

Our News

Liz Nicholls, Zetland, 1975

I feel inspired to bring you up-to-date, it has been on my list for some while! I still work in care. I now work in a rehabilitation unit for people with mental health problems and enjoy this very much, I love seeing people progress. I keep in touch with Maggie Williams (Orr) and visit her when I can. I also spent a week with friends in Eastbourne last year and took the opportunity of visiting Liz Cuthbe. We are now keeping in touch regularly. I attend the same Pentecostal church in Dewsbury, I also met up with Martine Wilkinson (Day) some time ago, she lives just a few miles away. Maybe I will get to a reunion one of these days. I enjoy reading about other people's news especially those whom I remember. School life seems so far away, I still receive a Christmas card from June Sherratt (Lucas) which is nice. I would love to hear from anyone who remembers me. elizabeth.nicholls@ntlworld.co.uk

Gwen Light (Lennox), Zetland, 1941

As usual I am enjoying reading the magazine although I don't remember as many of the names as I used to, having left school in 1941!! My husband and I still get to see his sister who now lives in Exmouth. She was in Zetland as I was. This year I also met up with Marie Hobby (Frost) who was on holiday in Clacton-on-Sea. Each month I see Peggy Coupe (Mann), another Old Girl.

Another strange coincidence: my grand daughter who was at Birmingham University happens to share a house with Katie Taylor who was at the school.

Beth Whetstone (Tarrant), 1933

Beth has suffered two years of ill-health and hadn't realized that her membership had lapsed until her niece told her she was arranging a trip to Old Girls' day. Beth writes:

I actually left school in December 1933 and I changed from sixth form to commercial and left before my sixteenth birthday so I could do a year at Gregg

College. The school moved after 1934 and my sister, Enid, was in the first lot to go there. Sadly she died in 1982 aged 61 but her daughter, Jenny, has always wanted to see her mother's school and she has now achieved her wish. We had a simply lovely day and were most impressed with all the improvements.

Jan Provis (Watson), Moira, 1949

We have just returned from 3 weeks in Turkey and it was absolutely gorgeous. We have been to the same wonderful hotel for 4 years where we are just spoilt to bits.

Time waits for no man and unfortunately I shall be 80 next January but do play tennis twice a week and also golf. I am chairman of the Leicestershire Ladies Veteran Tennis Association which has just celebrated its 20th Anniversary with a fabulous Gala Dinner. (Jan was very good at tennis whilst at school and after she left, was one of a team of Old Girls who played against pupils on Old Girls' Day.)

Life at the ripe old age

Marion Hankey (Blackstock) 1958

In November 2009, Gloria Hunniford and Jonty Hearnden arrived with the team from Cash in the Attic to see what we had to sell. The auction was held on the Isle of Wight and was great fun. Rosemary Tomlinson was on the TV programme with me; we buy at auctions and sell at antique fairs, garage sales and car boot sales.

Mum and I are moving to a house next door to my daughter and son-in-law, Liesl and Zachary in October 2011. It has been extended to become a rather super 5-bedroom house although we are supposed to be down sizing!!

For over 38 years I have accommodated overseas students who come to the U.K. to learn English. I have now decided to "retire" from hosting them. I am still in touch with some. One Japanese girl (now married with 2 children) bought 9 of her family here last year and my daughter and I accommodated them between us!

I thought when I retired I would have coffee mornings and shopping sprees in London with my friends, and have time to relax, but far from it. I love to have my grand children for tea after school. They are the light of my life. Liesl and Zachary have a lovely house in Majorca so we go there for our holidays.

I go dancing four times a week and I also go to aqua-fit and mature movers and I am writing my life story. Also I have two lodgers to look after. Not bad for a lady who will be 70 next year.

In 2012 I'll hold a reunion at our new house, we might be more organised then, but thanks to Joy Horne who is holding one in 2010 which is mentioned on the reunion page.



*Jonty Hearnden, Gloria Hunniford
and Marion Hankey on the day they
came to do the rummage*

Margaret Gregg, Zetland, 1938

When Margaret wrote to Kate Spencer about Phyllis Druce, she included some news of herself:

I'm 88 at the moment. My memory is bad for remembering a lot of things, mainly where I have put papers and various other things. I was blown over by the wind one year and ended up in hospital. I now have a pin in my pelvis, also my right arm is cracking up, but can manage to hold a pen to write.

Margaret then continued with her memories of Phyllis Druce which are included in the Obituaries section. Her letter concluded:

I hope you can make a bit of sense of all this. With all best wishes from one Polished Corner to another.

Jenny Staines (Charlton) Moira, 1962

Married Roger in 1967 and have 2 children, Victoria and Jonathan, and 3 grandchildren. Worked in hospital cleaning management and college lecturing and now retired and enjoying life even more. Really enjoyed meeting up with friends at the 56-63 gathering at St Albans and hope there will be another.

Muriel Burnell (Roberts), 1935

I was very interested in Mrs Rose's Prize Day Address about the Prize for Order and Attention. I received that prize in 1935.

My first job after leaving school was in the office of a cotton mill in Salford, until I sat the Civil Service exam, and, on passing it, went to work in the Ministry of Transport.

Barbie Lowe (Elvin), Moira, 1972

Living in Hampshire with hubby. Three children, now adults! Working for Oxford University Press. Looking to retire and move to France.

Judy Clarke (Stiles) Atholl, 1956

After leaving Rickmansworth I attended Denson Secretarial College in Kensington. I had a varied career, leaving work to marry in 1960 and we have two daughters. I trained to be a teacher as a mature student and became a head teacher in 1980. I retired in 2000 and my husband and I emigrated to Australia in 2001. Our whole family now lives in Australia.

Peggy Davis (Collier) 1934

I am a very old pupil aged 92. I went to Weybridge, then Clapham and left in 1934, the year the school moved to Rickmansworth. I have visited the school since.

I have a lot to be grateful for: a good family who care for me: twin sons aged 67 and "my baby" who is 54!

Susan Wellington-Hobbs (Wellington) Atholl, 1976

I enclose a photograph taken on the day I married David Edward Hobbs on 26 August 2009. Eight Old Girls came to our wedding. Here we are on the steps at Oldway Mansion, Paignton, Devon.

They are: at the back on the top step, my new sister-in-law (not an Old Girl!)

Back Row, Left to Right: Rosemary Witt (Fisher) Atholl, Antoinette Lauton (Jackson) Cumberland, Jane Woodard (Hudson) Zetland, Anne Turpin Atholl, Pat Kerswell (Knight) Cumberland,

Front Row: Elizabeth Blackmore (Brown), Alexandra, Jo Hall (Witt) Cumberland, Susan Wellington-Hobbs (Wellington) Atholl, Julie Ludbrook (Maltus) Moira.

Some of Susan's memories of Weybridge and Rickmansworth appear in our "Memories" section

**Liz Daybell (Sear), Atholl, 1975**

Since leaving school I trained and qualified as a beauty therapist and worked at the Royal Garden Hotel, Kensington. Then I decided to open my own business in Surrey. At 22 I had my eldest daughter, Toni, now 28, then my son Sam, now 23. When I was 27, my relationship ended, so I was a single Mum for a while. Then, at 28, I met my husband, Hugh. We have been married for 20 years and have a daughter, Ruth, who is now 19. We all live in Nottinghamshire. I have my own beauty business which I am lucky enough to run from home. My husband is head teacher at a Special School. I have reached a point in my life where I have a little more time to myself and would love to catch up with some of my friends from way back when. I have very fond memories of my school years and would like to get more involved with OMGA.

Gillian Moss (Wallbank), Ruspini, 1956

I was at Weybridge from 1946, then Rickmansworth to 1956. They were the best years of my life. I have kept many friends. Now retired, I am a member of U3A, grandma to 7 grandchildren, a walker and a widow.

Marilyn Jobson-Scott (Andersen) Zetland, 1960

I am fortunate to have had a really good and busy year this year with quite a lot of travelling in our various classic cars plus some other trips. I have had a guided tour of the Houses of Parliament and tea with our MP prior to the election (he was still our MP after!).

One highlight was our trip to Rickmansworth where, in addition to the school visit, we met up with three of my cousins and their wives, who all live nearby. So, with a visit to France to see Claudia Dimmock (Cole), it has been a busy year, but very enjoyable - retirement is great!

I am still doing a little work as we changed the business when it became a limited company. My son Jonathan is taking over from his father who had been unwell. I am passing over all the book keeping to Jonathan so spending a bit of time showing him the ropes.

We opened a new office in the centre of Bideford in a very prominent area. It has caused some amusement as we are located next to a hairdresser.

The Juxtaposition of the signage for the hairdresser reads 'Who's Next' followed by us - 'Bideford and District Funeral Service'! It has even been mentioned on the radio by Chris Evans.



The Friendship of Hens

I think we must have been watching too many episodes of 'The Good Life', in 1988, when we took it into our heads to move from London to the country! The rural fantasy included a huge vegetable garden, plus a few goats – and chickens, of course. But in reality, although moving was the best thing we could have done, the envisaged smallholding never materialised. However, twenty-two years later, I have at last become a keeper of chickens, albeit on a very small scale. I find it more absorbing and interesting than I ever imagined, and only wish I'd started sooner.

I have just three hens, cheerful scatty creatures who roam the length and breadth of the garden, keep me in eggs and even do some indiscriminate weeding – certainly more than I ever get round to. I thought I would name them after Celtic saints, and the two big hybrids, one ginger, one black-and-tan, ended up being Ethel (for Etheldreda) and Hilda; but somehow the smallest one, black with a greenish sheen on her feathers, became Peggotty. Hilda is top hen, confidently adventurous, always leading the others astray. Soon after I got them, I spent a merry half hour trying to round them up in next-door's field, where they had found themselves an interesting obstacle course full of defunct cars, providing plenty of hiding places. On another occasion, I found them sauntering nonchalantly through my other neighbour's flowerbeds. A gift of eggs smoothed the way to retrieving them before they scratched up all the bedding plants – but it took many hours of finding and plugging all the escape routes with chicken wire before the garden was finally secure. Hens have an amazing ability to squeeze themselves through impossibly small gaps - and the juiciest worms are always on the other side of the fence.

Ethel, Hilda and Peggotty are inseparable. Where one goes, the others go too, but each knows her place. Peggotty is the lowest in the pecking order, then Ethel, with Hilda as leader. Peggotty is my favourite, though I'm fond of them all. While the other two have a mad stare, Peggotty's dark eye has a shrewdly intelligent look; and where their tails mostly have bad hair days, hers is a jaunty little plumed bob-tail, most endearing. What none of them know is that she will outlive the others by a long way, (as long as the fox doesn't get her), as she is a pure-breed and the others are common hybrids. When I see Hilda pecking Peggotty's back, I console myself with this thought, but I'm rather glad they don't know!

It's definitely a two-way relationship between my hens and me. I am always greeted with excited clucking, and a race up the garden to try to reach me first. They peck affectionately out of my hand, and yes, I know it's just cupboard love, but it's still nice to feel wanted.

What excellent pets they make! They amuse themselves happily all day long, pecking and scratching and digging holes for their dust baths. They make such delightful little noises, except raucous Ethel, when she's announcing to the world that she's just laid. They put up with such good grace to being tucked under my arm and having their heads stroked, their only protest being an energetic shake of the feathers once they're back on terra firma. They put themselves to bed as soon as it's dark, without being told. And, best of all, in exchange for just a handful of corn and a bowl of water, they provide me with far and away the best free-range eggs I've ever tasted.

Margaret Wainwright (Lockwood)



Margaret with Peggotty

Lesley Ralston (Glass) Connaught 1963

I am (quite) an Old Girl. I left school (having been in Connaught - which was generally felt to be the best house to be in, as we had Miss Cameron as our House Mistress who, apart from being a bit of a character, allowed us to watch television).

I became a secretary and married my husband, Derek Ralston, in 1969. We had 2 sons, Ben and Tom (now 26 and 36 respectively) and adopted another, David, now 26 whose parents (our friends) died tragically. I now live in a lovely house (just behind the school in Loudwater, Herts!) which we have occupied for almost 25 years. I can hear the school clock chime when I walk my dog along the Chess.

Derek's job involved addressing meetings and conventions and in 2005 he realised that his voice was becoming weaker. Finally in May 2006 he was diagnosed as having Motor Neurone Disease. Derek was unable first to speak, then eat and breathe - and because of this, sleep. He was beginning to have mobility problems when he died, almost exactly 2 years after diagnosis.

I am now the Chair of the South Herts Branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association. I became involved in this charity initially mainly to occupy myself, but I have become very motivated to do something to help people with MND. I realise from my experience that people with MND need support and financial help and assistance, as do their carers and families. It is truly one of the most awful and frightening of diseases.

In our branch of the MNDA we raise funds to assist people living with MND to pay for equipment or care that they cannot obtain from the NHS or social care services. We are often able to release funds quickly to help ease difficulties (as symptoms progress so quickly) for individuals and their carers. We are also trying to raise the profile of MND - hence this article.

I still keep in touch with 2 of my friends from school, Sue Oliver and Liz Thomas (who was in Sussex). I also discovered that a photograph of Sue and myself is on the front of one of The Royal Masonic Institution for Girls books (published in hardback) and on the inside is the same photo, but with Stephanie Palmer as well. This I discovered via Jan Chamberlain who has a collection of these books.

I would love to hear from other people who were at school when I was. Please get in touch at: leshenhouse@gmail.com or 01923 778990

**Helena Margaret Turner
(Burnham)**

Sue Gray, Helena's daughter writes that her mother has recently moved to a rest home. She suffers from dementia but she has settled in well, and still recognises her family. Sue has asked us to make this announcement, so that old friends will understand why she no longer keeps in touch.

Sandra Davies, Zetland, 1963

Writing from Sydney I am pleased to report that I had my right knee replacement on 1 December last year and have made an amazing recovery.

I have had my usual jaunt down to Melbourne in May for the Victorian Reunion staying with Nikki Cranston (Marion Nickson). We visited the Titanic Exhibition and attended a choral festival with about 15 choirs participating. Nikki sings in a Gospel Choir, hence the visit to the choral festival.

I have another trip coming up in September to Adelaide to stay with Anita Haines (Brown) who I was at

school with and have not seen since leaving school. It will be most exciting to catch up on all the years.

My friend and I have completed the back stage tour of the Opera House recently (including negotiating about 150 steps). It was most interesting and informative to see just what goes on behind the scenes. In October I will be attending the Ben Hur Spectacular in our Olympic Stadium with Russell Crowe as the Narrator.

Heather A Gibbs (Butcher) 1942

A lot of what I learned at Ricky has come in handy. Good manners, etiquette, handicrafts, concern for others. I have only recently, owing to a fractured tendon, given up the running of a Club for the elderly. I still visit three people in nursing homes, make jams for charity and I am a sides person and reader in church. I have just got into mosaics and have worked on a project with school children and the elderly. This week I hope to complete a six-panel mosaic for a Community Centre.

**Naheed Dadlani (Valliani) Atholl
Sussex, 1998**

On the 22nd of March 2009, My husband Mehdi and I had a beautiful baby boy. We named him Mikaeel. He's now 18 months.

Mikaeel Dadlani



Ray Sherman (Barty)

Dear Everyone

How swiftly the years fly by! I hope you are all well and coping with the difficulties with which the last year has beleaguered us.

My fourth granddaughter has just joined St John's College, Cambridge and is loving every minute. My one and only grandson is in his last year at Eton. It seems only yesterday that all five of my grandchildren were little toddlers and now the last one will leave school next summer. My fourth great-grandchild was born in January.

Ray added a delightful portrait of her guide dog, Kirby, and her son and daughter-in-law, Stuart and Anne Sherman sent a photograph.

My guide-dog, Kirby is a wonder, I cannot go out alone without her now. I find that she is truly amazing even the way she finds our route in and out of shops and finds the shops I want. She is even successful when I inadvertently ask her to find a route back to front (if you see what I mean). We now use Fraser's coffee shop as our base where we always stop off for a cup of coffee for me and a nice big chew for Kirby as our rewards! She is a fantastic friend and keeps me very happy, she does some funny things. I feel sure she laughs as much as I do.

Sadly on 6 June I received this email from Stuart and Anne Sherman:

It is with great sadness that I inform you that Ray's guide dog Kirby died last night.

She had been ill for some time but we thought she was recovering; however her health deteriorated quickly over the last few days. Ray is naturally devastated by Kirby's death.

Kirby's role as a guide dog provided a lifeline and valued independence to Ray, allowing her to travel around with relative ease and safety; Kirby also provided much appreciated companionship. She was loved by everyone who met her and will be greatly missed.

And a more cheerful update in July from Anne Sherman:

In July Ray started training with a new guide dog called Bouncer, (so far the name does NOT match the temperament!) and we hope he will be a comfort to Ray and renew her confidence.



Photo: Ray and Kirby

