

Luminary

2021 | THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF
ST ALBANS HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

ART CLASS

The landscape artist
who loves green

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

STAHS alumni living
internationally

THE YOUNG ONES

Life in Prep compared
to Junior House



St Albans
High School
for Girls

WELCOME FROM OGA CHAIR, ELLIE DE GALLEANI



It is my pleasure to welcome you to this year's magazine. Although we have been unable to meet in-person for much of the last year, it has nevertheless been an exciting and productive time for the STAHS alumni community.

We have been delighted by the success of our online events and reunions, and the online platform has enabled us to connect with Old Girls living further away. We are planning to continue to run online events in the coming year, alongside in-person events.

I would like to thank Old Girls for their continued careers support for current pupils. The alumni body is rich in talent and experience, and it is wonderful to see this being shared so enthusiastically. It has been fantastic to start seeing alumni coming back into school in these final weeks of term.

I do hope you enjoy the magazine and that we see you (either online or in person) at one of our events very soon.

ALUMNI OR ALUMNAE?

After last year's magazine we had some comments about the conflicting use of alumni and alumnae. As our community includes former pupils and former staff members, we felt it was better to use 'alumni' – which encompasses different genders. For consistency, we will now be using this term throughout the magazine and our wider communications. We appreciate that this isn't strictly grammatically correct (and our apologies to the Latin scholars amongst you!) but hopefully this will be more straightforward and avoid any confusion.

Old Girls' Association (OGA) Committee

President: Amber Waite, Head

Vice Presidents: Susan Riley, Barbara Elliott, Jacquelyn Pain, Rosemary Martin, Jenny Brown

Chair: Ellie de Galleani, 1990-1997

Treasurer: Sara Hadley (Pangbourne), 1985-1996

Membership Secretary: Nadine Gardner, 1970-1977

OWLs' Secretary: Sheila King (Thomas), 1960-1970

Committee members:

- Marion Allan, Former Staff (Prep), 1979-2008
- Louise Barnes (Burns), 1990-2001
- Sophie Day, 1999-2006
- Hilary Doherty, Former Staff (Prep), 1983-2005
- Jacqui Evans, 1981-1992
- Ginny Rennie (Kettle), 1980-1991
- Anna Noack (Tombs), 1988-1999

Committee meetings are held once a term, currently via Zoom. If you would be interested in finding out more about joining the OGA Committee, please email alumni@stahs.org.uk.

JOIN THE STAHS ALUMNI COMMUNITY PORTAL TODAY!

It's nearly time to wish our fantastic portal a happy second birthday – it's grown up a lot in that time and has more great content, news, support and capabilities than ever before. Sign up today to:

- Read news about your fellow Old Girls and the School – and share your news.
- Take a look at our video library, featuring recordings of our Twilight Talks series, careers webinars and highlights from the Music department's 'On the Record' series.
- Find and connect with former classmates around the world.
- See what support we can offer through our careers network – from our jobs board to careers events to getting advice from fellow alumni, there's something for everyone.
- Find out how to support current pupils, whether that's speaking at an event, giving a webinar or being one of our profiles.
- Sign up to reunions and events, both in-person and virtual.

Keep in touch!

<https://alumni.stahs.org.uk/>





CONTENTS

02 **Chair's letter** An OGA committee update

04 **Head's letter** Welcome from Amber Waite

05 **School Officers' letter** An overview of the year from the outgoing officer team

07 **STAHS news** Top news from the STAHS community, including the latest changes to the School site

10 **Screen painting** A look at some of the amazing pieces from this year's A level Art

12 **Prep: then and now** How the education of our youngest pupils has changed

14 **Around the World** A look at some of our international Old Girls

20 **Art** Creativity from alumna Zoë Wilkinson

22 **Harriet Kelsall** The new collaboration between STAHS and Harriet

24 **Alumni yearbook** Your news and updates

28 **Obituaries** Those we have said a sad farewell to this year

30 **Alumni bookshelf** Latest publications from the alumni community

31 **Careers** How the alumni careers network has been supporting pupils

32 **Recent reunions** A summary of last year's events

34 **Diary dates** Upcoming events

35 **Development and partnerships** An update on the latest fundraising and outreach work

36 **A look back**

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HEAD'S LETTER

When I wrote to you in last year's magazine, I said that 2020 had been a year unlike any other in memory. The start of 2021 seemed to be going in the same direction, and I was so very disappointed to have to start Lent term remotely.

But, in typical STAHS fashion, the pupils and teachers adapted marvellously with a full and exciting range of events and activities taking place remotely, alongside online teaching. These included webinars and masterclasses, distinguished guest lecturers and wonderful pupil performances, and my particular thanks to all those alumni who have supported us by speaking to pupils this year.

The delight at being reunited in March was wonderful – it made such a difference being able to experience the buzz of excitement around the School and hear the happy chatter of voices and laughter in the corridor outside my office.

Since the start of the pandemic, it has become clear that how society views success, and what is valued, has been undergoing a subtle but seismic shift. What is particularly encouraging for me is how this mirrors our views at STAHS and our new philosophy for the School, particularly for our Sixth Form pupils.

We call this 'Teach to 25' and it means that rather than viewing the Sixth Form as the pinnacle of secondary education, it is instead the first step on a much longer journey. Whilst we don't want to undervalue A levels or the incredible amount of work that pupils put into their studies, they are the first rung after which a young person might earn a degree from a top university or complete a competitive apprenticeship, obtain professional qualifications, embark on their first career and embrace adulthood.

We want our pupils – our alumni – to go out into the world feeling happy and secure in themselves. Undoubtedly, there will be times when they have to deviate from their plans and we want them to have the mental and emotional resilience to do this and embrace change.

STAHS has always focused on students leaving the School as well-rounded individuals, and this philosophy is the natural next step. Students are encouraged to develop the skills, independence and knowledge needed for their journeys into further education and the world of work – and whatever twists and turns those paths might take.

As ever, we want to challenge students, whilst also putting a supportive arm around them; we are ready to celebrate when things go well, but are equally ready to listen and encourage when things don't quite go to plan.

We are still in the early days of 'Teach to 25' – not least trying to work out how to measure success, and as a scientist who likes hard data, this is causing a bit of a conundrum! We feel sure that this is the best way to help prepare our pupils, as they enter a world that is changing rapidly from the one that we felt so secure in, back in early 2020.

As I now draw to the end of my second year as Head – my cotton anniversary – I hope for a more 'normal' year next year, whilst also planning for whatever might get thrown at us.

I wish you all the best and hope to be able to welcome you back to the High School next year.



Amber Waite, Head

THE SCHOOL OFFICERS' YEAR IN REVIEW

SASHA

HEAD OF SCHOOL



2020-2021 has been a truly unconventional year at STAHS, particularly during our time in office. Both beginning and ending our role in the pandemic, the team faced many challenges throughout the year.

However, as you will soon see, we were still able to conduct many of our beloved STAHS events, even if not in the typical way. Charity and student outreach were a really important focus for the officers this year and we were really pleased with the response from the whole STAHS community on our social media and virtual platforms during the lockdowns. I'm so proud of everything the team achieved in such difficult circumstances and I wish the 2021-2022 team all the best!

NATASHA

DEPUTY HEAD OF SCHOOL



Without a doubt, my highlight as a School Officer this year has been my role as Editor-in-Chief of the school magazine Imprint. I worked closely with a team of Sixth Formers, collating and editing articles written by the girls and STAHS alumni as we explored how the school has changed (and stayed the same) through time. Being able to release the hard copy at the launch in October was particularly rewarding given all the obstacles imposed by COVID-19. Since my role on the School Officer team centred around the humanities and arts, I had also hoped to introduce a journal focused on these subjects later in the year, but unfortunately lockdowns made this impossible. However, it is an idea that I would love to see future School Officers take on board.



L-R: Emma, Zara, Sasha, Natasha, Freya, Eleanor, Josie, Gabby

SCHOOL OFFICERS

ZARA

DEPUTY HEAD OF SCHOOL



My highlight of the year has been helping to organise and work with the school community to support an array of charities, such as Savannah Education Trust. The school managed to raise over £11,000; not only has it been amazing to see the amount of money we raised and its effect, but the memories and the fun that have come from different events such as bake sales, dressing up as characters for mufti days and online activities have made it that much better!

ELEANOR

SPORTS CAPTAIN



As School Sports Captain, I would normally organise sports events and help out within the Department. Due to COVID-19, my role has been less sports-based than it perhaps normally would be.

This year I helped the Department raise

awareness for Black Lives Matter through sport. Myself and others produced a display on black people in sport and it presented how important they are in shaping their sports into what they are today. We also raised awareness for various charities that helped ethnic minority groups get into sport. Aside from my sporting role, I thoroughly enjoyed organising our Harvest Festival service. This involved producing a video, rather than an in-person service, for our school community to enjoy.

EMMA

SCHOOL OFFICER



My role in increasing political awareness and public speaking opportunities within the School in the past year has been very exciting, particularly because of how eventful politics has been in recent times.

It was really rewarding to educate in an

accessible way about the US election at a whole school assembly, and also about Brexit to Years 10 and 11 in their form times. However, the highlight of the year within my area of responsibility was definitely the Staff vs Student Christmas Debate, which was still a blast even though we had to adapt it to being over Zoom.

FREYA

SCHOOL OFFICER



This year the School Officers and I have focused on sustainability at STAHS as now, more than ever, it is important to think about the environmental impact of our actions as a school community. A particular highlight was launching a new

Eco Committee, which comprises representatives from all year groups and works to evaluate our actions as a school, spread awareness and then communicate and implement new ideas. Opportunities like this are something that I will always remember and value from my time at STAHS.

Despite lockdowns and isolation disruptions, it has been a pleasure to meet with the committee and hear so many incredible ideas. I was astounded by the overwhelming interest to improve our school's environmental outlook and I hope in the future the Eco Committee will continue to harness this passion to implement lasting change.

GABBY

SCHOOL OFFICER



The highlight of my year as School Officer has been organising activities to commemorate British Science and Engineering Week. The importance of encouraging girls to pursue a career in STEM cannot be emphasised enough and

I am grateful to have been able to plan a variety of events to celebrate this week, despite the COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time. Several alumni gave thought-provoking speeches over Zoom on different topics such as Geology, Engineering and Statistics and we also ran a photography competition with the theme 'Innovation'. In addition, we had the opportunity to set up form-time quizzes and I'm incredibly glad that one of the themes for the quiz was the contribution of Women and POC in STEM.

JOSIE

SCHOOL OFFICER



Through this turbulent year the School Officers and myself were particularly keen to ensure our peers felt supported and connected to one another. This led to us creating a 'School Officer Helpline', allowing students in all years to have

a School Officer they could turn to for advice and extra support. We also raised awareness and money for the Charity 'YoungMindsUK' during a mufti day as STAHS became a sea of yellow and helped remind us once more the importance of looking after our mental health. Finally, during our first term we put on a webinar after being inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement. It was incredibly inspiring seeing so many of our peers give short talks on topics important to them, whilst also seeing our school community unite to further our education on ending racial hate.

The eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed that the School Officer team has grown. As well as the Head of School (formerly Head Girl), two Deputies and Sports Captain there are now four other officers. Each of the officers has a different remit and area of responsibility and together hold the following posts to better support pupils and their interests:

- Community and Eco Officer
- Arts Officer
- Academic Officer
- STEM Officer

STAHS news

The two winning teams



EXAM RESULTS 2020

In a year where examinations were cancelled, pupils' hard work was recognised through the submission of centre assessment grades (CAGs) and STAHS celebrated a range of fantastic results.

In A levels, 65% of all grades awarded were an A* or A and just under 30% of all grades awarded were an A*. Alongside this, 16 pupils achieved straight A* grades (three of those achieved four A* grades), 100% of Oxbridge pupils were accepted onto their chosen course, along with excellent outcomes for medicine, veterinary and dental offer holders.

Amber Waite, Head, commented: 'I am delighted that STAHS pupils have had such positive outcomes in terms of gaining excellent places at university. They have been the absolute model of STAHS values, demonstrating perseverance, positivity, good humour and, above all, an excellent sense of perspective. I am so very proud of them all and wish them the very best of luck for their very exciting futures!'

SCHOLARS SPARK DEBATE

STAHS Year 10 Hodgkin Scholars enlightened a virtual audience with an evening of stimulating speeches during the 2021 STAHS mini TEDx-style online event.

The scholars were tasked with researching, scripting and delivering a talk lasting five minutes on a social issue of their choice. Alumna Krupa Jasani, Financial Planning and Analysis Manager at euNetworks, was invited to award the prizes and treated the students to an engaging discussion on women in the workplace and how to challenge the status quo.

Congratulations to Polly and Sophie who were awarded Speaker of the Year for 'Hands off the Hijab', an insightful presentation on restrictions being placed on women's freedom to wear religious symbols whilst in public in certain countries.

The runner-up prize was awarded to Alice, Holly and Arshya for their speech 'Who are we seeing on our screens?', which addressed representation of ethnic minority actors in film and television.

Jonathan Marshall, Assistant Head Academic Development at STAHS, thought all the students pursued bold ideas and talked with wisdom well beyond their years. When describing the evening he said: 'It was fascinating to observe how the students' talks took shape through debate and the judges faced a very difficult decision on the night!'

The STAHS Hodgkin Scholars are named after Dorothy Hodgkin who won the 1964 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for her work on the structures of vitamin B12 and penicillin. During Year 10 and 11, the scholars engage with the broader Academic Scholars programme whilst also furthering their research and critical thinking skills.

Destination of 2020 leavers



A DIVERSE CURRICULUM

After the events of 2020, including the killing of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement, STAHS decided to review diversity across all areas of the School – covering the curriculum, co-curricular activities, recruitment and admissions – to ensure that the School, staff and pupils were all acting in a fair and inclusive way.

A key part of this was setting up a Diversity and Inclusion working party, led by Deputy Head Rachel Parker, to specifically review the curriculum and co-curricular activities.

Rachel said: 'We wanted the group to be truly representative, so it included staff, alumni, parents and Governors. We realised quickly what a big job this was and so as a group took the decision to focus on black lives and black culture specifically, to then broaden this out in the future.'

'The group then split into subject areas, with a member of staff in each group, to look through the curriculum in detail. Alongside this we also had groups looking at mental health and the PSHE curriculum.'

The work is still ongoing but a number of changes will be made from next year, focusing on three key areas: context to what is being taught, language and involvement. The majority of curriculum changes will be in Key Stage 3–Years 7 through to 9, given the rigidity of the GCSE and A level syllabi, as well as extending this down to the Prep.

The work has also been across all subject areas. Rachel said: 'We were keen to avoid this just being focused on subjects like History and English, and as a result we had groups looking at Art and Design, Maths and Science, Music, Sport, Geography, mental health and character education.'

Alumna Davina Mootien (1999) joined the working party. She said: 'The killing of George Floyd made me feel all sorts of negative emotions, from horror to sadness and despair. Then I received an email from STAHS asking for volunteers to be part of this working group. I was filled with a new set of emotions from relief to hope, and genuine gratitude that there were others in this community that wanted to do their part to eradicate the prejudice and make our world a better place.'

'I was asked to join Science and Maths. Meeting the teachers from these departments warmed my heart! They were already doing so much to ensure that the pupils had a broad understanding of people from all different backgrounds and how they contributed to these subjects.'

'Being part of the working group opened my eyes to some of the problems that still exist. Everyone had their own connections and experience of the School and whilst there is always more work to do, the determination, perseverance, and expertise of all those involved gives me faith that we will make an even better world for our children.'

ALUMNI NEWS IN BRIEF

To read the full stories, please visit alumni.stahs.org.uk/news

Alumna awarded OBE

Dr Rimla Akhtar (2001) was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2021, announced on 11 June.

Pippa and Prep sing together

Hearing from the Prep choir is always a treat, but even more so when the song they are performing was written by a STAHS alumna.

Alumna shortlisted for Rising Star award

Jessica Thorne (2014) has been recognised for her work in the Digital category of the 2021 awards.

Presenting 'The Conversation'

We are delighted to share our new School film, 'The Conversation', to share the ethos and spirit of STAHS and a peek at our great facilities.

SPORTS DAY

This year Mandeville won Senior School Sports Day – with some fantastic races and House spirit! In addition, a number of School records were broken. Alexia in Year 12 broke the Senior 200m record, Sienna broke the Year 8 300m record and Tomisin beat the year record in Year 9 triple jump.





Soon to be the new
Student Hub

BUILDINGS UPDATE

The School has been through a huge building programme recently, with the new Sixth Form Centre and dining hall now open for use. The focus in the new academic year will be the refurbishment of 9 Townsend Avenue – formerly a dental practice.

Work will start in Autumn 2021 and the building will change into a Student Hub, opening in early 2022. It will become a focus for students where they can access a range of wellbeing and support services, providing a place for quiet reflection and assistance. STAHS believes that having crucial wellbeing services co-located is more important than ever and this new development will create a space where girls can have the opportunity to pause and collect themselves in the school day, where they can find guidance and solace when needed.





The professional exhibition set-up in the Art Department



Esme Robinson

SCREEN PAINTING

If a picture is worth a thousand words, it's clear that this year's Sixth Formers have a lot they want to say. Several of the pieces - many of which were researched and created within lockdown or under isolation restrictions - seem wistful and contemplative, and it is striking how many are abstracts or landscapes, devoid of people. The paintings and installations are as individual as the artists themselves, but what clearly links them all is the incredible creative talent in the Class of 2021.

To see more, as well as this year's GCSE exhibition, please visit the STAHS virtual art exhibition: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmW6JiNd>



Jadesola Kloss



PREP – THEN AND NOW

THEN

I was kindly asked if I would write some memories of my time teaching in Junior House or Michael House, as it was called in 1955.

I have a wealth of memories of the many years I taught at SAHS. Michael House was a small department in a house just around the corner from the main school, and opposite Boro'gate Boarding House. There were boarders too in those days and I recall that instead of winter coats, they wore cloaks lined with their house colour (very Harry Potter).

In Michael House, there was a Kindergarten, Transition and Forms 1 and 2. The third forms were situated in the 'huts' opposite the main school, which is now the site of the Jubilee Hall. I also had the pleasure of small boys in my class, before they went on to their Prep schools. They certainly added another dimension to all proceedings!

There are many activities to choose to write about and I must be brief, so - just two special events that took place during the school year.

Firstly, the 'Pageant of the Nativity', then organised by the Head of PE, Miss Meiklejohn. This religious pageant (first produced in 1921) included every pupil and was a spectacular production of processions, tableaux and music. We, in Michael



The 1972 pet show

House, provided the 'small angels', who had to be rehearsed, then dressed and made up for their performance, under the watchful eye of the Head of Department, Miss Jefferis. The final performance of the Pageant was in 1979.

Then, during the Trinity Term, there was 'The Pet Show'. This took place on the space where the Hawking block is now situated, then latterly on the Playing Field. All pets were welcome so, as you can imagine, from the smallest hamster to horses (horse boxes parked in Townsend Avenue) it was always a chaotic, noisy and fun day – dogs wanted to chase cats, the occasional 'escapologist' and always hoping that caged birds didn't fly off or that goldfish bowls were not spilled.

These were just two of the annual highlights, but there were so many other special occasions – the Grand Opening of the new outdoor swimming pool – when Old Girl Marjorie Robertson (Dame Anna Neagle) attended together with former-Headmistress, Miss Edith Archibald. Also, the week of incredible celebrations for the Centenary in 1989.

I feel I have never said 'Goodbye' to SAHS as my contact continued with my daughter Pippa, a pupil from the age of five, and now her two daughters, happily at the Prep and soon to be in Senior School and also my continuing friendships with ex-colleagues.

So, best wishes to everyone, and hoping that some of you can also say 'Ah yes, I remember that'!

Pamela Alderson, 1955–1995



A scene from the pageant



Learning in the woods

NOW

It is striking that teaching and learning at the Prep has changed so significantly and yet, at its heart, the aim is still the same: focusing on the development of the whole child. We want to allow each girl to explore a wide range of subjects and activities so that she can develop her own interests and ignite a passion for learning but, above all, feel healthy and happy.

Most obviously, the site is completely different. Separated from the Senior School in 2003, it is now housed at the former Polaroid headquarters in Wheathampstead. This move not only allowed the School to grow – there are now 340 girls in the Prep – but also meant that outdoor learning could become a key part of the curriculum, where girls can learn, explore and be active throughout the site's 18 acres of woodland and meadow. Using our outdoor spaces means that the girls can not only stretch themselves in a safe way, but can also keep active and healthy. Outdoor learning is a part of our curriculum – both developing humanities, art and STEM in an outdoor environment, but also using the time and space to practice problem solving, team building and leadership skills.

What is taught has evolved as well. Not only is outdoor learning part of the curriculum, but STEM teaching has changed significantly. There is a dedicated and refurbished IT suite allowing pupils to learn coding and physical computing and, in Years 5 and 6, girls are introduced to engineering and product design principles.

Despite the increased distance, many of the links with the Senior School haven't changed, predominantly through music and use of the swimming pool (thankfully covered in 2006, compared to the one opened by Dame Anna Neagle!)

There are also the familiar events that involve all Prep pupils; this includes the annual Garden Party where all of the pupils and their families come together to look at displays of the girls' work and have an afternoon tea, complete with singing and dance performances. We also run two community

events open to both pupils and neighbours – our Book and STEM festivals. It has been lovely to open up our site for these, with some fantastic speakers, to help share and encourage interest in these crucial areas of early education.

Even though the location has changed, what is taught has evolved and the events are different, the heart of the Prep is still the same. There are still the same screams in the playground, pride in the Houses, dedication to charity and excitement to learn – whether that's in the classroom, at an extra-curricular club or in the woods.

Judy Rowe, Head of the Prep



Pupils learning in the newly refurbished Buchanan & Danna Ma Computing Suite



CITIZENS OF THE WORLD

Walking around St Albans, there's a strong chance you will bump into someone connected to school – whether a member of staff (current or past) or a pupil (current or past)! But even though huge numbers of the STAHS alumni community remain in and around the city, there are many that end up in more exotic climes. Here we catch up with a few of them to hear more about their journeys, stories and memories.



CAROLINE PALMER

Left STAHS: 1997

Lives: Hong Kong, since 2013

Why did you move?

I visited Hong Kong in 2008 to see a friend who lived here and loved it. I was looking for a change of scene from London and as soon as I had the opportunity, I decided to move. I was Senior Director at BNP Paribas Real Estate, Hong Kong and Singapore, but I have recently set up my own real estate company advising Asia-based clients who are investing into the UK property market.

What's the best thing about where you live now?

Weather, scenery, hiking (75% of Hong Kong's territory is green), opportunities to travel in Asia (pre-COVID!), convenience and experiencing a different culture.

What's your favourite memory from school?

Meeting an amazing group of friends who I am still in touch with today.

What has changed the most for you this year?

Like a lot of people, the events of 2020 have meant a year of reflection and in a positive way; it has meant I have pursued my ambition of setting up my own business. I realised I wanted the flexibility of being able to spend more time with my family, and to leave the corporate world. However, it has certainly been hard not to be able to travel and see family in the UK or for them to be able to visit.



HARRIET COBB

Left STAHS: 2004

Lives: Dubai, United Arab Emirates, since 2015

Why did you move?

I moved out with my job at the time; I was working at KPMG in the forensic team doing fraud investigations and I came out to Dubai on a two-year secondment. But as is very typical of people that come on a secondment, I'm still here five years later! My current job is at Apple; I work in AppleCare Global Compliance and from Dubai cover the region of UAE, KSA, India and Turkey.

What's the best thing about where you live now?

It's an amazing place to travel the world from (not so much nowadays!). Dubai is such a multicultural city with people from all over the world so it's a blend of cultures and experiences. Within the UAE you can do everything from swimming in the sea with dolphins, hiking mountains, camping in the desert, spending the day at the beach or on a boat, shopping at the biggest malls and eating every cuisine that you can imagine. When we first moved here every day really did feel like a holiday.

Favourite memory from school?

All the time I spent in the Home Economics kitchen getting snacks and hugs from Mrs Browne.

What do you miss about the UK?

Mostly family and friends who used to make frequent visits out to Dubai, which hasn't been possible this year, but when I come back to the UK it's always a must to get a pork fix!

What has changed most this year?

Unfortunately, we were supposed to have our wedding last year which had to be postponed, however now I am expecting my first baby, due in July, so things will continue to change a lot this year!

**ALICE SWAIN****Left STAHS: 2009****Lives:** Vilafranca de Bonany, Mallorca, since 2016**Why did you move?**

I had been teaching in London for a few years where I met my American boyfriend; whilst he moved to Kazakhstan and then Qatar, I stayed in London but was able to visit him, which made me realise how much of the world I hadn't seen. Together we decided that long distance was no longer for us and we started looking for jobs abroad together. Europe always seemed like an easier first leap where I could still travel and fly back to England easily and Mallorca was the winner in the end.

I am now the Co-Academic Principal of the Rafa Nadal International School. We are an American International boarding school that caters to both tennis and non-tennis students and we opened our doors in 2016, so I was lucky enough to help set the school up.

What's the best thing about where you live now?

Mallorca is incredibly beautiful and I love the pace of life. Despite the stresses of the week, even a weekend spent at the beach or in the mountains can feel like you've flown away for a mini holiday.

What has changed the most for you this year?

For me, two of the biggest changes this year have been in teaching and travelling. Normally, I'd fly back to the UK regularly or spend the weekend in Madrid or Barcelona which has been impossible this year, so I've learnt to appreciate finding adventure at home. Teaching-wise, as a school that caters to tennis players, we were very experienced with teaching online and supporting students with distance learning. Coming back to school in September was challenging and wearing masks 24/7 in the heat was hard and has made for a very different teaching experience in the classroom. In spite of this, I've seen our students change and mature into such resilient young people who, despite facing a very restricted school experience, manage to find the positives in everything. We've been fortunate enough to stay in school full-time this whole year with lots of protective measures in place and having a work routine back has been very welcome.

The other big change is I am currently pregnant and due to give birth this summer so that has been the biggest and most exciting change this year and I'm hoping restrictions lift in time to have lots of visitors once the baby arrives!





VERITY REES

Left **STAHS**: 2002

Lives: Florida, USA

Why did you move?

I am now a part-time lawyer and part-time semi-professional runner. If I had stayed in the UK after I finished my law degree at the University of Oxford, I would have been required to do a one-year legal practice course and two-year training contract to be a qualified UK lawyer, whereas all I had to do was pass the New York State Bar Exam and I was instantly a qualified US lawyer. I had always adored New York and

I believe that if you want to be the best at something then you go to New York to do it. I moved to the US in 2006 and lived in Manhattan for 14 years and a year ago I moved to Windermere, Florida.

As a lawyer, I specialise in executive compensation, negotiating employment, severance and equity compensation arrangements for CEOs and management teams, alongside pro-bono work, assisting non-profit organizations with employee benefits and labour issues. As a runner, I specialise in the 800m on the track and in tower running – essentially, I race up the stairs of tall buildings like the Empire State Building.

What's the best thing about where you live now?

New York was amazing in my 20s and early 30s. But I was also working seven days a week, often 18 hours a day. I wasn't even able to take the day off to have surgery a few years ago; I woke up from the general anaesthesia to emails asking if I was conscious yet and how soon could I get to a computer. So, when I was offered partnership a few years ago, I declined. My firm and I came to an arrangement and I now consult for them part-time from Florida. Right now, my focus is on becoming the 2022 World Masters Champion in the 800m and the oldest ever All

American, which is an award given by US universities to their top athletes.

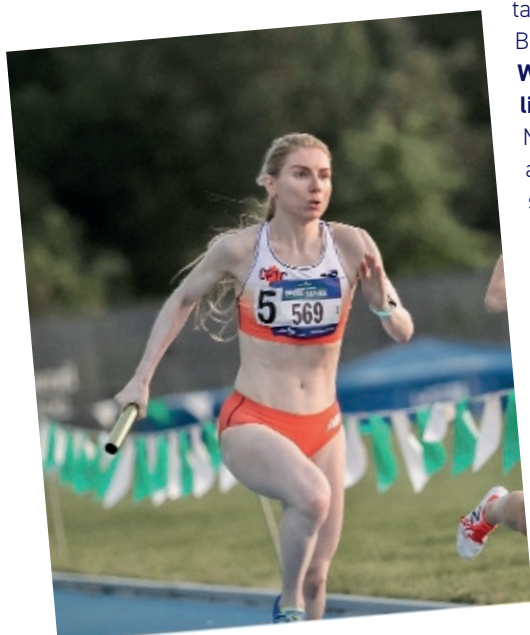
I love that I can train twice a day, read books instead of legal documents and I live close enough to the Disney Magic Kingdom to see the fireworks every night.

What's your favourite memory from school?

I had some wonderful teachers who really made a lasting impact on me. Mrs Daly, the then-Head, was incredibly supportive and I could never have achieved 10 A*s in my GCSEs and become British Ice Dance Champion in the same 12 months without her belief in me. Mrs Reid, Mrs Fingland, Mr Lisher and Mrs Thompson all taught me so much. I used the prize money I received during my last year to buy a Tiffany keychain on which I had engraved "SAHS 1995-2002" and I still carry it every day.

What has changed the most for you this year?

I used to travel all over the country competing as a tower runner, but that sport was wiped out overnight by the pandemic and most of the 2021 races have been cancelled. Amazingly enough I had sponsors and received funding. I never would have believed organisations would pay for me to fly to Chicago to run up the Willis Tower or Seattle to run up The Space Needle.





CAROLE PITHER

Left STAHS: 1969

Lives: Fuveau, France

Why did you move?

I lived in the Amazon for three years then moved back to the UK in November 1973. In February 1974, disgusted with life in Britain at the time (Thatcher, strikes), I moved to France. I lived in the Paris region until 2001 when, since I had more work in Marseille, I moved to Aix-en-Provence. I now live in Fuveau, a village overlooked by the Sainte Victoire mountain.

I worked door-to-door selling and typing for a translator before becoming a radio reporter, presenter, journalist, translator, documentary film-maker and author. I'm supposed to be retired but I now run a transport business. It's impossible to condense a very busy and interesting life, meeting people and travelling the world into a few lines!

Favourite memory from school?

My favourite memories are of inventing ways to disobey the rules and of Miss Leather falling into the wastepaper basket (nobody dared laugh).

What do you miss about the UK?

I miss nothing about the UK and I never have - except for my parents, when they were alive.

What has changed most for you this year?

Not being allowed to go diving in Tubbataha.



VICTORIA HILL

Left STAHs: 1999

Lives: Melbourne, Australia, since 2014

Why did you move?

I decided to go backpacking at 27 and travelled through Australia and New Zealand. I absolutely loved it and once I got back to the UK I decided to give Oz a go, in December 2009. I knew the UK was always going to be there if it didn't work out, but very luckily it did, and I haven't looked back since. Australia is just very chilled... and let's be honest, we actually get a decent summer.

I'm now a Senior Marketing Manager at a Superannuation/Pension Fund, which may sound a little boring but in Australia it's mandatory for your



employer to pay 9.5% of your salary into your Super Fund to help you save for retirement. I help our members understand their pensions and how they can make the best out of it.

What's the best thing about where you live now?

Melbourne is a fabulous city: it has everything you need and it's really easy to get out of the city into regional Victoria for beaches, wineries, mountains and all the rest. Melbourne definitely has a more European feel to it, so maybe that's why I feel so at home here.

What's your favourite memory from school?

School feels like forever ago! Although we worked hard, there were a lot of

laughs and fun along the way with my year. Ski trips were always a blast. I'm lucky to say that I'm still best friends with some girls I went to school with even though I live so far away.

What do you miss about the UK?

Family – although with video chats I probably see them more than I would've done if I had stayed in the UK. I also really miss M&S sandwiches so that's always my first stop when I land back at home for a holiday.

What has changed the most for you this year?

Not being able to travel has been the biggest change and the uncertainty of when that may happen again. I've been very fortunate that I've been able to get home to the UK at least once a year

since I moved to Australia, so that has been hard.

But on a positive note, I feel relationships with friends have improved. Being made to stay at home and not see each other physically changed the way we do things. The famous pivoting of nights out to nights in on Zoom was, in hindsight, so much fun. We came together for activities we probably wouldn't have as often – cooking classes, cocktail making classes and just random video chats.

I definitely appreciate what I have more and will not take that for granted. I'm very thankful that my family and friends have/are getting through this, and I can't wait to see them all again in person.



JANE STEWART DICKSON

Left STAHS: 1983

Lives: Wellington, New Zealand, since 1984

Why did you move?

My mother was a New Zealander and I had dual citizenship, so I went out two weeks after I sat my Biology A level retake. I was having such a lovely time that I didn't want to come home when I got the grades to go to Leeds. After getting my BSc in Geology from University of Canterbury, NZ, I worked as a Geologist in New Zealand and Australia for about four years. I then worked as an Ambulance Officer in Surrey, UK, for a couple of years, but most of my career has been in administration in NZ. I'm currently working for a large consulting engineering company, where I focus on health and safety and training. Good fun.

What's the best thing about where you live now?

I am extremely aware of my good fortune living in New Zealand. With our borders closed this (southern) summer we have explored parts of the country we probably never would have gone to, like Great Barrier Island. With a lack of foreign tourists, we were able to get onto the Lake Waikaremoana great walk with a group of 16 friends and family.

I love the 'can do' attitude of New Zealanders. Living in the capital city means that we have easy access to cultural and sporting activities, which is wonderful.

What do you miss about the UK?

I miss my family, especially now that we can't travel. Thank goodness for being able to talk over the computer. I miss the history of the UK; being able to visit stately homes and gardens. I miss the costume exhibitions at the V&A and the National Portrait Gallery.

What has changed the most for you this year?

Not being able to travel to see my father and sisters. Apart from that, the changes in the past year are things that I have chosen to change. I now commute by e-bike and that has definitely changed the way I move around the city.



ANN COX

Left STAHS: 1953

Lives: Thornbury in Ontario, Canada

Why did you move?

When I was at the High School we used to pray for missionaries in Borneo and Sarawak, so that probably gave me the incentive to move away from England. I spent the 50s in medical school in London, where I graduated in 1959. My husband was a Civil Engineer who had spent a summer in Canada and wanted to return, which we did in September 1960. I completed my house jobs in 1960 and I was able to get a job as a senior intern at the Reddy Memorial Hospital in Montreal. When we moved to Ontario I wanted to go into private practice, so I had to take the equivalent of my final exams I had taken in England three years previously. So, the only subject I really had to study was public health and then I was able to work as a GP!

What's the best thing about where you live now?

The best thing about where I live now, aged 85, is that it's in a small country town. The condo building where I live is within walking distance of the grocery store and if I turn left as I leave the building, I'm in the country! What more could I ask for?!

Favourite memory from school?

I think my favourite memory of the High School is morning prayers in 'the Hall' where there were four wooden boards hanging on the wall titled 'Oxford, Cambridge, London and Medicine' and the names of the High School graduates who had gone there. It was at prayers in the Hall that I heard the news that 'the war was over', two days after my 10th birthday.

What do you miss about the UK?

Quite honestly, I can't think of anything. It's 2 February 2021 as I write; the sun is shining on the snow outside. I'm going for a walk with a friend in half an hour. It doesn't get much better than that. Especially now in the time of COVID.





GOING GREEN



During the cold and locked-down days of early 2021, one of the loveliest programmes to watch was Sky Arts' Landscape Artist of the Year, seeing talented individuals create varied and incredible artworks from the scenes in front of them.

And so it was even more exciting to see that one of those artists was alumna Zoë Wilkinson (2018).

'I applied to be on the show in January 2020 and by March I had completely forgotten about it! It wasn't until I had just finished my university exams in May [Zoë is currently studying Philosophy] that I got a phone call asking me to be on the show. It had been such a long time since I applied that I was really surprised.'

One of two amateur artists in heat four of season six, Zoë's episode was filmed at the end of July 2020 and was an unforgettable day for her. 'The experience was amazing! I loved having an excuse to paint every single day and was able to cement my love of art. The night before filming I didn't sleep at all so a 7am start on set was a bit daunting. I started off by doing some initial interviews which I found a bit strange because I wasn't used to talking to a camera.'

Zoë's landscape was the beautiful Chartwell gardens in Kent, with the painting beginning at 10am. 'The beginning of the day was very stressful because I was aware that I only had four hours to make a finished painting. I had a few issues with

my paint which kept drying out because the weather was so hot. Once I got into [it], I felt a lot more relaxed and started to forget the cameras were there.

'Every so often one of the judges would come into my pod to talk about my painting. I think that was the most surreal experience of the day because I was used to seeing them on TV and suddenly, they were right in front of me! Although I didn't get through to the semi-final, I was still feeling great by the time the day finished because it was such a unique and exciting experience.'

Zoë's love of green and her expressive style bursts from the screen in her finished piece. 'I like using dramatic colour schemes because I feel like it creates a stronger sense of place. Landscapes are my favourite thing to paint at the moment, because I love capturing the moods that different places evoke.'

As well as landscapes, Zoë's art also reflects her values and much of her A level work focused on feminism – exploring this and creating more politically-driven art is an area she wants to focus on more in the future. But for the moment, her plans are rather more modest: 'my biggest ambitions are to be able to do art full-time and to eventually have my own studio.'

Watch this space!

For more details, take a look at Zoë's work online and on social media at zoewilkinsonart.com and on Instagram @zoewilkinson_art.





Harriet Kelsall Bespoke Jewellery

SILVER LININGS

New traditions are often forged following difficult times and testing circumstances. A collaboration between STAHS and alumna Harriet Kelsall is one of these, with the award-winning designer, entrepreneur and jeweller creating a bespoke piece for the Class of 2021, in what will become a new gift for Year 13 leavers from STAHS.

Harriet said: 'I instantly thought this was a really lovely idea for the girls and was keen to be involved. After looking at the new School logo I had an initial idea for a design concept; I was keen to make a light and airy piece that would be both easy to wear and modern, with an element of timelessness.'

It is fascinating to hear about Harriet's thought process and how her school days directly influenced the design. 'After thinking a lot about education and what it meant to me, I realised that I used to think that education felt a lot like jumping through important hoops and that the High School was there to support and challenge me. It was these ideas that inspired the looped design at the top of the shield.'

'We all have to go through various stages of education like GCSEs, A levels and perhaps a degree or vocational qualification. When you look at the three loops from the front, they form the shield shape but from the side you can see the cycle of education and support that inspired the piece too.'

'When I was working on this project, I found myself reminded of my own Sixth Form years and I thought a lot about what I would have liked in a piece of jewellery at that point. I imagined myself once again walking down the corridors with arms full of folders; but then I thought they are probably just carrying iPads these days, and I'm positive that they no longer have blackboards and chalk!'

It is clear that designing a piece of jewellery is more than a creative exercise for Harriet and involves really thinking about the recipients. 'I obviously love visual balance and colour, but I also love stories.'

When somebody comes to us for a bespoke design project, we think "how can we tell this story?". It might be a love story, a life story or a story of support and hope. I try to inject creativity into every piece so that it isn't just a lovely piece of jewellery which is beautifully made, but also a symbol of something special and personal for each project.'

The design is not the only important part of the STAHS piece though, with Harriet making a conscious decision to make the piece in recycled silver. 'We have done a lot to help move ethics on in the jewellery industry, which has been a fascinating journey, but of course like every industry, everything is still far from perfect despite having come a long way. I am proud to say that my company was the first company in the world to be certified by the Responsible Jewellery Council and licensed to sell Fairtrade gold.'

'When it came to the STAHS piece, I asked the casting house if they could make them in recycled silver as I knew they had been considering using more recycled metal in their work but weren't doing it quite yet. They said that although they were not really ready to start working that way, they would get ready in order to do this for us, and I am just thrilled about this. So, in a way, this project from the High School has helped make ethical progress itself, which is brilliant!'

'Young people are truly leading the way in environmentalism and are so inspiring to me – our customers who are my age rarely ask about ethical options until we suggest it to them. However, our young customers don't only ask us for them but even ask us brilliant questions like: "How can you prove to me that when you say this is Fairtrade gold, it really is?". These kinds of questions show me that the future will be in safe hands.'

A full version of the interview with Harriet can be viewed on the alumni portal: <https://alumni.stahs.org.uk/news/alumni-news/52/52-Silver-linings>





Alumna Harriet Kelsall

1950s

Mary Deane (Timbers)
1945-1950

I shall be 90 later this year so have little in the way of news now, other than keeping going! Still able to live at home I am glad to say but other than enjoying my four great grandchildren (at a distance!) my life is now a quiet one, in common with many others of my generation I suspect.

1960s

Rowena Godfrey
1960-1969

Working on the family history jigsaw puzzle

Four boxes of family papers – legal documents, letters, cash books, photographs and more – investigated during lockdown have allowed me to know a great deal more about my ancestors. This photo from about 1900 shows my great-grandparents and seven children. Thomas Joseph Griffin was born in Bristol in 1846, after his father – who claimed to be a



My great-grandparents Thomas Joseph and Helen Griffin and seven children in about 1900

doctor – went bankrupt, moved from Birmingham, and married for the second time into a wealthy family. In contrast TJ married the daughter of a family servant. Their oldest child Helen died aged 30 in 1906. My mother's cousin had hinted at a second daughter: Thomasine's baptismal record and death certificate show that she was born very prematurely, about six months after Helen's birth, yet amazingly for those times she lived for five weeks. Then came six sons.

Following an Act of Parliament in 1898 concerning vaccination against smallpox, TJ was appointed a Vaccination Officer by St Peter's Hospital, 'to perform the duties specified in the Order of the Local Government Board' in six Registration Sub-Districts in Bristol. He continued in that role until shortly before he died in 1920. His salary was not huge, and it seems that he and Helen struggled somewhat financially, though some properties on Castle Green and in the Montpelier district inherited from richer relatives provided useful rents.

Their sons had varied careers. For example, my grandfather Percy worked for Bristol Corporation Electricity Department, while Fred was on the sales side of Dunlop for his entire career. Both of them served in the army, in England, during the First World War.

I have sent all sorts of documents to various Archives around England, but there are still many missing pieces of the family history jigsaw puzzle, and I will undoubtedly never finish it completely.

1970s

Vicky Metcalfe (Silver) 1968–1976

Been farming with Tim, at Home Farm, Purley on Thames, for 38 years now... who said it was a stepping stone farm?! Aberdeen Angus are still the mainstay of the farm. At present we are looking at a summer of less grass due to river meadows being used more for leisure in these COVID times and the now very dry spring, following flooding in January. Looks like a tricky time is ahead for farmers generally. We celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary in January of this year - I'm now feeling old! Twin boys, born last September, take our total to seven grandchildren. Our children have been fortunate that work has continued for them, along with needing to work out how to cope with some home schooling, like so many families. We moved into the new farmhouse just six months later than planned, despite COVID, and are enjoying the space after living in a two-roomed shed for 18 months. I continue to volunteer as a canoe/kayak coach and am looking forward to the return of racing at the end of May. I hope that all is well with everyone I know.

1980s

Lesley Sayliss (Wachtel) 1973–1982

June 2018–March 2021 I completed the x3 year Hertfordshire Macmillan Brain Tumour Allied Health Professional Neuro-navigational Pilot Service - a highly successful cross-county project clinically supporting people diagnosed with high grade brain cancer but sadly the impact of COVID-19 meant the service could not be commissioned permanently. So, after 35 years always in contract to NHS in various Clinical Physiotherapy roles, in conjunction with 13 years in an educational role (at the University of Hertfordshire), I have taken my NHS pension... but not retired! In January 2021 'upskilled' as a COVID vaccinator and thoroughly enjoying doing additional 8–12 hours per week as a vaccinator – mainly in the Stevenage Hub; the team of staff and volunteers has been amazing and the interaction with public so rewarding. Now enjoying having the time to Cross-fit train for another Tough Mudder and my first 'Murph Challenge'; also looking for a

new role - most likely still in healthcare work but via a third sector organisation, so looking forward to new challenges post lockdown.

Julia Ebbett (Palmer) 1977–1984

I have lived in Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, since 1988. Married to David Ebbett, with three children: George (23), Jessica (20) and Maia (19). We have a small farm of Hereford cattle. I am general manager of a Maori health and social service organization. In my spare time I'm a keen equestrian and tramper.

Rosalind Wright (Gill) 1978–1989

I continue to teach international students at INTO, UEA. I mainly teach academic English and International and Development Studies to undergraduates, but in the last two years, have also been teaching research skills to postgraduate students. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us into online teaching, although we were able to do some face-to-face teaching last autumn. After a rather rocky start, as teachers got used to the mechanics, and then the possibilities, of various virtual learning platforms and video-conferencing software, we got used to it, and seem to be in a more settled state. Nearly every one of my colleagues yearns to get back to face-to-face teaching however. In the last two years, I have also been exploring the possibility of ordained ministry with the Church of England. I continue to be heavily involved with my local church, Christ Church, Eaton. I also keep links with the local Liberal Democrats.

1990s

Carla Preston 1980–1991

Since I left school I have had two careers and a daughter four years ago as a solo parent. I worked in the arts and museums for 10 years including some years as an archivist for photographer Lord Snowdon. I then retrained as a counsellor and psychotherapist earning my Masters in 2014. My daughter, who was donor conceived, is four and about to start school in September. Choosing a school for her has brought back strong memories of starting in the Juniors when I was seven.



1990s

Hannah Bowring (West) 1992-1999

I live in south-west London with my husband Dan and my two kids, Elise (seven) and Max (four). I work for an international development charity called Tearfund, campaigning on climate change issues.



2000s

Nic Owen (Doherty) 1990-2001

After navigating 2020 with a three-year-old and a newborn, this year I took the plunge to leave my 15-year career in investment banking and buy the Baby Sensory business for St Albans and Harpenden. We're the first programme to be underpinned by science, proven to aid babies' learning and development from birth to 13 months. Our multi-award-winning sessions engage babies, inspire parents and give that truly WOW factor through music, props, puppet shows, lights, bubbles and are an ideal place to meet other new parents, ask questions and share ideas, experiences and memories together. I couldn't be prouder to have left the big city to bring smiles and support to parents and babies in our local community; I've loved seeing some STAHS alumni bring their babies to class, and I hope to welcome many more of you to our classes in future. @babysensorystalbans



2000s

Emma Adlard and Stephanie Rawlins 1994-2005 and 1997-2004

After leaving school, we kept up our musical interests by playing piano duets together whenever we could. In 2014, we put on a Christmas fundraising concert in St Albans, and have been continuing them (almost) annually ever since! We now have a name – Alban Duo – and our audiences continue to grow each year. We're delighted that our cumulative total raised for charity is now into the thousands.

2000s

Rosemary Ingold (Gillman) 1999-2006

I continue to enjoy the excitement and variation that my husband's job as an Army officer entails; in May 2021, we are being posted to Tamil Nadu, India, for 12 months. I am so looking forward to the opportunity to live in such a beautiful part of the world! I work as a supply teacher when possible (sometimes tricky, given how often we move) and am thoroughly enjoying the camaraderie and community of Army life, and the adventure of getting to live in so many places.

Rachel Vickers 1997-2008

I have been qualified as a nurse for the past seven years and have spent most of that working in the Emergency Department. I have recently moved to Sierra Leone to work on a nurse training project.

2000s

**Kathy Reed
1996-2004**

After finishing medical school and working for a few years in Poole Hospital, I started combining my passions of travelling and medicine. I worked in Panama for a charity called 'Floating Doctors', then Honduras and Fiji, where I was a volunteer medic on conservation dive sites. I have since moved to Australia, worked all over the country and am now

an Emergency Physician with an interest in Retrieval Medicine, working in Newcastle, NSW. My partner and I have also just returned from a job as Alpine Ski Medics on the ski slopes of Queenstown, New Zealand - which is arguably the coolest job we'll ever have!



2010s

**Sarina Dhir
2013-2020**

One of the youngest COVID vaccinators volunteering on my gap year. I initially planned to volunteer abroad in Nepal but due to COVID made some changes and am now helping out in one of the biggest vaccination programmes in the world!



2010s

**Emily Sterling
2011-2013**

In September 2020 I started to re-train as a Genetic Counsellor part time alongside my job in the NHS doing diagnostic imaging. Next year I will be spending three to four months on placement at Great Ormond Street as part of this, which I am really looking forward to!

**Sophie Hilton
2005-2015**

Future Trainee Solicitor at Allen & Overy LLP.

OBITUARIES

1950s

Wendy Sturgess (Harris/Ruis) 1945–1951

Wendy had the misfortune (usually regarded as a calamity) to be born to a mother who died a day or so after having given birth to her. Raised by elderly spinster aunts, and with a five-year-old sister, Wendy had a strict non-conformist upbringing. She stood out at school – so she told me – for being unkempt, with her strong, dark hair standing on end.

Wendy was an exceptional human being. If events seemed to be going awry she managed to turn things around, gaining a positive outcome. Although her marriage to an Italian in Udine ended in divorce, she brought her two sons back to England where they have flourished and there are five grandchildren.

Wendy became proficient in Italian and qualified as a teacher. She was also a professional librarian, ran a poetry group and was talented in art, classical music and creative writing. She was a good friend to a wide circle and did an immense amount for her chosen charities.

She has been a wonderful, sensitive, supportive friend and found time to write me monthly letters over a six-decade relationship. Severe health problems slowed Wendy down recently but by no means diminished her meticulous care for her many projects. Always cheerful and positive: a good friend indeed. I hardly knew Wendy at school. Our friendship started when we met, unplanned, at Library School in Brighton in 1955.

Jean Spelman (Thompson/Brown)

1960s

Elisabeth Alison Freda Edwards (Baker) 1950–1963

Liz was born on 11 February 1946 in St Peters Street and lived in Beechwood Avenue until she was in her twenties. Liz went to Lyndale School, Hillside Road, for two years and then to St Albans High School for Girls from 1953 to 1963. She



Elisabeth Edwards

played most sports at school including lacrosse and hockey, where she was the first team goalkeeper, but loved cricket and won awards for her bowling.

Liz joined Townsend Tennis club in St Albans in 1959; she spent as much time as possible at the club and won the junior mixed tournament twice, getting to the semi-finals of the Herts Junior Championship and later winning the Ladies Doubles three times and the mixed Doubles on the fifth time of trying.

Liz started her working life as a librarian at the St Albans City Library. She loved the mobile library and had a couple of years with a PR agency in London, organising exhibitions. She then worked at the QEII school library and Hatfield Polytechnic library, where she

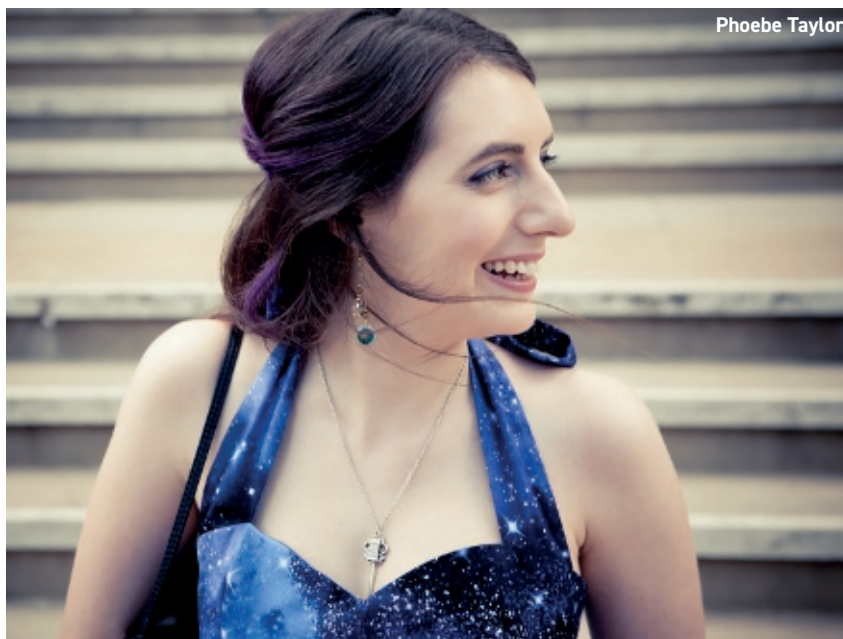
also played cricket.

Liz and Gus had been aware of each other through football and cricket sporting links for several years, however, when they were both studying for a Sports Diploma in 1973 they were asked to make up a double date with another couple of friends. This went well and they got married in 1974 at the United Reformed Church in Homewood Road, although if her mother had her way it would have been in the Lady Chapel in St Albans Cathedral.

After marrying they lived in Cheshunt for several years, during which time Rachel was born in QEII in 1978 and then Samantha in 1981; the family then moved to Welwyn Garden City in 1984.

As the children grew up, Liz took a

Phoebe Taylor



'HER TIME IN THE WORLD WAS FAR TOO SHORT, BUT HER IMPACT WILL BE DEEPLY FELT FOR YEARS TO COME.'

part-time job at Notcutts, which was in line with her love of gardening, and then got her final job as a librarian at Oaklands College.

After retiring, Liz carried on with her sports, playing even more. There were regular tennis sessions and Liz also took up bowls, and was a much better player than she thought she was. She regularly played in friendly, competition and league matches against other clubs. She won several trophies and in 2018 was Ladies Champion at Shire Park.

Liz enjoyed the bar and all social life at Townsend and the bowls clubs. She was very competitive, a stickler for the rules and correct etiquette and fought hard when she was playing. This continued with her year long illness, fighting hard to make the most of her time, accepting the inevitability, making all preparations and wishes known and not complaining, but with just a few tears occasionally. In the end, the year-long illness became too much, and she passed away in the Isabel Hospice with her family around her.

Her family came first throughout her life, with Townsend, tennis and sport in general second, with gardening third. She was also very appreciative of all the friends she made throughout her life, particularly if they loved sport or Manchester United. Liz even accepted a Spurs fan as her husband for 46 years.

Gus Edwards

2000s

Phoebe Grace Taylor 2005-2007

I'm very sorry to inform you all of the death of my best friend, Phoebe Taylor, who attended Sixth Form at the High School from 2005 to 2007 and died by suicide on 28 February, 2021. She was 31. The effect of COVID-19 on Phoebe's mental health was profound. Although her death was not caused by the virus itself, she was very much a victim of the pandemic.

Only at the High School for two years, Phoebe made a big impression. Her distinctive purple fringe was a constant feature, despite the frequent reminders that it went against school policy.

Studying Classics, English, French and Spanish, her gift for and love of languages stood out just as much as her rule-breaking hair. She quickly made friends and found herself inducted into the 'study room crew', a group of friends who based ourselves in the old study room in the Sixth Form block. She joined Paris House, where I had the pleasure of being House Captain in 2006-7, and years later she would still refer to me as her 'captain' from time to time.

Her love of languages took her to Cambridge, where she graduated with a First in Modern Languages after four years of study. This included a year abroad in Salamanca, Spain, particularly memorable for the time she managed to fit about a dozen of her school friends into her tiny apartment. I was there and I'm still not sure how she did it!

After university, Phoebe and I moved to a flat in London together. She took jobs in publishing and in the charity sector, preferring to move between organisations and share her particular brand of efficient competence and sparkly joy with different projects and causes rather than pursuing a single career in the traditional sense. Some work highlights included getting the chance to work with Tom Hiddleston and lifelong favourite actor David Tennant, and being able to correct some long running mistakes in the text of *The*

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy ahead of its new anniversary edition, but she perhaps most valued the time she spent at the Cardinal Hume Centre, a charity that supports homeless young people, families in need, and individuals living in poverty.

She loved ice cream, musicals, books, poetry, the colour purple, travel, Doctor Who, the Lake District, Michael Palin, the music of Vienna Teng and Dossa, and so many more things that I'll associate with her forever.

She was a deeply kind, generous and thoughtful person who was always devoted to her friends, including many from the High School. In the time since her death, her loved ones have been astonished by the number of accounts of her quiet kindnesses to others just when they needed it most, good deeds that she never told anyone about. Her time in the world was far too short, but her impact will be deeply felt for years to come.

She is lovingly remembered by her parents Ros and Carl, brother Sammy, and countless beloved friends and family who love and miss her very, very much.

You can read and leave tributes, as well as donate to her family's chosen charities, at <https://phoebetaylor.muchloved.com/>

Amy Woodworth (2000-2007)

ALUMNI BOOKSHELF

It's been another busy year for our alumni authors! We hope you enjoy reading about what they've been writing, from Victorian seafarers to a dystopian future, via the lives of truck drivers.



UN CAMION DANS LA TÊTE

Trucks have a bad brand image: big, slow, polluting, a source of accidents and traffic jams. However, we frequently forget how vital they are to our lives: everything we own, even our car, was transported by a truck. For two years, Carole Pither shared the everyday lives of truck drivers. She investigates the passions that motivate them as she travels with truck drivers across Europe, America, the Middle East and India. Her journey challenges the preconceptions we hold about them, highlighting their harsh and dirty lives, the dangers they often face and the constant loneliness.

Carole Pither (1959–1969)

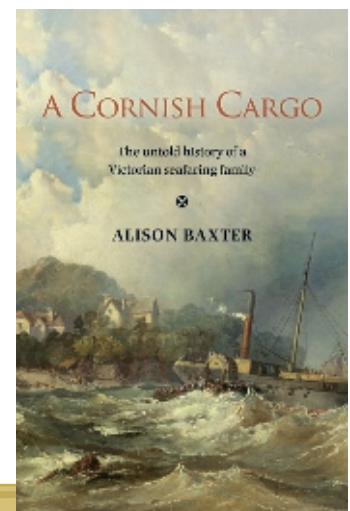
This is Carole's second book; her first *Sur les traces de Kéraban* follows the journey of Jules Verne's character Kéraban travelling the perimeter of the Black Sea. Both books, written only in French, highlight the travel and adventure that have framed Carole's life as a writer, journalist, documentary film-maker and, most recently, the owner of a transport business.

A CORNISH CARGO: THE UNTOLD HISTORY OF A VICTORIAN SEAFARING FAMILY

The past is made up of the stories of ordinary people, most of them long forgotten. This book is part social history, part detective story; it is the true account of how the fortunes of one family – the Dupens – changed as a result of the Industrial Revolution, when the world was transformed by the power of steam. Starting in 1835 in Cornwall, it follows the family as they seek their fortunes across the world, taking them to Madras, Malaya, China and Australia. The family history of the Dupens takes us on a voyage of discovery that will resonate with anyone who has inherited their own cargo of keepsakes and myths.

Dr Alison Baxter (1961–1968)

Alison was featured in last year's *Luminary* (2020), after she completed her PhD in Creative Writing in December 2019. Her book, *A Cornish Cargo*, grew out of the experience of exploring the boundary between fiction and non-fiction, and her thesis included a section of the book and a critical commentary on the process of writing it. Alison loves researching and writing about the history of ordinary people, who often turn out not to be ordinary at all.



BALANCING ACT

Corporal David Conrad has life figured out. His job gives him power, control, and access to Top Secret operations. His looks have tempted plenty of women into his bed, and he has no intention of committing to a relationship.

When Ketty Smith joins the Home Forces, Conrad sets his sights on the new girl – but pursuing Ketty will be more dangerous than he realises. Is Conrad about to meet his match? And will the temptations of his job distract him from his target?

Rachel Churcher (1982–1993)

2021 marks the publication of two new books in Rachel Churcher's award-winning Young Adult dystopian Battle Ground series. *Balancing Act* is a tie-in novel, suitable for older teens and adult readers, revisiting the events of the series with a new narrator. *Finding Fire and Other Stories* is a collection of tie-in short fiction, narrated by secondary characters from the first five books. All seven books in the series are available now, and for a taster of the story you can download *Making Trouble*, a free prequel novella, from freebook.tallerbooks.com.

Alumna Anna Hemmings
delivering a Sixth Form
lecture in September 2020



CAREERS

This academic year has been fantastic in terms of alumni support – a huge thank you to everyone who has spoken to students or been part of our profile series.

Faced with continuing restrictions and a further lockdown, much of the careers support and advice from alumni has had to move online. This has actually worked extremely well, allowing pupils to hear from a range of alumni based around the UK and internationally.

Head of Careers, Gini Parton, said: 'It is fantastic to see just how much help our amazing alumni have offered to current students. In a year of so much uncertainty and anxiety it has been hugely appreciated by everyone.'

In the future, whilst we hope to be able to welcome Old Girls back to school, we will also be continuing with using Zoom to allow those based further away to continue to support pupils, either with their career or university decisions.

Alumna
Mpula Lawton
delivering a
Sixth Form
lecture in
September
2020



If you would be interested in speaking to students, delivering a webinar or being part of our profile series, we'd love to hear from you! Please email alumni@stahs.org.uk to get involved or find out more.



Over 70 alumni spoke to pupils this year – either through a talk, webinar or one-to-one chat.

Over 20 careers webinars have been held since September 2020, covering a range of career paths, including the civil service, dentistry, publishing, architecture, law, politics and research.



Over 150 students listened to an alumna giving a webinar or subject talk this academic year.



12 alumni supported mock interviews or spoke individually to Sixth Formers preparing to make university decisions.

10 alumni supported this year's Oxbridge conference, speaking to 180 students from STAHS and other local Sixth Forms.



10 alumni joined our Year 10 careers day, talking about their career journeys.



There are now 22 recorded webinars on the STAHS student dashboard, creating a fantastic resource for pupils who want to find out more about different career paths.

REUNIONS AND EVENTS

Even though we haven't been able to meet up over the past year, that hasn't stopped our events programme, which has taken place over Zoom! Here's a round-up of some of the talks and reunions that have happened during the past 12 months.

CLASS OF 1981 REUNION

On Thursday 25 February 2021, 21 of us who left school in 1981 after A levels or 1979 after O levels (remember them?) got together on Zoom (of course) for a fun-filled evening to reminisce and laugh about our various hilarious memories of the High School. Felicity and Louise, from the STAHS Development and Alumni office, gave us a quick virtual tour of the School and update.

We were helped along by an assortment of photos that various of us had managed to find and the cornucopia of mementoes from Elaine Lavery's attic (including Divinity results from J2 and all our heights in J3). Louise Doddrell filled in various stories with her prodigious memory of people, places and incidents. We spent so long reminiscing that we did not have time to catch up on what we have all been doing over the last few years. Another time...

A great advantage of Zoom was that our audience was not constrained, with friends joining from far and wide. Here's hoping for another reunion IRL in a couple of years' time.

**SJ Radford,
Class of 1981**



Memories from the Class of 1981



Joanne McMahon

CLASS OF 1980 REUNION

I saw a notice on the STAHS Facebook page about a reunion of the 1980 class... my class! I have lived overseas (France then US) for 36 years so had never attended a single reunion. This one was different in that it was going to be virtual due to COVID. I thought 'why not?' and signed up. I was excited to see who might be there. When I popped in, I saw a small animated gathering of only seven, but I was surprised and delighted to see my old friends Judy Ridgwell and Louise Bonnington. I also recognised Jane Beresford almost immediately and Fiona Lack and Susan Leach. I believe Alison Taylor was there too but her face was in low light so I had a harder time recognising her! It was so utterly cool seeing them all again after all these years and swapping stories of our exploits and some old funnies. The time went by quickly and yet there was so much to catch up on and say. 40 years is a long time! I am so grateful to Louise Barnes and Felicity Bond who organised the get together. If it had not been online this year I would probably have never seen these girls again!

Pam Muirheid (Williamson), Class of 1980



COFFEE WITH THE HEAD

As we have been unable to welcome visitors into School as usual, we were keen to give alumni the opportunity to meet with Head Amber Waite virtually instead. The Coffee with the Head series comprised three events held over the Michaelmas and Lent terms where Old Girls were invited to join Amber for conversation over a virtual coffee. The events were a great success with attendees ranging in location from St Albans to Canada and New Zealand, and in age from 25 to 90. It was a great chance for Amber to update on School developments and her vision for the future, and also to hear more about life at – and since – the High School.

TWILIGHT TALKS

We were delighted to launch a new series of evening lectures – 'Twilight Talks' – in January 2021, to showcase some of our outstanding alumni in challenging or thought-provoking careers through an online talk that anyone, regardless of lockdown restrictions or location, could enjoy.

Our first webinar featured Dr Alexandra Battersby (2000), who gave an insightful talk about her role as a consultant paediatrician in the NHS, working through the most unprecedented and challenging period ever faced by healthcare professionals.

In February we were joined by Louise Radnofsky (2000),



who discussed her fascinating career in journalism and current role at the sports desk of the Wall Street Journal, talking about the challenges of working in such a highly competitive, and male-dominated, industry.

Our final webinar was given by Joanne McMahon (1987), an award-winning opera singer, and ended with a wonderful impromptu concert of some of her favourite songs.

We are planning a second series of Twilight Talks for the autumn, so watch this space!

Watch all of the Twilight Talks now: <https://alumni.stahs.org.uk/pages/videolibrary>.

Dr Alexandra Battersby

DIARY DATES

We are hoping to once again start holding in-person events in 2021/22. Here are some of our planned upcoming reunions and events, although we recommend keeping an eye on our web portal, as well as Facebook and LinkedIn, for further updates!

As well as the below, we are hoping to bring back our alumni mums' coffee mornings and continue to hold Zoom reunions, allowing Old Girls from around the world to catch up. Details of these will be published on the alumni portal.

For more information about any of our upcoming events or to book your place please visit <https://alumni.stahs.org.uk>.

REUNIONS

OGA annual reunion – 'open house'

Saturday 11 September 2020, Senior School, Townsend Avenue

We're trying a different format this year and look forward to welcoming you back to school on Saturday 11 September, between 11am and 2.30pm. We'll have more of an 'open house' format, providing you with the opportunity to wander around the School in small groups—seeing some familiar spaces as well as our new Dining Room and Sixth Form Centre. There will be light refreshments available and we look forward to welcoming you back!

London drinks reception

30 November 2021, Lansdowne Club, London

This is a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and network with fellow alumni before Christmas. In the gorgeous Shelburne Room at the Lansdowne Club, located in Mayfair, you'll enjoy drinks and canapés, whilst having the chance to hear from STAHS Head, Amber Waite, and find out more about our fantastic careers network.

OWLS lunch

28 March 2022 (back-up date 4 April 2022), Senior School, Townsend Avenue

We are looking forward to the return of our annual 'Older and Wiser Ladies' (OWLS) reunion lunch for Old Girls aged over 55, and former members of staff. It's a great chance to see the High School and catch up with friends over a delightful lunch. We hope to be able to hold this during term time, but have also prepared a reserve date, should it be prudent to hold the event during the Easter holidays. Confirmation of the date will be published in early 2022.

The big anniversary reunion lunch

Saturday 14 May 2022, Senior School, Townsend Avenue

It's been lovely hosting Zoom reunions over the past year, but we know that everyone is keen to meet up again. To kickstart this, we would like to invite those who celebrate a decade reunion – the Classes of 1962, 1972, 1982, 1992, 2002 and 2012 – to join us for a reunion lunch. We will continue our Zoom reunions as well, for Old Girls who can't get to St Albans or live abroad, and these will be arranged throughout the year.

CAREERS

STAHS symposium – On equal terms: working together to achieve gender equality

Saturday 6 November 2021, Senior School, Townsend Avenue

This half-day conference will feature a range of fascinating and insightful speakers talking about gender equality in business, so that attendees leave with increased knowledge, a sense of purpose and ideas about what they could do to invoke change in their workplaces, careers and professions. This event will conclude with networking drinks and will also be streamed for those unable to join in person.

Twilight Talks

December 2021, January 2022, February 2022 – dates TBC, Via Zoom

After the fantastic success of our first series last year, we are delighted to bring back our series of Twilight Talks for the winter – bringing interesting and informative speakers into the comfort of your home! Details to follow on the alumni portal.

PARTNERSHIPS UPDATE

PARENT POWER

STAHS parents have been extremely generous in supporting the School this year, despite sadly being unable to hold any parent events on site due to restrictions.

The Parents' Association has continued to run the 2HUS (second-hand uniform shop), with special openings at Easter, during the Prep Reception induction day and even experimenting with online ordering. PA Chair, Dixie Stafford, said: 'We are looking forward to our end of term openings of the 2HUS and, especially, to restarting PA socials next school year.'

With the proceeds from the 2HUS, they have kindly supported the purchase of outdoor furniture for the Sixth Form to use in their garden area and on their outdoor terrace, which are already out and being enjoyed! In addition to this, the Prep will purchase a gazebo for the outdoor decking area.

The Prep has also continued to be supported by Buchanan and Danna Ma.

Through their generous donations, the Prep IT suite has now been refurbished.

As well as being newly repainted, the room now features a generous space in the center for physical computing and island computing pods for group work. This allows pupils to work better both independently, as when coding, and in groups, when the central space can be used for robotics programming. Newly named 'The Buchanan and Danna Ma Computing Suite', the space is a huge hit with pupils. Buchanan and Danna Ma have also purchased Ozobots, EV3 logo robotics kits and Robo Wunderkind Robotics kits. The School sent teams to the Lego League competition, where one team came away with the Teamwork Award and the other won the Innovations Challenge.



Prep computing



New furniture in the Sixth Form garden

OXBRIDGE CONFERENCE

Unsurprisingly, outreach activities have proved more challenging over the past year. However, the use of Zoom meant that, despite the restrictions, this year's Oxbridge conference was able to draw on more alumni expertise and reach more pupils than before.

The evening event was open to STAHS pupils and Sixth Formers from other local schools and drew an audience of 180 students, including pupils from Beaumont and St Albans School.

After an introductory talk by Dr Sam Lucy, Director of Admissions for the Cambridge Colleges, ten STAHS alumni kindly gave up their evenings to speak in breakout rooms about their experiences applying to and studying at both Oxford and Cambridge.

STAHS Oxbridge co-ordinator Dr Sonja Stocks, who organised the conference, said: 'It was fantastic to be able to bring pupils and alumni together to find out more about applying to, and studying at, Oxbridge. Huge thanks to the alumni that supported us; being able to hear about your experiences first-hand made a huge difference.'

CLASS GIVING

Our recent survey results showed us that if alumni were to donate to the School, they would be particularly interested in giving a one-off gift to a specific cause, such as bursaries or hardship. Based on this feedback we will be launching class giving next year. Alumni – supported by their year group – will be invited to support key fundraising initiatives, such as bursaries. We're really excited about this and look forward to sharing further details next year!

Swimming in the 1970s



A LOOK BACK...

As it's a (delayed) Olympic year, here's a look back at the different sports at the High School over the decades.

Athletics at the Sports Field



Fencing in the 1970s



Gymnastics and dance showcase, 2017



Tennis in 2018



High jump, c.1912

