

# Newsletter

Old Elphinians

Spring 2003

Issue 4

## Best laid plans fail to meet expectations

DESPITE THE gloomy winter weather and the unsettled political climate as this Newsletter “goes to bed”, I am determined to think positively, writes Old Elphinians’ Secretary, Melanie Thompson. This year we will meet at the School for a reunion and our Annual General Meeting on Saturday 17 May, and I am looking forward to a happy social gathering, with a good dollop of Derbyshire sunshine.

The minutes from last year’s AGM were printed in our *Newsletter* no. 3 (Autumn 2002), as was the revised Constitution. Our agenda this time will take up where we left off in May 2002 (see page 2).

But I confess that it’s not so easy to think positive when things are not going

so well for our “society”. Despite our hopes, there has not been a swell in attendance at our reunions; only York consistently draws a decent number.

The London reunion in November 2002 was particularly disappointing, in more ways than one. We numbered only 23 – of which eight were Old Elphinian committee members and school staff. This meant that we have suffered a significant financial loss, which Sarah Brain, our Treasurer, will report to the AGM. It is such a pity that so few of you were able to come. The venue was ideal for a reunion of this sort, and although the food was a little costly, it was roundly praised.

When we first mooted the idea of a London meeting, we called for

“expressions of interest” to be sent. As it turned out, those few people, plus a few faithful stalwarts, were the only ones who made it on the day.

### Your views count

The lack of participation leads me to wonder what it is that you really want from us, your committee. With this in mind, I will propose a motion at the AGM in May that we circulate a survey in our next (Autumn) newsletter to find out exactly what you want.

Please do contact us if there is anything you would like to be included on the Agenda, and do come to the AGM and reunion in May to support the committee.

We would also be very pleased to hear from anyone who would like to join the committee or to stand for the posts of Secretary, or Treasurer. It’s not that we are resigning, just that we don’t want to stand  
*...continued on page 2*

## Rekindle musical memories

ANDREW JACKSON – who many of you will remember as an energetic member of the St Elphin’s music team during the 1980s – has suggested that next year we might hold a “Vienna reunion” to celebrate the fact that it will be 20 years since we all set off on the very successful and enjoyable Choir Tour of Vienna.

This is a great idea, particularly as the timing coincides with the School’s 100th anniversary on the Darley Dale site.

So, we are proposing to hold a choir reunion in the Summer of 2004 at the School, on the same day as the annual reunion and AGM. The day will include a short rehearsal, lunch, and a concert performance for other visitors, staff and students. The timings and programme will be discussed at the AGM and in the next *Newsletter*.

If we are to make this a successful and enjoyable event, we need huge support from everyone who went on the Tour, and also from any other Old Elphinians who would like to join in.

In light of recent events, we have decided to seek a firm financial commitment from you before we take this further. Therefore, if you would like to join in, please send a cheque for £10 (payable to Old Elphinians) as a deposit, to the usual address (see page 4), together with a short note stating your name, address, phone number and voice part (also any ‘requests’ [No Bartok thanks! Ed.]). Deposits must reach the Old Elphinians by **10 May 2003**.

We will refund your deposit in full if the event is cancelled, or if you are unable to attend for any reason.

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Editorial, continued...

in the way of anyone with a burning ambition to take up the reins!

Can I also just add a (barbed) note of thanks to the "helpful" people who wrote to point out the typographical errors in the last newsletter.

I do apologise for any mistakes, especially the omission of the date for the London reunion, but I'm sure you will appreciate that there is a lot to be done in a short time and no one is perfect. What a pity it is that those who complain do not volunteer to help out!

#### Provisional agenda for the AGM

1. Apologies
2. Matters arising from the minutes
3. Head's report
4. Officers' reports
5. Vote of thanks (to out-going officers)
6. Motion: Helping the school
7. Motion: Date of the AGM
8. Motion: "Members' survey"
9. Changes to subscriptions
10. Date for next AGM

## Success all round in 2002

MRS TAYLOR, the Head, writes: This year we decided not to declare our GCSE and A level results for League Table purposes, joining the protest with other independent schools against the unfair criteria employed to calculate them. However, when the results were published in the national press, we found ourselves in 4th place in Derbyshire, above such eminent schools as Mount St Mary's and Abbotsholme.

We were particularly pleased with our Art and Textiles A level students since there's a 1 in 10,000 chance of gaining 100% in Art A level, but we had three girls achieving this excellent mark. And just to show what all-rounders our girls are, one of our 100 percenters is now studying medicine at Sheffield! At GCSE we are equally blessed, with nearly a third of the year group gaining nine or more As and A\*s.

Exams are important, but not the only success we've had. Our choir has performed from Buxton to York Minster,

finishing the Christmas term with a wonderful Victorian Evening set on the terrace, in Stopford Hall, in the entrance hall and in the Chapel. The Juniors delighted us with Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and the seniors are hoping to repeat their 'Grease' success of last year with 'Our Day Out'.

We separated Speech Day and Founders' Day this year, having Speech Day and a (washed-out) Sports Day in July. Don Hale, the Journalist of the Year, was our speaker. Founders' Day started in school in January with Eucharist then went on to St Helen's, our parish church, for a lovely service with contributions from Infant, Juniors and Seniors and an address by Archdeacon David Garnett (complete with a day-old chick) before coming back to school for tea.

Some things change, some traditions live on. As our numbers steadily grow for the third year running we look forward to meeting Old Elphinians when you visit us in May.

## Reunion and AGM booking form

THIS YEAR'S REUNION and AGM will be held at the School on **Saturday 17th May**, from 10am to 5pm. Do bring along your family too; encourage the dads to take the children to Matlock Bath for the morning, then ask them to join us for lunch and a refreshing walk around the grounds. We hope that a few current pupils will be on hand to show us the latest developments at the school. Raffle prizes most welcome.

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

### ST ELPHIN'S REUNION 2003 BOOKING FORM

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

I enclose a cheque, made payable to "Old Elphinians" for: £.....

Name (please print).....

Nee.....

Address.....

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

Phone.....E-mail.....

Dates/House when at school.....

Please return this slip (no later than 2 May 2002) to:

Old Elphinians, St Elphin's School, Darley Dale, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2HA

## Money matters

I have had the accounts audited from 26 June 1999 to 23 January 2002, writes Old Elphinians' Treasurer, Sarah Brain. I am arranging to have the next year's accounts (24 Jan 2002 to 31 March 2003) audited before the AGM, when I shall present a report.

June 1999 to January 2002:

Balance brought forward . . . . .	£268.49
Income for period . . . . .	£3763.16
Total . . . . .	£4031.65
Expenditure for period . . . . .	£2228.63

Balance at Building Society . . £1803.02

#### Fundraising

Despite a lack of support from Old Elphinians I did go ahead with the "Old Elphinians Raffle" at the School's Christmas Bazaar. I produced two food and wine hampers, one toiletries basket and one fruit basket. I claimed £30.13 expenses, but donated the balance myself. We raised £84.87. I think this was a worthwhile venture because it generated a lot of interest in the Old Elphinians, but I would need stronger support from you all if I am to repeat the exercise.

# News

## Correspondence received

If you wish to contact any of the people mentioned below, please write to the Old Elphinians (see page 4 for details).

Former Head Girl, **RACHEL WOODHOUSE** is a nurse, working in Matlock. She is going to climb Mt Kilimanjaro to raise funds for SCOPE. Any of her friends or teachers who would like to sponsor her adventure should ring her on 078555 47571.

**TITI IRIAH** (nee OLAREWAJU) is married with two children (eight and one) and lives in Canada. She writes: My husband is a graphic designer and I run my own business. I was an Account Executive with a recruiting firm until last year but decided to open up my own business. Hobbies – singing (thanks Mr. Jackson) and travelling.

**KATIE ELSE** writes: I moved to Mullingar, Southern Ireland, about 10 months ago, and I'm absolutely loving it. Still making it back to the UK for weddings (ALEX DELLOUNGO RAPER (DEL LUONGO)) and reunions with the rest of the crowd: SARAH DAVIES (LAMB), CATHERINE LEES (MALKINSON), LAURA-JANE BLANT (QUICK), SARAH WILLIAMS (TARBATT), NICKI TARBATT (ALLEN), KATHERINE SAVIDGE, JANE TOWEND and NICKI HEATHCOTE.

**MITCHY JALALI** is working in Miami, USA as the paediatric transplant co-ordinator for the second largest US transplant program. But later this year she is planning to give it all up to enter grad. school to study Art History. She plans to get a PhD and teach.

**SARAH BLAKE (PATTINSON)** has moved to Darmstadt, Germany, where her partner Rick is working at the European Space Centre. She writes: Darmstadt is okay. There are some few good museums, a

lovely park and pretty good shopping (and bars!). We will be here until the end of May.

**GITTA GEMMEL** recently joined the Old Elphinians news-group, and writes: After my O levels I went back to Sweden and did my A levels there, then went to a hotel secretary school in Stockholm. In 1970 I moved to Munich and worked as a hotel receptionist for two years. Then I worked for a publisher (newspapers and magazines) for six years. After that I changed again and worked for 18 years in a travel agency. In 1996 I moved to Tuscany, Italy with my German boyfriend. We live in a small village near Siena.

**DEBBIE CAIRNS (CROXALL)** was married last year, and lives in Edinburgh.

**PETER POLLARD** writes: You will be interested to know that **MISS PHILLIPA ROBINSON** has recently celebrated her 94th birthday. I arranged for the School to send flowers and cards, and was in touch with her Godson. She still lives independently, but is becoming more dependent on outside help. Yet her strength of character and spirit are undiminished!

**SAMANTHA HAY** recently starred in HMS Pinafore at the Savoy Theatre, London.

**SARAH BRAIN (STRAW)** writes: In September 2002 my husband and I showed around a party of former pupils, including **SARAH RANDELL**. I have also heard from: **SARAH LYTE** who was at the school in the 1970s and would like to hear from **JILL LEACH**; and **DENISE ALLDAY** who would like to contact **MARY JANE FRANCES (DAVYS)**. Denise writes: My, how the school has changed. Where are all the long black cloaks we used to have to wear to hide our legs while out walking behind the school gates?!

I was a pupil at St Elphin's from 1963-69 and was Head Girl during my last

year when Miss Robinson was Head, writes **JO LEWIS**. I have recently moved to the Isle of Wight with my husband.

I have very sad news to report. My daughter died in June 2002, in a helicopter crash off the coast of America while she was serving in the Royal Navy. We had a beautiful memorial service for her for all our friends and family, including three of my school friends – **VICKIE BOWN (BURNS)**, **MARY HOWARTH (WILLIAMS)** and **MARY BROUGHTON (DAY-BELL)**. **HILARY HEPWORTH** and **MARGARET HOW (JONES)** also sent their condolences.

**SUSAN J F LEIGH (WILLIAMS)** writes to say that she was in Bakewell in November and went past the school. [Do call in next time, Susan!] She writes: We moved to the Isle of Man with my father and one son. Since our move my father has died and we now have the sad task of rearranging his rooms. I am anxious to contact **SUSAN PAMELA THOMAS**, who was at St Elphin's in about 1962. She was Head Girl and I think her married name is Williams. We lost touch and I have been unable to contact her, despite several attempts.

**MARGARET BORTHWICK (WHITEHEAD)** worked at the school from 1960-62. She wonders if any staff or pupils remember her. Her details are on the Friends Reunited website.

**OLIVIA RILEY** was in Kennedy House and left St Elphin's in 1997. She is based in Christchurch, New Zealand, with her fiancé, and has contacted the school to offer her hospitality to sixth-formers planning a "gap year".

**FIONA D HIBBERT** left St Elphin's in 1998, and has graduated with a First in Geography from Queen Mary College, University of London. Next year she is planning to study for an MSc in Law and Environmental Science. She reports that **KATIE-MARIE BAUGHAN** has gained an

MSc in Marine Chemistry at Bangor, and **GEORGINA ELDER** has graduated in nursing in London.

**PAULINE WHITEHOUSE** studied Medicine in London and is now a surgical registrar living near Southampton. She will marry Captain Niall Martin, also a doctor, in July 2003.

**FLORENCE MAHONEY** sent a postcard to Mrs Taylor, following a recent visit to the school. Florence lives in The Gambia. She writes: it was kind of you to receive **JOAN DOYLE** and myself so very warmly. Our visit brought back so

many memories, especially happy ones of the beautiful chapel where I was Sacristan and Server. How very modern you have made the dorms! I wonder if so much comfort is good for the girls. The Art/textiles room was out of this world.

**MARY AITCHISON (DAVIDSON)** was at St Elphin's from 1940-45. She contacted us from her home in Lytham.

**OLGA CHRISTINE CONSTABLE (JOHNSON)** was at the school from 1943-56, in Wilson or Kennedy House, then in Fletcher House. She lives in Two Dales.

# Obituaries

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

**JEAN WADDELL**, who attended the school from 1939-45 died of cancer in January. Her funeral was held at Ashford Holy Trinity church, and donations were collected in aid of Newholme Hospital, Bakewell.

**PHOEBE M MILTON** wrote to inform us of the death of **MARY EVANS (FUTU)** on 10 May 1997. Mary had been in Wilson house. Phoebe also writes: Many readers will remember the Kelham Fathers, who were the "prophets" for the weekend. Father Paul Huwe came to us many times, and played a good game of tennis. I have seen him several times over the last few years. He was blind, but was very well looked after in Milton Keynes. Sadly he died in August and a memorial service was held in September at Willen.

**JUDY CROOK** writes: **HELEN CAWOOD** died in Ashgate Hospice on 28 September 2002. Her long and happy teaching career at St Elphin's spanned almost 30 years. Sadly Helen's retirement was not long. She had spent several weeks at the hospice

following surgery in June. During August, although weak, she was still alert and caring about and praying for folk whom she felt were in more need than she was. I shall always remember the visit when I wheeled her into the lovely garden and we sat in the sun and dead-headed roses, which she had noticed needed attention.

In recent years Helen had done some beautiful patchwork, and she had updated the Old Elphinians' Book of Remembrance. During the last year in her Two Dales home Helen enjoyed the company of Monty, her black-and-white cat (now with her niece).

The funeral and thanksgiving service on 4 October was held in a packed church. The number who had travelled there reflected the affection in which Helen was held, not only for conscientious and excellent art teaching, but as a caring friend. Helen asked for John 3:16 to be read at her funeral. I know Helen would love you to ponder again on those words which meant so much to her.

**ANDREW JACKSON** writes: **DOROTHY WATTS** passed away in Stepping Hill Hospital, Stockport, on 10 June 2002, aged 93. Miss

Watts taught Piano and Speech and Drama at St Elphin's for twenty-five years, and was respected by generations of girls.

Dorothy lived for her teaching at St Elphin's, as well as for the countless private pupils that she taught and encouraged at her home in Buxton. She had very high standards and her pupils achieved excellent examination results consistently, even in her latter years. Her pupils benefited from her vast experience as a festival adjudicator and as an examiner for the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

Miss Watts had a long association with the Buxton Festival of Music and Drama, being its

Chairman for many years. She forged a link between the Festival and St Elphin's. So many of us will remember the coach journeys up the A6 to take part in the festival. Such outings were challenging, but great fun and provided many memorable experiences, thanks to Miss Dorothy Watts.

Dorothy was one of the "Old School", a shining example to pupils and colleagues alike. Sadly, in recent years she suffered poor health, but even so, she had tremendous determination and maintained a wonderful sense of humour.

Her funeral, on 21 June, was held at St Mary's Church in Buxton, and was attended by a large number

of former pupils, colleagues and friends. Dorothy would have liked that – to be among so many people who valued her friendship and had tremendous respect for her teaching and integrity.

PETER POLLARD writes: the news of the death of COLONEL KENNETH HOBBS last November came as a shock, and was received with much sadness. Bursar at St Elphin's for 20 years, from 1974, he worked with five Heads, and earned the respect and affection of each one, and of all the staff who worked under him. He and his assistant, Mrs Margaret Renshaw worked so well together and were a formidable duo, as all staff realised!

Naturally, as a close colleague and friend over 15 years – and beyond – I came to know him well.

Tall in stature and impressive in manner, Ken Hobbs's chief attributes were his strong sense of duty and his total loyalty to his employees and to the school. He loved the big occasions, when not a detail was overlooked; he expected to work long hours without a murmur of complaint; and he was always a fine ambassador for the school in the community outside. Nothing was too much trouble for him – "no problem" being his response to any request made!

His years at the school brought consolidation and

major changes. New and impressive buildings were his special concern. The premises were increasingly "let" during holidays and he received glowing tributes from those who visited or stayed in school year after year.

Ken Hobbs liked people, and was at ease with those from all walks of life. He acted as Secretary to the Friends for many years and was involved in fund-raising for the British Heart Foundation. Many of you may also remember Hardy and Perkins, the Bursar's pet dog and cat in my early years at St Elphin's.

We send our condolences to his widow and to his stepdaughters, Carol and Jane (both Old Elphinians).

## Destination York

PETER POLLARD has organised the fourth biennial reunion in York. This year's event will be held at St William's College, College Street, York (adjacent to York Minster) on **Saturday 15th November**, from noon to 4pm.

"After three happy Reunions at St William's College, York, it seems appropriate to return there for our autumn gathering this year," he writes. "I do hope that once again I can count on your support. On previous occasions we have catered for around 70 people, from all school generations. Let's hope we can make this one 'better than ever'. I am hoping to persuade a number of former staff to be with us on this occasion.

"Catering charges have been raised a little, but for what we get I believe the total cost of £21.50 this time is very reasonable. As before, I've arranged a three-course lunch, with wine available by the glass (or bottle). Once again, there will be a raffle in aid of Old Elphinian funds."

### YORK REUNION BOOKING FORM

Please reserve.....place(s) at the 2003 York reunion, priced £21.50. I enclose a cheque, made payable to "Old Elphinians" for: £.....

Name (please print).....

Nee.....

Address.....

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

Phone.....

Dates/House when at school.....

Please return this slip (no later than 10 October 2003) to:

Peter Pollard, Elgin, High Street, Thornton Dale, Pickering, North Yorks YO18 7QW. Tel: 01751 474229

## Contact points

ALL CORRESPONDENCE should be sent directly to: Old Elphinians, St Elphin's School, Darley Dale, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2HA.

Please send e-mail to: [admin@st-elphins.co.uk](mailto:admin@st-elphins.co.uk). Alternatively, why not join our news-group? Simply send a blank e-mail to:

[Elphinians-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Elphinians-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).



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