

OLD ELPHINIANS SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2006.

Dear Old Elphinians,

From 1981 to 1999 I was Peter Pollard's deputy and I am in that role again now. Peter has had a very difficult year and is taking a long time to recover from the problems, which overwhelmed him last autumn. I keep in touch and he sends warmest greetings to you all.

A very big thank you to everyone who made the thanksgiving service at St Elphin's Church, Warrington, on 11th March 2006 such a special occasion; it was good to see so many staff and old girls and thank you to all who contributed to the service and thank you too to those whose thoughts and prayers were with us even though they were not able to be there themselves. We were warmly welcomed at the church by the rector and had a wonderful tea at the local church primary school which has recently incorporated the name of St Elphin into its official title. We left feeling that we should like to return in the future and perhaps give some support to the church and school.

I was pleased that we had been able to support former school suppliers – a Slacks coach brought 50 from Matlock to Warrington thanks to Sue Spriggs' organisation and the service sheets were produced by Image printing. Spare copies of these are available if you send an A5 (9" x 6.5" or 240 x 165mm) stamped (23p for one copy) addressed envelope to Christine Tew. (N.B. larger envelopes now need 37p postage).

On a personal note I want to thank you very much for the beautiful Camellia plant with which I was presented on that occasion. So many folk had worked hard that I feel I should be sharing it with you all!

Christine Tew has worked tirelessly for the Old Elphinians for a long time. She retired once but then was brought back as secretary to help us over a crisis. She tells me she would like to retire (again!). I do hope that as many as possible will come to the November reunion so that we can

show our support and thank her for all she has done.

Our old school buildings are still empty and rather forlorn but there was an article in the recent Darley Dale "Update" stating that Audley Court have applied for planning permission and work could begin in October 2006. There will be a range of central facilities for the community (including library, restaurant, health spa) and 129 small apartments for housing the over 55s. More information is available from Audley on 01784 457615 or visit www.audleycourt.co.uk

I look forward to seeing you in Nottingham in November and I hope you are all enjoying the summer!

With my very best wishes,
Judy Crook.

Dear Old Elphinians,

I do hope you are all keeping well. After the bustle of helping to organise and attending the Thanksgiving Service in Warrington Parish Church, things seem to have gone very quiet on the Old Elphinians front. I would like to thank those of you who sent me letters and cards of thanks, they were greatly appreciated. In particular I would like to record my most grateful thanks to Judy Crook for the organisation of the service. It would never have been possible without all her excellent organisational skills. It would not have taken place had she not been at the helm.

As Judy has already mentioned I feel that it is definitely time for me to pass on the job of secretary to someone else. When Peter asked me to take over when Melanie resigned I did say that I would only take it on for a limited time. How time flies I think that must have been three years ago. During that time we have had the sadness of the school closing, but we have still managed to hold two successful reunions and also the Thanksgiving and I do hope that the reunion in

Nottingham will also be a success. The Old Elphinians can only continue if you, the members, support it. The monetary situation at the moment is healthy. To try to enable as many members as possible to be able to attend reunions I am trying to persuade a member from the South West to organise the reunion for 2007 in that area. If I have any more details by the time the newsletter is complete they will be included.

I have enjoyed being your Secretary in particular all the contact with you that it has involved. However I am due to retire in the next eighteen months and intend to take up new interests and expand on the ones that I already have. I started to play golf about two years ago and hope to get better (there is plenty of room for improvement!) and I would also like to travel more.

With many thanks for all your help,
Christine

P.S Judy and I decided that you might be interested in the memories which were submitted and also the address by the Lay Chaplain Mrs Wendy Kenyon and so have decided to print them. We do not have much actual news from Old Girls for this edition as it was all printed in the previous newsletter.

Message for St Elphin's at Warrington Saturday 11th March 2006

Its very special to have been asked to speak here today – and I'd like to thank Judy Crook on behalf of us all for the work that she has put in to getting this service together.. It does say at the top of our orders of service that each of us involved is just one of a long line of chaplains, teachers, governors, parents, pupils...and I feel very humble to be here as the last chaplain of St Elphin's following so many much loved and deeply spiritual men – a couple of whom are here today and others who have already been mentioned.

If we had had our Eucharist service in our chapel this week, we would have heard the story of God putting the rainbow in the sky and promising total commitment to us, no matter how bad things got. It is a wonderful message of hope and reassurance that, like the rainbow, is especially meaningful after grey

skies and dreary days. Today we hope that there is a definite sense of the sun breaking through and God's light reaching out to us in all its colours of the spectrum to meet us at whichever wavelength we're on.

At the Centenary service in 2004, when we celebrated 100 years of being on the Darley Dale site, I made the analogy of St Elphin's being like a person who changes over the years – changing in looks and interests and personality and unrecognisable to some who knew her at a different stage. Its true of us isn't it? We know the school of our era and that for us is St Elphin's. We look around and recognise some as part of us but don't know others... Yet however much a person changes – it is the same person. We are all equally St Elphin's and we are held together by a common thread. The difficulty for us today, however, is that we're coming from slightly different places – some of us are primarily glad to be here, seeing old friends, sad that we're not in Darley Dale but full of thanks for our time in the past. Others, who were there at the end, may find today harder, there's perhaps more of a keen sense of grief still for those. So if you'll forgive me I feel we must address the pain and darkness before we turn to the healing and light of our thanksgiving service.

We haven't called this a memorial service – but we might have done. There was a death last year and it was long and drawn out and very painful. It bore all the hallmarks of a terminal decline – we fought it, we believed we could beat it, we looked to other experts to find a cure, a solution, we weren't going to lie down and die...we prayed, we looked to God for intervention, for a miracle, and at the end in our disappointment we were weary and found ourselves ready to go. It was hard for those who were there and this year has been one of grief and loss for many of us.

Nisi Dominus Frustra 'Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain'. Canon Wilson gave us this motto from Ps 127. He knew that God was building something at St Elphin's at the time of its recent move to Darley Dale and he also knew that our school was only going to succeed if God was at the helm as its guiding force...

It did succeed. It became something very precious and bore fruit that none of us can quantify. Each of us needs to know that whatever we do the same is true for us 'Nisi Dominus Frustra'. But what are we to make of the end of the school, a year ago today?

Had we moved so far into our *own* building work that it was all '*in vain*'? Perhaps.

Had God ceased to be involved and had he given up on us then? Certainly not.

During that frantic time of the recovery fund appeal, so many of you, and others, wrote to assure us that you and they were praying for us. I remember at the time one girl telling me that whilst she was 'not very religious', she had prayed for the survival of the school every day – many of us did. Isaiah writes the Lord's ear is not 'too dull to hear' (Is 59) – God is not deaf nor is he uncaring. I believe our prayers *were* heard and *are being heard yet*. I also believe our prayers made a difference even if the answer wasn't the saving of the school. How did our prayers make a difference? We ended well. Truth and integrity and love and laughter were there at the end. The bonds that exist between us are immensely strong. Much good has overcome evil. Much light has broken through the darkness. If today is to be a day for closure – and I don't mean of the school – I mean for being able to draw a line underneath the death of a year ago and to be able to begin afresh with new hope and direction – we do need to acknowledge the disappointment and hurt of our failed hope but we also need to acknowledge that much good has been borne out of that ending.

That's why Pam Simpson has worked so hard to donate parts of the school - like an organ donation and transplant - to places near and far for *their* life and health. That's why Ann Hodgson has taken such trouble over the archives. Details of both of these efforts are featured on the back page of the service sheets. That's why Judy Crook has been compiling so many of your memories of the school – indeed she has been deluged with them – because we have so loved and cherished our time there. And Brenda Bower's legacy to the school is to be used in a trust for the education of others in the future.

St Elphin's is still touching our lives and the lives of others... in eastern Europe, in Africa, wherever each of *us* is placed... and it's time to say thank you.

Saying thank you today is a way of proclaiming that the closure of our school may have hurt, but we are more than that *place*; we are St Elphin's. Death will not have the victory – it will not have the final say – and we will be marked by the school's *life* not its death. If the faith we were taught in that chapel has anything to say to us – it is that in Christ death never has the victory – God always has another punch line – he delights to bring new life unexpectedly and

marvellously when death appears to have won. God is a God of resurrection and he offers us new life.

It all began here with the Rev Edmund Entwistle preaching on the Rich Young Ruler back in 1697 – 309 years ago. If it had not been for him there would have been no pension fund for widows and adult daughters of clergymen from which Horace Powys was to found the school in 1844. Had it not been for *him* and for that on-going chain of people who dedicated themselves to our school, had it not been for some of *you*, – not one of us would be here today. What a privilege to have been part of it. We thank God for these special people of courage and vision and faith.

It was Margaret Flood who wrote these words:

'The chapel represents the soul of the school. The outward form of it and its services may change, methods of administration and education must inevitably change as time goes on, but the School has an immortal soul, a shrine at the centre of its being, which is the Dwelling Place of the Most High.'

We don't have the chapel any more, but the immortal soul lives on. It strikes me that this is in much the same way the early Christians had to learn that when the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed, *they* were the temples of the Holy Spirit. *We* are the soul of St Elphin's. Our school was built on vision and courage and service and love and faith. How are we going to take that soul of St Elphin's to others? How can we be the next Powys or Wilson? 309 years ago these walls heard the Rev. Entwistle end his sermon quoting the letter to the Hebrews 6: 10 and I want to close with those same words which constitute the same promise to us today.

'God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.'

We are part of something God has built and it has not been in vain, it has been the most marvellous privilege, it has been the most extraordinary adventure. May God continue to bless us and to send us out to others in his continuing work.

Memories of St Elphin's for Service on Saturday 11th March 2006

Memory 1a *Memories of around 1946 by
Joan Doole nee Gregory*

I remember my 4 years at St Elphin's for the caring and understanding staff- especially Miss Jasper and Miss Hunt- and the lifelong friends that have meant so much to me and my family in the years since— Katy Soutter and Florence Peters (now Mahoney).

Florence arrived from the Gambia for the sixth form in 1946, the first African pupil at the school. Those of us old enough will remember this was a VERY cold winter with 30ft snowdrifts on Farley Hill. We could not visualise then a country that was always hot just as Florence could not have understood a country that was so bitterly cold—there was no TV in those days.

We struck up a friendship while getting ready for Games one day-in adverse weather conditions! SO when we were on WALKS—in pairs, in the sixth form, we were up the fields, quickly down to my home by the council school, into the back gate after a quick look around to make sure no one saw us and into the warmth! We were looked after and kept fed and warm by my mother until we crept out- unobserved we hoped - and returned to school warm and happy.

At a reunion in London some years later Florence's brother came with me. I introduced him to Miss Jasper as Florence's brother- she quietly said—"Oh yes, I remember, you used to go on such long walks together"! We obviously had not fooled her - but how wise she had been to keep quiet. This was a very useful ploy that I have been glad to use on many occasions since!

Each of our extended families have shared a great friendship, together with Katy, in the many years since. Florence's three boys and our three girls are very close and caring friends. They consider themselves to be brothers and sisters which fascinates people!

All thanks to St Elphin's and their caring staff and my caring parents who welcomed Florence and her family into our lives.

Memory 1b *memories of the war years by Pauline Guard*

I remember sewing a white collar onto a blue check dress every Saturday morning – if it wasn't sewn correctly it had to be re-done.

I hated crocodile walks and much preferred private walks with teachers or the Mirfield Fathers. In order

to go on these you had to knock on the staffroom door and state the name of the person you would like to walk with – you had to open the door, speak BUT not look inside the room!

I hated wearing itchy stockings, held up by suspenders attached to a liberty bodice – ugh!

I decided I should like to prolong my stay in the Sanatorium..... So I put the thermometer on to a hot radiator.....and it broke. I was in deep trouble then!

I did try to run away once but only got as far as the Lodge at the end of the drive.

One pound of jam had to last for a month. I can still get sufficient jam out of a seemingly empty jar much to my grandchildren's amusement.

We were always left with the plum jam as the senior girls had first choice. I have been married for over 50years and have never bought plum jam!

I was very proud of my "stripe" sewn on to my tunic, for deportment

I remember hearing German aeroplanes going overhead – were they bound for my home town of Manchester?

Memory 1c **ELPHINSPEAK** *Mary Lamb, staff 1953-67*

When I think of St Elphin's I remember its vocabulary and wonder if anyone out there remembers it too.

How many recall the location and function of Upper, Lower, the Elephant, Meddi B, Top C, Long C, Back landing and the Bridge.

Who remembers the local landmarks Rickety Bridge, Desolation, Egypt, Toothbrush, One Tree Hill and Long Meadow?

Who knows what was meant by "flicking" or "saccing" (both entirely respectable) and where might OEs have been found "charring"?

Who once stood outside the staffroom door at the weekends and shouted (fortissimo) Please may I speak to CH-A-R-G-E?

What were "signs", "NGIs" and being "two-towards"?

What was a “drawing –room” and a “voluntary obligation”?

And finally did anyone ever discover the identity of the person who innocently or with tongue in cheek translated “Nisi Dominus Frustra” as “Do not frustrate the Headmistress” or was it just a myth?

Memory 2a *read by Rachel Woodhouse*

The three Tuckwell sisters Judith, Patience and Mary were contemporaries of my aunt and mother (I didn't join the school until the 1980s!) and I am reading from Judith's account of the 1950s.

I arrived at St Elphin's in September 1951. Miss Stopford was the Headmistress, I was ensconced in Fox Dormitory (how we longed for the dizzy sophistication of Back Landing or Top Central) It is not fashionable nowadays to admit to being happy at school, but for me it was the beginning of seven happy years.

I remember:- Hockey, Vyella dresses, Sunday silks, the hump, Senior Loakie (plus cockroaches), Tom's field, Chapel Cutting, and vividly the Chapel itself. Music was to become one of the mainsprings of my life and the Chapel Choir gave us an enormously secure foundation. The hymns, anthems and psalms we sang I still remember and certain tunes have the capacity to transport me straight back to that building.

We were allowed an unusual amount of freedom to explore the lovely country surrounding the school; One Tree Hill, Flash Dam, The Lakes were familiar stamping grounds and later, as sixth formers, we were allowed to have tea out in Matlock .

Special events at this time were tea in the rose garden after Speech Day and Sports Day, and Ascension Day form picnics.

I don't think St Elphins in the fifties gave us a particularly good academic education but it gave us many things - good friends, a sense of security and a zest for life. We had fun, we had energy and we laughed a lot.

Memory 2b *Darley Lodge 1960s*

Christine Tew's memories of

For those of us who were fortunate enough to be in Selwyn House (the best House of course) we lived at Darley Lodge. This was a large old house just down the A6 towards Matlock on the opposite side of the road from School. Miss Thompson Music, so named because there had been a Miss Thompson Games, ruled Darley Lodge with a rod of iron. She was also known as Thumper due to the way she played the chapel organ with a very heavy hand. She lived at Darley Lodge with her rather smelly spaniel called Suzy. It was quite a long time before I realised that she also had a glass eye. She drove an old Ford Prefect car and many times we would hear the squeal of brakes as she drove out of Darley Lodge on to a blind bend with gay abandon.

Second in command was Miss Winder, who didn't seem particularly young to us girls, but of course we now realise that she must have been very young because many of you will know her as Mrs Wass. When my daughter started St Elphin's I found it very irritating that my hair was much greyer than hers!

We also had a matron whose job it was in the winter to light the gas fires, which were the only heating we had in the dormitories. We once had the wonderful idea that we could make toast on these; unfortunately Miss Thompson's sense of smell was much better than her eyesight and we were in very serious trouble.

Washing facilities were plastic washing up bowls, which we filled from a large pot sink. There were two cubicles with wash basins in but these were strictly for the prefects, woe betide you if you were caught in one of those. Baths were only twice a week with a limited amount of water.

We led a rather isolated life away from the school, but loved it even though it meant getting up earlier than the other houses to be in school in time for breakfast, and of course remembering our twin sets and jonquils (a type of Clarkes slip on shoe) which we had to change into for tea. Miss Robinson would stand in front of the fire and check everyone, as we filed past, nobody ever escaped her eagle eye. Wrong uniform resulted in an order mark, which were all added up against our houses. I am afraid Selwyn always did rather badly in that department.

Powys nearly always won, but we usually won the house music competitions, and we weren't too bad at Netball and Rounders. I was very sorry to learn that Darley Lodge had been sold and Selwyn disbanded in the 1980s but memories cannot be taken away, and they were for the most part happy ones.

Memory 3a *Read by Sarah Wickham*

As an old girl of 1984-1992 I am reading extracts from two different old girls of the 1960s. This reflects my interests as an archivist, both in the school archives and in my present job.

Firstly choir memories -

The choir visited Warrington twice.

On one occasion we took part in the annual Warrington walks wearing our boaters. Many of the older residents threw money to us, as was the tradition, thinking the school was still for clergy orphans.

The second time was for Colonel Pigot's funeral – the governor after whom the house was named – we wore our grey suits and blue veils and formed the choir for the funeral service.

Miss Thompson ensured we were word and note perfect!

Another choir memory was when we attended a Royal Schools of Church Music choirs festival. Other choirs thought we were novice nuns because of the blue veils we were wearing!

Secondly - (by Monica Lilley nee Trevethick)

We Pigot people slept across the road in Rotherwood. We had such a good time there, separate from the rest of the school. Miss Grant, our laid-back, lovely matron, let us talk till all hours of the night, and we did! - ghost stories, jokes, impersonations. Powys House had rather a thin time as any high jinks used to make Maud Robinson's chandelier swing.

Although we didn't realise it at the time St Elphin's had something very special,, indefinable, an enthusiasm and compassion that was hard to beat.

These memories are so precious; no-one can take them away – they are to treasure.

Memory 3b *read by Jennifer Denning*

David Prytherch was both chaplain and sixth form housemaster in my time at school.

In 1969 the front page of The Daily Express showed the school judo team watching their chaplain fly through the air as one of the team executed a perfect throw! This came about because the sixth form discovered their chaplain had been a member of Cambridge University Judo team. They asked him to

teach them – mainly to learn an effective knowledge of self defence. He set aside an hour a week for this for several years but then decided that he'd had enough bruises!

One of the team used her skills to good effect when being pestered by a man at a dance – her father later met the chaplain and thanked him for the skills he'd taught her.

Another of the team went to Glasgow University to read Medicine but was killed in a car crash while on holiday in Yugoslavia. This was a painful tragedy but members of that sixth form came back to school to join Pat's parents for a requiem in the chapel.

In the mid-70s, after A levels, girls did not leave until the end of term but had 'special' lessons. It is not surprising that there were reactions to this

– LG cycled down the front staircase, across the front hall and out of the front door whooping loudly.

It became a custom that the Upper Sixth planned some clownish action at the end of term. An old car had been given to the school for teaching purposes. It was parked below the athletics pitch near Grove Lane. One year the sixth form crept out of Devonshire at 3am and somehow manhandled the car to the front porch and jammed it into the front door. Remember this took place under the bedroom of the Headmistress!

Memory 4 *memories of the '80s and '90s* *Read by Alex Mayland and Vikki Sheldon*

Boarders' outings

The most memorable was to York Minster when repairs were well underway following the fire in the south transept. As well as visiting the Glaziers Trust (where the new stained glass window for our Chapel was later made), Canon Mayland (my father and also a school governor) took us, wearing our tin hats, up inside the Minster walls so we stood on platforms where we could touch the newly painted bosses in the ceiling. He told us to remember that moment so that on future visits to the Minster we could say 'I once touched that boss up there.'

Other outings included subject trips to Haddon, Chatsworth, Eyam and many other places both in Derbyshire and further afield to enhance our learning.

There were leisure trips to numerous theatres.

Overseas journeys took us to many destinations including Paris, Onzain, Rome, Pompeii, Wurzburg and even Canada.

We enjoyed our hard practices and wonderful performances in House Drama, House Music Competitions and Buxton Festivals.

Particularly memorable school productions include

The Tempest – a magical experience in the gym
Daisy pulls it off – who could forget it?
and later an ethereal Midsummer Night's Dream

And musical productions we remember include

Oliver,
The Mikado,
The Boyfriend and
the very moving Noye's Fludde which involved every girl in the school.

Sporting prowess was certainly healthy

We swam and had galas at the Matlock Lido
We experienced hockey, netball, cross-country running, tennis, rounders and athletics.

We excelled at Debating and Latin speaking.

We showed our business skills through Young Enterprise.

And we were known in the county for our excellence at all levels in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

The 15th November 1990 marked one hundred years since the birth of our most famous old girl, Richmal Crompton.

We all dressed in Edwardian costume, ate appropriate food including bulls eye sweets, and photos of Williams appeared in more than one national newspaper that week!

1994 was a special year which began in January when we had a wonderful service in Derby Cathedral to celebrate 150 years.

In May the Duchess of Kent visited the school – the day began at 7am when the police came with a beautiful spaniel to sniff out the bombs! The lunch menu was chicken and mushroom pie followed by fresh fruit – but HOW does one serve the fresh fruit to Royalty!

A whole weekend for the old girls' reunion that summer

In June the Old Time Musical in Buxton Opera House – a wonderful performance complete with thunderstorm outside and a power cut in the interval.

Nearly all the memories submitted for today have mentioned Christmas – this was a highpoint for every generation,

standing on the staircase above front hall,
singing carols, in an atmosphere of rejoicing.

Some of the memories that weren't read out on 11 March 2006

From David Prytherch, Chaplain and Sixthform housemaster

In the mid-seventies there was a TV series called COLDITZ which portrayed the life of Allied prisoners of war in a Nazi concentration camp. This series was very popular with the Devonshire house sixth form, who rushed to the common room after their study period to watch the film each week.

From time to time they renamed the school Colditz.

A large banner was stretched across the front porch so that visitors arriving for Speech Day were confronted with the one word – Colditz. (*this was done by the girls who jammed the car into front porch*)

Isobel Stevenson reminded Judy Crook of the flood in Summer 1981

I arrived at school one morning to find police cars and fire engines in evidence. A water main had burst in the field above the school. The alarm was raised by the Kennedy Housemistress who found herself ankle deep in water at midnight. The resident staff were up all night dealing with the emergency – the Stopford Hall floor was so damaged it had to be replaced – but Isobel told me she nearly rang me at home (but didn't) to let me know what to expect as a resident deputy head!

I soon learnt about sleepless nights – more than one boarder chose to run away at night – One police sergeant said “we need to search the building first before we report her missing” but after a while of my unlocking doors and him shining his torch he capitulated to my request that she really was missing and took an appropriate course of action.

When the new, sensitive, fire system was installed we had numerous false alarms – I think it was only once that it went off three times in one night!

Even now, when I go to bed, I place slippers and dressing gown in the right place for when the alarm goes off!

Sarah Scott nee Barrett wrote to Judy Crook

I do remember you kindly drove us to the theatre in Chesterfield in the new school minibus. It was pitch black and it started to rain. I think you were looking for the windscreen wiper switch but you switched off the lights instead!

Judith Carter (nee Tuckwell)

I left in 1958 at the same time as Miss Stopford. Heralding the sixties, the school took on a brisker more focused approach, necessary and timely; education for girls becoming recognised as critically important. The ethos of the school remained unchanged but a small, indefinable and precious ingredient was lost then, perhaps for ever?

Choir memories of the 60s by Ann Bisbrown-Lee

On one visit to Warrington, the rector, Canon Longbottom took us up the church spire to show us the magnificent views. (In the 80s Miss Crook escorted two sixth formers to represent the school at Canon Longbottom's memorial service)

Joyce Jackson (nee Daintith)

I went to St. E's in Sept 1942 to teach Biology, Botany, Zoology and later Geography. I was Joyce Daintith from Warrington, but after one term with special permission from bishops and governors, I married Hilary Jackson who was on army embarkation leave. I shared the science teaching with Margaret Hurst, in the boarded over swimming pool! I had to put up with her 'stinks' while she had my croaking frogs. We were fortunate to spend the war in such safe and beautiful surroundings and in a happy community. Does anyone remember the agricultural camps we had at Tissington? One day I went with the workers as a change from 'orderly duties'. It took all day to hoe one enormously long row of turnips. The Chapel is a vivid memory of mine with Greg on the organ. So many happy memories.

I left in autumn 1945, pregnant with a daughter now 60! I still have a few contacts with Old St. E's but if anyone likes to contact me I promise to reply. 127

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email hilary.jackson@durham.anglican.org.

The 11th will be a memorable day; hold on to the happy memories.

GREETINGS

The present bishop of Warrington, Bishop David sends his best wishes for this service.

The previous bishop of Warrington, now the Bishop of Ripon and Leeds, writes "The combination of pastoral care, Christian witness and academic determination made it a privilege to be part of the school."

And the former Bishop of Warrington, Bishop Michael, who was Chair of the governors for over 20 years, sends greetings to you all and says how many happy memories he has of his time at the school.

The bishop of Repton, Bishop David, a recent governor, asked me to convey his gratitude to those who remained committed to their teaching vocation amidst all the upheavals of the final stage. There are members of staff who deserve medals as well as all of those who worked in various capacities to sustain the school until the end of its life.

Several other former governors send greetings including Canon Joc Colling, a former incumbent of this church, Richard Horne, Ewan Callow, Kate Hodkinson.

Apologies and best wishes have also been received from Stephen Yeo, Andrew Teague, David Prytherch, Stephen Jones, Isobel Stevenson, Geoff Preston, Eva Ainscough and Valerie Fisher.

Robert Owen writes

Ruth and I are sorry not to be with you today, due to my commitments over Confirmation weekend at Queen Margaret's School. However, you will all be in our thoughts for this special service of Thanksgiving for St Elphin's. Indeed, we as a family have much to be grateful for: our time at St Elphin's was very happy and our

children, Lauren Amie and Grace always speak about it as their favourite school and refuse to give away their now tiny kilts and grey blazers!. We also made some very good friends there, and still keep in touch with these even 12 years after our departure. St Elphin's will remain a precious memory for all of us.

and then

Peter Pollard (headmaster from 1979-1994) says "I am so very sorry not to be able to share in today's special service at Warrington Parish Church. One year on from the sudden and tragic closure of such a fine school, I hope it will now be easier for everyone to focus on its excellence in educating generations of young women for over 160years. I am proud to have played a part in that heritage and my thoughts are with you all on this occasion."

Many other people are thinking of us today, and not only in this country, but all round the world; its wonderful to know that the school has had pupils from all five continents .

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The Old Elphinians had purchased the picture of Horace Powys which had hung on the stairs at school. Rosemary Thornton made a very appropriate speech as she presented this to the Rector of Warrington..

The offertory (given to the church who had made no charges for the occasion) was taken by Sheila Allen, Katrina Codling, Kathryn Dickens and Ann Hodgson. Andrew Noble played the organ.

Andrew Jackson and Adrienne King led the choir of volunteer old girls who sang "Panis Angelicus" and "A New Commandment".

Mary Goodman read Psalm 121.

Hugh Robinson and Catherine Haynes did the intercessions.

Andy Williams led the service.

News from Old Girls

Mary Cliffe wrote to me in July to tell me that her sister Pat Marshall nee Cliffe died on the 25th June. She was 85 and lived in Canada. Mary and Pat went to St Elphin's in 1930 after their parent's died very young. Pat was only 9 at the time and they were both in the Junior School namely Fox and Willis. Miss Flood was headmistress and really rather frightening, she was followed by Miss Hudson. Nurse

Thompson was Matron of Fox & Willis, Mary believes that she left to marry the school doctor who practised in Bakewell. She remembers being called into her room one Saturday afternoon during a 'rest on their beds period' and told the facts of life. She thought she said the fags of life and thought so for several years until her Grannie corrected her. She thought that maybe the 'fags' was very appropriate. Mary left in 1930 followed eighteen months later by Pat. They both took up nursing careers at St Georges in London. Their cousin Peggy Denning (nee Clarke) joined them at St Elphins and much later Pat's grand-daughter Tracey Thornfield (nee Critchley) also went to the school.

Pat was very friendly with Mabel Dorrit Knight (nee Hand) and had remained in close contact ever since. Mabel lives in Exeter and is naturally very upset at the sad news. Pat leaves a daughter and son-in-law, granddaughter and great granddaughter. They have lived in Canada for about 20 years and have been very happy there.

All the girl's from the Bahamas mentioned below meet up regularly and send their best wishes to all who knew them.

Jeunesse Osadabay is currently heading the Legal and Compliance Unit of Credit Suisse Bahamas Ltd a Swiss Offshore Bank. She has been married but is now divorced but has a beautiful 4 year old son who is her world. Her sister Jackie is married and living in Belize with her husband and 3 kids and is practising law.

Sharmaine Gray and her sister Shonallee are practicing medicine and accounting respectively.

Kenra Francis works as a lawyer at the Financial Intelligence Unit in Nassau.

Bridgetter Igbo nee Sands works at Templeton Advisory.

Kenra Myckelwhite nee Kemp is in an Insurance Company.

Nicole Crawley is married and is at a Commercial Bank..

OLD ELPHINIANS REUNION AND AGM

NATIONAL WATER SPORTS CENTRE
HOLME PIERREPONT
NOTTINGHAM

18TH NOVEMBER 2006. 9 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

The room will be available from 9.00 a.m. and coffee and biscuits will be served between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. The AGM will commence at 11 a.m. and lunch will be served at 1.00 p.m. The cost will be £20 00 per person. Car parking is available on site. The nearest train station is the Nottingham Midland.. A taxi should cost approximately £4 00 from the station to the Water Sports Centre. Please return the slip below by the 1st November with a cheque made payable to Old Elphinians.

NAME.....MAIDEN NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

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TELEPHONE NO.....

EMAIL ADDRESS.....

Return to Christine Tew, 2 Beeston Road, Sheringham NR26 8EH, or email christine@christew.freerve.co.uk