

Newsletter

St Elphin's School Old Girls' Guild

Spring 2002

Issue 2

AGM to set new agenda for the Guild

EXCITING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS are usually the preserve of "controversial" organisations such as Railtrack or Consignia, but this year we hope to see a few sparks fly at the Annual General Meeting of the St Elphin's Old Girls' Guild, write Sarah Brain and Melanie Thompson, joint secretaries of the OGG.

Our first term as "joint secretaries" has been relatively quiet, mainly because it is taking us time to get our feet under the table, but also because of the usual variety of urgent work and family matters that have to come first. But please don't think we haven't had the OGG on our minds; we certainly have, and the AGM on Saturday 18th May will be the first step in a new direction for the OGG. The first thing to tackle is the name.

What's in a name?

Well, actually, quite a lot – as the Chairman of Consignia (formerly The Post Office) recently pointed out.

Who really wants to belong to a body with "old" in the title? And now that St Elphin's has admitted a number of pupils from the former Stancliffe Hall, perhaps

we should drop "girls" too? The suggestions are:

- the St Elphin's Society
- Old Elphinians
- The Darley Dalers
- the St Elphin's Guild
- St Elphin's Alumni
- the St Elphin's Fellowship
- or, keep the current name.

We will vote on the name at the AGM.

If you are unable to attend, but wish to cast your vote, please write to the OGG (address on page 3) stating the ONE name you prefer. Postal votes must be received by Friday 10th May 2002.

Getting organised

The next thing we must do is put our house in order. Despite generous help and advice from past secretaries, staff and other Old Girls, we do feel that the status and aims of the OGG need to be clarified, especially as we are collecting and spending money on your behalf. So we have drafted a new "constitution", which clearly states the aims of the OGG, and the responsibilities of the officers.

This means that a major item on the agenda at the AGM will be a debate on the draft constitution. We will be very happy to accept suggestions for changes to the draft so that they can be discussed too. It's too long to print the draft in full here, but if you would like to see it before the AGM, please send an SAE to the OGG, and we will forward a copy (see booking form on p4). Of course, we will also circulate copies on the day.

We are sorry if this all sounds a bit formal, but once we've put the records straight we won't need to do it again!

Wheels in motion

The "any other business" bit of the AGM is a chance for you to raise your concerns or make suggestions for things we could

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News-group goes live

BY THE TIME you receive this newsletter, the St Elphin's Old Girls' Guild news-group should be up and running at Yahogroups.com.

If you have access to e-mail facilities you will be able to join the group (it's free) and share conversation with old friends, and make a few new ones, as well as hear the latest announcements about reunions and school events.

We hope that this news-group will go some way towards improving contact with you all – especially those who live overseas and can't attend reunions.

Simply send a blank e-mail to: Elphinians-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

You will receive a short message asking you to confirm that you wish to join, then you can post messages to your hearts content. Have fun!

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AGM agenda continued...

do. Please send in or bring "motions" so that we can start being a bit more active.

Just to set the ball rolling, this time we have a few suggestions of our own.

Amnesty for Old Girls

Despite the best efforts of everyone involved, the OGG mailing list is still a problem. It's not just that people move around a lot; the problem is that in the past people joined as "life" members or for three years only, and we don't know who signed up for what.

To make matters worse, we are suffering from a demographic problem that is currently taxing the best brains in Whitehall – namely, we have an "ageing" population (please excuse the term).

Think about it: if you joined the OGG for life in 1962, your subscription was not really sufficient to cover costs for 40 years' membership! At the time, it didn't matter, because the number of new members joining was sufficient to cover our expenses.

But we've now reached a point where the number of existing members far outweighs the number of new members joining. In other words, the "youngsters"

are not keeping us all in the manner to which we've become accustomed!

What can we do about it? At the AGM we will propose to have a "membership amnesty" so that everyone who believes that they are a member of the OGG, for life or otherwise, will be put (or kept) on the mailing list for a small fee – likely to be £5-10. But unlike when you first joined, this time you will get something for your money, in return: everyone who sends a cheque will receive a "certificate of membership" so that, should records go astray again, you can prove you're a member. At the same time, we will keep copies of the certificates so that we have something to verify membership in future, if necessary.

Anyone who does not "re-affirm" their membership within a certain time will only be able to re-join by paying the full fee (which will also be decided at the AGM in May).

Just for the record, we will make sure that the £5-10 charge for "re-affirmation" will cover the admin costs involved, as well as a "donation" to funds.

It's not easy to run an exercise like this when we only contact you twice a year, so if our proposal is approved at the AGM the "amnesty" will probably begin in Autumn 2002 and will last for six months (i.e. we'll print details of what to do in the next newsletter, and the deadline for signing up will be the AGM in 2003).

Helping the school

Another "motion" we will discuss at the AGM is about our support for the school.

Although the OGG has been generous in the past, this has lapsed for various reasons. We think the OGG should give regularly to the school, perhaps in the form of an essay competition with a prize of a £50 book token. Or perhaps we could pledge to raise funds for a specific project that the school suggests.

This is where we need your help: can you suggest ways that we can regularly support the school? Please send your ideas to the OGG (address on p 3) by Friday 10th May, so we can discuss them at the AGM.

Enjoy the day

The timetable for the day is printed on the booking slip on page 4.

We do hope all this formality hasn't put you off and that you will still be coming along to see all your friends. The AGM is just a small part of a very enjoyable day; and once we've sorted these things out, hopefully we'll never have to do it again! We look forward to seeing you.

York report

TO JUDGE from comments made at the time, and in cards and letters afterwards, our third York reunion at St William's College was much enjoyed by all, writes Peter Pollard.

Fifty-three people – an easy mix of school generations and of staff past and present – spent a happy four hours together. We shared a delicious meal, won prizes in a mammoth raffle, chatted and reminisced (noisily) and on this occasion, of course, welcomed Mrs Erica Taylor, the new Head and her husband.

We naturally enjoyed hearing of Mrs Taylor's plans for the school, and how much has been achieved in her first few months in Derbyshire. An influx of young pupils, following the closure of Stancliffe Hall, excellent exam results, an imaginative recruitment drive, and the influence of new staff in key positions: all these augur well for future success.

York is clearly an appropriate venue for these reunions. Many people sent good wishes and were sorry not to be able to attend. Please join us in 2003 and make that gathering the best yet!

From the proceeds of the raffle and from a generous donation, I was able to send the OGG Treasurer a cheque for just over £200. My thanks to everyone. It was great to see you all again.

School news

WE DO APOLOGISE for the absence of a letter to you from Mrs Taylor, write the OGG Secretaries. Due to our lack of timely reminders and Mrs Taylor's busy schedule we could not get a report ready in time. However, please do read Peter Pollard's report of his recent visit to the school (page 4), or better still, come along to the Darley Dale reunion to find out for yourself!

We wish to bid a fond farewell to four cherished and dedicated members of the teaching staff – Ann Hodgson (English), Ann Phillpot (Head of Boarding), Sheila Taylor (Business Studies) and Liz Prince (Special needs) – and two members of the support team who, between them, have notched up over 50 years' service to the school: John Willoughby (Groundsman) and Shirley Mellor (Laundry). We wish them all a very happy retirement. And we look forward to welcoming them as "associate members" of the OGG – or whatever it will be called!

Summer Ball 6 July

Picture this: a hot summer's night in July. The wine is flowing and the band is playing...

Does this sound like the St Elphin's you know and love?

Well, prepare to be amazed! For one night only the Stopford Hall will be transformed by the miracle of technology (and acres of fabric) into a splendid glittering indoor marquee, to host a ball fit for a queen!

Parents, friends, old girls (and boys) most welcome (£45 per person). Contact the School Secretary for tickets or details (mark your envelope "Summer Ball Committee").

The St Elphin's Summer Ball in honour of the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

News

Correspondence received

If you wish to contact any of the people mentioned below, please write to the OGG, care of the school (see box below for details).

I was at St Elphin's from 1922 to 1933, writes **RACHEL JOHNSTON**. When I started in 1922, I was the youngest pupil in the school, aged just 7 and a half. Now I am 86 and in quite good health, but the friend I live with is not very well, so I am quite busy.

I was glad to read of **RUTH ROSEVEARE** and the Old Girls she is in touch with (see OGG newsletter no 1, Autumn 2001), as I remember them all. I am not in touch with any old girls now, but have very happy memories of my years at the school, and also of the 150th Anniversary reunion, which I attended, as I stayed with **ROS MAUDSLEY**, an Old Girl married to my nephew! I am glad to think that the Guild is flourishing.

HELEN TYLER was a pupil at St Elphin's from 1979-90, together with her elder sister **ELSPETH TYLER**, and her brother **DAVID TYLER** and her half-sister **KATHERINE ROE** who briefly attended the infants class in the late 1980s. She remembers several staff with fondness, including Mr Burgess, Miss Marsden and Mrs Taylor who

inspired her in Geography, Mr Middleton (for his stink bombs and fireworks!) and Mrs Bilk of the junior school.

Helen writes: Belated thanks to Mrs Pearce, who persuaded my parents to let me off Latin because even she could not get me past *Ecce Romani I*.

I trained as a mineral surveyor at Sheffield Hallam University and then, due to the rapid reduction in the number of working mines, I joined HM Customs and Excise. I have since transferred to the Inland Revenue to work as a tax inspector (no guffaws from former maths teachers please!) and am now living in domestic harmony with my partner Gary in Llanelli.

Unfortunately I lost touch with all of my contemporaries, which is a great shame as ours was a good form. I would be particularly interested to hear from any leavers from Upper V in 1988 or Upper VI in 1990.

HELEN YOOL (nee **STONE**) writes: I am a contemporary of **SYBIL WELLS** (LADY **OSMOND**) and knew Miss Thoulless (staff) at school and in Exmouth for some years before her death. I moved in the Froebel world, and was Assistant Director of the National Froebel Foundation from 1950-1965 when it finished. I would love to see any St Elphinites if they ever come to Lyme Regis.

NIKKI KAY, who left the school in 1991, e-mailed her greetings to staff and pupils, in particular to Mrs Corfield, Miss Crook, Mrs Leach and Mr Pollard.

MITCHEKA JALALI (known at St Elphin's as Mitchy) e-mailed her greetings from sunny Florida where she lives and works. She would like to hear news of **SALLY TWOGOOD**, **SARAH KNIGHT**, **SHARON TAYLOR**, **FUNKE ADESINA**, **DELLA JACKSON** and **LISA EATON**.

MARGARET DENNING (**PEGGY**), who recently moved to the Isle of Wight, writes to say that she had very happy times at the school from 1935-39, during Miss Hudson's time. Her two cousins **MARY CLIFFE** and **PAT MARSHALL** also attended the school. She keeps in touch with **PHOEBE MILTON**.

SAMANTHA DROVER (nee **CAFEARO**, Kennedy 1979-1984) lives in London. She married Richard in 1993 and they are the proud parents of a son, Max (aged 1), and expected a new arrival in late 2001.

She moved to London via Bristol University, and became a Fund Manager. She works in an Investor Relations Consultancy as a Partner. She is in regular contact with **ANN GRAY** (nee **WALTERS**) and is godmother to her daughter Charlotte, and keeps in contact with the Ambrose family.

ELIZABETH HALL (nee **MUMFORD**) writes: I was at St Elphin's from 1961-68, in the full bloom of Miss Robinson's era, and I would love to hear from any other Old Girls who were there during that time. I have been married now for 27 years, and have two daughters, Caroline and Joanna. Caroline is teaching at a primary school just outside Wolverhampton, and Joanna is in her second year at Oxford, studying modern languages. I am retired and living in London.

MARGARET MALMSTRÖM (nee **WALLIS**) writes from Furulund, Sweden: I haven't been to the school since the 150th Anniversary reunion in 1994. I am still in contact with several of my St Elphin's contemporaries. Thanks to them and the newsletter, I do not feel

isolated in this part of the world.

I hope that St Elphin's continues to flourish. I have wonderful memories of the times spent there by myself and my late sister (1937-46).

KAREN LITTLE (1961-69) writes: I was at St Elphin's during Miss Robinson's time together with **ELIZABETH CORY** (see Obituaries). In 1992, Elizabeth and I tracked down 24 people from our year and held a reunion at my home in London.

I trained as a drama teacher, but only taught for a year before working in theatre and TV for 15 years as a stage manager. Then I took a degree in Theology at King's College, London, and now work at Lambeth Palace, where I have met **SARAH RAWLING**, who left St Elphin's in 1992.

Obituaries

IT IS OUR SAD DUTY TO REPORT THE DEATHS OF THE FOLLOWING OLD GIRLS.

JOAN FREEMAN, who taught maths at St Elphin's from 1931-35, died on 28 December 2000 aged 91.

Stella Allen writes: Miss Freeman was a very good teacher and a wonderful form mistress. She had been headmistress of the Shute School for many years, and I attended a thanksgiving service in Shute Church near Axminster, Devon last April. The service was a happy occasion. The preacher even reminded us of her nickname at the Shute School, "mahdi", which means something like "crazy slave driver". Apparently, Miss Freeman even used the name herself. She was much loved and respected by her pupils and in the locality.

VIRGINIA MACAULAY (nee **WATERHOUSE**), 1931-2001, died at her home on the Costa Mijas, Spain, on 1 August 2001. Following a funeral and cremation service in Fuengirola, a Service of Thanksgiving was held at St Peter's

Church, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks on 14 August, and her ashes were scattered in the Garden of Rest at Chalfont St Peter, near the homes of two of her children.

June Gibson (nee Brierley) writes: Virginia (Ginny) was a year my senior at school but we met again at the London Reunion in 1993. Both then living in Buckinghamshire, we continued to meet until Ginny moved to Spain where, as luck would have it, they were only a few miles from our timeshare. So, with our visits to Spain and their visits to family here we were able to enjoy meeting from time to time.

Ginny's sister, Wendy, was also at St Elphin's. She now lives in America.

ELIZABETH CORY died in June 2001, after battling against breast cancer for seven years. She attended St Elphin's from 1961-1969.

Michael Abbott regrets to advise us that his wife, **ERICA HOPE TURNER HANCOCK**, died on 8 November 2001. She was a pupil at the school from 1941-46.

Contact points

WE HAVE RECEIVED a number of requests for addresses of Old Girls.

We are sorry, but at present we are not planning to issue a members' address list. It would be expensive to print and mail out, and it would be out of date as soon as it was printed. Also, all the details are stored in a computerised database so we need to be aware of the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

If you wish to contact any member mentioned in this newsletter, or search for a member, please send us a short note (1 side A4 maximum), stating the name (and nee) of the person you wish to

contact and your own contact details. The OGG secretaries will then enclose your message in the next newsletter mailing. It will be for the recipient then to make a reply. Please note that we cannot guarantee that our database is up to date.

All correspondence should be sent directly to:

Mrs Helen Fairley, School Secretary, St Elphin's School, Darley Dale, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2HA.

Please send e-mail to: admin@st-elphins.co.uk

Alternatively, why not join our news-group? Details on page 1.

KAREN ASHURST (Powys 1978-1980) writes: After leaving St Elphin's I continued my rackets lifestyle living overseas – playing, working and living in Italy, Bahrain and Cape Town. Then I decided that perhaps education was a great thing after all, so I re-sat my A-levels and went to Southampton University where I took a 2i in Politics. Work really kicked off and, among others, worked for an “infamous” cabinet minister. I am now very settled living in Hampshire and work in PR withing the pharmaceutical industry. I stayed in touch with Chris Middleton (Jarvis), former housemistress of Powys, for a number of years.

ALLISON COPE (nee JUSTICE, Powys 1983-88) writes: After leaving the school in 1988, I worked as an office junior for Glow-Worm in Belper, Derbyshire, where I now live. In 1991 I left England to go to Dubai, where I worked as a secretary for Kuwait Oil Company, just after the Gulf War. I returned to England in 1996 – homesickness brought me back. I worked for Thorntons for two years

as a PA to the factory manager, then moved to Bowmer & Kirkland Ltd as office administrator. I married Darrell Cope in 1999, and our first baby is due on 26 December 2001.

I have kept in touch with HELEN GILBERT and CATHERINE EADIE (nee BARR), and would love to contact SHALINI NAIR and anyone else who was in the same year as me. Helen Gilbert keeps me up to date with what ANNIE BISHOP and NATASHA WEST are up to.

DAWN BRAITHWAITE (nee JENKINSON) attended St Elphin's from 1978-1986, together with her older sister CLARE. She writes: Clare and I both now live in Australia, and have married Australians. I live in Sydney and Clare lives in Broome. Neither of us have children, although I have two smooth fox terriers, which are a good enough substitute for the time being. I have been a chef for 13 years, the last two at the Regent Hotel in the city, as pastry chef. My husband, Tracy, is also a chef. I would love to hear from my contemporaries.

BARBARA BAER (nee WARD) (Wilson House,

1945-48) writes: PAM EDWARDS (nee GAMBLE) and her husband, who live in New Zealand, stayed with us for two weeks in August. We were able to meet JENNY CHORLTON, MARY BEVINGTON and AUDREY CUNNINGHAM (nee GARDNER) for lunch in London. Pam has been able to spend a couple of hours with MARY STAPLETON (nee SAPWELL). I am in regular contact with the two Marys, and meet Jenny quite often. Mary S and I are godmothers to Pam's younger daughter. Mary B is godmother to my daughter, and Mary S is godmother to one of my twin sons.

RACHAEL HORN (nee MACLACHLAN, Wilson House 1983-90), has contacted the OGG to say that she is very interested in receiving news. She is living in Nunavut, Canada.

PETER POLLARD writes: Members will be interested to have up-to-date news of two nonagenarians: Miss Philippa Robinson and Miss Dorothy Watts. In January, Miss Robinson celebrated her 93rd birthday. Not long before this, Mr Richard Horne, a present Governor, visited

her in Poole and found her in excellent spirits. She loves to have news of the school and of former pupils, and was delighted that the school had been in touch for her birthday this year.

Miss Watts, also 93, have been unwell recently and is currently in hospital in Buxton. However, she too is remarkably resilient and enjoys the contact she has with current and former staff, who visit and keep an eye on her.

Just recently I spent two nights in Darley Dale and, thanks to Mrs Taylor's kindness, was able to stay in St Katherine's, my home for 15 years. I had forgotten how beautiful those hills look on a sunny March morning, and it was a joy to be able to spend time in school, seeing exciting new developments and meeting old friend, as well as making acquaintance of new staff and current pupils. It was a privilege to share in a Eucharist in the Chapel once again as I knew it. (The altar has reverted to its former position and this was the first service to take place after the change.)

So much is happening at St Elphin's and there's a “buzz” about the place

which I found exciting. And of course, the pupils are as impressive as they have always been.

P.s. I noticed in The Times of 5 March that FINOLA DOYLE, Head Girl during the 1980s is engaged to be married to Mr James Godber of Buckinghamshire.

Missing persons

On 26 November 2001, **GRAHAM CAMPBELL** of Cosway, Australia wrote: In the mid-1950s I lived in Warren Carr, Darley Dale. My neighbours were called WILLIAMSON, and they had two children, ROSEMARY and David. Rosemary I know went to St Elphin's, and I wonder if any member knows how to contact her or her family, as I would like to catch up with them on my next rip to the UK?

The following names are on the OGG mailing list but do not have addresses. Please will any member who knows of their whereabouts contact the school (details on page 3) so that we can amend our records?

MISS RUTH TURNER; MISS ROSANNA SIU, 23 Borrett Road, Flat C9; MISS SHIRLEY SAI-WAI, 2 Park Road, 7/F Block B; MISS KATHLEEN KERSHAW; MRS LOUISE JENKINS; MISS NATASHA; MISS ZOFIA; DR PAULINE WHITEHOUSE; MISS RITA LEE; MRS HAZEL JOHNSON; MISS CAROLINE GAZEL; MISS WENDY HOULSTON; MRS SYLVIA ISAACS.

Darley Dale reunion and AGM

THIS YEAR'S REUNION and AGM will be held at the school on **Saturday 18th May**, from 10am to 5pm. The whole family is welcome to join the fun – please bring raffle prizes. We hope that a few current pupils will be on hand to show us the latest developments at the school.

Order for the day:

10.00am	Registration and coffee	2.00pm	Time to wander
11.00am	AGM	3.30pm	Chapel
1.00pm	Buffet lunch	4.00pm	Tea, raffle and farewell

DARLEY DALE 2002 REUNION BOOKING FORM

Please reserve.....place(s), priced £10.00 (adults), £5.00 (under 16s).

I enclose a cheque, made payable to “S.E.O.G.G.” for: £.....

Name (please print).....Nee.....

Address.....

.....Post Code.....

Phone.....Dates/House when at school.....

Please return this slip (no later than 3 May 2002) to:

SEOGG, c/o The School Secretary, St Elphin's School, Darley Dale, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2HA

NB: if you wish to view the DRAFT Constition before the AGM, please enclose an SAE.

London link-up

WE ARE PLEASED to confirm that we will be going ahead with the London reunion at Regent's College on Saturday 9 November, as mentioned in the last Newsletter.

Further details and prices will be advertised in the Autumn newsletter.