be eternally grateful that our school escaped damage and further casualties as it did.

I for one really enjoyed school life, particularly I have to admit, hockey, tennis and something most competitive in Houses, indoor games. My friend Betty Gray, the team leader and I were most keen Bohun members. As many of my generation must have thought during the years, we should have worked harder at school. There somehow was not the pressure to achieve as there is now, although many did gain state scholarships and university entrance. I was disappointed with my matric results, not for myself but that I must have disappointed my Father. He was the eldest in his family and the only one of 5 to have a grammar school education: although 3 others passed the scholarship the family could not afford the cost of uniforms etc.

I took a pre-nursing course in the 6th form which became my career, very happily and more successfully so and joy of joys on my last day at school I was awarded my tennis colours! Thinking back, I have no recollection of VE day either at home or school, I have no idea how we celebrated if in fact we did.

One thing I remember well: my father was a keen gardener and it was very usual then for some of the girls to bring flowers to decorate their form room on a Monday and tend them until Friday. Some of the staff admired such as lily of the valley and I would bring roots for them for their own gardens. This must seem a million miles away from education today. In fact my friend Betty told me so many years later how envious she was that I won a prize for the best wild flower arrangement!

Such has been my very happy life, I joined a Guide company when a friend Lizzie said she was, when we were 13. I have combined nursing experience with Guiding to have many Guiding appointments concerning disabled members, school nursing was a bonus to. Camps and holidays in many places, home and abroad, sports weekends at Stoke Mandeville, all thanks to my husband and children who gave me every encouragement. 'If they want you to do it dear, accept.'

To conclude, my education at Westcliff did not come to an end in 1948 did it?

### **Shirley Bradley (Prentice) 1947-52:-**

I have 8 grandchildren and one great granddaughter called Belle. She is 20 months old and is very clever. If you ask her name she will answer Belle Minnie Gibson. Four of my granddaughters are married and Katie, the youngest, is getting married in March. I am very proud of her. She is a paramedic and her future husband Rob is also a paramedic.

### **Rose-Marie Birch (1949 to January 1955):-**

The Recollection of a B Student

My train of thought begins following the sitting of the 11 Plus Examination! The exam itself had been an impending terror as it was made clear that this was the most important event in my pre-teen life! I prayed diligently that I would pass and 'earn' the longed-for Raleigh Bicycle along with the promise of a golden education at WHSG.

Close to the end of term, Mr. Gibbs (Headmaster of West Leigh School) stood before our class and told us that he was about to share the examination results. We sat tense and still as the names of the successful students were read out. Hearing my own name, I almost crumbled in relief. Seventy-one years later, the happiness of my parents remains one of the rare occasions during which I had their complete approval. Posing for a photograph beside my new bicycle (wearing my new school uniform) I felt very special!

I remember:

-The first day at School and the pride of having been assigned to Bohun House (my badge is in a box of treasures as I write).

-Our form mistress, Miss Chesterton leading her students from the Assembly Hall parading us down the left-hand side of the corridor.

-It didn't take long for a group of friends to identify themselves.

- **Gillian Musto** with whom I have maintained a subsequent life-friendship

- **Jean Everett**
- **Doreen Steed** (now known as **Diana**) whose sister, Brenda, kept us up-to-date with things fashionable!
- **Wendy Snow**
- **Sandra Wallace** who taught us about boyfriends!
- **Margaret Westcott** with whom I used to ride to school and who sadly died
- **Catherine Livermoor** and the lovely afternoon teas I had at her home

Sadly, my memory is fading: apologies to those whose faces I see but whose names have fled.

Those WHSG years were indeed the best of times and the worst of times and the best memories I happily revisit:

-A warm sunny day sitting at my desk with my head resting on folded arms while Miss Warburton read aloud Matthew Arnolds poem: 'Sohrab and Rustum'. In the process the green hockey field merged to become 'the sandy banks of the Oxus stream'.

-Celebrating my husband's 80th March birthday in Norway, we went dog-sledding over a frozen fjord framed by pyramidal peaks. Thanks to Miss Dodworth, I felt confident in recognizing the effects of the Ice Age!

-Geography and History have become keen interests and I was fortunate enough to spend a number of years in Kalkan, Turkey where Freya Stark roamed and wrote. To a degree I followed in her footsteps and became the English/French speaking guide with an acquired knowledge of the Lycian Triangle sited at Xanthos, Patara, Letoon in the Torus Mountains, Anatolia. For the very best years of my travelling life, I whole heartedly thank Miss Wallace who opened up my mind to the excitement of History and Archaeology.

-Science, not my forte, but, nevertheless, life led me to New York City and through Edward R. Murrow I ended up assisting Dr. Leo Szilard (who split the atom with Enrico Fermi) in the writing of his book, The Voice of the Dolphins. An exciting time during which I met Jonas Salk and, throughout which, wished I had been more attentive during science instruction with Miss Woods.

In retrospect I was a handful and an under-achiever I which was later diagnosed as relating to wartime trauma\* and deprived of both parents and early formal education due to TB which my mother and I both contracted when I was two.

\*A returning enemy aircraft discharged a bomb in Worthing, Sussex. The blast destroyed my grandparents' home and I was haunted by the fear and the experience of being dug out of the rubble.

My final sharing is the memory of frequently standing 'under the clock'. Miss Wilkinson terrified but nowadays I like to think that I made good use of my education and that she might have derived satisfaction from my achievements.

Happy Birthday and Thank You WHSG!

**Addendum:**

Second marriage to Ronald Young – Aeronautical Engineer – Rolls Royce Aviation

Four children :

Dan – Attorney – 5 children all college graduates – Indianapolis, IN

Andrew – deceased at age 6 – brain cancer

Sarah – married – no children. Rescuer of +150 Chesapeake Bay Retrievers Management position S.E. Mills, Rome, GA: BA – Agriculture – Berry College GA

Christopher – educated at Gordonstoun and St. Andrew's university –BSc entrepreneur – Fairfield CT – 3 daughters in UK – educated at Repton: graduates of Newcastle – Leeds and Brighton Universities.

PS I would very much like to be in contact with **Rosemary Westcott – Margaret's** sister. Are you able to help me? Thank you....enjoy a Grand Celebration. From **Rosi aka: rabbits!!!**

**Note from the Editor:** *If you are in contact with Rosemary Westcott please ask her to email [pastpupils@whsg.info](mailto:pastpupils@whsg.info) if she would like us to pass her details to Rose-Marie Birch*

**Joan Doreen Steggall (D'Aeth) 1950:-**

I was born in 1938 and started at Westcliff High School for Girls in 1950 under the reign of Headmistress Miss Wilkinson and Deputy Miss German followed in the next year by Miss Raeburn. In 1963 I married my husband Brian and emigrated to Perth, Western Australia where I still live. I enjoyed my time at WHSG immensely.

Geometry was my favourite subject under Miss Ladmore. Hockey was my second love being trained by Miss Parr. I remember Miss Dodsworth in Geography telling us how Perth was the most isolated city in the world! Not in my dreams did I imagine that I would be living there. In 2004 and 2006 I attended school reunions. I enjoyed catching up with old school friends and reminiscing about schooldays. I am still in touch with some of my former old girls. It was lovely to walk around the school and feel the ambience again.

After going through World War 2 and being quarantined in 1953 when my brother contracted Polio, in 2020 I am again partially confined as Perth is shutting down in response to the Covid 19 virus. In my years at WHSG I learned to enjoy pastimes. I am now patch working. Miss Osmond-Smith guided me in art. I have had a couple of Art exhibitions and have exhibited over years. Due to the pastimes I learned at school, I am not bored being home. Last year we downsized to a smaller house and garden, the maintenance of which also keeps us busy.

I hope the 100 years celebration of the school goes off well and sorry I can't be there. I wish you all well.

**From: Sylvia Krywaniuk (nee Smith) (1953 – 1960):-**

My name is Sylvia Krywaniuk (nee Smith). I attended WHSG from 1953-1960. I trained as a teacher at Trent Park College, Cockfosters, London where I specialized in Drama & Creative Dance. In August 1967 I moved to Alberta, Canada, where I taught grade 3 in Edmonton. I subsequently went to the University of Alberta, from where I graduated with an M Ed in Psychology. I met my future husband there, as he was enrolled in a Doctoral program, also in

Psychology. In 1974 we moved to Vancouver, BC where we still live. We have 4 children & 5 grandchildren most of whom live close by. I am also in close contact with **Pat Stacey (nee Alexander)** who was in my form & we were best friends. By chance we discovered that we both live in Vancouver & have been close friends again for the past 40 years!

### **Anne Wilson (1961-1967):-**

Attending Westcliff High School from 1961 to 1967, I initially slid down a slippery pole due to my indolence; going from 'A' stream in my first year, to 'B' stream in the second and then to almost being given my marching orders, before pulling up my metaphorical socks for the second half of my stay. My feelings are, therefore, perhaps a bit more negative than some regarding the whole experience.

Smells are very evocative and my abiding memory of my early years at the school is of the dark, dingy basement. The acrid smell of the milk lined up in crates, mingled with the stale smell of sweaty bodies emanating from the changing room remains with me to this day. However, we were a 'captive audience' in the winter weather each year until the Spring emerged and we were then able to burrow out of the darkness and stand in the fresh air of the playground.

Much has been written subsequently of the notoriously harsh winter of 1962/1963, which started on the Boxing Day of 1962 and dragged on until early March 1963. Rivers froze over, blizzards sometimes caused snow to settle to a depth of at least six inches and all national sporting events were cancelled for the entire period. Despite that I can't remember a single occasion on which the school closed down or transport didn't run – thus enabling us all (teachers and pupils) to be in attendance. That would never happen in this day and age, I'm sure.

The school canteen, which bore a striking architectural resemblance to a Nissen hut, was not designed for quick access; built as it was at the end of the long, winding pathway adjacent to the playing fields. Even in that bitterly cold winter of 1963 we all processed down there for our school lunches, bundled up in thick winter coats, scarves and gloves that did little to protect us against the elements.

We are told that over the years 'today's sixty' has become 'yesterday's forty'. It's difficult to argue with this contention, as teachers who we perceived as 'elderly' in those times, were probably nothing of the sort. Even allowing for the skewed nature of a child's perception of the age of anyone older than their own generation, the majority of teachers of our day were old-fashioned by anyone's standards. The arrival of the youthful Mrs. Boulter was a breath of fresh air and an exception to the general rule. Tweed skirts and hush puppies reluctantly made way for leather skirts and high heeled shoes and I was intrigued by the article she wrote for the Magazine where it seems she initially suffered from a degree of patronage meted out by older members of staff. Looking back now I realise that she was, of course, nearer to our age than theirs and this, together with the 'old guard' rallying together out of possibly insecure self-protection, may have accounted for the chasm.

I had the pleasure of meeting local writer, Judith Williams, at the Centenary Tea held on Saturday, 7th March and she told me that, in collating material for a book on the School, she had found it extremely difficult to obtain recollections of Miss Raeburn, headmistress for the whole of my tenure. Her predecessor, Miss Wilkinson (known by the girls as 'The Wilk', I believe)

was just before my time, but she seems to have been a vividly memorable 'character', as was Nancy Howard, Miss Raeburn's successor.

My own impression was that Miss Raeburn was a likeable and decent woman, but extremely shy. Her taking of assembly every morning put me in mind of an understudy who has been pushed on stage reluctantly and who is disconcerted and surprised to find herself there at all. In a strange reversal of roles, I always felt the 'real' star was, ironically, the 'understudy' - her Deputy, Miss German. Oozing quirky confidence and authority, I would suspect there is no shortage of anecdotes to compensate for the lack of those about Miss Raeburn. Others might disagree (although, perhaps not Mrs. Boulter!) but I did not find her a likeable woman at all and much preferred the fair and impartial Miss Raeburn.

You will probably not be surprised to learn that I did not become a prefect; nor did I win any prizes whilst I was in situ. However, in an irony that amuses me, I was awarded a 'Progress Prize' after I had left the Sixth Form! No-one can accuse the School of lacking a sense of humour!

### **Jill Pickering (nee Bath) 1962-1969:-**

Here are some of my memories of WHSG. I attended from 1962 – 1969 and my form tutor was Miss Michaelson (later Mrs Balfour) She was famous for the very high heels she wore and taught French. My brothers both attended WHSB and I chuckle now at the rule which said I could not walk to school with them or be seen talking to them around school premises. A visit to the office was the correct mode of operation. When you see that boys now go in the 6th form girls and vice versa - a complete transformation!! I credit WHSG for my path to becoming a teacher and also to finding me a husband. My husband and I met at a dance in the Boys' Hall on April 1st 1966 and we are still together after nearly 54 years. We have stayed in the area, living in Rayleigh and I taught for over 40 years, a job I loved. My husband went on to be a successful engineer and won two awards which involved meeting the Queen and Prince Philip. We have two lovely grown up daughters and two wonderful grandchildren. Over the years we have travelled quite a bit and keep busy with our home and garden, work with schools and looking after the family. We have fond memories of our days at Westcliff and have lots of times when we chat about the various staff members and their idiosyncrasies. Miss Hughes was a favourite, with her lovely Welsh lilt and her passion for maths. She always went the extra mile and was heavily involved with the newsletter until her death. I also owe my love of French and Latin to Mrs Balfour and Miss Luffrum. (I always thought she was aptly named) In the recent past, I was invited to attend Mock Interview days and found it amusing to be stationed on the stage in the main hall – treading the steps that Miss Raeburn and Miss German had trodden before me. It is amazing to think the school is 100 years old.

### **Judith Williams (Selby) 1973-80:-**

It's a long time since I started at the school in 1973, when Sixth Formers were fearfully grown-up, 'Chinese concrete' was on the menu in the canteen, and I daily scuttled past the clock lest it entice me to commit some gross misdemeanour such as losing my muddy hockey socks. Summoned to Miss Cunningham's "careers room" (bijou cupboard by the front door) in the Fifth Year, I was advised to become a secretary or a teacher. "I don't want to do either of those!" I declared, taking my geography degree across to America to become a children's nanny (heaven forbid Miss Howard should hear of it!). On my return, I found a job as a secretary ... I am now a teacher.

It's even longer since the school operated from Victoria Avenue where little Betty Goddard (later Deputy Head) and Olive Freeman (later my Home Economics teacher) were pupils. How I wish I'd pestered them for anecdotes of the school's early days, of stern Miss Wilkinson and jolly Miss White. I've recently spent a happy (busy!) eight months researching and writing up the history of this marvellous school, and it's made me so proud yet humbled to belong to this exclusive club of thoughtful, clever, creative, dynamic, resourceful, enterprising, ingenious, wonderful girls (yes, and some boys now). Long may WHSG continue.

### **Anon 1990s:-**

#### **A Lasting Friendship and a Very Special Delivery**

Here is a short article for your newsletter. I think we'd rather remain anonymous (I've used our first names and been vague on dates) but it's such a lovely story, it should be shared.

September Early 1990's. Westcliff High School for Girls, the first day of term, Miss Rushman's class, 2 nervous and excited Year 7 girls, Katie and Laura, meet for the first time. They become friends.

April 2019. Over 25 years later. A beautiful baby girl is born. The mother Katie is overjoyed with the safe delivery of her gorgeous and perfectly healthy daughter. Laura is relieved too as she carried this precious bundle for 9 months.

Back story. 12 years ago, Katie had cancer treatment. She was able to create embryos which were then frozen. Katie and her husband are the genetic parents of their daughter, she was just 'cooked' by their friend Laura. Katie is now 10 years clear and enjoying motherhood.

They say you make friends for life at senior school and in our case that couldn't be more true. Thank you WHSG!

### **Christine Hawes (McAvoy) 1980-1985:-**

It was by chance that I bumped into an old WHSG classmate when looking around prospective senior schools with my daughter 6 years ago. We exchanged numbers and thought nothing more of it. However, a couple of weeks later, Steph invited me to join her and a few others from class R at the annual luncheon. I nervously agreed; I hadn't seen the girls since 1985. It was lovely to catch up with old but familiar faces. I must have made a good impression as I was then invited along to their regular monthly meetings at a local drinking establishment.

2018/2019 was our 50th birthday year. We celebrated with various fun events including an afternoon tea, and a night spent on the Sunborn Yacht dancing the night away with 'So Solid Crew'. I am so thankful for that chance meeting (coincidentally at a WHSG prospective year 7 open evening). It has opened up a great new social life for me and brought with it new friendships.

## **Mona Sood (1984-1991):-**

### **The Best Start in Life**

My involvement with Westcliff High School for Girls has come full circle in its centenary year, from eleven year old pupil to long-standing school governor. The memories that are made and stay with you during the formative years of life are crucial in the development of any child, and mine are fond. Finding my feet in the first year – aside from the tradition of standing bolt upright to receive a teacher, grammar school was not the prim experience I had expected; sneaking an illicit radio into school to listen to the new chart on Tuesday lunchtimes, the installation of 5-stick KitKat machines (breakfast, anyone?) to generate revenue for PE equipment – great for us kids, but not something that would be countenanced today; the launch of Comic Relief in 1985 complete with a baked bean bath and the opportunity to get revenge on your least favourite teacher (taken with surprising good humour); the confiscation of non-regulation articles of clothing – I was particularly attached to a faded denim jacket but fast became detached from it by disciplinary means; hating jolly hockey sticks in muddy winter fields and then finding summer brought on its own “sporting” challenges when sprung with the annual 1500m sprint (“we’re going for a run, girls” meant “you’re going for a run, I shall officiate and motivate by means of whistle”); creating increasingly inventive yet legitimate ways of avoiding the dreaded unheated outdoor swimming pool...and subsequently discovering a physical activity that I was actually good at and actually enjoy (tennis!). Then suddenly making the transition from practical jokes of gifts of chopped liver misappropriated from the biology lab to the unsuspecting biology notebook – I was always the victim! - to suddenly realising that boys existed and that separation was no more robust than a mesh wire fence by the canteen.

Sixth form came after a relatively easy breeze through GCSEs; I remember hating pure maths with a passion by that point, but discussing the previous night's shenanigans at TOTS took the edge off the triple maths lesson on a Friday afternoon (admittedly it didn't add to succour to my grade). The week-long biology field trip was a highlight; suddenly we were treated like trusted adults by our teachers who we now saw in a new and positive light, and the wonderful relationships formed with friends then took me through one of the most difficult times in my personal life. Thirty years on, I can still remember the birthdays of my best friends at school, even though life took us in separate directions decades ago.

Looking back, I approve of absolutely none of the high jinx we indulged in but retain a huge appreciation of what WHSG gave me – in hindsight I could have applied myself to study more and be a little more constructive with my extra-curricular time as WHSG students are today. The myriad of opportunities that didn't exist when I was a pupil – or perhaps I didn't then have the eyes to see them? – would not be made possible without its highly committed teaching and support staff, and volunteers over the years. Its academic results places it amongst the top of state schools in the country, and whilst this offers an obvious advantage, WHSG also gives its students so much more over the course of 7 years of education. The ethos of WHSG is firmly invested in creating good world citizens: it has served well when it imparts in its students the ability to think critically and laterally, and never to accept without first applying judgement. Making well-informed decisions and considering the impact of our choices before we make them all contribute to the mindset that you are in charge of your own destiny and nothing will beat you. A bit of application goes a long way: something that hasn't required your own effort feels intrinsically less valuable than anything achieved through sheer grit.

We all have a journey, and I have described the lighter side of what was a first-rate educational start in life. There is an ongoing argument about grammar schools perpetuating elitism and inequalities; whilst this may be true for some, my own story differs. As a child of first-generation immigrants escaping political unrest in Africa, it recognised my academic ability (despite the innate laziness that went with it) and gave me a future that I now realise I otherwise wouldn't have dared to dream of, but was my normal back then. As a high-achieving twenty-something, I was covertly labelled by non-immediate workplace colleagues as "Product". "Product", it turned out was shorthand for "product of a private school education" which might be thought to be derogative if it had not come from those who valued education; whilst circumstance had forced them to make huge personal sacrifices, they nurtured high ambitions for their own young children and it was said not with envy, but aspiration.

My own aspirations for WHSG "products" strive much further: it is no secret that I would like to see a WHSG alumna break the public-school-Oxbridge-mould and be appointed to one of the four offices of state within the next thirty years. Westcliff Girls are more than capable of running the country, and a grammar school education paves a pathway for those not born into privilege to aim high and achieve their true potential. If I had a daughter, I would certainly want her to benefit from WHSG start in life and leaving as someone that will both get what they want from life, and make a positive imprint on the world.

**Mona Sood, Vice-Chair of Governors, 2020; past pupil, 1984-1991**

**Naomi Levin (nee Fischer) 1962 – 1963:-  
*Looking for Vivienne Foley***

My maiden name was Naomi Fischer and I attended Westcliff High in 1962 and 1963, leaving in April 1964, when I was just 14, for Australia. I was not very academic but loved sport and played hockey and tennis for the school. In 1969 my family moved to Jerusalem, Israel where I still live.

Unfortunately over the years I lost touch with my childhood friends in the UK and would very much like to make contact again just to see where life has taken everyone.

One of those friends was Vivienne Foley. She was a serious ballet dancer and I have a beautiful photo of her ready to perform, as well as a few of us at her home (which I believe was in Thorpe Bay). I would really love to reconnect with her.

I'd appreciate any information you can send me. Once Corona is over and we are able to travel again I hope to come back to Westcliff for a trip down memory lane.

*If you are still in touch with Vivienne please ask her to email [pastpupils@whsg.info](mailto:pastpupils@whsg.info) so that we can reconnect Naomi with Vivienne again.*

## **Elizabeth Wheatley (nee Sharp) 1958 – 1965:-**

Here we are, already in the second half of 2020 with the days shortening, feeling as though we are emerging from hibernation. Despite Mike's now having celebrated his 80th birthday (via a family Zoom gathering) and I my 73rd, we have not been shielding. I have continued to do the food shopping and most days we go for a walk. I have to confess that, certainly in the earlier weeks when the weather was truly wonderful, I actually enjoyed the quieter pace of life – as did Mike. However, I still chair the Godalming/Mayen Association and I have recently been asked to remain as President of the Rotary Club of Godalming for a second year.

We should have been welcoming our friends from Mayen and celebrating the 40th anniversary of our twinning. Even though certain travel restrictions have been lifted, there really is not enough open to make it easy to visit places of interest. They were scheduled to be going to Leeds Castle, the Roman Baths at Bath, Henley-on-Thames, London and Oxford. However, if the Olympics can be postponed until 2021, so can our anniversary. We shall be carrying out the whole program, along with our celebratory dinner, in twelve months' time, when we hope all this Covid business will be just something to be aware of, like normal bouts of winter 'flu. Postponement does actually have an advantage: the civic element of the towns didn't officially happen until 1982, thus celebrating the 40th anniversary in 2022. We hosted the 30th anniversary in Godalming when I was Town Mayor, so Mayen will be in charge this time. We visit each other in alternate years meaning that, under normal circumstances, it would have been our turn to go to Mayen in 2021. If we go in 2022, we can time our trip to coincide with whatever official celebrations are planned, thus enabling us to share the proceedings and save making a special journey.

Rotary has been very busy over the last few weeks. We obviously could not meet physically, but we have had a weekly Zoom meeting and kept in phone contact with those who cannot manage such modern technology. Unfortunately, we have lost two gentlemen, not through the Corona virus, but both deaths came as a terrible shock. Meanwhile, one of our members, Jenny Mason, picked up a message on Face Book from North Camp involving the making of scrubs, etc. As a result, through a special Face Book, she has gathered over 60 ladies who have been busy creating at home and completed over 1,700 items for the NHS, Care Homes and even dentists. Some of this group have now become the Rotary Godalming Community Corps, known as Sewing 4 Good and have also had a stall on the High Street selling masks for charity. The idea is for them to meet once a month, as things continue to improve and, while not being full Rotary members, will be connected to us. Soon scrub bags and masks won't be needed so much, but they are planning to continue making smaller bags with the idea of filling them with toiletries for women escaping domestic abuse.

Meanwhile, we are very concerned about the possibility of the financial fall-out once the Furlough scheme comes to an end. With this in mind the two Godalming Rotary clubs have got together and, along with Citizens Advice Waverley and administrative help from Waverley Borough Council, have formed Rotary's Waverley Covid Support Fund. We are trying to accumulate funds to help those who suddenly find themselves unexpectedly in dire financial need. We don't plan to hand out money but either vouchers for specific products, or to buy the necessary item ourselves for the person. From our club's point of view, while this is likely to be a vital life-line to some of our residents, we feel it is only half the story and are in the process of setting up a 'Job Club', in conjunction with Waverley Borough Council. We had a Zoom talk at a recent Rotary meeting from a District Governor who would be able to give training to volunteers to help those affected, so watch this space...

## OBITUARIES

### Miss Ladmore

I heard today that Miss Ladmore died in March (2019). She was my form and maths teacher for 5 years and I'm sure many of the alpha students from 1952 to 1956/7 will remember her.

**Anne Newman (Boatfield) 1952-1958**

### Margaret Lawson (Wyatt) aged 96:

I am writing to inform you of the death of a previous student. Margaret lived a full, independent and active life until 2 months ago when she became ill following a fall. I know she attended the annual 'old girls' lunch' which she looked forward to very much. I do not know if there were any remaining friends and acquaintances in attendance. Her funeral was at Southend Crematorium on Tuesday 12th November (2019).

**Cadie Fryer**

### Pauline Godfrey (Nee Irwin) – Started WHSG Class R Room 19 – September 1985.



I have been asked to pay tribute to Pauline for the Old Girls Newsletter and it is truly an honour but I have so much to say about her but at the same time no words can express how sad it makes me feel that she is no longer with us. I know this is echoed by everyone that had the honour of meeting her. This is one piece of schoolwork that I hope is grade A+.

Pauline Irwin was born on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1973 and had two sisters Helen and Clare who are also WHSGOA and a brother, Ian. She attended Our Lady of Lourdes and passed her 11+ along with lots of the girls in our year and chose to attend WHSG, so from the beginning she was well known throughout the school.

I met Pauline Irwin and Karen Hunter on an evening viewing of the school, when we were shown round the school together. Karen must have wondered what the next seven years were going to be like after spending a couple of hours with us. I did not know anyone at WHSG and lucky for me we were all in the same class, spent many hours together under "The Clock" and have been friends ever since.

There are so many memories from school that I have of and with Pauline all of which make me want to laugh and at the same time cry because she is not here to recount them with. There are so many stories from our days at WHSG, printable and not for print, that a special supplement would be needed. The following is a snapshot of Pauline relating to her time at Westcliff and her achievements after leaving school:-

- Our Head Girl for the Class of 1985 – She was great in her leadership, she deserved that role and she was born to do it. She won the vote of the girls and Miss Howard made sure she got the job.
- Organised an epic charity week raising £5,000 for Lady McFadden Breast Cancer Unit
- Sporty – School Hockey Team & Athletics team and always in our class teams for all sports

- Year 1 & 2 (in old money) Our Class Assembly co-ordinator – Always had funny ideas to make the class assembly in Room 5 more interesting. In particular, we had our bite sized version of Grease and we always had time to include an adaptation of Pollution by Rik Mayall to fit the topic of the assembly:-

Pollution, all around,  
 Sometimes up, sometimes down,  
 But always around.  
 Pollution, are you coming to my town  
 Or am I coming to yours?  
 We're on different buses, pollution  
 But we're both using petrol.

- Set up her own business called Creative Care Services Limited and instrumental in a variety of projects such as The Vibe, a centre providing activities for people with disabilities.
- Stood on the 4<sup>th</sup> Plinth at Trafalgar Square, one of 2,400 people chosen out of 34,000 applications to declare the plinth as a free, independent, democratic, republic.
- Set up a group for parents with cancer called the Pancake Group.

Years passed and I had not seen Pauline for a while but one day shopping in Basildon I heard a voice and I saw her unforgettable red hair. Completely distracted I kept browsing in areas of the shop that I did not need to be in to check whether it was her and I did not want to say hello to the wrong person. After stalking her around the shop and managing to position myself to get the perfect view of her, I knew it was her so I tapped her on the shoulder. It was like we had seen each other yesterday. She even told my son that I was really naughty at school.

Pauline has a son called Frank who is literally a mini me of her. Same cheeky smile with eyes and personality that lights up any room. As luck would have it a few years ago they played a football match against each other and I have a priceless photo of them both together.

Pauline was unfortunately diagnosed with cancer. She fought it both times and never gave up but unfortunately, we lost her last year on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Ironically, she had been in the newspaper when we did our Charity Week Event as we had raised £5,000 for the Lady McFadden Breast Cancer Unit.

Pauline was an amazing person and always tried to help people whenever and wherever she could and she was the voice that was not afraid to speak.

I was lucky to attend two Old Girls Lunches with Pauline and when we arrived Miss Howard saw us and said, "I see the naughty girls have arrived". Even she had a cheeky smile as she said it and she said that we were not naughty and that we were just "Spirited". The highlight of the first lunch we attended was singing the school song I luckily have a video of us, you can hear us but not see us. I did notice that the engraving of the Head Girl's name had stopped at the year before us and I challenged Dr Hayman as to why Pauline's name was not up there. Thanks to Miss Howard, Mrs Howard and lots of emails I glad to say that her name is where it should be engraved on the balcony and the names of those that followed are also there.

I received the sad news of Pauline's passing from one of our friends from WHSG and I created a group on instant messenger to break the sad news to as many girls from the Class of 1985 as I could. WHSG is a special place. Everyone had different experiences and spent different lengths

of time there but one thing we all have is memories of our time there. It has taken a sad event like this for us to all pull together and recount funny memories that we have all had with our Head Girl at the centre of them. Everyone knew her and everyone was sad to hear the news but everyone wanted to tell a story about her. Amongst the messages I received one girl said "Pauline will be forever remembered for the fun and mischief she brought to almost every lesson and lunchtime"

The bond of WHSG is always alive and in tribute those of us from the Class of 1982 and other WHSG girls that knew her attended her funeral and we sang the school song. Unfortunately, we were not accompanied by the late Molly Holdsworth but I think Pauline would have been listening and laughing at us. We were determined to make her proud and amidst laughter and tears we sang that song from the bottom of our hearts and we almost hit the high notes but we came together to remember our friend and our Head Girl Pauline

***With thanks to Michelle Curtis  
(Class of 1985)***

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## **WHOGA Committee**

This year we have unfortunately lost two Committee members. After very many years of service, **Anne Rickard** has decided it is time to step down. She has helped the Committee in various ways for a long time; in particular she used to arrange for all the Newsletters to be posted out each year. A few years ago, when the usual organiser was unwell, she also managed to step in and take over at short notice all the lunch arrangements.

**Tina Gowers** has also recently resigned from the Committee, in order to spend more time looking after her grandsons. We understand she will still be able to assist with the Raffle at the annual lunch.

Thanks to both ladies for their time spent with the Committee. We wish them both all the best and look forward to seeing them at future school and OGA events.

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## **Westcliff High School for Girls – Newsletter**

Keep in touch with what's happening at Westcliff High School for Girls by accessing the School's Newsletter via the website: <https://www.whsg.info/1412/newsletter>

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## **THANK YOU**

Thank you to all those who kindly contributed to this newsletter. We always love hearing from Old Girls and if you would like to make a contribution to the next issue, either with details of what you are doing now, an appeal to locate a past pupil, or just to share some memories, please send them to [pastupils@whsg.info](mailto:pastupils@whsg.info) so that they can be included.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

President:	<b>Dr Paul Hayman</b>	Headteacher, Westcliff High School for Girls, Kenilworth Gardens, Westcliff-on- Sea, SS0 0BS
Vice President:	<b>Pat Elliott</b>	
Treasurer:	<b>Sarah Hunt</b>	237 Eastwood Road North, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 4ND Sarahhunt17@aol.com
Lunch Co-ordinators:	<b>Sarah Mismar</b>	49 Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 2XQ sarah.e.baron@googlemail.com
	And <b>Lisa Clarke</b>	
Membership/Minutes Secretary	<b>Helen Boyd</b>	36 Kenilworth Gardens Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 0BH helenboyd27@gmail.com
Newsletter Secretary	<b>Lesley Woodward</b>	190 Bournemouth Park Road Southend-on-Sea, SS2 5LU lesley.woodward1@btinternet.com
General Administrator	<b>Lesley Wilkins</b>	

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List of attendees at 2019 Luncheon

(Current names first)

Joan Aldridge  
(Barrell)  
Stephanie Andrews  
(Pyne)  
Carol Attersley  
(Cottridge)

Helen Boyd (Skinner)  
Shirley Bradley  
(Prentice)  
Michelle Bridge  
Margaret Bristow  
Gillian Burmester  
(Ryan)

Judith Canham  
Maxine Carrigher  
(Martin)  
Jacque Carter (Story)  
Lisa Clarke (Dixon)  
Anne Cornell (Martin)

Pauline Devereux  
(Bate)  
Katie Dyos-Smith  
(Dyos)

Pat English (Staines)  
Pat Elliott

Mary Fidge  
(Shopland)  
Mary Francis (Kent)

Marilyn Goodman  
Tina Gowers (Webb)  
Liz Green (Elizabeth  
Tait)

Caroline Gibb  
Kay Gibb (Seabrook)  
Christine Hawes (McAvoy)  
Alison Holmes (Miller)  
Sarah Hunt (Saint)

Annette Jordan  
(Rayner)

Pat Kenny (Tomkins)

Susan Layzell (Gallacher)  
Hilary Le Marie (Gothard)  
Sheila Leys (Clarke)  
Brenda Lobar  
Lucy Lock

Susan Mahagan (Hance)  
Sarah Mismar (Baron)  
Stephanie Moon  
Helen Morgan (Catton)  
Alison Morrison  
(Clarke)  
Ann Mott

Helen Newman (Salmon)

Doris Plowman (Everitt)  
Dawn Pyne (Tyler)

Mervyn Redding  
Pam Regan (Summers)  
Dorothy Rickard  
Tina Rippon (Whatley)

Joy Sawkins  
(Hartley)  
Deborah Skeels  
(Pyne)  
Anne Sorrell  
(Gregory)

Jennifer Thorogood  
(Clarke)  
Carol Tissington  
(Wilson)

Doris Underwood  
(Mathers)

Sheila Webb  
(Millbourne)  
Linda Wellard  
(Stromans)  
Jane Whittington  
(Jarrett)  
Lesley Wilkins  
(Wood)  
Martin Wilkins  
Judith Williams (Selby)  
Lesley Woodward  
(Ogden)

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