



LORD DIGBY'S SCHOOL OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

President:	Mrs Ditmas
Chairman:	Pauline BATSTONE
Hon. Secretary:	Valerie Giles (LONG)
Hon. Minutes Secretary	Susan Vincent (McKNIGHT))
Hon Treasurer:	Wendy Green (GOULD)
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**FROM THE CHAIRMAN:** Pauline Batstone

The pace of life in the Old Girls' Association has quickened somewhat since our last Magazine was issued, thanks to the coming on board of new and energetic colleagues. Thank you to Susan Vincent (**MCKNIGHT**) our Minutes Secretary, Valerie Giles (**LONG**) Membership Secretary and Wendy Green (**GOULD**) Treasurer for all your hard work and the time you have given to reinvigorating the Association and bringing in more Members and funds to enable us to continue to bring old friends together. June Helson (**PIKE**) has continued to be a stalwart of our Committee but is now determined to pass the baton to the next generation. Thanks also to Ruth Berry (**COX**) who has also decided to leave the Committee and to Jean Davey and Chips House (**RANSOM**) who have yet to make their escapes! It will seem strange having an A.G.M. without Betty **CROCKER** who has been at the heart of the O.G.A. for so many years. We also sadly lost Miss **HODGSON** this year and several Old Girls who will be mentioned elsewhere. One person though who does deserve a special thanks is Daphne Mitchell (**HISCOCK**) for her time and skill in preparing the magazine for printing each year, which is so valuable to us.

As far as the future is concerned, we are in a good financial position to continue our main purpose of keeping Old Girls in touch with each other by producing the Magazine every two years and organising the Church Service and Reunion. It is now 25 years since Lord Digby's School closed and the number of Old Girls who want or are able to keep in touch via the Old Girls' Association is depleting. Former students of all ages increasingly use social media to keep in contact and organise their own reunions, but there is still that excitement of receiving the Magazine and looking up old friends.

The Head of our successor the Gryphon School, Steve Hillier, assures me that new pupils are told of the history of the Sherborne Schools so that L.D.S., St. Aldhelms and Foster's are not forgotten. The L.D.S. O.G.A. Shield is awarded annually to the girl making the greatest contribution to school life. Together we are looking at how the L.D.S. O.G.A. and the Gryphon's Former Pupils Association can help each other.

Next year marks the centenary of the founding of the Old Girls' Association, just at the end of the First World War. We hope as many Old Girls as possible, regardless of whether they belong to the Association, will support our Founders Day Service at Sherborne Abbey at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 and the Reunion thereafter. It would be lovely if those of you who also do get together in Form groups could take the opportunity of combining your own event with the Centenary Reunion - or even attending both. I look forward to seeing you there.

**FROM THE SECRETARY: Valerie Giles (LONG)**

I was elected O.G.A. Membership Secretary at the 2016 A.G.M. My first task was to consolidate the various lists of members.

In order to update the records and to ask for your opinion on the future of the O.G.A., I sent out or emailed a letter, including a form to complete, to over 250 members in June 2016. To date (mid-March) I have had 63 replies which is a little disappointing, but it has been great hearing from people I knew at school and remembering many faces as I did the lists.

I am very grateful to members who spread the word so that the current membership list is now 274. There are 22 names for which I have no contact details, and 12 letters were returned unknown although we have located 3 of those members so far!

Please check with all your L.D.S. friends that they have sent us any change of address, particularly if they have not received this year's magazine.

I have received more forms with donations since Christmas, increasing the fantastic figure mentioned by our Treasurer to £1,830! Further donations towards the 2018 Centenary Celebration would be gratefully received!

**FROM THE TREASURER: Wendy Green (GOULD)**

*I was elected as your Treasurer at the A.G.M. in 2016 and give below a brief summary of the financial position to the end of 2016. The opening bank balance at 1 January was £1,453.30 with a closing balance at 31 December of £2,905.19. The main movement on the account is for the annual Reunion which for 2016 was:*

*Church Service cost payments £177.50*

*Cream Tea at The Eastbury Hotel - Receipts £360 - payments £366.*

*A donation of £20 was received at the Reunion.*

*The membership contact during the year brought in a fantastic sum of £1,745 in 'top up' donations/payments for the book "Looking back at Lord Digby's School" with Membership Secretary expenses of £129.61 for postage and stationery.*

*We now have a healthier balance to plan for our Centenary in 2018 thanks for the generous donations received.*

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FROM THE NEWS EDITORS: June Helson and Susan Vincent

Since the publication of the last O.G.A Magazine, we have had to adjust to the death of our Chairman, Ruby Crocker (**ANTELL**) 1933-39. Ruby was a loyal member of the Association and had been a strong Chairman for many years. It obviously meant a great deal to her as she regularly drove from Halstock to Sherborne for her committee meetings, even in her 90th year.

A firm believer in the traditions and ethics of the School, Ruby put great effort into promoting the Old Girls' Association and its continuing opportunities for members to meet regularly and re-live those more carefree school days and share the unfolding of their lives which were greatly influenced by the moral code grounded in our years at L.D.S. We send our condolences to Ruby's friends and family.

Please send us any old editions of Magazines you have which you no longer need as we will donate a set to the Sherborne Museum.

Katherine Barker (**TRUMP**) 1958-63, Museum President, has written the following:

The History of Lord Digby's School

Next year being the Centenary of the founding of Lord Digby's School Old Girls' Association, there is a talk on the history of Lord Digby's School arranged by the Sherborne Museum

Old Girls are warmly invited to the forthcoming talk by Barbara Elsmore on the L.D.S. story. Her talk will be one of this coming season's Sherborne Museum Winter Series and is on the afternoon of Thursday, 7th December, 2017.

This will be held in the Raleigh Hall in Digby Road, doors open at 2 o'clock and the talk will begin at 2.30 p.m.

It was in January of last year, 2016, that Barbara gave an excellent talk on the history of Foster's School, where both her father and grandfather were pupils, and was able to make full use of the archive safely stored in the Museum. Do join us for what promises to be a most interesting afternoon, a unique opportunity to share your memories with our speaker, our audience – and with one another over tea and cake afterwards. Above all spread the word – the Talk is open to anyone interested.

News of Sherborne House:

Redcliffe Homes have not yet announced their plans for the building. The roof has been made secure in the last two years. The McCready Screen which has been restored by a special appeal to the Friends of Sherborne House and mentioned in the last issue of the Magazine was on show at the Sherborne Literary Society Festival last October 2016. Lucinda Hawksley, an award winning Authoress, is the great-great-great-granddaughter of Charles Dickens and came to speak about him and his friendship with William Charles Macready amongst other friends, in the Coach House next to Sherborne House where MacCready and Dickens often sat together. It is rumoured that the building may be converted into luxury apartments. We are writing to Redcliffe Homes to see if they wish to be involved in our Centenary celebrations.



“Looking Back at Lord Digby’s School”. This will be published in 2018 –our Centenary year-and we already have orders for this. It is not too late to add your own memories to be incorporated into the book. It will be on display at the 2017 Reunion.

We will be adding to it with the new memoirs received for this Newsletter. Ideally email susanvincent11@yahoo.co.uk. Susan’s address is also at the end of this Magazine.

Future of Paddock Gardens:

Many of you will be aware that at a recently held meeting (March 2017) of over 300 residents, the majority voted for the Council to start talks with the



Sherborne Community Arts Centre Trust over “the possible future use, management and the maintenance” of Paddock Garden on Newland. Only six people voted against this. The Trust wishes to build an Arts Centre incorporating a restaurant – to be known as Paddock Gallery – on land south of the garden, and wishes to make some alterations on

the right hand side of the garden to allow public access to the building and to widen the pathway to accommodate large lorries delivering large paintings

etc. for exhibitions twice a year. The Trust has a grant of £4 million to get the building work underway from an anonymous donor in a nearby village.

The Council have since met and agreed to the following resolution:

“Sherborne Town Council confirms that is it not in a position to agree to the proposals received to date from SCACT. But Sherborne Town Council does agree in principle to enter into serious and detailed discussions with SCACT about the possible future use, management and maintenance of Paddock Garden, and the garden’s possible integration into the SCACT site to assist in delivering the Paddock Gallery project.” A formal planning application will need to be submitted as well as formal architectural designs. Another consideration is the impact on car parking in Sherborne if the gallery attracts several hundred people a day.

At the public meeting, it was pointed out that on any one day there seemed over 200 spare car parking spaces. In addition, statistics showed that the current use of Paddock Garden is not extensive. On the day of the public meeting, with the sun out at lunch time, it was stated that there were only six people in the gardens and two were from Yeovil. We will get the views of our members at the A.G.M. Press cuttings on the proposed plans will be available. If you know of anyone who has donated a plant in memory of a loved one from the school please let us know.

Susan Vincent attended and was amazed at the number of people who were turned away due to lack of space in the Digby Hall, Hound Street. An old boy of Sherborne Council School, Adrian Dodge, was there and spoke about the concern many had regarding the lack of car parking space in Sherborne despite a claim that there was plenty. He was not convinced that the Art Gallery would bring money into the other shops in the town if people had limited time to park their cars, if at all. Overall he supported the idea. It would be useful to know at the A.G.M. if any other Old Girls were present. If there are any concerns over this possible change to the Paddock Garden we can draft a Resolution at the A.G.M. which if voted on can be sent to the Sherborne Town Council.

L.D.S. O.G.A. Centenary

As Minutes Secretary, Susan took possession of all the old Minute Books from 1919 and noticed that in 1968 the following comment appeared in the Minutes of the 1968 Reunion: *“Apologies were received from many members, including Miss Thomson who sent The Association her congratulations on its 50th Anniversary.”*

The Committee in 1968 included June Helson who represented years 1940-47 and Ann Wright for years 1956-63. June is still very active today and Ann has sent a contribution to this year’s magazine. We hope both will be at the Centenary Celebrations next year.

The earliest Minutes Book we have is dated from 5th November, 1919. In the first meeting of this year the members decided to elect a new Committee and Secretary and reorganise the Association.

The following were elected:

President: Miss Billinger, Hon Secretary and Treasurer: Molly Berry. The Committee were: Miss Sparke, Miss Hillier, Kate Tucker, Winnie Wood, Hilda Lowman and Ethel Young.

The following rules were passed:

“The Annual Subscription to be 3 shillings by the 1st of September every year. It would only be accepted after October 1st if an additional fine of 6 pence was paid.”

Another rule of interest was that each member should write to the Secretary at least once a year so that there may be a regular record of “Old Girls”.

It was also suggested that Old Girls should send contributions to the School Magazine and Miss Billinger asked each member to contribute to the School’s charitable work in connection with Dr. Barnardos homes.

Scratch Dials an edited story from Lord Digby’s School Magazine December 1939

“Do you know what Scratch Dials are? We anticipate the answer. Nor did we until introduced to them by Mr Burt.

Before the 14th century, there were few clocks used on churches, but on many of them there were scratch dials, which told the people when it was

time for their services. A circle was scratched on the wall. In the centre was a hole, into which a style was fixed, so that the shadow cast by the sun would fall to the edge of the



circle. Then, lines were scratched from the centre to the edge in the lower half of the circle at certain intervals. When the shadow fell on the horizontal

lines (i.e. the diameter) it indicated 6 a.m. or 6 p.m., and when it fell on the perpendicular one, it was noon.

There were two others showing at 9 a.m. and 3.p.m. Generally, the 9 a.m line was the widest and deepest, for this was the time for Mass, their most important service.

These dials are to be found generally near or in the porch in a prominent position and at eye level.

In Dorset, only eight scratch dials have been notified, but there must be many more than that. Locally these can be found at Nether Compton, Longburton, Hazelbury Bryan, and Rimpton. In addition, there are some in Somerset. It would be interesting to know how many there are in Dorset.



News of Staff & Old Girls

Staff News

Mrs DITMAS has been struggling to maintain her independence with the help of carers several times a day but eventually she had to go into a care home. Her address is: Milkwood House Care Home, Hill Brow, Liss GU33 7PB.

In her last letter, last June, Mrs **DITMAS** wrote *"I was not coping alone at home, and with both my children overseas I had no option but to make the change. The home is wonderful. I am cared for with so much kindness but I am not well physically but at well over 92 one must expect something to be imperfect."* Her letter concludes *"so many happy memories of my time at L.D.S."* We send special love to her.

Mrs HILL is still being cared for at Riverside Nursing Home in Sherborne. We send best wishes to her.

Mrs RAWLINSON was at a concert at the Abbey recently. It was good to see her looking so well and enthusiastic about life in general.

Mrs Tomlinson (WONFOR) is always busy looking after people and especially in her work on the Committee for the Friends of Yeatman Hospital.

Mrs Coe does not let anything stop her getting on with life. She still exhibits her work at shows - Bath and West, Bruton and Sherborne. Despite several operations, she is trying to secure citizenship of Cyprus and therefore acquiring a passport so she can continue to visit the island despite Brexit.

Miss THOMAS always writes letters which leave one breathless. "*Holidays have been refreshing - 10 days in Madeira, lots of walking there and also followed by more on Dartmoor..... then two weeks' travel in France*" hilarythomas@uwclub.net

Mrs Livesey (HICKLING) had a poor year in 2015/16 with a burglary, car trouble and yet with her usual fortitude seems to have "bounced back".

If Old Girls have news of any other member of staff please let us know. One often wonders what happened to Miss Rose, the marvellous history teacher of the late 50's and early 60's for instance. We hope other former staff members will write to us in our Centenary year.



Deaths

We are sad to record the following deaths, and send special love to their families and friends:

Patricia Sharp (MEADER)	19 October, 2014
Penny Van Eupen (RICHARDS)	2014
Jean Parker (COOMBS)	March 2015
Eileen WELCHER	April 2015
Betty Leggett (BALLAM)	May 2015
Ruby Crocker (ANTELL)	July 2015
Jean NORRIS	September 2015
Sheila Bungay (LANGRIDGE)	October 2015
Caroline Osborne (TUCKER)	December 2015
Rosalind Lester (HOYLE)	January 2016
Sybil (SIVERS)	April 2016
Peggy Ives (COX)	June 2016
Leslie N. HODGSON	June 2016
Betty CROCKER	June 2016
Jill Cox (PARTRIDGE)	September 2016
June TOPHAM	2016

In retirement June **TOPHAM** and her husband moved to Poole where they spent a lot of time sailing. They also spent time fighting planning applications for “new mansions” on the side of the Harbour. June was still doing Yoga at 92, the year of her death. Her daughter Sheila Whelan (**TOPHAM**) writes that her mother kept in touch with many ex pupils and teaching staff.

Sheila has returned to Devon having lived in Cheshire for thirty years. June had taught P.E part time in the 1970's.

Miss Leslie **HODGSON** who died on 11th June, 2016 had given most of her teaching life to Lord Digby's School and inspired many generations of pupils to love numbers.

When Miss **DEW** retired in 1963, Miss **HODGSON** became Deputy Head Mistress and was understanding and supportive to all members of staff.

When Mrs. **DITMAS** arrived in 1967, they formed such a firm friendship that it lasted for the rest of their lives. Retiring from L.D.S. in 1979 they ran together Catherington House, a retreat home in the Portsmouth Diocese which a few of Old Girls enjoyed on several occasions - (Jean **DAVY**, Jean Chapman (**GRAY**) and June Helson (**PIKE**). Eventually the two of them retired from that work as well and bought homes near one another in Petersfield. By Christmas 2015, Miss **HODGSON** and her sister had moved to a care home in Essex to be nearer to her family. Unfortunately, by this stage her health was poor and she was becoming increasingly confused. A broken leg in early 2016, which led to septicaemia, meant large doses of antibiotics which increased her tiredness and at the end she died peacefully in her sleep.

We send condolences to the family, and many Old Girls and Foster's Boys sent emails of memories of a much-appreciated and dedicated teacher.

The Committee all attended the funeral of Betty **CROCKER** 1938-43 together with over fifty members of her family and friends. Here is a summary of the tribute made by her brother-in-law and part of the poem composed when Betty left the Sherborne Post Office in the 1980's.

“Betty was the eldest of three daughters and at 11 passed to attend L.D.S. where she was a keen tennis player. Leaving school at 16, Betty joined the Post Office where she trained at first in Taunton as a telephonist and then became a clerical officer serving the public. Until she left to care for her younger sister, Betty was promoted to Post Mistress in Fordingbridge, Hampshire. Since her sister's death, Betty lived on her own in a lovely bungalow at the bottom of Greenhill where she was very proud of her new kitchen as well as her cosy lounge. Until her retirement from work Betty was deputy Post Mistress of the Post Office in Sherborne .

Sherborne life in retirement for Betty was a sporting one in that she ran a swimming class at Sherborne Boys School until 2015 as well as following

Rugby at Sherborne School, never missing a home game. Although Betty refused to buy a computer she used the Public Library to send her emails to friends around the world as she travelled extensively in her life to Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, America, France, Jersey and Switzerland.

Betty was Secretary of the Old Girls of L.D.S. for fifty years and latterly Treasurer, only to retire in April 2016. Betty had a month in the Yeatman where she received great kindness and was able to pass messages for the Committee prior to the AGM 2016 until a week before her death. In the last week of her life Betty was in Riverside Nursing Home, Sherborne. At the 2016 Reunion twenty pounds was raised for cards and flowers for Betty which she received with delight each week.” The remainder of the money - £10 – was donated to Riverside Nursing Home.

Below is an extract of the poem from work colleagues on Betty’s retirement at Sherborne Post Office:

“Messenger boys and Telegrams
Betty can still recall.
The Postmasters that came and went,
Our Betty outstayed them all.

She still preferred her wooden stool
And disliked the new coin hopper.
She loves plastic bags and crosswords
No power on earth can stop her”



News of Old Girls

As a result of Valerie’s letter and email there has been a good response from everyone covering a number of years. Thank you for this.

Margaret Moore (**ABBOTT**) 1957-64 has emailed the following news and would love to hear from former classmates:

My husband and I have lived in the small village of Dockenfield, south of Farnham in Surrey for the past ten years after spending twenty-five happy years in nearby Rowledge. Since my husband retired in 2000 we have filled our days with family, gardening, taking part in local activities and travelling the world. Geography was always my favourite subject at school under the teaching of Misses **MOORE**, **LIGHTBODY** and **WEBB**. Since 1994 when our youngest child no longer wished to holiday with us we

have travelled the world, often with Ramblers Holiday, seeing so many countries on foot and the way the locals live. Among the most memorable was Peru sailing on a reed boat on Lake Titicaca, travelling the length of New Zealand, with a helicopter ride landing on the Franz Joseph glacier, again by helicopter to view the amazing Victoria Falls, the Great Wall of China and many more. Our three children and eight grandchildren live far and wide. Our eldest daughter and family live five miles away at Churt, our second daughter has lived in S. California for twenty years with her husband and four children and ten years ago our son emigrated to W. Australia where he is now married with two children aged four and two. Each time we go to Australia and California we include a touring holiday to see more of these amazing areas of the world. We must admit to favouring Australia, we have seen so much of this wonderful country and on our next visit to family, plan to travel north of Perth to Kimberley and Darwin, the only problem is we have to go in our Summer as conditions there in our Winter are too wet and hot. This summer we have plans for our American and Australian families to join us in the UK, and we have booked cottages at Piddletrenhide (thought the name would amuse them!) for a week as I would like to show them the Jurassic Coast and other areas of my home county including a visit to Sherborne. Our visits to Sherborne are very infrequent now since my parents died in 2003 and 2006 and the family home has been sold and redeveloped as Abbots Court, Priestlands Lane. I have lost touch with most of my school friends so if you read this I would very much like to hear from you. tonygmoo@talktalk.net

Yvonne ALLEN 1952-59 left L.D.S to study Town Planning at Manchester University and has very happy memories of her time at L.D.S. Unfortunately memory problems make reflection of her youth harder now but we should remember that during the period 1966-2000 Yvonne was involved in a number of major infrastructure projects around Gatwick Airport. We thank her partner Brian Johnson for keeping in touch. b_johnson@btinternet.com

Julie (BARTLE) is using her talents in I.T. at the International College in Sherborne and also plays the cornet in the Sherborne Town Band. Julie also played for the Queen on her recent visit to Poundbury. Julie is now living in Sherborne on a new development on the northern edge of the town.

Pauline BATSTONE 1959-68 emails the following: *“Since the last magazine we have not had a reunion of our cohort, although some of us are able to keep in touch via emails and Facebook and just bumping into each other. A couple of years ago I was delighted to catch up with Pearl Ball (SHERRY) at a funeral of an old family friend and we have continued in contact - she has not changed and still giggles just as much. I also hear occasionally from Ros Soper (CLAYTON) who has just had a holiday in Mauritius, Janice Hutchins (ROLLS) and Steph Phillips (CHRISTOPHER) and through them hear of others*

from our year. Ann **SAINSBURY** and I also plan lunch now she has returned from what appeared to be a great trip in exotic places. I am afraid I did not manage to send Christmas cards last year and fear that some friends may think I have forgotten them or passed on, which is not the case....

Since the last magazine, I have done some globetrotting to see if there is life outside of Dorset. I made trips to Venice, Russia and Spain in 2015. A year ago I did a round-the-world trip to Australia with the companionship of a longstanding friend, going out via Los Angeles (getting there was the flight from hell) and coming back via Dubai. I travelled on my own in Australia, visiting distant relatives descended from my great grandparents in New South Wales and then over to closer relatives in Fremantle, stopping off to revisit Canberra where I worked for a short time as a student in 1971. I also did a cruise around the Norwegian fjords last summer and visited Scotland just before Christmas. Friends and I are now planning trips to Portugal this Autumn, India next January and New Zealand in the Autumn of 2018. At some time I want to fit in a trip to distant relatives in Canada. I have decided to take every opportunity to see something of the world whilst I am still fit enough to do so. Unfortunately, my stupid addiction to being a local Councillor does take up a lot of the time which is left when not gadding off, and does not give much opportunity to follow up direct contact with old school friends. At the time of writing this update I am about to stand again for the Dorset County Council so busy getting leaflets out and knocking on doors. I was first elected to the County in 1993, quit in 1999 for work and family reasons and then re-elected four years ago. I am also a District and a Town Councillor - a "one stop shop" to quote our local MP. Overall I have served 22 years as a local Councillor. It is very much a full-time occupation but I enjoy it, otherwise I would not do it. The internet means that wherever you are you can keep up with what is happening at home so that residents in my Ward normally don't realise I am replying to their emails from the other side of the world." p.batstone@btinternet.com

Averil **BATTEN** 1945-51 attended Betty Crocker's funeral and hopes to get to this year's reunion. The problem is that Averil is on a course of chemotherapy so will have to see how things are nearer the time. Averil has sent us two funny stories for this edition of the magazine. The first is one relating to Miss Whitworth. "During the course of Miss Whitworth giving our marked books back to us, she was so cross with one member of the class that she threw the book at her and it missed and sailed through the open back window. A lot of subdued laughter and the girl concerned had to go out and find her book."

The second story from Averil is as follows: "Our form was just off the main hall and one term we had a new teacher who was the daughter of a Vicar – Miss Bucket. Can anyone verify this name? Actually we were all a bit naughty with her. On one occasion a member of class was being cheeky so

Miss Bucket led her to the cupboard at the back of the room and shut the door behind her. When she went to let her out of the cupboard she wasn't there. The girl had gone through the cupboard and out the other side into the Hall and gone home. That caused quite a laugh in the class."

Pam Kaile (**BISS**) 1945-51 has happy memories of the school and has given 35 years of her life to Girl Guiding. Pam emails as follows:

"I was 10 years 2 months old in 1945 when I left Sherborne Abbey Primary School to join L.D.S. At that time, my dad had not been demobbed from the R.A.F.A. A children's service celebrating peace was arranged in Sherborne Abbey and I was chosen to read one of the four lessons, with three others, one each from Foster's, King's School, and the Girls' School. At the rehearsal, Miss Thomson and Miss Whitworth stood at the back of the Abbey and Miss Thomson said "*Now Pamela, I shall stand here and I expect to hear every word you say. Remember to keep your voice and your head up*". Obviously, there was no microphone then in the Abbey, but I managed somehow.

With the encouragement of our dedicated teachers I performed in several school plays - the French Maman in an all-speaking French play; "Queen Victoria" with Jean Gray (**TUCKER**) as Prince Albert; and the Virgin Mary in Houseman's "Bethlehem". Sue Hayter (**BAKER**) and I also led a "crocodile" of Dancers onto the Playing Field one Founder's Day. I joined the Amateur Players of Sherborne when I left school and went to work for Lloyds Bank, where I met David - it'll soon be our 58th Wedding Anniversary! We had three children in five years and several moves for Lloyds Bank, and I joined the Stalbridge Players, the Langport Players and the Wareham Players along the way.

When we were living in Somerset, Bev, our eldest daughter, then aged seven, came home from Brownies and said "*Mummy, Brown Owl wonders if you would like to come and help us do some craft and cake-making*". My reply was "*Yes, but I'll have to bring Lyn (5) and John (3) with me as Daddy is at work*" - and that was the beginning of my 35-year involvement in Girl Guiding, 28 years of which were in Wiltshire South, where I became Divisional Commissioner and later on County Chairman of the Trefoil Guild. I had many happy times on Pack Holidays, Camping, taking Guides to Adelboden in Switzerland, Brownies to Euro Disney Paris, Legoland in Denmark and, of course, making many more friendships along the way.

I have now lived happily for 18 years back in Dorset, with our family around us."
davepamkaile@talktalk.net

June has received a letter from Barbara Hiscott (**BLOOMFIELD**). Barbara says:

"Apologies for the writing before I start. I should have done this before when I got notification from L.D.S. I am sorry I cannot make it to Sherborne again, Maurice doesn't drive any distance now, not even to Milton Keynes (50 miles) where our daughter lives. She and her husband go to Cornwall and when they go usually they stop in Sherborne for lunch, visit the Pageant Gardens and the Abbey. So I do keep some connection. I am still in touch with Julie Tuffin of Barton Gardens. We were both married in 1955 so

celebrated our Diamond Anniversaries two years ago. That year was special for us as our first granddaughter was 30, Maurice was 80 and then our 60th. Best of all was that our son, daughter-in-law and two granddaughters came over from the U.S.A. and we had not seen them for six and a half years and Samantha was 5, so we had the great pleasure of meeting her for the first time.

The first granddaughter is getting married next year but I don't think Mark will be able to come – he is so busy with work. He travels the world as a tyre designer with Michelin, getting contracts from Thailand, China, Korea, Hawaii and with headquarters in France, he travels there quite often. He speaks fluent French so is in great demand.

*We are still in the same bungalow that we bought in 1971, (14 Helens Close, Upwood, Romsey, Huntingdon PE26 2QN). We have a more aged population around us now, very nice helpful neighbours. There were 36 children in the road when we came and now not one! Maurice stays pretty fit apart from having to strap his knees up when he plays table tennis. He has to do most household jobs now as I have very debilitating vertigo and also eye problems. I can still read thank goodness which keeps me sane. I keep in touch with Brenda **STAINER**, Shirley **HAIGH**, Topsy **CHESTER** and Gillian **TRUMP**. I'm afraid we are not computer users so find it frustrating when emails are required.*

I do hope you have some wonderful celebrations and L.D.S. will never be forgotten. With Maurice being an old Fosterian, we have many a conversation about the old days and what attending a good grammar school meant!

A lot of people said we were too young to marry, but here we are still!"

Melian Mansfield (**BORDES**) 1953-1960 was the subject of a major article in the Sunday Telegraph in February 2017. Melian is happy for us to publish an excerpt from the story and hopes to be at the 2017 Reunion. The article is quoted below:

"I'll never get over Anna's death, but it's crucial that life goes on".

"After losing her daughter to suicide, Melian Mansfield tells about working her way through grief with her ex-husband.

On May 1, 2015, the unthinkable happened: Melian's bright, beautiful, high-flying, second-eldest child, Anna – the 44-year-old mother of two boys aged six and three – took her own life and was found in the bathroom of their London home by her husband, Carlo. Anna, who was facing problems at work, had a history of depression. So did Melian's own father, Lt-Comdr. Breon Bordes, following war service. One of Anna's relatives was also diagnosed with schizophrenia while at university."

Melian's work as an educational campaigner has been something of a solace over the past 18 months. 'It keeps me focused; it has helped enormously,' she admits.

This is the first time that Melian has spoken publicly about the loss of her daughter which, she explains, is still raw. It's very difficult to say what I feel because it's so devastating. What could we have done? Although Anna did confide in me a lot, I could never have foreseen what she would do. She had problems at work, but she had such good friends,

an amazing group who talk so animatedly about her still. She was so much loved by everybody.”

Melian raised her children alone, after her marriage with Michael broke up in 1984, when their youngest, Kieran, was 4; the oldest, Jonathan, was 17, Anna, 14, Louise, 12 and Leo, 10. Michael went on to marry film-maker Yvette Vanson (although he is now with a new love, 53-year-old Yvette Greenway, and is believed to be getting divorced from his second wife).

‘After university, Anna started out as a children’s play-leader,’ recalls Melian. ‘She then trained as an aerobics teacher. She was very sporty, brilliant at gymnastics and a good swimmer, ice-skater, footballer, horse-rider and dancer. She played four instruments. And then she went on to work in the media. She was such an achiever.’

Yet, according to her mother, Anna had suffered from depression “on and off” since her teens. Becoming a mother then brought tragedy, when her first child was stillborn. Melian is still searching for clues as to whether Anna’s bouts of depression were made worse by tough experiences or hormonal issues. It is clear that the biggest frustration is her abject helplessness in the face of it all. It is a sadness that ripples out to the rest of the family, with one of Anna’s relatives having been diagnosed as schizophrenic, something neither Michael nor Melian have ever talked about publicly. ‘Anna’s death has been very tough for everyone,’ she says.”

In August 2015, three months after Anna died, Michael Mansfield gave an interview to this newspaper about the loss of their daughter and the Silence of Suicide (SOS) forum he had set up to raise awareness of the subject. ‘It was a brave thing to do in a way,’ says Melian now. ‘I think it’s important for him to do it, it is how he operates, he’s a big communicator and much more open about things whereas I couldn’t possibly have done that because I’m a much more private person.’

Melian drew support from a group called The Compassionate Friends, for parents who have lost children through illness, accident or unforeseen events. ‘NHS grief counsellors, she says, provided crucial help to the whole family. That service was completely free; they were amazing to us.’”

Helpline for The Compassionate Friends, visit: tcf.org.uk; call: 0345 123 2304 or email: helpline@tcf.org.uk.

Pamela Aston (**BROOKS**) 1957-64 gives us an update on her life to date having admitted she always enjoys the Magazine and is interested in everyone’s news.

“Our three children are now all in their 40s. Both the boys are married and live in the UK. Our daughter married a “Kiwi” and lives in New Zealand. We have two grandchildren there and two in the UK. The two grandchildren in this country live fairly near us and I look after them two days a week. In my mind I am still capable of running around after a four year old and a two year old, but my body tells me otherwise!

Brian and I retired early from our dental practice and sailed our boat to Greece – in easy stages, coming home for the winters. The boat was moored in Greece from 2005 until 2013 when we sailed her back to the south of France, this time only taking three weeks to do the trip. The following season we took the mast down and brought her back through the French inland waterways. In 2015 we brought her back to the Solent and, with much sadness, sold her.

We replaced the boat with a motorhome. Our two dogs much prefer this to sailing! We find travelling in Europe is a lot more “motorhome friendly” than UK, with stops in or near the centre of villages and towns. In this country, one is generally expected to stay on a caravan site.

*We try and see the NZ contingent every year – we’ve just come back from a trip over there and our daughter and the children are coming for a brief visit at the end of September. Kirsty likes to come back because she has kept in close contact with many of her school and University friends and enjoys being able to see them while she’s here. It makes me feel rather guilty because I have not been so good about keeping in touch with school friends. I hear from Pam Hopkins (**JONES**), Jane Craven (**RABBETTS**) and Moira **MORKING**, but haven’t seen any of them for ages. Pam has recently moved back to Somerset/Dorset so that might make it easier to catch up, but now that my parents are both dead I don’t come down to Milborne Port. However, I hope I might make the Reunion, and if not this year, definitely next year!*

It is so nice having the school site on-line – a good way to contact people and pass on news.” pamela.aston@dsl.pipex.com

Valerie Waterfall (**COFFIN**) has a very full life supporting her husband in his work for the Sherborne Douzelage. Val and Kevin also do great project work for the Landmark Trust including the restoration of Belmont House at Lyme Regis - the former home of John Fowles. In addition Val tells us of their work on Bird Surveys for the British Trust for Ornithology and visiting Finland “made contact with a local birder who showed us around his local area.....we also had a lovely visit to our twinned town of Asikkala and met friends and experienced local sites and customs but not Saunas!!” All their children are doing well and special mention this year of Paul who has gained his Doctorate in Engineering from Bristol University despite four children, a wife and a full time job to deal with. val.waterfall@btinternet.com

Thelma Horne (**COOMBS**) 1945-53 enjoyed the Reunion in 2016 and we were glad to see her too. Travelling from Kent she found the afternoon programme very convenient so we will hope she will manage the journey again this year.

Ruth Berry (**COX**) had heard from Doreen (**DOEL**) who lives in Yeovil that Sheila **BAKER** was still managing to live in her own home with the help of carers.

Teresa Hyde (**CURTIS**), Joanna Derrick (**HAMBLIN**) and Caroline Crabb (**HELSON**) 1967-74 found themselves together at a Christmas Party in 2016, where they reminisced about school days and making Dorset Wheel Buttons!

Joy Royce (**DAVIS**) 1963-69 keeps in touch at birthdays and Christmas. Her husband is still having treatment but they get about as much as possible. Joy says *“one has to grab life in both hands and keep light our faith”*. This she certainly seems to be doing.

Anne Smith (**DOBLE**) 1945-51 has amazing memories of her time at L.D.S which we include here but will also be added to the Book of Memories of Lord Digby's School which will now be published in our centenary year. Anne emails: *“After two terms at Ilminster Grammar School for Girls I moved to Sherborne where my father bought Castleton Stores in Long Street. Down the road lived Miss Dew, my inspiration, as she taught me to love France, and later I took one of the first Southampton University degrees in French. On the other side of the road lived Jean **NORRIS**, and on the corner with Newlands was Jill **KING**, both very senior girls, much looked up to from a distance. We never walked to school together! My brother Peter was at Foster's School, and one day he walked part way to school with me, carrying my hockey stick. Later that day I was summoned to Miss Thomson's study as it had been reported that one of her girls was seen walking along Newlands with a boy! How times have changed.”*

Anne continues: *“My parents moved back to their beloved Devon just before my final year at L.D.S.. I spent that year living in the flat over Coombs Restaurant in Cheap Street with “Uncle” and “Auntie” Coombs – parents of my dear friend Jean Parker (**COOMBS**). Jean died two years ago. This was my year as Head Girl, with the onerous job of ringing the end-of-lessons school bell at the foot of the main staircase. This brings me on to those wonderful murals. I have to thank the School for a lifelong love of art and music stimulated there, for it was in those years that I was able to observe the British Museum team lifting off the Victorian brown varnish to reveal nymphs, putti and other delights hidden for so long.*

Some years ago, a new neighbour moved into a house around the corner whose garden backs on to ours. She had a son a bit younger than ours, so I invited them to tea to make them feel welcome. She told me she had just returned from abroad. Then sometime later she came to say goodbye as she was leaving Oxford to be nearer her mother in Bournemouth, and she told me she had accepted the Headship of a small Girls Grammar School in Dorset. Yes, you can guess the rest. Her name was Shelagh Hill. So out came my old school photos and magazines and we chatted more in that couple of hours than ever before. In the intervening years, David and I have

become Founder Members of The Friends of Sherborne House and attended some events in Sherborne. Miss Thomson came to a Gaudy at her old college, St Hugh's and had lunch with us. Miss Dew stayed for a weekend when our two children were young, so about 50 years ago! We called on Faith Dew at the time of her 99th birthday and promised we'd come again for her hundredth, but sadly that was not to be."

davidandanne.smith@outlook.com

Diana Walton (**EASTHOPE**) 1955-61 writes that she still lives in North London and has five grandchildren. Diana has just retired from her part time job as an Educational Psychologist in Hackney but still has her proper job of minding two of her grandchildren twice a week. Diana is in touch with the following: Melian (**BORDES**) 1953-60, Barbara (**GRANT**), Janet (**SAMPSON**), Judy (**BROWN**) and Jean (**TAYLOR**) amongst others.

Some of Diana's memories of L.D.S are quoted below:

I arrived at L.D.S. on a cold January morning in 1955, fresh from a cotton town in the industrial north – What a culture shock!

One of my earliest memories is a needlework lesson with Miss **PALMER**. Judy **BROWN**, Rosemary **ASTON** and I were chatting (or so Miss Palmer claimed), so she moved Judy to sit on her own. When the chatting continued, she moved me to sit with Judy, which proved (of course!) that Rosemary was the saint and Judy and I the villains. At the end of year needlework exam, Judy got 10%, I got 20% and Rosemary got 90%, indisputable confirmation that Miss Palmer's estimation of the three of us was accurate! Rosemary then moved to Dorchester and I was told I was doing Latin - presumably because I was thought to be no good at needlework.

Years later, walking up to the dreaded lunch canteen in our orderly crocodile, Miss Palmer collared me and my partner (Janet **SAMPSON** I think) and said accusingly, "You two were walking in a three!" – Her delightful Irish logic had remained impeccable over the years!

Another teacher with a choice turn of phrase was Miss **HODGSON**, who frequently bemoaned that we all lacked 'spunk'!! She used to claim that she could sit on the floor with her back to us and we would all remain as quiet as church mice. Certainly, we were remarkably a compliant lot and debate was definitely not encouraged – one PE report said, "*Diana argues for the sake of arguing*", then the following term, "*Diana has still not outgrown her tendency to argue for argument's sake*" and so it went on....

My abiding vision of Miss **DEW** is pushing her bicycle, with its wicker basket full of exercise books attached to the front, along Newland and up the school drive. Did she ever ride it? Or was it her way of transporting books? She was a caring soul, who saw us all as her extended family. She once put her arm round me, gave me a hug and reassured me, quite unprovoked, that I was just as pretty as my sister. (I wonder if a teacher would dare to do that these days?)

My sister, Jennifer, 3 years ahead of me, was very glamorous and was incensed when she wasn't made a prefect. It was hardly surprising, as she wore scarlet nail varnish, squashed her soaked school hat in her pocket until it was misshapen and purple and belted her (very short) school mac painfully tight. Tommy was not amused, though, in my experience, Tommy had little patience for any lack of conformity! I remember Jill (**VEITCH**) telling her that she was leaving at the end of LVI and Miss Thomson exploding, "Get out of my sight. Absolute nonsense!" - No discussion at all.

Talking of Miss Thomson, do you remember how she would stride, tightly corseted and brassiered (is that a proper word?!) into the classroom, throwing open the windows, regardless of the weather, and straightening the pictures? I particularly dreaded this after we had been swimming in the open-air pool at the Boys' school. We had to swim after 1st May, even if it was snowing and the water was so cold it took your breath away. Our fingers were white and numb when we got back to school but the windows had to be thrown open and the heating off!

I left L.D.S. in 1961 to read Psychology ("one half nonsense, the other half common sense" was Tommy's verdict!) at Manchester. During my last term, our Head Girl, Janet **COLLINGS**, was killed by a motor bike when she ran in front of a bus, clutching onto her school hat, in the pouring rain on her way home from school. It was a shock for all of us and a huge tragedy for her parents. She was an only child.

Enough of my ramblings, though it would be interesting to hear other peoples' in future editions."

Geraldine Huber (**DRAYTON**) 1956-61 has had a difficult year:

"The past two and a half years have seen much sadness and lots of happiness with my family. My husband, Frank, was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease and passed away suddenly from a heart attack. We were so thankful that he didn't have to suffer the indecencies of the latter stages of MND, which I know he would have found it very difficult to cope with. A dreadful debilitating illness which is quite arbitrary. My mother has also passed away at the age of 94! She was still very active to the end and was able to live on her own in the Newland Flats, Sherborne with the help of the wardens. I miss trips down to Sherborne where life always seems so relaxed!

On a much happier note my eldest grandson Alex was married to Madelyn in Charlotte, North Carolina in April last year. A family gathering from the UK, Spain and New Zealand stayed in a large house by Lake Norman. Alex had been studying at the University in Jackson Mississippi. He met Madelyn who was also at University and as they say the rest is history! They were married at Carrigan Farms which is a working fruit farm. The wedding venue has been built in a

quarry with the most beautiful blue water, real sand, waterfalls and a long boardwalk leading down from the top of the quarry. The ceremony began with Madelyn and her father walking down the boardwalk to the sound of a vocalist singing " Can you feel the love tonight". Lots of fun afterwards with a BBQ and disco. Morning came far too soon!!

The next day we all met for lunch at the lake. We said our goodbyes and the UK party then left to spend a week in Charleston South Carolina. We had a lovely colonial style house for the eleven of us, Gone with The Wind sprung to mind!! Charleston is a lovely city so pretty, with lots of narrow cobbled streets and an abundance of wisteria. We visited many places including Boone Hall Plantation which has remained an active agricultural farm - from cotton in the 1800's to strawberries, pumpkins and timber today. We were able to see some of the original slave cabins which were built around 1800 - an important reminder of those who lived and worked on the plantations. We visited several museums including The Old Slave Mart Museum and The Calhoun Mansion house.

So, at the end of our two weeks we all headed back to Charlotte for our flight home with lots of lovely memories. My home still being Churchdown in Gloucestershire." geraldine.hubber@virginmedia.com

Lillian Jaynes (**FISHER**) has sent the following message in a fascinating email:

"A couple of years ago, I found an old exercise book which turned out to be the diary I had written on return from a Geography/Biology Field trip to Dartmoor with the Fifth Form in 1962. On reading it, I was struck by the innocence of the age - no IPads, no mobiles, no cyber bullying. I apologize to my old class mates for any embarrassment caused but in my defence, it DID all happen nearly 55 years ago!

The following are extracts from that Diary and the full version will be published next year in Memories of Lord Digby's School:

FRIDAY September 15th 1962

On a warm, sunny day we all assembled outside Sherborne Station, twenty girls, Miss **LIGHTBODY** and Mrs. **FOUNTAIN**. As we waited on the platform for the train to Exeter, Mrs Fountain suddenly realized she had left her walking stick in the booking hall and I was sent to pick it up. I had visions of watching the train disappear into the distance as I ran over the footbridge but all was well and I fell into the reserved carriage with Wendy **PENNY**, Jean **PAULLEY**, Chris **DENNING**, Sandra **CLEEVE** and Jane **ANYAN**. We arrived in Exeter and made our way to the exit. Really, we looked rather smart in our "mufti" skirts and jumpers and one lady, we found out later, asked if we were on an "Outward Bound" course as we looked so smart! We left our luggage at the bus station and Jane, Sandra and I set off to explore Exeter. Somehow, we

ended up at a tanning factory. The noise and stench was overpowering. Went to a café for a drink to take away the taste. Met up with everyone at the bus station. By now it was drizzling and as we drove across the moor we saw cattle, ponies and sheep with blue brand markings miserably grazing the tough grass. Arrived at Bellever Hostel. It seemed bleak, rather like a barn, which indeed it used to be. Passing through the common room and dining room, we clattered up the wooden stairs to the dormitory. In a long, high room there were about twenty iron, black bunks. We were issued with sheet sleeping bags and after taking a lesson from Maureen **SIMPSON** on what to do with them, (Maureen was a Girl Guide), we made our beds. Jane A. and I bagged a bunk near the window with Jean and Sandra on one side and Jill and Susan Exton on the other. We went down a wooden ladder at the other end of the room and found the washing area. Stacked up on the floor were coloured plastic bowls for washing and against the wall was a red topped table on which to put them. The warden brought in an oil hurricane lamp and hung it on a rafter. We, (Jen **HUNSLEY** and Marie France, Jen's French pen-friend) chatted and then went down for supper. Had soup, roast potatoes, carrots, mince, baked apples and custard. Afterwards we cleared away and had a lesson on Exeter in the dining room. 10 o'clock and time for bed. We settled down and then Mrs. F and Miss L. clattered up the stairs. The door appeared to stick and they took some time to open it. On her way to the bathroom, Mrs. F. tucked Jean in! Jean was mortified and the rest of us cackled and snorted into our sleeping bags! All went quiet. Unfortunately, the window was open and I caught a cold.

SATURDAY 16th

We all got up. Jean and Wendy still had their curlers in! Breakfast followed and after clearing away, Jane **WIGMORE** Jane A., Sandra and I peeled the potatoes for dinner that night. We made rather a mess with all the water and were dismissed! Then taking up our packed lunches, macs, ruck sacks and putting on walking shoes, we set out across Dartmoor. Rather a wet day. Walked with Nichola **HOWE** and Geraldine **RENDALL** to Bellever Tor and finally made our way back to the hostel. The common room was heated by a massive log fire and although we had a lesson, we were too hot and tired to concentrate. Putting our shoes in front of the fire to dry, we went quietly to bed.

SUNDAY 17th

Today we were following the source of a river. Jane W. distinguished herself by falling in! We tramped through a farmyard and Wendy and Jean set off down a track. They were soon back chased by six very bad tempered geese! During the evening, Wendy had us in fits telling us about the fowls she looked after. In the lesson, we found we had walked about fifteen miles that day. Off to bed. When Miss L. came up she couldn't open the door. She and Mrs. F. banged on it and we heard them whispering.

Next minute she called for Jen H., whose bunk was nearest, to pull on the other side. Unfortunately Jen was fast asleep! After a while we made Jane W. get up and open it, which she did - very reluctantly!

MONDAY 18th

Left the hostel and set off by bus to Plymouth. We said "goodbye" to Jen and Marie France as they had to return home. The bus took us on to Kingsbridge and Celia **HAYNES** went to see her aunt who owns a shop there, but she wasn't in. On to Salcombe. This is a lovely town with luxury hotels and houses. We actually saw the place where Russ Conway used to stay when in the area. It is also a very hilly town as we found out over the next couple of days. We left our luggage with Mrs. F. and she followed with it all in a taxi, waving and smirking as she overtook us on the hill! Our hostel was called "Overbecks" and surrounding the house was a tropical garden.

The common room here was a large room with trestle tables down one side, a table tennis table in the middle and a piano at the far end.

TUESDAY 19TH

Walked to Sharpitor following the coast, periodically giving Mrs. F. flowers to identify and to keep her quiet! We found a great many caterpillars in the heather, much to the delight of Liz **WILCOX**.

WEDNESDAY 20th

Went by ferry across the Salcombe estuary to Prawle Point. We walked until we came to a village when Jane W. went into a pub for drinks. Angela **TRUMP** then appeared with a pint of cider and was just drinking it when Mrs. F. and



Miss L. came round the bend. After that break, we set off again, though we were warned to keep an eye on Angela! Beautiful scenery, beautiful weather. We did find an adder though and Mrs. F. killed it with a stick - not until Angela had tried to get a close look at it! On the beach we took off

socks and shoes and had a paddle. Exhausted that evening. We were

becoming quite used to the sleeping bags but someone, possibly Rosemary **CURTIS**, used to snore occasionally and evidently Mrs. F., Jane and I muttered in our sleep.

THURSDAY 21st

Our last day. Bus via Buckfast Abbey to Exeter and home."

trevillian1947@gmail.com

It is always good to see Joan McNicol (**FOX**) 1933-40 when she makes her way from the Isle of Skye to Sherborne for Reunion week-end. Her letters are always interesting with news of her family across the globe-but Joan herself seems busy as well. "*I have joined an aerobics class and the teacher said she cannot believe we have a 93-year-old in the class. I still drive, but locally and not at night.*" Joan would have preferred the morning service followed by Lunch for the Reunion.

It was Ann Rose (**FOXCROFT**) who wrote to June in September 2015 to break the news of the death of her cousin Jean **NORRIS** in Australia on 21st September, 2015. Jean had emigrated in the 1980's and settled in Melbourne, to be near her brother John. Jean was very involved there in her church and teaching English to members of the congregation who needed help. Jean did a lot of camping to see other parts of her new country. June adds that her long letters to a number of old L.D.S friends covered interesting comments on situations in the world and that she will be missed a great deal. Ann herself has been busy and wrote of the training her elder son Jonathan had gone through to be ordained as a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. "*I had no idea that the mother of a Catholic Priest has so much to do for the Ordination*".

There was a mini reunion at the Abbey for Kate Harper(**GIBBS**)'s wedding last year, 2016. Kate and Tom are now based in Shirweiner where Tom is on a six-month Army Course and Kate is in the College Office designing the course for next year. Kate can stay in their army house whilst Tom is on deployment in 2017.

Gillian Walters (**GIBLING**) and her husband moved from Norfolk to a nursing home in Exmouth to be nearer members of the family. Unfortunately, Ray died in early January 2017 and we send special love to Gillian at this time. June Helson visited them at Exmouth in June 2016 and was happy to see how well they were looked after. Gillian would love to hear from Old Girls who remember her and even a visit as she is not so mobile these days. The address is:

Halsdown Nursing Home, 243, Exeter Road, Exeter EX8 3NA.

In January 2016 June Helson spotted Jemima Parry Jones (**GLASIER**) on the BBC programme Countryfile .Jemima is still very recognisable and happy in her life of breeding vultures.

Susie Gorman (**HAYWARD**) 1960-65 tells us how successful her form reunion was at The Eastbury Hotel and many travelled from across the country. "It



was lovely to meet up with our class at the Eastbury Hotel last September. So good to see so many of us and catch up on all our news! It was a great venue - managed to take some photos in their garden and hope to do the same again this year!

The highlight of last year - 2016 - was Jonny, my son, getting married at

Winchester Cathedral in October! Wonderful wedding - Cassy his bride looked really gorgeous! They had the reception at 'No Mans Fort' in the Solent - all taking a boat from Portsmouth to arrive for a beautiful sunset - we were so lucky with the weather! We

followed this with a lovely holiday at Sandals, Barbados for my birthday in November which was nice and relaxing after the run up to the wedding! Sadly Keith, my husband, now has Parkinson's, but we try and have as many holidays as we can while we can !



Susie is in the first photo of the reunion third from the left. Susie herself took the group photo in the garden at The Eastbury.

susiegorman@hotmail.com

The local Blackmore Vale Magazine gives us news of Old Girls occasionally –in February 2016 we noticed an account of wassailing at Henstridge in which Liz **HOLBROOK** was providing the music.

Rosalind Lester (**HOYLE**) whose death is recorded was 97 years old when she died. Her daughter Melanie tells us that her mother would tell many stories of her time at L.D.S. and one day after many years absent from Sherborne we visited Miss Dew. “As soon as Miss Dew opened the door she immediately said “*Oh Rosalind how lovely to see you*”. I was blown over how Miss Dew remembered my mother. Melanie tells us that her mother was active till the end of her life and especially loved her garden. Before passing peacefully away Melanie tells us that Rosalind had walked around the garden looking for signs of spring. Rosalind was at Stonegarth as a boarder with Ruby Crocker (**ANTELL**). Melanie remembers her mother telling the following story “*I would take letters stuffed up my knicker legs to post in town so they would not have to be “proof read” by members of staff.*”

Ralph and Valerie Giles (**LONG**) always send newsy letters at Christmas and it is now good to have Val on the Committee which means that Ralph drives her over to Sherborne so we are pleased to see him regularly too. They continue to enjoy their holiday apartment in Collioure in France where they spent thirteen weeks in total in 2015 and ten weeks in 2016. During the June visit in 2015 Val writes “*The train to Baziers was struck by lightning during a heavy storm, so no electricity, no toilets working, no PA system, therefore little information for five hours. We arrived at Beziers station two hours after our plane had left for the UK. As there were no more flights to Bristol for four days we enjoyed spending time exploring more of Beziers which was very enjoyable*”. In 2016 Wendy Green (**GOULD**) joined Val and Ralph for a week.

Val writes that all her children and grandchildren are doing well. Ralph and Val write as follows in 2016: “*We are going to be grand-parents again. Sally, daughter number two, is expecting her second baby, a girl, in early April 2017. This will be our fourth grandchild and a sister for Adam age 2*” valeralph@yahoo.co.uk

Susan Vincent previously Warhurst (**MCKNIGHT**) 1956-61 is delighted to be on the L.D.S. O.G.A. Committee. It was a great privilege to be able to visit Betty Crocker in the last two months of her life and I enjoyed keeping her informed regarding the preparations for the 2016 Reunion. Betty was so grateful for the cards and flowers she received after the 2016 AGM and sent her thanks to everyone. Betty urged us all to keep the Old Girls going and wished the new Committee well. I have now been back in Sherborne three years after living in London most of my working life. It is a vibrant town with always something going on from the Sherborne Literary Society events to many wonderful concerts. On many occasions, I find myself meeting up with Katherine Barker (**TRUMP**) 1957-63. We were good friends at L.D.S and we have

kept in touch from our school days. Other classmates I meet from time to time, apart from assisting with the magazine, is Daphne Mitchell (**HISCOCK**) and Jeannette Gillett (**WENT**) who are often at the same events as Katy and I at the Octagon Theatre, Yeovil. My main interest is studying for an Open University Degree in the Classics as well as working as a Headhunter on specific assignments and being the Deputy Poppy Appeal Organiser in Sherborne.

I still visit my sister Judy (**MCKNIGHT**) 1960-61 in London for theatre and concert visits. Judy is now Vice President of the European Economic and Social Committee representing the trade union movement. Her role will diminish sadly over the next year or two. The other two Groups on the Committee are the Employers and Various Interest Groups. Judy is visiting Brussels at least twice a month and has visits from time to time to attend conferences in member states. There is also the chance to visit countries outside the EU with social policy issues under discussion. In the last 6 months Judy has visited Mongolia, Slovakia, Greece and Italy.

Jane Tearle formerly Towillis (**MEAGER**)1964-666 in Sixth Form has updated us with her news as follows:

*“Living in Cerne Abbas; retired; enjoying tennis (in Sherborne) and travel. Family - grandchildren in Seattle with younger son Michael and about to have a new granddaughter here in Cerne with James. Passion for photography and have linked up with Jenny Short (**CHAFFEY**) who has the same passion! We also followed the same path into teaching via Chelsea College of PE.*

*In touch with Trudi Bell (**BURBRIDGE**), based in Cornwall and Tess Betts (**YEATMAN**) based in Chetnole.”* tearlejane@gmail.com

Alison McFaul (**MILES**) 1966-71 has written:

Some of us who started together in 1966 have been brought back in touch



Sue, Mary, Chris, Kate, Alison

with each other and have met up at our various homes around the country through the past few years: Mary **GRIBBLE**, Kate **KEWLEY**, Susan **AUSTIN** and Alison **MILES**. This year we all visited Mary in Cornwall and popped over on the King Harry ferry to see Christine **HANCOCK**, who also lives down that way. Facebook has provided further contacts and it's been good to 'friend' Gillian **CHAFFEY**, and keep in touch with her exotic travels.

We'd love to hear from any others of our year. It's amazing how the collective memories are restored and rejuvenated by sharing what we each have remembered over the past 50 years and they let us see again those girls we were when we met aged just 11. Alison.McFaul@rspb.org.uk

Susan Hardy (**MOORES**) 1957-64 has been in touch and says that the new Bishop of Sherborne has family connections. June Helson took Miss Thomas to a special welcome service in Sherborne Abbey as she and the Bishop had been former colleagues.

Another Old Girl who always writes to June at Christmas is Olwyn Robinson (**NICOLSON**) 1960-67. Olwyn has quite a bit of news which is worth conveying to you all: *"I started the year (2016) badly as in the first week of January, I fell off the pavement in the dark (6pm) coming home from Vicky's. The street lights in her part of the village are not very good - almost non-existent. To cut a long story short, I ended up in A&E with two very badly sprained ankles and a pierced femoral artery. As I had been wearing flat lace-up shoes, we can only assume it was the end of the lace which did the piercing! It all took rather longer to mend than I expected, but by the end of May I was feeling confident again to go for a walk by myself. Needless to say, we now have a good stock of torches by the front door for evening outings!"*

Olwyn continues: *"June saw us in Switzerland on a 'train' holiday. We set off from St. Pancras on Eurostar - a new experience for us both. We changed trains in Brussels and then had an overnight stop in Cologne, before a lovely journey down the Rhine to Interlaken. The holiday was all we had hoped for, and we were so lucky with the weather. I was glad that the whole trip was accompanied, especially at the stations where we had to change trains. The journey up the Jungfrau was the highlight of the holiday. As it was overcast when we set out, we thought there would be no view from the top. How wrong we were! The sun came out just as we got off the train and we had wonderful views!"*

Olwyn continues *"August was not a good month - I was recalled after a mammogram and have had two operations for breast cancer. I have now had the all-clear, but have to go for radio therapy on 4th January and should be finished by the end of January. These last few months have been traumatic and we did not realise how badly affected we had been. For the last two weeks or so we have had to take it very slowly and rest most of the time. I think we had been running on adrenalin since August. Still, at least I can enjoy Christmas now! I have been so lucky."*

In March 2017 Olwyn sent a further letter:

"An update on my health - I have completed the radio therapy, which was not too bad, except for having to go up to the hospital every day for 4 weeks. Luckily my appointments were the first of the day so I did not have to wait around for too long. For the next few years I will have regular check-ups and a yearly mammogram, but I feel so incredibly lucky. The support I've had from friends has been incredible and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my class of 'Old Girls' for all their messages I was so sorry to miss our reunion in September but I was sent some lovely photos by Jenny (CHAFFEY)."

Olwyn ends with selected memories of her time at L.D.S and the two memorable ones are: *"One of my fondest memories is of Miss Dew in my first year, teaching us French - 'Toto mont la chaise' was actually acted out by her, and it is a sentence which has stuck to this day! Miss Thomson demanding that all the windows be opened when she entered the classroom, regardless of the weather. I can remember sitting by the window getting wet as the rain blew in."*

olandal@talktalk.net

Carolyn Hood-Cree (**ROBINS**) 1954-6 hopes to get to the Centenary celebrations but her husband Michael has mobility problems so travel at present is difficult.

Carolyn is in touch with a number of schoolmates including Barbara Arnold (**GRANT**) now in California, Peggy Fryer (**COFFIN**) on Facebook, Diana Walton (**EASTHOPE**), Melian Mansfield (**BORDES**) and Jennifer Virtue (**BARLOW POOLE**). In October 2016 Carolyn and her husband celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. *"We were married at St Aldhelm's R.C. Church, Sherborne on 22nd October 1966 at mid-day . On 22 October 2016 at St Thomas's R.C. Church in Canterbury we were joined by Michele, Tim and Elizabeth. Michele and Tim were married there in 2010. It was very special because there was a choir singing the Angelus, which is normally said at Mid-day Mass, a lovely celebration of our special day."*

Carolyn continues *"we visited my brother in Bradford Abbas in September 2016 and we ourselves live in a small village five miles outside of Canterbury. We now have help with our very large garden and since my hip replacement in 2016 we also have help in the house."*

Carolyn has reminded us of her career starting with nine years in Rhodesia after her marriage to Michael an agriculturist. Their two children Michele and Robert were born there. Robert and his family are in Atlanta and Michele and her family are in London.

Having qualified as a teacher before her marriage Carolyn has had a successful career in Education and was Head Teacher of an Infants School in Ashford for the last 15 years of her working life. hoodcree@btinternet.com

Suzanne Boon (**SARTIN**) 1947-1954 writes *"In the 1950's our science teacher was Miss Lofts, who had to prepare us for G.C.E. General Science. Her main interest and forte was Botany and she painted beautiful botanic studies; however, she admitted that she had to "swot up" each physics and chemistry lesson before she taught us and she could not abide "creepy crawlies." When girls brought her living creatures to identify, she shuddered and sent them off to find me, as I would happily handle anything that would not bite or sting and knew the difference. There would often be, outside the form-room door, a small girl, clutching a cardboard box with, perhaps, a cricket, a chrysalis or a large and beautiful moth to show me.*

When we were children our Father interested us in birds, butterflies and animals, and our Mother was very knowledgeable about plants. Granny was an amateur geologist; I spent many happy hours looking at her fossil collection. She introduced me to Rev. Joseph Fowler, who had written a book about Sherborne's geology. When I was about seven, he took me to a Romano-British site near our home and got me fascinated by archaeology.

Last May I spent three weeks with my younger daughter, Joanna, who lives in County Wexford, Eire. We took part in a Biodiversity survey of Ireland, studying her parish and the neighbouring kilometre squares. That parish is particularly interesting, as it climbs from 90 metres above sea level, by the river, with alluvial marsh and clay, to 360 metres on the flank of the Blackstairs Mountain, with granite and shale. The flora & fauna are, therefore, very diverse. We accumulated a huge amount of information which was recorded on the national data base at Waterford. We listed every wild plant and creature that we found, from insignificant little "weeds" to exciting rarities noting, every animal from Aphids to Wood lice, including Buzzards, lizards, mining bees, damselflies and ladybirds. Among the several hundred-plant species we found, from Alder trees to Yorkshire fog grass, were golden saxifrage, angelica and irises by the river, past assorted ferns, wild roses and vetches, up to the heathers, milkwort and bog plants on the mountain. There were also invasive aliens like Japanese Knotweed and the lovely, river-clogging, Himalayan Balsam.

Much time and after-midnight electricity was used, whilst we looked up Latin names for everything. It is annoying that some of the plants I learned the names of 70 years ago have been re-classified. I shall never remember their new ones! Many plants familiar to us in Dorset and Somerset were missing from the area we studied and we came across quite a number I had never seen before, no doubt due to the acidic soil, high terrain and rainfall. At the end of the year the Wexford wildlife expert introduced Joanna to the national coordinator of the project by saying, 'You wouldn't believe it; Joanna got her poor old mother, who

is nearly 80, over from England and dragged her around the countryside counting species.’ Joanna protested, ‘I didn’t have to drag her!’”

When we set off to photograph the camera-shy lizard that we had seen before, Mum was singing softly as we tramped up the stony track “we’re off to see the Lizard, the wonderful Lizard of !”

Joanna got special mention and thanks in the 2016 report as she was one of the top five contributors in all Ireland. This May I will return to County Wexford and we hope to do more studies and specially to add to the knowledge of the distribution of Vascular plants and their pollinators. In the meantime I shall be gardening or chatting to my 12-year-old granddaughter, if I can prise her away from her computer. Unfortunately, Megan, like Miss Lofts, cannot abide “Creepy crawlies.” Dave.Suzanne@talktalk.net

June meets Stella **STURGESS's** mother frequently as she is involved with bell ringing and other roles in the Abbey. Stella is practising her physio in Australia where she tries to enable patients to remain within their own homes.

As a result of visiting the L.D.S display in the Museum in 2015 Gill **TAYLOR** 1968-1975 has renewed her membership of the O.G.A. and it has been good to see her at a couple of the Reunions. Gill has written to us saying how much she enjoyed the service in Castleton with the familiar readings and hymns. Hopefully Gill and all other Old girls will be even more impressed in 2018 when we have the Reunion Service in Sherborne Abbey to celebrate the Centenary of L.D.S. O.G.A. Gill is still in touch with Judy Pettit (**WIGHTMAN**) and Alison Graham (**HUNT**) .At a recent meeting of all three, Gill and Judy realised they had not seen face to face Alison for forty years. Gill in her letter in 2016 told us that it was forty years ago she had left Lord Digby's. *“After Kent University, I worked in the Library of Bristol University and then moved to Nottingham to complete a P.G.C.E. I worked there for five years as an English teacher before getting involved in community work in the field of AIDA and HIV.”* After a number of other charitable roles Gill then studied full time at Sheffield University Law Department for a M.A. in Socio Legal Studies. Despite some lecturing opportunities after this and following her father's death, Gill then lived for four years in a Spiritual Community in The Brecons, Wales as a “cook/cleaner/office worker/gardener”. Gill comments that this path has led her *“to meet a huge range of people and various groups who are often on the edge and ignored”*. For the last seventeen years Gill has lived with her daughter and partner in Lyme Regis. One day they hope to return to Sherborne to be able to attend the Abbey more regularly. In addition, Gill tells us of her sister Debbie **TAYLOR** 1975-82 who is in Lincolnshire working for the Environment Agency and her spare time is taken up with “horses, hens and donkeys.”

Elizabeth Ray Jones (**WELCHER**) wrote to June in 2015 "I must thank and congratulate you and all your team for producing such a comprehensive and interesting magazine"

In March 2017 Elizabeth emailed Susan as follows: "I have just chanced to read some Old Girls' news, so am able to respond briefly to your appeal for more bits and bobs for the magazine. It's my 87th birthday today. Alan and I have been lucky to enjoy pretty good health so far.

When Alan retired from his job at the Royal Institute of British Architects, we went to live in Prague. We were there for six very happy years. Alan worked for the Czech Architects' Institute, and I taught English at the Agriculture University, and we made some ongoing friendships. Now we live in Exeter. We find that Devon is particularly mindful of the refugees who keep arriving, mainly from the Middle East and Afghanistan. I am teaching English to a charming woman who comes from Kabul. Alan and I became Quakers many years ago, and now he (although 'retired') gets roped in for all sorts of Quaker concerns, from how to improve the Meeting house acoustics, to ambitious projects aimed at helping those poor people trapped in the Middle East, or struggling to get out of it.

Over the years I'm sorry to say I have not kept up with my L.D.S. contemporaries except for Jean Norris. We had a trip to Australia some years ago and enjoyed meeting Jean and hearing about her activities. We were very sad to hear of her death last year."

A previous letter from Elizabeth told us of Eileen's death. June remembers Eileen being our first qualified medical doctor and we had a day off to celebrate!!

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June recently met Fay (**WISDOM**) just after her form Reunion.

Anne Hibbert (**WRIGHT**) 1956-61 has emailed us with an update of her news

"After getting an email from Val Giles I thought I would get in touch just to say I am still living in Honiton and working part time in the dress shop where I have been for the last 26 years. Life is very different since losing my husband which is now nearly 7 years ago, where those years have gone I just do not know but you have to carry on and I have such a lovely family and so many wonderful caring friends. Through the amazing Lions organisation of which Ralph was a member I did meet a friend who lost his wife about 4 years ago and so we see one another at weekends and do have a lot of fun so life isn't quite as lonely as it was and I still do a lot with his Lions Club as well as the one here in Honiton.

I spend as much time as I can in Cornwall visiting Jamie my youngest son and his family. There are 5 children there, 4 boys and a little girl of 6 who rules the

roost as you can imagine! My other son lives just 5 miles from me with his 2 grown up daughters, one of whom is a hairdresser so Grannie is very lucky!

I am still in touch with lots of L.D.S. girls but sadly am not able to be at the reunion as I will be in France this year. Hope this might help to fill a little space somewhere!" ann.hibbert@live.co.uk



Photo courtesy of Ian King

We would like to thank all who have contributed news and items for this edition of the MAGAZINE.



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