

The 90th Anniversary Reunion of the County Grammar School Godalming (virtual) 17th October 2020

The event began promptly at 2.00 BST, although this meant a very early start for our friends in the United States and Canada and a late one for those in Australia and New Zealand. At the peak of the Zoom meeting there were 74 screens being used, but several people were sharing with friends or family, so the numbers may well have reached or even exceeded 80. Although the majority of participants were in England, notably of course Surrey, there were also members in Wales, Scotland and the Isles of Scilly. Several OGs now live in parts of Europe, in particular France, Portugal, Switzerland and Italy. North America was well represented, with members in California, Nevada, Massachusetts and Canada. The Antipodes had OGs in Western Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand.



Sue Hindle (née Potts 65 – 72), a member of the committee and founding member of the current OGA, welcomed everyone and introduced the various presentations throughout the afternoon. Sue was one of the first girls to go to do Law at University from GGS and then had a long career as a solicitor, both in and around the Guildford/Aldershot area and also in Lancashire. Since retirement she has been travelling and leading meditation retreats for an India based organisation round the world.



The first event was a virtual tour of the old building, filmed and narrated by Marian Muskett (73 – 80). She was in the final intake to the Grammar School in 1973 and lived in Guildford at that time. After leaving school she went on to study Modern Languages at Southampton University and later trained as a Careers Adviser. She has been working as such back at the College since 2001, at which point there were still a number of teachers there who had taught her. [Tour available on the website]



Shirley Coleman (65 – 72), who nowadays teaches Maths, Stats and Physics at Newcastle University, then introduced the new OGA web site and showed the Zoom guests the various aspects of it.



Rod Weale (70 – 77) left Godalming and served in the RAF and Surrey Constabulary before he and his family moved to Tenerife where his wife had been born. Ironically, having failed to take the Spanish O Level, Rod is now fluent! His sons and grandchild still live on the island. After leaving Spain in 2006 Rod worked briefly in Slovenia as a lecturer and management consultant before returning full time to the UK in 2009. He works, when there are tourists, as a tour guide and has been an active member of Lions Clubs International for over 30 years. He is currently working on his third book on The Fallen on War Memorials and is also Chairman of Wonersh Parish Council. His partner Roswitha is German – another language to learn!! Rod gave a moving talk about the Second World War Memorial at Godalming College. He has written a book “To the End, to the

End, They Remain" vol. 2 which is available for purchase. Please contact via the website (theoga.org). [Talk available on the website]



Jane Jopson (67 – 74) introduced the list of teachers which she has compiled. I attended GGS from 1967 - 74. Jane enjoyed her time there as a member of Page house. History taught by Mr Ross was her favourite subject but I left not knowing what I wanted to do - apart from the fact that I loved books. This fortunately stood me in good stead as I worked in most aspects of the book industry culminating in 30 mostly great years in publishing as Group Inventory Manager at HarperCollins from which I retired three days after lockdown started.



School song [lyrics and music can be found on the website] were sung by Hazel Freeston and Cherry Webb (47 – 54). Twin sisters Cherry and Hazel (White) started at the grammar school in 1947 and found that there were 3 pairs of twins in their class of 30. They later became joint head girls in 53/54.



Paul Ellison (67 – 74) attended Godalming Grammar from 1967-74. Following study at the Royal Academy of Music and Cambridge, he taught music in London. In 1988, he emigrated to San Francisco where he now works as an organist and university lecturer. He played the organ of the Church of the Advent of Christ the King, San Francisco ("When Morning Gilds the Skies", "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind", Marche en Rondeau by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, "Lord Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing", Trumpet Voluntary by Jeremiah Clarke) to accompany a slide show of photos of Godalming Grammar School through the years. [Available on the website].



Marta Riddle (65 – 72) gave the answers to the quiz [in a separate file]. Brought up in Farncombe and went to Godalming Grammar School 1965-72. Studied Theology at Hull University followed by a PCGE. Taught in Hull for 2 years then returned to live in Farncombe and became Head of RE at Glebelands in Cranleigh. Married Peter in 1983 and had a daughter in 1986. Retired in 2013 and now looks after her granddaughter 3 days a week. Enjoys visiting art exhibitions, historic buildings, reading and meeting up with friends.



Ann Eatwell (65 – 72) read from her diary about a school visit to the theatre. [Video also available on this website]. Ann Eatwell attended Godalming Grammar School from Sept. 1965 to June 1972. For almost all those years (till 1971) she had to travel 20 miles from her home, on two trains, to get to school. Once caught by a Prefect in her first term, for missing Assembly, she was sent to the Beak. Mr Dewar was amazed to hear how far she travelled and she was given permission to miss Assembly indefinitely. Her life has been spent in Museums. Largely, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, where as a curator, she cared for historic and contemporary ceramics, glass, jewellery and silver.

A Visit to the Theatre!

I am going to remind you of our wonderful educational school trips to the theatre. In my year we were privileged to have experienced one of the most innovative and influential productions of Shakespeare;

Peter Brooke's interpretation of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. (It has its own Wikipedia page now!) We were also taken to one of the worst productions I have ever seen: The Tower Theatre's *Romeo and Juliet*. As you will hear that visit got me into trouble with Miss Mac.

I still vividly remember these experiences which I am going to weave around my diary entries. I kept a diary or journal from the age of 15 for ten years.

To start with the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, I remember an almost empty white stage that we, the audience, seemed to look down on. The lack of fussy scenery allowed the words and the sense of the play to reveal meanings more clearly. It was funny and acrobatic – the cast spinning plates and flying through the air as if we were at a circus. I saw what theatre could do and it became the production by which I judged future plays.

My diary entry for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Wednesday January 6th 1972

"Have just been to "Midsummer Night's Dream". It was great! We went to the matinee performance and there were three coach loads of us. El, Liz, Chris and I sat at the back with Judy, Anne, Jane, Nick and Jonathan singing and messing about. The theatre was quite small and we could see fairly well. The scenery was absent since it was an ultra modern play- just 3 white walls with various entrances (2 doors at the back) and ladders to the balcony above on which many of the cast sat or stood watching their fellows acting below and joining in. It was a bit like "Hair" really- for audience participation I mean. At the end of scene one they were throwing paper plates and streamers about the stage. Drums rattling and hissing things and a guitar player provided music and it was almost a musical – song in every scene. The actors were very articulate – Helena only had to sigh with appropriate feeling and everyone laughed. Hermea was an acrobat jumping all over the stage – so was Puck who came swinging down on a rope or a swing. It was a very lively, comical and boisterous production, fairly bawdy and suggestive in parts, even blatant – so much so that Miss Mac, Miss Gill and Mini Burns sat through the whole thing stoney faced. The rest of the staff seemed to enjoy it though, esp. Mr Martin, whose raucous laugh could be heard all over the theatre. The fact that the only real scenery was a flying feather, two trapezes and three wire things suspended from fishing rods to suggest the forest of Athens, did not detract from the text and because the language could be interpreted more easily the time sped by. The Athenian workmen were also very good and their play brought the house down especially the man pretending to be a wall. It was an original, totally convincing approach to the play – and now it truly seems to have been nothing but an imaginative, very amusing *Midsummer Night's Dream*."

From the sublime to the ridiculous.

Romeo and Juliet.

I have more vivid memories. There was a bad start for the company – very poor direction. The prologue speech was given over the apparently dead bodies of *Romeo and Juliet* who then got up and walked off the stage – alive again! As teenagers we thought this sort of thing was funny. It just got worse with poor costumes and actors unsure of their lines and unable to carry a speech.

Sunday June 21st 1970

There was a bit of a preamble to theatre visit.

"Now I must tell you what happened on the last day of term. Well it was all very boring, sad and a general waste of time apart from one incident which leads me to believe through no fault of my own I am getting rather a bad reputation at school and do not see myself ending up as a Prefect at all (thankgoodness). Well

we all just gave our books in and then either held a post mortem on the exam in question or talked amongst ourselves. Anyhow before all this rigmarole started I was told Miss Mac wanted to see me and so I rushed off to find her. I was told that it didn't look as though I was in trouble. Any how we practically collided in the corridor and she said something to the extent of:
"Come and sit down Anne" (She always pronounced my name as if it had an "e".) " I think this might shock you" Or words to that effect.

Any how I was quite expecting some old relation to have popped off but when she said the matter in question had happened before the exams and she hadn't wanted to upset me before the exams I was very surprised! She asked me about the theatre trip which I may have mentioned some way back, but believe me it was now ancient history after the exams. For one minute I just couldn't remember! Anyhow I got a longish lecture on how badly I had behaved at the theatre and how the manager had complained – about our party I might add and not just me – and she said she'd have to consider me very carefully on future trips to the theatre!

I was so stunned I just didn't know what to say, I had actually forgotten the incident and had been preparing for a major crisis when she told me to sit down. I was also furious at being the scape goat for the whole party and indeed the whole theatre since a lot of noise came from the rest. However at the time after the stunning effect passed on I was secretly killing myself beneath the serious and repentant facade that I presented for Miss Mac's benefit, while telling myself that it was probably old Burns fault I was nominated as scapegoat.

Looking back it seems I haven't mentioned that fateful evening of May 6th. Well we went by coach from school to this rather small theatre in London called The Tower Theatre. The people were all hopeless and very grotty. Romeo kept leaping about on the stage and to the pleasure of one form (not ours unfortunately) entirely missed the steps and landed on his nose. Juliet looked about 30 and was a good foot taller than Romeo. The other people were so colourless they aren't worth mentioning except Mercutio who had a broad Welsh accent and a hairy chest!

They all pranced about the stage and the theatre in tight fitting hose making enough signs to turn old Burns bright red. Romeo and Juliet danced on and off the stage – whether dead or alive, dragging every last syllable of meaning from long winded epistles that became considerable draughty. The other "actors" forgot their lines at the worst! Apart from the boring play and its other deficiencies, the theatre was dreadfully hot and stuffy (it was a cold night as well) so that any amusement to be found was a relief. This may account for the laughter in unnecessary indeed in quite (from the actors point of view) unexpected places i.e. Romeo and Juliet embarrassing nearly brought the house down whilst the emergence of the apothecary dressed in a red cloth with slipping pillows beneath to give the illusion of a hunch back ,and in carpet slippers, presented the unworldly impression of a lobster (broiled) emerging from its pot!!

I will submit I have a loud voice and laugh and used both but then so had many others! Mrs B was not amused and glanced accusingly at me on many occasions- unjustly I thought though I must submit that when the flask gurgled as I poured some refreshment out, it was rather loud. However on the whole I think it was very unjust to make me a scapegoat for 90 people (of our school at least) and had she decided to take more decisive action against me I would not have taken it sitting down! However, I let things stand though everyone I talked to has agreed at its injustice since they also know the circumstances whereas she (Miss Mac) did not even attend the theatre."



Chris Holdsworth (67 – 72). Chris was in a Q and A (with Sue Hindle) about being a new girl from the North and how tricky it was to settle in. Born 14 Feb 1954, Merton, Surrey. Parents Kenneth William d 1976 (civil servant in what was Inland Revenue – now HMRC) and Edna d 2003 (secretary/pa to managing director of a textiles company until marriage). One brother John b Dec 1955 d Jan 1979. Attended Burnley Girls' High School until Nov 1967 when family relocated to Guildford & then GGS until 1972. Studied Law at Sheffield University (graduating in 1975) & then 6 months at Guildford Law College for the Law Soc, professional exams.

After admission as a solicitor worked at a large general practice in Manchester. 3 years later made a partner and was put in charge of a branch office in Cheadle.

Later worked at other branches and finally, in city centre again before taking 'early retirement' in 2009 with no regrets.

Now keeping busy as Governor at our village primary school (Chair for 11 years), Secretary of Twinning Association (twinned with another village in Rhone Alpes region of France) & Editor of village bi-monthly magazine. Enjoy family history research, good food & wine, travelling & I spend far too much time on social media...

In Chris's words: About the virtual GGS re-union.... I was 'persuaded' by Eleanor & Ann to agree to talk about the culture shock of moving from an all-girls school at a town in Lancashire (very much on the decline - a cotton town back in the day) to a co-ed school in posh, leafy stock-broker belt Surrey (that was how I thought of it anyway). I just mentioned a few things to Ann & Eleanor during our weekly Zoom meeting last week along the following lines:

It was 1967 and I was just weeks into the first term of my 3rd year at Burnley Girls' High School when our family moved to Guildford, my civil servant father having been promoted and it involving a new post at Thames Ditton.

I didn't want to move! I'd made good friends at BGHS and was happy there. I had many pre-conceived notions about 'Southerners' - they talk posh, they're less friendly and not as neighbourly as Northerners etc. and I was worried I wouldn't 'fit in'. My brother (21 months younger than me) was only in his very first term at Burnley Grammar School (an all-boys school) and he didn't seem to be bothered as much as I was over the pending move (it turned out that he was and hid it from both me and our parents - but that's a tale for another day).

Mr Dewar, (being conscious of the expense of moving from Lancashire to Surrey - properties much more expensive etc.) told my parents that they needn't buy the GGS uniform until we'd grown out of our existing ones - a big mistake as they quickly realised - as immediately, we stuck out like sore thumbs on our very first day at GGS! I was embarrassed both because of the uniform and my accent in particular. I was very conscious of both and felt that I was being stared at and laughed at.

I was miserable for quite a long time at GGS - didn't like the school and found it difficult to make friends. As I subsequently learnt (years later), staff at GGS were well aware that I was unhappy. My parents were told at their first parents' evening that it was well known that I disliked being there because my facial expressions as I walked around school 'spoke volumes'! It was hard for my parents but my brother (bless him - he was just as unhappy as I was) kept re-assuring them that school was fine and he didn't know why I complained about it so much.

Anyway, in a very short space of time, the old school uniforms were quickly ditched and new GGS uniforms bought for us both so we at least didn't stand out any longer (until we spoke of course). My misery was

compounded when I came bottom of the class in Latin at Christmas 1967 (I had been top of the class at BGHS - such a come-down - I was mortified and it was a real shock for me).

Time went on and gradually my pre-conceived notions about 'unfriendly Southerners' began to fall away. For a start, on the day we moved to Guildford when we arrived at our new house before the removal firm, within a short space of time, there was a knock at the door and there was a smiling lady with a picnic hamper full of sandwiches, fruit, cake & drinks. " I thought you might welcome this whilst you're waiting for all your furniture to arrive etc." she said. Myth number one blown straightaway although it didn't register with me at the time or I refused to recognise it - not sure now which it was. The smiling lady was one of our new next-door neighbours and there were many more like her (some of whom, like us, were 'incomers' from the North). My mother made lots of friends very quickly - she was that sort of person - would get talking to anyone, anywhere.

Slowly, I began to make friends at school, caught up with the others in Latin after putting in a lot of extra work at home (but never did in the sciences really - at BGHS we only studied 'general science' for the first three years rather than the separate sciences as at GGS - and that was despite Kirsten Lamb lending her books to me so that I could copy up her notes. Funnily enough it was during Latin lessons that the ice melted so-to-speak and a certain person by the name of Ann Eatwell who sat at the desk next to me started the thaw by talking to me (even if she did find me strange as she admitted years later). I remember deliberately using words such as 'ginnel' and 'snicket' which people didn't seem to know and then taking great delight in having to translate them (they're both words for narrow passages between houses). At last I was talking to people and feeling better about myself and the rest, as they say, is history. Here we are all these years later still in regular touch and thanks to re-unions and Facebook in touch with many people now whom I didn't particularly know well at school as I wasn't in the same class as them/didn't study the same subjects and I love that connection!

And now I've come full circle in a way - went back north to university (albeit on the other side of the Pennines in Sheffield) with another 6 months at Guildford Law College, studying towards Law Society exams (lodged with Liz Woolford's parents) and then another 6 weeks again in Guildford for the Solicitors' Accounts course at the Law College (stayed with one of our Guildford ex-neighbours on that occasion). Now back in Lancashire - near Lancaster & a mere 20 minutes' drive from the fringes of the Lake District - a very different part of Lancashire from my 'home town' Burnley.

And the conclusion/moral of this tale is that people are much the same wherever they hail from - and that if you start from pre-conceptions and prejudice you do both yourself and others a huge disservice. As I have learnt, there is little difference between Northerners and Southerners in the end and indeed I have very good friends in both parts of the country. As for the schools - GGS comes out top in my book - co-ed definitely better than single sex schools as far as I'm concerned. And in all honesty, on reflection, after those initial difficult months at GGS I loved my time there!

And now for a confession; I'm not really a Northerner at all! I was actually born in Merton; my parents lived at Wimbledon Park for the first two years of their marriage - my father working at Somerset House at the time. When I was 6 weeks old my father was again posted back north and so my parents went 'home' taking me with them. They often reminded me that I wasn't really a Northerner at all - unlike them and my brother!



Joan Palmer (49 – 54) talked about her singing career. Once she discovered singing at school, academic subjects flew out of the window and after she left, she felt guilty about not achieving more academically. However, she gradually came to realise that singing is a talent and that, for her at least, it has helped her to have a productive life. Her story today is about one of the most important things she has ever achieved and is the direct result of the encouragement to sing that her teachers, Dr Hunt, Ward Needham and David Stannard gave her.

In Joan's own words:

Something which was to become one of the most important parts of my life started its journey when I was in the second form in 1950. There was a shortage of teachers during the war and our music teacher, Dr Hunt, came down from London to help out, staying on until the early 50's when he left to take up a prestigious appointment as Director of the Royal College of Music in London. One day we were all singing in class when he stopped us and said that someone was singing a wrong note. He then made us start again from the beginning while he walked up and down the aisles between our desks. To my horror he stopped beside me and said that it was me, before adding that I had a good voice and that I must go to choir practice last period on Friday.

At that time we had a teacher, Ward Needham, who taught geography and who was also a talented thespian. He and Dr Hunt had started the annual tradition of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta production and my first experience was chorus in the *The Gondoliers*. I went on to play roles in other productions, now under the musical direction of David Stannard who had replaced Dr Hunt, and was hooked for life. I left school and started to work for Barclays Bank but singing remained a major part of my life, even after I married John and had my two children, Julian and Janine. John's career was also banking and we had to move home every time he was promoted but wherever we lived I always joined societies and gained a great deal of experience as a singer and sometimes as a producer.

Tragically in 1983 when my children were still quite young, John was taken ill and died eleven months later of inoperable heart disease. Obviously it was a terrible time and for several months I had no motivation or direction. At the time John died we were living in Broadstairs and I had been singing semi professionally, appearing in shows in various theatres in the area. Because I had production experience my son suggested that I produce a show myself but I didn't feel I was up to it at that time. However, Julian had sown a seed and when I later had the idea of producing a charity show for the British Heart Foundation I got in touch with the Kent organiser, explained what I had in mind, and asked if they would like to take up my offer.

This was when fate stepped in. By coincidence the BHF organiser had received a call a couple of days earlier from an ambulance driver asking for help with a problem within the service. His name was Frank Stocks and he had recently qualified privately as a paramedic. I say privately because the Kent Ambulance chief had refused to accept the cost of training paramedics or to install defibrillators on Kent ambulances, even though Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire ambulances all had them. Frank, the BHF organiser and I then had a meeting and it was agreed that I would form a BHF committee with a view to changing the attitude of the Kent Ambulance Chief. Such was the cause that I had no problem getting volunteers for the committee with our MP Jonathan Aitken, a lovely man despite his mistake, as our very 'hands on' president.

Now an organised group, we invited the Kent Ambulance Chief to a meeting which he thankfully agreed to attend. He took a lot of persuading but eventually agreed to have paramedics trained and to install defibrillators in all Kent ambulances. However, he had one condition, which was that we raise the money for the first defibrillator. It was now that all my years of musical and production experience came into play and I spent several weeks hiring a theatre and gathering together experienced performers to create a variety show which we named 'Heart to Heart'. I negotiated a good price for the theatre and everyone; performers, backstage staff, lighting crews and musicians all agreed to work without a fee. All fourteen hundred seats in the Winter Gardens theatre were sold and the mayor and our two MP's, Jonathon and

Roger Gale, all agreed to support us. It was nerve wracking but the evening was an enormous success and so much publicity was generated in the local press that other groups, including schools, WI's, social clubs and many other organisations, arranged events and raised even more money. In those days one defibrillator cost £4000, equivalent to £13,000 today, but we easily passed that target and the remaining money was donated to the BHF for research.

The defibrillator was purchased and presented to the Kent Ambulance Chief who had no option but to keep his promise and at last Kent Ambulance Service had the facilities needed to save lives and was brought in line with Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire. But it didn't end there. A few days later I was approached by the manager of the Winter Gardens who, because of the success of the first show, invited me to produce another 'Heart to Heart'. All the members of the committee agreed and when we heard that the Ramsgate hospital didn't have a mobile defibrillator, raising money for that became our next challenge. Everyone involved in the first show agreed to come on board again but I wanted to add something different.

I was reading the local paper when I saw an article about a boy pianist, 8 year old Freddy Kempf, who had already played with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. I also read that his mother owned an hotel in Ramsgate so I called her to ask if Freddy could appear in the show. She told me that his tutors were very cautious about where he played so I suggested they call the manager of the Winter Gardens. They did call him and when he confirmed the success of the last show gave their permission, on condition that a special grand piano was brought in and tuned for Freddy. We first met Freddy on the day of the dress rehearsal and, because of his extraordinary talent, had been slightly concerned what he would be like. However, he was an adorable, well mannered little boy who couldn't even reach the piano pedals when he sat on the stool which meant that all the expression in the music had to come through his very small fingers. He went on, at the age of 14, to become the UK's youngest ever Young Musician of the Year and now aged 44 is one of the most renowned concert pianists in the world. <https://www.freddy-kempf.com/bio/> The show was once again a big success and the Ramsgate Hospital got its first mobile defibrillator. My family, friends and everyone involved in the shows gave me huge support and the result was that lives of patients traveling on ambulances in Kent were now much safer. Of course that didn't bring John back to us but it did make some good come out of his early death.

I have made many mistakes in my life that I regret but singing a wrong note in Dr. Hunt's music class in 1950 was not one of them; that was Serendipity.



**Summer 1939 by Josephine Collett (née Robbins)
Attendee of Godalming County Grammar School 1938 – 43**

Josephine Robbins received a scholarship to Godalming County Grammar School in 1938. She left in 1943 to practice for the Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music in pianoforte which she gained in 1947. She joined the Women's Technical Services Register to do war work at the National Physical Laboratory, Teddington. It was a long journey from Godalming during the time of V1 and V2 rockets.

She married Flight Lieutenant Denis John Regent in 1949 and their son, Neil, was born in the following year. Sadly, Denis died two years later. Josephine worked firstly at the Market Research at BOAC London Airport and then became Information Officer, at the Central Office of Information in London in 1961. She married John Collett in 1968, but sadly he died in 1985. Her retirement features charity work and membership of various clubs. There is lots to do here in Teignmouth!! Jo talked about the outbreak of the Second World War and the evacuees who came to Godalming Grammar School from Sir Walter St. John's Grammar School of Battersea, London.

Jo told us:

'Sequor ut Attingham' – 'I follow that I may attain'! Attain what though? This ambiguous school motto caused many a snigger amongst the more cynical element in our small, mixed-sex grammar school, with its hilltop setting amidst the idyllic Surrey countryside. Mr Wigfield, our wonderful, kindly headmaster, ruled with a rod of velvet; believing in the carrot not the stick, discipline rated low in his pacific Quaker-inspired regime. In our green blazers we were an instant target for disapproving townsfolk, who muttered darkly when some of our more exuberant pupils misbehaved.

The summer term was ending in an intense atmosphere of anxiety. Neville Chamberlain's 'Peace in our Time' treaty with Hitler was unravelling at an alarming speed and war with Germany seemed inevitable. I always remember my mother's cry at the announcement of the Munich agreement "Yes! But what about poor little Czechoslovakia?" Sacrificed to achieve this abominable treaty, I little realised how large a part this tiny country would play in our family life in days to come as we hosted Czech Jewish refugees for the duration of the war.

At assembly on the last day of term, the atmosphere was one of uncertainty and apprehension. Mr Wigfield arrived, gown flowing. Prayers and hymns were brief and his face was grave when he announced, "Should war break out we shall be sharing our school with 500 boys from Sir Walter St John's School in Battersea!"

A whoop of joy emanated from the feisty girls of Form 4, whilst the prefects looked on with disapproval. We of the humble first year, giggled nervously behind our hands, wishing we too were fourth-formers with their cockily tilted hats and 'women of the world demeanour'.

The long summer holiday had started and my cousin Jeanne came to stay. Happy hours were spent in the local recreation ground and occasionally in the grounds of an empty mansion, wandering around its lake to watch the dragonflies and butterflies as they darted about in colourful profusion.

On a day of hustle and bustle, we abandoned the rec' for the station, to watch in amazement as whole schools were decanted from ad hoc arrivals which replaced the usual half-hourly schedule. "Look, there's Wandsworth Central" said an onlooker, as a well-disciplined crocodile of girls in red blazers marched up the platform.

"Who are they then?" we asked, as a large group of boys in black blazers emerged from another train. "Oh, Spurgeon's Orphanage I think," came the reply. And so it went on and on until our compliment of evacuees from London had been met and accommodated by their new hosts.

"Look at the Twins!" I said, as wandering back home, we passed two carrot-headed identicals.

Uneasy play! It was 4th September and our hearts weren't in our ball game at the rec'. What was happening at home? Those worried voices – the expectation of an announcement.

"Oh, I'm frightened" cried Jeanne "Let's go home."

Mum and Dad were at the door looking grave.

"Come in quickly" said Mum "We've declared war on Germany."

Caroline Brooks (66 – 73) Treasurer gives a vote of thanks for donations.



Photos were taken before the assembly broke up into small breakout groups - approx. 16 groups of 6 in two 15-minute sessions. During the final remarks the Old Godhelmians were unmuted individually so that they could say something brief to the whole group.

The Reunion ended with a farewell and a toast by President Shirley Coleman. She gave an invitation to the Godalming Grammar School Reunion 16th October 2021. Widor's Toccata, which was always performed on Founders' Day, was then played from a recording.

**Votes of thanks for GGS Virtual 90th- Anniversary Reunion
17th October 2020 via Zoom**

Thank you all for an immensely enjoyable afternoon. I know what hard work it is for everything to run smoothly and really appreciate it.

Best wishes Margaret Langford-Wood

Thanks very much! I am very glad I joined the call.

Peter Whittingstall

My sincerest congratulations and thanks to all of you who worked so hard to put this wonderful event together.

It seems sad that many of those who took part today will not be able to be there in person next year. I did agree with Audrey when she suggested that it would be a good idea if a short part of the day next year could be devoted to a Zoom session for people who cannot travel. We did do it a few years ago when Kay organised the reunion and it worked really well then but Zoom makes it far easier.

Another idea crossed my mind as well. Many of us come from quite a distance but it occurred to me that perhaps it could be arranged that those who have to stay in an hotel could all stay in the same hotel. I don't have to as my son lives not far from the school but I would really enjoy staying the night before in an hotel with a group of OG's and having dinner together. We all got on so well today, no matter what age we were, and we mingled far better than during a normal reunion.

So, a weekend instead of just a day would be something very special to look forward to.

Just an idea

Take care, stay safe and thank you again.

Joan Palmer

Although I was a silent observer at today's OGA virtual reunion I really enjoyed it. I managed to tune in with my limited computer skills. It was so well put together. Thank you for your help.

Best wishes

Pam Todd (nee Smith) 1953 -1958)

Thank you Shirley and all concerned so much for this 90th Celebration of Godalming Grammar School/ College. So much hard work has gone into this and it was lovely to talk with other OG's in the break-out sessions.

A very moving afternoon of memories and sharing. Many thanks

Alwyne Taylor

Well, what a fantastic reunion! Thank you all so much for your hard work, it is difficult to put into words the overwhelming joy and emotion evoked by the memories of such a gathering of OGAs. The

performances were delightful and poignant in many ways, bringing to mind events and personalities long forgotten. How amazing to hear from Tasmania (loud and clear) one of our members from Chiddingfold who remembers my friend Una Berrow (nee Howard); I shall ring Una this evening! I'll also write down as much as I can remember of school life during the years 1938 to 1943. Keep well both of you.

With best wishes

From

Jo Collett

Many thanks to you and the rest of the team from Tim and myself for organising this afternoons event. We were slightly apprehensive about the chat rooms before the event, and our fears were well founded when we found ourselves the youngest two in our group and knowing none of the others. The other five in the same group fell naturally into two groups that knew each other, but we soon all got talking together and comparing life at GGS and teacher's names from our respective times at school, when we realised that even though we did not overlap ourselves a number of staff members that we knew did. And we never knew until today that until the early 60's the year groups were streamed into X, A, B and C classes. Paul Ellison mentioned the copy of the Hymn Book that we used, and I still have mine in a sitting room drawer, from where it is often brought out at Christmas so that I can sing carols, originally with our children, but latterly with our grandchildren. It has weathered the intervening years somewhat better than I have!

Best wishes,

Alison and Tim Wilcock

A big thank you to you and your committee for all the hard work you have put in to make the reunion such a success!! It was so nice to have an international flavour too!!

Thank you.

Best wishes from Carol Graves

Congratulations. What a great success! Look forward to next time.

All best wishes,

Paul Ellison

Many thanks to you and the team for organising today's reunion on zoom. I had to rush off unfortunately (during the break out groups) and couldn't stay to the end.

But I was so pleased to be able to join you, nice to see GGS again and hear so many interesting tales.

Thank you again and well done all.

Lynne Tythely

(Hammond 1964-71)

That was wonderful – thank you so much.

Sorry that a real tiredness hit me at 2.45 am (my time) and I was instantly asleep soon afterwards.

Blessings

David Meadows

And thank you so much to you and the rest of the committee for a fantastic reunion yesterday! It worked so well, especially in view of the numbers attending, and the programme was varied and interesting. Although break out rooms with those we knew would have been nice, it was good to chat with those from other years and decades, which probably wouldn't have happened so much had it taken place in person. I was able to use the online chat to speak with the sister of someone who was in my class and with the daughter of someone my Mum knows, so they were nice connections to make too.

Thank you again, and here's to next year!

Marian Muskett

I really enjoyed the event. It was very well organised and put together- a varied and interesting programme. I thought your piece went well Chris.

Well done, a triumph. Music, memories, diaries, history, photos. It felt very inclusive too- wish I had heard the 90-year-old and her memories of evacuees- I just caught a bit of it.

Ann Eatwell

Thank you so much to you and the rest of the Committee for the very well organized Zoom Reunion. It made me realise I wish I had managed to get to the previous real-life ones.

It was so interesting hearing people's stories, especially in the event and also in the break-outs (though we only heard the stories from the groups we were in). It made me wonder if it would be possible to put a strand on the website for these and other stories, maybe under the title of "Memories"? I do remember years ago when Friends Reunited was functioning that there was this facility in The Godalming Grammar School section and I did enjoy reading the stories. Perhaps the Committee could consider it as it's a long wait between reunions?

I am interested in the staff list that Jane Jopson is compiling. I only got a glimpse of Dad's entry, but think it might not do him justice in the other subjects he taught, besides Geography. Perhaps Jane could include that he taught Heraldry and coached Rugby in the 40s & 50s then taught Calligraphy and "O" level Surveying in the 60s as well as producing and directing most of the drama productions throughout his time at the school.

Once again, very many thanks for such a thought provoking event.

Deborah Domun

I would like to thank and congratulate you for arranging the 90th Anniversary of Godalming Grammar School on line. I was very successful. I enjoyed the variety of memories presented by different people and the virtual tour of the school. I must confess to being quite misty eyed while listening to some of the music played on the organ and pictures taken from the O.G. Website. I too had walked past the War

Memorial for seven years and never peeped inside! The memories of teaching staff who not only were talented teachers but seemed to support each other. It was a little community. We were privileged to attend.

I was also pleased to meet again some of the friends made during my time at school. One big plus to having an on line reunion was the number of O.G.s who are now living in far off countries who were able to attend. I loved the fact that people living in California, NewZealand and France were included and able to contribute.

Please give my heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to this most successful event and I look forward to meeting you all (all being well) next year for a face to face reunion.

Linda (Dixon, nee Parker, 1958- 1965).

Congratulations and sincere thanks to you and all of your team for the brilliant organising of the meeting and all of its content. It was truly worldwide with some of the contributors joining in from all around the globe. I am treasurer of Woking's Twinning Association and I know how important it is to maintain contact with old friends overseas as well as those in the UK.

One can only hope that 2021 would allow an actual get together-fingers crossed!! but yesterday was almost as good.

I look forward to seeing the recoding and any associated papers in due course.

Thanks again and best wishes,

Chris Sansom

A most enjoyable session on Saturday. Thanks so much.

Best Wishes.

Ron Mayers

Thank you very much to you and all involved with the organisation of a wonderful event yesterday. It was so varied and enjoyable - the afternoon just flew by!

I really appreciate all of the hard work that went into creating this 'virtual' reunion, enabling so many of us to reconnect with people and of course with the building too!

I wish you well and hope to see you in person next October.

Stay safe in these times!

Wendy Smith

I thought it worked really well, and the random breakouts were very succesful, I spoke to lovely people I probably wouldn't have met in an actual reunion. It has renewed my faith in nostalgia.

Penny Murray (Ridgers)

Please could you convey my congratulations to all of the O.G committee for the very successful video reunion. It must have been difficult to set up . It was nice to be able to put faces to E mails. My only regret was that there were not more of my era available and even some of those that were listed as joining did not appear.

Wally Brown

A big thank you to yourself and all others who made reunion such a success. I found it interesting and enjoyable and the meeting in rooms seemed to go well with mixed ages and thus mixed years of attending the old school.

Hopefully next year we can meet up but it feels good to have been present this year.

Until next year keep well see you then

Sylvia Gumbrell

What a wonderful afternoon we had on Saturday seeing all the school faces and hearing the various talks and music.

I particularly enjoyed the virtual school tour with its carpets.

There was no tree in front of the school and we always ate in the assembly hall with its wall bars in the 1946-51 days.

Obviously a lot of hard work went into the preparation and I would like to thank everyone involved.

Allan (Joe) Stow

Despite my initial worries about my competence in participating, finally everything went off nicely and I thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon of October 17th 2020 visiting our old school (thanks to Marian's film) and sharing in the different interventions led by Sue Hindle.

I would be grateful if you, Eleanor, would pass on my thanks to your team for all the work they put in organising the event, which was indeed a magnificent afternoon for all who joined in, often from far distant places.

Let's all keep our fingers crossed, hoping that the Covid19 virus will have vanished before October 2021 so that we can meet up in person instead of just virtually.

Ken Birbeck

A very belated but BIG thank you for the zoom reunion you all organised on 17th October - it really was very good and so interesting with different aspects of school and personal lives - tweaking our memories. We especially loved Paul Ellison's organ from San Francisco - very enjoyable and again brought back great memories of school assemblies and speech days!

I was only sorry that no one from my year was discernible but there were several from Brian's year and several folk we both knew so that was good and of course always good to meet up with folk we hadn't known before - as we did at the reunion last time. You have a great batch of folk who were all about the

similar era as most of you on the committee. Look forward to seeing the report and photo on line sometime!!

Anyway - thanks again for all your hard work putting that together - it was quite a herculean task I'm sure.

Very best wishes - and looking forward to next year!!

Brian and Pat Oxborough