



## PROJECT ZERO

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*Students and alumnae living  
a more environmentally  
sustainable lifestyle*

## PLUS

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### *Climate change activist*

An interview with alumna  
Baroness Featherstone

### *Bursary stories*

Alumnae share their  
transformative experiences

### *Ladies of letters*

Alumnae and students keeping  
in touch during lockdown



*“South Hampstead students and alumnae are taking on small but important roles in creating awareness of climate change and living a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle”*

VICKY BINGHAM  
 — Headmistress, South Hampstead High School

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**W**elcome to the 2020 edition of *Resplendens*, our magazine for South Hampstead Alumnae.

These last six months have been challenging for all alumnae in our community. I know that many of you may be vulnerable and isolating from your families, others have been simultaneously juggling the demands of busy jobs and homeschooling young children, and our recent graduates are facing a tough job market as they embark on their careers.

When I look back on the lockdown period, I remember not so much the social distancing and the isolation that we felt in physical form, but more the sense of our community and people coming together online. In particular, I was touched by the 60 students who corresponded weekly with our alumnae sharing stories and memories of their time at school. South Hampstead is most definitely a community that exists beyond the classroom and beyond year 13, virtually or in person.

You are also a community that speaks up and speaks out and I would like to thank you for acting with thoughtfulness, open-heartedness, respect, courage and honesty when 500 of you wrote to me in June wanting to know what we are doing to ensure that our curriculum gives students enough opportunities to learn about racial prejudice and black history. I would also like to thank the 20 alumnae who took time out of their busy dairies to speak to me on the phone about diversity and inclusion. We are listening to you and with the establishment of our new Diversity Steering Group, we will ensure that South Hampstead is a place where mutual respect and diversity can flourish.

As the economy faces even more uncertain times, we are well aware of the incredibly different circumstances our recent alumnae graduates find themselves in as they embark on their careers. We realise there is no magic bullet to finding a job, but the SHHS and GDST Alumnae Networks can assist you in building your own personal networks, guide you in your next moves after university and help you make decisions about your future. You can read more about our LinkedIn groups, online networking

with GDST Life and other resources available in our careers section on pages 8 and 9. Likewise, if you are more established in your profession, please do reach out through us, or through these networks, to help a South Hampstead alumna make the first steps in their career.

The theme of this issue is environmental sustainability and we highlight how our students and alumnae are encouraging others to combat climate change. In September 2019, we set up a 365 club at South Hampstead with the aim of creating awareness around climate change and encouraging students to make their own eco-pledges, such as only travelling on public transport and no longer using single-use plastic water bottles. The older students were interested in the political angle and demonstrations around climate change, and have become role models for the young years. Together, their sacrifices have grown into a school-wide project where students are working with staff on *Project Zero* to significantly improve South Hampstead’s environmental credentials by its 150th anniversary in 2026.

Encouraging your peers to reduce their carbon footprint and contribution to landfill through lifestyle changes requires leadership and taking the initiative, characteristics that we nurture in all year groups at South Hampstead and skills that I proudly recognise in our alumnae. The stories in this edition of *Resplendens* show how members of your community are playing small but important roles in creating awareness of and combatting climate change. You are a creative, resourceful and influential group of women who can inspire each other, and in turn we can learn so much from you. Please do let us know what you are doing in your fields of work to promote sustainability. I look forward to seeing you at our events this year, virtually or in person, and hearing about how you are adapting to live a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle.

VICKY BINGHAM  
 Headmistress, South Hampstead High School





EMILIA  
Our first production in the new  
Waterlow Hall

ORACY  
CULTURE  
AWARD 2020  
ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION  
WINNER



## 2019/2020 AT SOUTH HAMPSTEAD

# Speaking up and speaking out

*The class of 2020 has handled the challenges and uncertainty of their coronavirus-impacted exam year with incredible aplomb.*

Students were awarded moderated grades via email on results day, only to have these adjusted to centre assessed grades a few days later. This year's Upper Sixth leavers have so far secured places at top universities to pursue a diverse array of courses, from Astrophysics and Archaeology, to Middle Eastern Studies and Mechanical Engineering.

The majority will be heading to their first choice destination, predominantly Oxbridge and other Russell Group universities, as well as US Ivy League colleges, Harvard and Yale.

### FIND OUT MORE

Have a look at our website [www.shhs.gdst.net](http://www.shhs.gdst.net) and our twitter feed [@SHHSforgirls](https://twitter.com/SHHSforgirls) to see how our students thrive, academically and otherwise.

## OUTREACH

Students throughout the school continue to volunteer in their local community, visiting elderly residents at local care homes through our *Pensioner's Link* scheme, and volunteering at JW3's *In the Loop* programme, teaching IT novices how to Tweet, text, FaceTime, post a photo on Instagram and set up a Facebook account. For *Mitzvah Day 2019*, we held a school-wide collection for Camden Food Bank, a collection of sanitary products for the charity Bloody Good Period, and an eco-friendly up-cycling project for Leket Food Bank in Israel where students turned old t-shirts into tote bags. Sixth Form and parent ambassadors continue to support our partnership with Spear, an organisation based on Finchley Road which helps young people facing disadvantage to find work or continue in education.

During lockdown, we welcomed Year 11 students from Michaela Community School to join our pupils on A Level introductory courses. Upper Sixth students at a number of partner school academies enrolled on our *GDST Limitless Learning* programme, enabling them to access a range of different electives covering academic material, similar to what they will encounter in their first year as undergraduates. Partner schools were also invited to this term's Speaker Series event on racism and unconscious bias, with seven schools signing up to take part in the talk and Q&A.

## DRAMA

This year's main school production was Morgan Lloyd Malcolm's play *'Emilia'* which tells the story of Emilia Bassano, a black poet long rumoured to have been Shakespeare's muse. It transferred from the Globe Theatre to the West End in 2019. South Hampstead staged the play's first school production. This was the first drama production in the new Waterlow Hall, which left everyone feeling incredibly inspired as to the plethora of theatrical opportunities this space can offer in the future.

## DEBATING

This year we were delighted to be awarded the *English-Speaking Union's Oracy Award (ESU)* in recognition of the school's flourishing culture of debate. A key initiative has been South Hampstead's *'Debate Hub'*, which works alongside local state schools to empower those who would not otherwise have access to debating. The initiative offers regular coaching and friendly fixtures. SHHS girls also competed at the UCL schools competition, the ESU Schools Mace, and the ICYD (International Competition for Young Debaters), from which they advanced to the finals at the Oxford Union. Lockdown also saw the launch of SHHS *'Juice Radio'*, run by two Sixth Form Drama Scholars.

## SPORT

South Hampstead continues to encourage sport for all, providing opportunities for girls to try a multitude of sports, from yoga to British Military Fitness to trampolining. In the lower school, there are A - D netball teams all playing regular fixtures. The U16 and U19 netball teams reached the Middlesex County Finals. 172 girls were due to take part in this year's Gym and Dance display, the culmination of a year of choreography. Sadly, this could not take place in all of its usual splendour, however the show did go on. Performances were watched by fellow students, filmed and sent home to parents.

Even a pandemic couldn't prevent sports day. Javelins were replaced by jumping jacks, and shotput by sit-ups as girls competed via video link. At this year's virtual sports' awards, we were delighted to be joined by guest speaker Kira Rothwell, a London Pulse Netball superleague player and England U21 International.

## MUSIC

As well as rehearsals for the Waterlow Gala Concert, the music department has been in full swing with over 50 concerts taking place last year. 350 music lessons take place in school each week, and these, as well as rehearsals continued online during lockdown, culminating in the 11 day SHHS *Summer Festival of Music*. This featured 32 wonderful performances from across the junior and senior schools, all filmed at home and then mixed and edited together.

## LOCKDOWN

Students participated in full days of video lessons throughout the summer term, complete with virtual trips to the Tower of London, and a year 6 'day to the virtual beach.' Students in the Upper Sixth, whose public exams were cancelled, took part in fascinating new elective programmes beyond the A-level syllabus. They delved into over 25 different courses, including the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, Poetry Translation, Vegan Cooking, and Disease Dilemmas which were all developed from scratch by our own teachers.

*At the very start of Lockdown when the over 70s were isolating, we invited alumnae to join our Pen Pal scheme so that they could correspond with South Hampstead students.*

# Ladies OF Letters

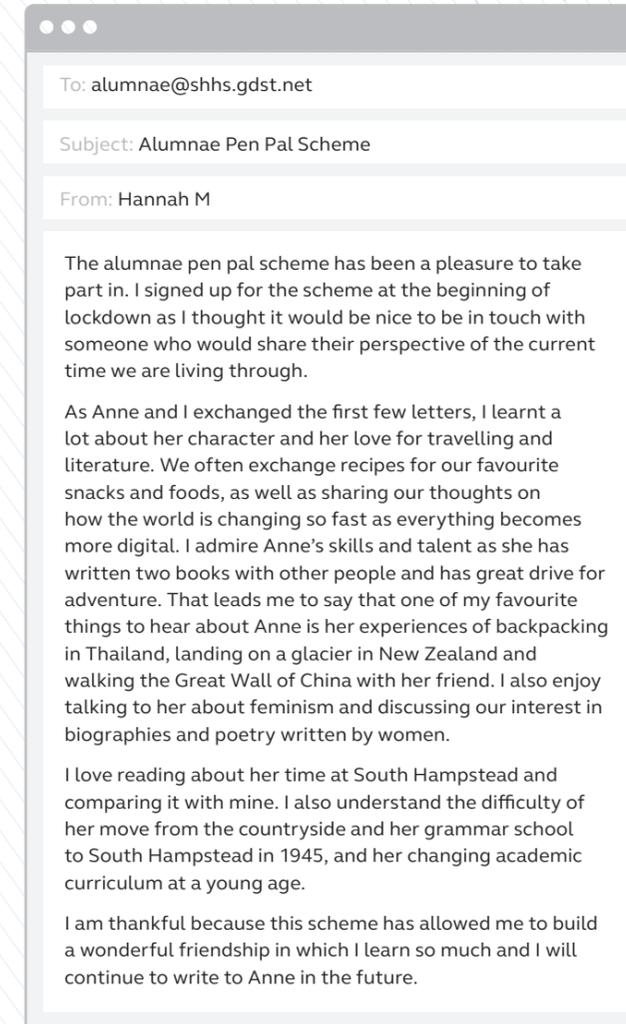
We were able to match year 10, 11 and 12 students with alumnae who left the school between 1936 and 1956 and had over 60 pairs in the scheme. Students were writing weekly to alumnae in lockdown all over the United Kingdom, and even to one alumna who had emigrated to Australia.

Where we had permission, emails were sent and otherwise letters were posted from South Hampstead's lockdown development office in Shropshire!

Many alumnae, students and their families have emailed to say how much they benefited from corresponding with each other and sharing stories about their times at South Hampstead.

We hope to invite all the alumnae who participated, back for the reunion lunch in 2021 so that they can meet their pupil pen pals in person.

*Alumna Anne Woolf (née Weber) from the class of 1948 and student Hannah M from Year 12 were paired together in April. They reflect on the scheme for Resplendens.*

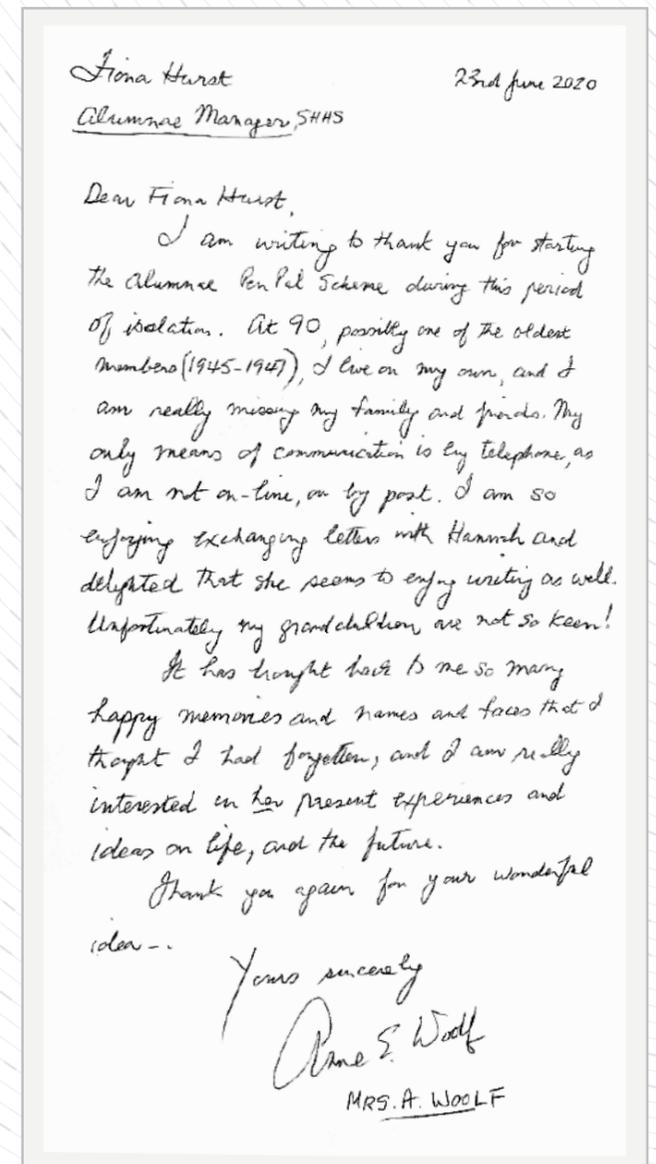


HANNAH M  
Year 12 student

Anne is one of many women in her family who studied at South Hampstead. She was one of four cousins who attended South Hampstead during the Second World War. Her cousins were Hilda, Winnie and Iris Weber and Iris was Head Girl of the school in 1944. Her cousins' daughters Pamela, Judy and Claire Phillips and Barbara Pinto then studied at South Hampstead in the 1960s and 1970s.



ANNE WOLF (NÉE WEBER)  
(class of 1948)



## A TRANSFORMATIVE

# Careers Network

*As we face an uncertain future, our focus on building a valuable careers network for alumnae and pupils has become more important than ever.*

This year we continued to offer networking events for our alumnae alongside our fellow GDST schools. We joined forces with Notting Hill and Ealing High School, GDST for the *Women in Law* symposium in May 2019 and several alumnae took part in the GDST online workshops on 'Setting up a Business', alongside other careers' events.

Throughout Lockdown the GDST Helps Facebook site linked up many alumnae and current pupils by providing important contacts for information about universities, careers and jobs. We are delighted that this autumn we will be launching our own careers' networking platform - *GDST Life* - to all South Hampstead Alumnae. The platform connects to our existing LinkedIn pages and will allow members to find and communicate with other South Hampstead and GDST alumnae working in relevant fields. We hope it will be an invaluable resource for our whole community, but particularly for those of you who are entering the job market in the next few years. Do look out for further information on how to join.

The pupil focused *Futures Programme* has continued to expand over the past year. Our aim is to promote thinking beyond the stereotypical career path and as part of the programme, we held our inaugural *Aspirational Futures Fair* in March. Over 20 talks and workshops were delivered by expert guest speakers, providing valuable insight into diverse careers including digital, the creative industries, engineering and politics. Our own Sixth Form team shared their advice on Oxbridge and international university application processes, while all students enjoyed sessions on building their personal brand and learning practical social science skills.

The fair included a panel discussion exploring ways to forge a more equal and inclusive future working world. The panellists, made up of parents and

friends of the school, identified the progress that has been made over the course of their careers, including increased transparency in gender pay gap reporting and technology enabling more flexible and agile working. Despite their varied personal experiences across different industries, they were united on the urgent imperative for diversity – from a business perspective as well as a moral standpoint.

We were delighted to open the event to students from partnership schools including girls from Haverstock School who described the event as “transformative.”

Our community continues to support the *Futures Programme* in so many ways – through mentoring via the Sixth Form Rungway app to coming in to speak in both formal and informal settings. The importance of role models is well documented and we know that you all have a wealth of experience and information which can be shared with our pupils. Your involvement in helping us to open doors to new ideas is invaluable in this area.

## GET INVOLVED

We are always delighted to welcome back alumnae to support the **Futures Programme** by talking about your career, offering work shadowing or offering master classes in key skills. To be part of our careers programme for 2020-21, please contact us:

**South Hampstead Alumnae Office**  
**Email** alumnae@shhs.gdst.net  
**Phone** 020 7435 2899

**GDST**  
**LIFE**  
 STAY PART OF IT

## Online networking

The *GDST Life* platform launches this autumn. It will provide careers information and links between alumnae working in similar areas. Join the South Hampstead LinkedIn group and look out for the email to connect to GDST Life.

## Mentoring

With a network of over 70,000 members, the opportunities created by this pool of talent are unparalleled. We currently offer two mentoring schemes; one-to-one mentoring for our alumnae community via the GDST, and the pioneering Rungway app, which connects sixth formers with alumnae. This app is a closed community of GDST Sixth Formers, alumnae and staff.

## Bespoke events

There are GDST wide careers events and full details can be found on the GDST web site ([www.gdst.net/alumnae/alumnae-events-online](http://www.gdst.net/alumnae/alumnae-events-online)). We also hold specific networking events at South Hampstead for our alumnae and details will be posted on our website and via the e-newsletter.

## Speakers and experience

All alumnae are invited to join us for our termly *Speaker Series* events which feature a range of high-profile lecturers from different backgrounds. We also welcome offers for alumnae to return to the school as lunchtime speakers, for our medical panel, for the sixth form speaker series, and for our 'Careers In' events.

## Futures Bulletin

This is a termly publication for students, parents and alumnae which showcases the latest in careers and higher education research. If you would like to make a contribution or have an idea for an article, please do get in touch.

## Thank you to speakers

A huge thank you to all South Hampstead alumnae who have inspired our students with their university and career stories in 2019 and 2020. The following alumnae visited the school to speak about their careers, ran mock interviews, spoke at our alumnae networking events.



**Susan Blum (class of 1973) for her invaluable leadership training**

**Jilly Moore (class of 1978) for her advice on a career as a theatre agent**

**Adela Gooch (class of 1979) who chaired our Speaker Series event on the future of education**

**Helena Bonham Carter (class of 1984) who spoke with Olivia Colman (GDST Alumna of the Year 2019) at our whole school assembly to open the new Waterlow Hall**

**Vicky Prais (class of 1989) who spoke to Sixth Formers about her work as a Human Rights Lawyer**

**Cellist Gemma Rosefield (class of 1999) who performed at our Gala concert to celebrate the opening of Waterlow Hall**

**Theatre Producer Despina Tsatsas (class of 2000) who spoke at our leavers' dinner in 2019**

**Eva Sampson (class of 2004) for her drama workshop**

**Lola Busari (class of 2005) for sharing her writing experience**

**Olivia Abrahamsohn (class of 2006) for her advice on careers in nutrition**

**Dhatri Navanayagam (class of 2007) who spoke at our online prize giving in 2020**

**Scientist Jess Wade (class of 2007) who spoke at our online leavers' dinner in 2020**

**Katie Mennis (class of 2015) for her talk on Classical Literature**

**Ada Liebenau (class of 2016) for running a Royal Society of Chemistry masterclass on practical spectrometry for A Level Chemistry students**

**Talya Sher (class of 2018) for advice on Engineering**

**Musicians Clío Gould (class of 1986), Eliza Millett (class of 2004) and Helen Hathorn (class of 1988) who performed with current music scholars at our Music in the Garden event in aid of the Waterlow Hall Campaign**

**Natalia Abramovich (class of 2014), Dr Alyson Elliman (class of 1966), Michal Kelly (class of 2018) and Val Wass (governor) who spoke at our Careers in Medicine event**

**Averil Burgess (Hon Alumnae) who took part in a school assembly as part of our 'In Conversation' series**

Current parents **Emma Codd**, Global Special Advisor on inclusion at Deloitte; **Kevin Cornils**, International Managing Director International at Peloton; entrepreneur **Michelle Feeney**, Founder of Floral Street; and **Tilly Franklin**, CIO-designate of the Cambridge University Endowment Fund and Founder of GAIN (Girls Are Investors), with Headmistress Vicky Bingham, who made up the panel at our *Aspirational Futures Fair*.



ASPIRATIONAL FUTURES FAIR CAREERS PANEL  
 See names below

# Alumnae in the news

Congratulations to alumnae across generations for achieving career success. Here is a snapshot of the accomplishments we have heard about in the past 12 months.

## PUBLISHED AUTHORS

### Allie Esiri

*“A lucky dip for all ages and a handsome Christmas diversion”*

— **Kate Kellaway** The Observer  
Shakespeare for Every Day of the Year is poetry curator Allie's fifth collection and consists of Shakespearean scenes, sonnets and speeches highlighting key moments and dates through the year.

### Abi Gewirtz

*“A terrific book for parents who want to know how to talk about difficult, emotional issues with children”*

Child psychologist and a leading expert on families under stress, Dr Abi Gewirtz's book, *When the World Feels like a Scary Place*, advises parents on how to help children deal with the worries, stress and other negative emotions caused by problems in the world.

### Emily Grossman

*“The perfect book for anyone who loves learning about science and all things odd!”*

— **First News**  
Scientist and broadcaster Emily has published her second book, *Brain Fizzing Facts*, inspiring children to study and explore the world of science. It was recently short-listed for the Tech Primary Awards 2020.

### Lara Feigel

*“The mix of caustic insights and sudden tenderness make The Group dynamics arrestingly real. I can't remember the last time I consumed a novel so hungrily.”*

— **The Guardian**  
Lara's first novel, *The Group*, is a fiercely intelligent, revealing novel about a group of female friends turning forty.

### Jenny Kleeman

*“A tour of the lurid fringes of the tech world”*

— **The Times**  
Jenny's first book, *Sex Robots and Vegan Meat*, explores how some people are now finding solutions to problems that have always defined and constricted humankind, what motivates them, and what about the many unintended consequences such inventions will inevitably unleash.

## JOURNALISM

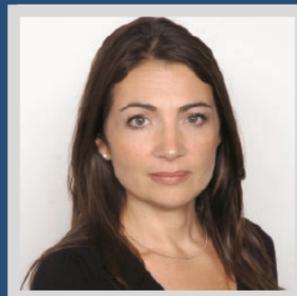
### Katya Adler

*Awarded Broadcast Journalist of the Year in 2019*

Katya is the BBC's Europe Editor, and has become a familiar face and voice during Brexit negotiations. Her ability to decipher and explain the EU's approach to Britain's political gridlock has been a defining feature of BBC coverage over the last two years.



**AUTHOR OF “SEX ROBOTS AND VEGAN MEAT”**  
Jenny Kleeman



**BROADCAST JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR 2019**  
Katya Adler

## TELL US YOUR NEWS

If you or one of your school friends has a success story, we would love to hear about it. Please contact us on [alumnae@shhs.gdst.net](mailto:alumnae@shhs.gdst.net)



**NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY COMMISSION**  
Nina Fowler

## EDUCATION

### Ann Kirk

*Awarded a BEM in the Queen's Birthday honours for services to Holocaust education and remembrance*

Together with five other Holocaust survivors, Ann Kirk and her husband Bob have collectively spoken to over 100,000 UK school children about their experiences. Every year, Ann and Bob speak to Year 10 History students at South Hampstead about their experiences of arriving in the UK on the Kindertransport.

## BUSINESS

### Dupsy Abiola

*Named in the 2020 annual Cranfield University 100 Women to Watch list*

The list identifies leading female professionals ideally suited to positions on the boards of FTSE 350 companies now or in the near future. In 2019, Dupsy was named in the Financial Times list of 'Top 100 minority ethnic leaders in technology.'

## LAW

### Katharine Newton

*Employment law Barrister appointed to the Queen's Counsel in March 2019*

Katharine is regularly instructed in high profile, high value and complex employment and discrimination claims across a wide range of sectors.

## ART

### Nina Fowler

*Unveiled a major commission awarded to her by the National Portrait Gallery, London*

Nina was asked to depict nine of the UK's leading living film directors. She chose to depict each sitter watching a film of great importance to them. *Luminary Drawings: Portraits of Film Directors* are now part of the museum's permanent collection and represent the institution's first contemporary drawing commission.

## SCIENCE

### Professor Jess Wade

*Awarded a BEM in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to gender diversity in science*

Jess Wade has led a series of public engagement initiatives to promote women in STEM. This includes schools' outreach work in physics, coordinating international women in physics academic conferences, and writing hundreds of Wikipedia pages to improve recognition of women scientists.

## FILM

### Natalie Cubides Brady

*Won best screenplay at the Poitiers Film Festival and nominated for best short at the London Film Critics circle for her film 'Beyond North Winds'*

This is the first film that Natalie directed and produced as part of her graduating from the National Film and Television School with a Masters in Documentary Directing.

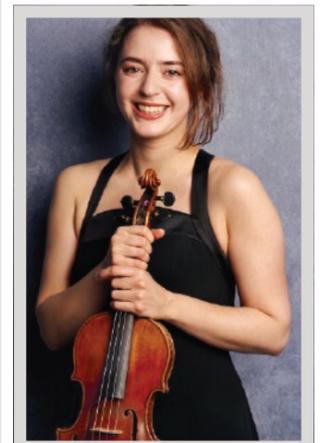
## MUSIC

### Mathilde Milwidsky

*“London born violinist Mathilde Milwidsky is simply terrific. Her tone, technique, and temperament is the ideal mix and balance for these works”*

— **Fanfare Magazine, US**

Violinist Mathilde released her debut album of fantastic, unheard 19th century Violin Sonatas by Agnes Zimmermann, played alongside pianist Sam Haywood.



**DEBUT ALBUM FOR VIOLINIST**  
Mathilde Milwidsky

STUDENTS AND ALUMNAE

leading the way to a more sustainable lifestyle

In this edition, we profile five alumnae eco warriors who are encouraging their communities to use clean energy, understand the science behind climate change, live a zero waste lifestyle and use sustainable fashion.



Diana Fox Carney launches Eco Week

GDST alumna and environmental campaigner Diana Fox Carney launches Eco Week at South Hampstead High School



GDST alumna and WWF ambassador Diana Fox Carney kicked off the start of South Hampstead's Eco Week in February. Diana is an environmental campaigner focussing on climate policy, clean energy, sustainable livelihoods and responsible supply chains.

"We can all make sustainable changes to support climate action like using public transport and reducing red meat consumption which are all lifestyle choices that your generation are making," she said complimenting the students on the range of initiatives they have implemented around the school to encourage their community to make a difference. "But while these changes are impactful, it is the large global companies that cause the most environmental damage. Little can be done to solve the climate crisis until these corporations take action."

Eco Week at South Hampstead was organised by our Sixth Form eco committee and the school's Design and Technology teacher Alex Wigglesworth, who is one of only a few UN-certified climate change teachers in London. The week aimed to raise awareness of climate change issues and translate this into positive action. Together they organised workshops on eco anxiety; wrote letters to MPs; hosted documentary and film-screenings; held clothes swaps and second hand uniform sales; made pedal-powered smoothies; sold eco-products and vegan goodies; and held assemblies and form activities on energy, transport, upcycling and sustainable design.

As well as hosting the annual Eco Week, the team meet regularly to mobilise a range of initiatives and inspire the community to make a difference – from eliminating single-use plastics and setting up recycling points, to instigating a meat-free day each week and carbon off-setting flights on international school trips.



Diana has worked for many progressive think tanks throughout her career, as well as working in climate policy and overseas supporting community projects. While Diana now works for Pi Capital, a convening organisation covering many fields of academia, she is still very much involved in environmental work. She sits on the board for WWF's UK Council of Ambassadors and was until recently Chair of the Trustees of the sustainable energy charity, Ashden. Diana also runs a website reviewing eco-products and is a champion of sustainable living in her personal life.

South Hampstead High School's overarching, strategic initiative, Project Zero, is a pupil-led, whole school initiative that aims to improve the school's environmental credentials by its 150th anniversary. The project aims to significantly reduce the school's carbon footprint and contribution to landfill by 2026.

# Alumnae Eco Warriors

## Clean Energy

MARY PERT (NÉE ELVIN) (CLASS OF 1998)  
Business Operations Manager for tepeo Ltd

When I left South Hampstead, climate change suffered from a lack of awareness. In the intervening 22 years, it has become an accepted and well-understood concept. The task in front of us today is about finding affordable, implementable solutions. Emissions from heating space and water in buildings contributes to around 20% of the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions. Persuading the UK's 28 million households to stop using fossil fuels (mainly gas) for heating is a significant roadblock on the country's journey to reach net zero emissions by 2050. While solutions are emerging for other sectors, such as transportation and energy supply, heating emissions have yet to be tackled in any meaningful way.

Electricity is an obvious alternative energy source as it has significantly lower associated carbon emissions per unit of energy than fossil fuels. However, it is more expensive than gas. My company tepeo has invented a clever boiler which will deliver the same performance as an ordinary boiler but runs on electricity. Its design includes a highly compact built-in heat storage and intelligent controls so that the electricity needed to charge it can be consumed at the cheapest and greenest times of the day. The energy is then efficiently stored until needed. When it is used with an electricity tariff that changes price according to when the electricity

*"I left a very enjoyable job in the oil industry several years ago in order to find a way to contribute my skills and experience to a greener solution. This role is the result."*

grid is over or under-supplied, such as when it is sunny or windy, the cost of running the boiler will be significantly lower than an ordinary electric boiler. Whereas other technologies require significant and expensive changes to an existing heating system, tepeo's boiler can be directly substituted for an existing fossil fuel boiler. This is a compelling solution for domestic users wanting to make the change away from fossil fuels without significant additional expense. Many prototypes have been built to test the concept and my role is to help the company with the next steps, such as domestic trials and working out how to commercialise the product.

At South Hampstead, I was one of those students who had no idea what they wanted to do, and felt quite petrified at pigeonholing myself into one career or another, but I was always very clear about what I cared about – humanity, animal welfare and the environment. I remember becoming vegetarian while in Year 9 and my parents telling me it was just a fad – but I'm now 40 and still vegetarian! South Hampstead's excellent science teaching and a degree in Physics left me with a very clear sense of the planet as a system in delicate balance, that we mess with at our peril. I left a very enjoyable job in the oil industry several years ago in order to find a way to contribute my skills and experience to something greener. This role is the result.

It is marvellous to see the school's commitment to a greener future and I wish every success for *Project Zero!*



## The Science Behind Climate Change

EMILY GROSSMAN (CLASS OF 1996)

Alumna Dr Emily Grossman is a science author, public speaker and TV personality. She spoke at The Guardian Live's first ever panel event on Climate Change, interviewed Sadiq Khan for Time Out magazine challenging him on London's emissions, co-wrote and presented a Radio 4 documentary on James Hansen – father of climate change awareness – and co-founded Scientists for Extinction Rebellion. She has recently published a new, free and rigorously fact-checked book, *Emergency on Planet Earth*, providing an easy-to-understand guide to the science of the climate and ecological crisis.

Eighteen months ago I went along to watch an Extinction Rebellion protest. As a science communicator, with a degree in natural sciences from Cambridge University and a PhD in cancer research, of course I knew that climate change was real. I had learnt about global warming at South Hampstead and I knew that there was no doubt that the Earth was heating and that it was our fault. But had things really become as bad as the protesters were saying? I wasn't so sure, so I decided to find out. What I was about to discover would change the course of my life.

The amount of heat that we're adding to our atmosphere is the equivalent to five atomic bombs going off every second, and is causing more extreme heatwaves, forest fires, droughts, storms and floods. We're losing ice at the rate of 300 double-decker-

bus-sized chunks every second, sea levels are rising, and if we don't take radical action now the homes of hundreds of millions of people are likely to be flooded yearly by 2050. Melting glaciers threaten the fresh water supplies of the 1.9 billion people living downstream, outside air pollution is killing nearly five million people every year, and our farming practices have damaged a third of our soils. Meanwhile, the Brazilian rainforest is being felled at the rate of three football fields every minute, wildlife populations have plummeted by 60% since the 1970s, and one million species are at risk of extinction. In fact, a devastating loss of pollinating insects, together with extreme weather and damaged soils, is already threatening our ability to grow crops.

I knew I had to do something. I joined with a small group of scientists and we formed Scientists for Extinction Rebellion. We wrote a declaration stating how, over the past four decades, scientists had tried every other method of drawing attention to the crisis and that 'non-violent direct action' was now the only option we had left. Within a month it had been signed by more than 1,700 scientists across the globe.

One year on, we have produced a free online book, *Emergency on Planet Earth*, which lays out the truth about the crisis we are facing. It's easy for everyone to understand – no matter your level of scientific experience – rigorously fact-checked and endorsed by a range of leading experts.

I really hope that this book will not just allow readers to educate themselves and to share what they learn with others, but that they will experience the same sense of empowerment and togetherness that I did in writing it. And that then they will take action. Before it's too late.

**Emergency on Planet Earth is available as an open-access Google Doc and Extinction Rebellion have adopted it as the science section of their website.**





## Zero Waste Lifestyle

BETTINA MAIDMENT (NÉE SOLOMONS)  
(CLASS OF 1998)

Alumna Bettina Maidment is the founder of Plastic-Free Hackney, which started life as an Instagram account for recording her own efforts in going “plastic-free.” She has appeared on BBC Radio 4’s *PM* programme and BBC Breakfast, and in *The Observer*, *The Times* and Marie Claire talking about her campaign. Plastic-Free Hackney has since grown into a Community Interest Company that campaigns for a ban of single-use plastics at a national level while championing the idea that collectively, individuals have the power to make huge changes.

*“Looking back at my time at South Hampstead I am now incredibly aware of how fortunate I was. It almost feels like a moral duty to take what I learnt and use my position of privilege to campaign for a better world, when there are so many people in the world do not have a voice.”*

Bettina rarely empties her bin now that she lives a low-waste, sustainable lifestyle. “I just had enough! I have two small children and had a moment of realisation that we can’t keep smothering the earth in plastic and it not have any repercussions on their future. Thankfully, it’s now a really mainstream issue and everyone is waking up to the reality of what we’ve been doing.”

Bettina’s campaign group Plastic-Free Hackney encourages other residents to commit to a more sustainable lifestyle. They carry out a variety of activities such as workshops for residents, programmes for schools, community awareness events and regularly hold litter picks. They also work with

businesses and other organisations who are looking to reduce their plastic footprint through giving talks and carrying out audits at their workplace.

They are making progress in small steps. In 2001, Hackney as a borough only recycled one per cent of its materials. Now the figure is just over 25%.

Bettina is well aware that we cannot all switch to a zero-waste lifestyle overnight. “Take it slow, otherwise it can feel overwhelming and you’re likely to give up,” she advises. “Any step you take to reduce your waste is a step in the right direction so swap things out as and when is necessary, use up what you have and just be more mindful of what you do buy – every pound you spend is a vote for the kind of world you want.”

“Plastics are an issue from their inception to their disposal polluting at every stage; what is often not discussed are the social justice issues – our demand for cheap disposable plastics is paid for by mostly poorer black and ethnic minority communities around the world; such as shipping our waste to countries ill-equipped to deal with their own waste leading to road side burning and the health implications this has. Plastic pollution and climate change are two sides of the same coin; we have less than a decade left to make radical changes to prevent catastrophic climate breakdown and society’s consumption is one aspect that needs to be vastly curbed to enable this.”

*“Looking back at my time at South Hampstead I am now incredibly aware of how fortunate I was. It almost feels like a moral duty to take what I learnt and use my position of privilege to campaign for a better world, when there are so many people in the world do not have a voice.”*



## Sustainable Fashion

ZOE COKELISS BARSLEY (CLASS OF 1999)

Zoe Cokeliss Barsley has been Head of Environmental and Community Affairs at Pentland Brands for the past five years. She studied Biological Sciences at the University of Oxford before completing an MSc in Conservation at UCL. She has since worked in a range of environmental organisations including the Zoological Society of London and the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre. She is now an experienced sustainability professional with a focus on stakeholder engagement and environmental footprint reduction.

*“It is vitally important to source responsibly to improve conditions for the people who make the clothes and shoes we wear, and to reduce the environmental impact of the materials and processes used to make them”*

From her time at Pentland, which owns sports, outdoor and fashion brands including Berghaus, Canterbury and Ellesse, she is only too aware of the need to improve the sustainability of the fashion industry.

“It is vitally important to source responsibly to improve conditions for the people who make the clothes and shoes we wear, and to reduce the environmental impact of the materials and processes used to make them,” says Zoe.

Zoe has helped Pentland to establish science-based climate targets, and targets to ensure all packaging is recyclable, recycled or compostable by 2025; reduce water and chemical usage; and collaborate with others to implement circular production processes, and give fashion products a new lease of life.



“

*As alumnae, the education and training we received at South Hampstead enables us to have influential voices and make things happen professionally and personally.*

*We can all be involved in the climate change agenda and set an example to our children.*

”

An interview with

# Baroness Featherstone

CLASS OF 1970

*Driving the agenda on Britain's path to net zero emissions, encouraging all of us to speak up against climate change and building back better after the pandemic - the former Climate Change Spokesperson for the Liberal Democrats speaks to Resplendens.*

Lynne Featherstone is the former MP for Hornsey & Wood Green, and a former Minister in both the Home Office and the Department for International Development. She was the chief architect of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2014 and was the Liberal Democrat Spokesperson

for Energy and Climate Change from 2015 until 2018. Lynne speaks to Resplendens about how she has pushed for all our political parties to bring forward their targets for net zero emissions and how as individuals, we can all make lifestyle changes to combat the effects of climate change.

**How can young people use their voices effectively to help create a better future for their generation when it comes to climate change?**

There are many ways where young people can influence policies that will affect their future. I'm delighted to see South Hampstead students are already taking a lead and being so exemplary by campaigning for their school to be as carbon neutral as possible by 2026. I would encourage young people to take their voices beyond their school community and inspire their families to match what South Hampstead is doing - look at your own individual behaviour, write to local newspapers and national newspapers, pick an environmental activity, get people together to publicise it and encourage others to do the same. I would advise young people not to aim too high or too big but to do something that they can achieve, in an area where they can make a difference, for example cleaning up a local park where other people throw plastic and taking public transport to school rather than being dropped off by parents. Encourage neighbouring schools to join in, challenge each other and see who gets to carbon neutral first.

**Following on from this, how can our alumnae from all generations contribute to a more sustainable future?**

As alumnae, the education and training we received at South Hampstead enables us to have influential voices and make things happen professionally and personally. We can all be involved in the climate change agenda and set an example to our children. If we don't, future generations of our families will not live in the world that we had. It's just unthinkable that we won't leave the world in a better state than when we came into it. This should be our ambition and all alumnae have a responsibility in this, as does everyone. It takes all of us as individuals to change the world.

**In your view, what is the most important issue that governments must tackle when it comes to combatting climate change?**

In the UK, one of the greatest climate problems we have is energy waste. Our homes are guilty of contributing to 27% of emissions because they are poorly insulated and use inefficient heating methods. If the governments of countries in colder climates incentivised domestic homes to use only green energy and to install effective insulation, populations could reduce this figure. It would also enable individuals to contribute in a big way to reducing their own carbon footprint.

Covid-19 has given us an opportunity to re-balance and realise what is important to us. The improvement in air quality, the drop in emissions and the reduction of air travel has temporarily achieved what we needed to do initially. We need build back better so we don't go back to our old habits. We need to change what we aspire to through economic change. The production of green energy can be our new economy and is a huge opportunity that can come out of this pandemic. We can see the world as it needs to be. A better world and a saner world where we can do things differently. I hope we take advantage of all that we've learnt during the pandemic. The way we produce energy is important, but all changes towards an environmentally sustainable lifestyle matter. All of it counts. We should be optimistic that the world can change.

**What changes have you made in your life to live more sustainably?**

I almost never use the car and I actually prefer travelling on public transport. I changed to a green energy supplier, I recycle everything I possibly can, I walk everywhere I possibly can, I don't fly if I can take the train. I don't buy clothes anymore, you don't need many clothes, and I don't use plastic unless I have to. All of the big things worry me even more than individual behaviour. I think individuals should, out of basic politeness to the world we live in, use as little as possible and reduce what they can. The biggest contributors to carbon emissions are the heavy industries such as shipping and aviation, but individuals should do what they can and set an example for the rest of the world.

**What originally attracted you to the role of climate change spokesperson?**

In 2015, I was thrilled when Tim Farron, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, asked me to be Climate Change Spokesperson because it gave me the opportunity to look at the issues with fresh eyes. When I examined the policy, I saw there was a lack of urgency in this country. During the coalition government, we led on the Paris Climate Change talks, and thanks to Ed Davey, the UK quadrupled its use of renewables. When I started the role, there was no strategy for becoming carbon neutral even by 2050. This was my opportunity to drive the agenda forward. My key achievement was quickening the pace on net zero emissions and making all the parties, including my own, move their targets back from 2050. They now all have different targets, but all are earlier than 2050 - except this government's target, which remains at 2050 but is under huge pressure.

Britain is not the worst in the world in its climate change policy, but we can go a lot further. We also have to consider the countries that need more help, especially when they are not responsible for the industries that created climate change.

**How do you feel your time at South Hampstead influenced you to be a campaigner and led you to a career in politics?**

I didn't have the smoothest of rides at South Hampstead but when I think back to that time, I realise that it was school that made me an achiever and made me work hard. Whatever I've done, I've always done my best and risen to the top due to the training I received at South Hampstead. It taught me to always try and to be passionate in whatever I set out to achieve. In a way, the volunteering I did at South Hampstead led me into politics. I like helping people and making life better for them. The drive that South Hampstead gave me was to do something that would change somebody's life. Life is what you make of it.

# View from the Archive

High in the attic of Oakwood lies the school archive, organised and administered by former History teacher Joanna Coates.

This year we launched a digital archive website and over the next few years, our plan is to add more material and update the references on the site.

Here is a snapshot of some of the fascinating material uncovered.



## PRINCESS LOUISE

The fourth daughter of Queen Victoria, who presented the prizes at South Hampstead's prize giving in the 1890s.

## 1890

These memories are from Phoebe Clark (class of 1896) and were added to the archive in 1957.

In 1890, there was a historic occurrence... The great concert organised by what was then, the GPDST Princess Louise, the fourth daughter of Queen Victoria presided. Thousands of girls, dressed in white, and wearing huge rosettes in their school colours (orange in South Hampstead's case), sang heartily. Princess Louise actually came another year to present the prizes at Speech Day. Phoebe received a prize for Arithmetic, and was given a book, bound in dark calf, stamped with the crest Mehr Licht, entitled Tales of Ancient Greek. Her other memories are of drill classes on Tuesday afternoons, and of Miss Benton, garbed in the best Scottish tweeds cut with a masculine outline. "She made a splendid Head," wrote Phoebe, "and no one could ever accuse her of injustice."



NANCY SALINGER  
Class of 1930



In Nancy's photo collection was this image. We assume that it is either a teacher arriving to work on her motorbike or a parent on the school run. If you know more about this lady, please let us know.

## NANCY SALINGER, PUPIL 1920-30

In the 1950s, Nancy Salinger donated numerous photos and a written memory of her school days to our archive. She remembers lessons only in the morning, and optional games on two afternoons a week, with a choice of tennis or cricket, and hockey or netball. The girls played a game called Fives, and there were five Five courts at the school. Nancy was Head Girl in 1929-30 and led Jewish assemblies for the 100 Jewish girls (out of 400) in the school. There was a prefects' room where they could brew up tea and toast crumpets from John Barnes in Finchley Road (now Waitrose). She remembers that some teaching was first class and some deplorable, but the teachers really cared that the students should do well. Fees were £9.00 a term(!), but Nancy had a scholarship in her last two years so half the fees were paid. There was no contact at all with boys or men. At first Miss Walker was Head Mistress. Nancy remembers her as a stern Cambridge Classicist, dressed in mannish coats, skirts, collars and ties. She was replaced in 1925 by Miss Potter, the gentle, artistic, cultured sister of Stephen Potter, the humourist writer. She dressed in flowing Liberty prints.

Nancy herself gained a place at St. Hugh's, Oxford, thanks to her teachers and her own ability, where she read English and PPE.

## SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

The school's first inspection was in 1887 when Miss Allen-Olney was the Headmistress. The inspection report mentioned the poor quality of teaching and suggested that the staff were not paid enough. Some teachers were taking evening jobs to make ends meet! The next inspection was in 1909. The school was again criticised for the low salaries paid to its staff and for its cramped site. Teaching in most subjects was marked as 'needing improvement.'

By the time of the next inspection in 1924, the report was more positive thanks to the work of the new Headmistress Miss Benton. The school was now well-administered, ably staffed and the teaching of some subjects received praise. However, the girls in the school were frequently criticised for a lack of diligence and the words 'natural indolence' appear frequently. The report says that the 'teachers were apt to do far too much for their classes' and that they 'expected far little strenuous and independent effort from the girls in return.'

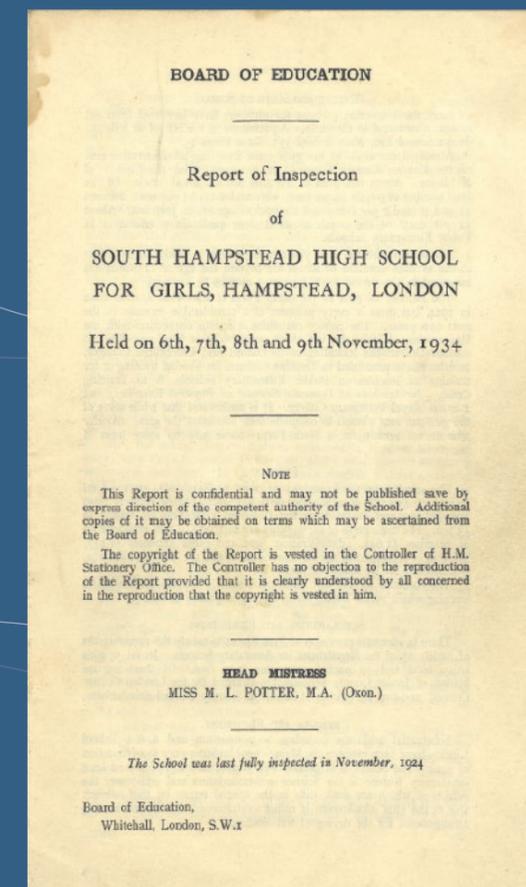
The 1934 inspection report shows a higher standard at South Hampstead. Inspectors saw no trace 'of the lethargic attitude to school work to which reference was made in the 1924 report.' It was suggested that this was due to stimulating teaching and stricter conditions of admission to the school due to its growing popularity. 'The school is ably and wisely conducted by Miss Potter and leaves the impression of a singularly harmonious community,' concluded the report.

It is clear that Miss Walker and Miss Potter had turned the school round. From 1934 onwards, there are no more critical reports, apart from complaints about cramped conditions in the building.

## THE SCHOOL LOG BOOK

In 1914, meticulous records were kept of the daily activities at the school, all in beautiful handwriting.

- The sum of £7.14/9 was raised for the Princess Patricia Ranch, a farm colony where young educated women could learn farming and fruit growing.
- Money which was otherwise to be used on prizes was now to be given to the needs of soldiers in the war. Mufflers, body belts, cuff, mittens, helmets and socks were sent to the soldiers in December 1914.
- The sum of £6.9 shillings was raised to provide money for a dog for an Antarctic expedition led by Mr Stackhouse.



A COPY OF THE SCHOOL'S INSPECTION REPORT IN 1934



CANADA HOUSE DRILL PRACTICE (1937)

ANN KUHN AS HOUSE CAPTAIN  
1940s

*Ann Kirk (née Kuhn) who returned to South Hampstead in 2019 to talk to students about her experiences of the Kindertransport during the Second World War*

SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE  
TENNIS TEAM, 1930s

#### THE SCHOOL HOUSE SYSTEM

After a gap of almost 40 years, South Hampstead re-introduced the House system several years ago.

The House system was originally set up during the First World War. The houses were named after four countries in the British Empire - Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand.

Each house had a House Mistress in charge, helped by five members of staff. They had a strict set of rules and competed against each other in sports and singing. The houses were a replacement for clubs, but when these became more popular in the 1950s, enthusiasm for the houses began to fade. Girls in South Africa house were upset at being associated with a country now practising Apartheid policies and renamed it Africa House when South Africa left the Commonwealth in 1960.

When the 'winds of change' began to blow in the 1960's, the house system disappeared completely. Feelings for the Commonwealth declined rapidly as the UK started to try to join the European Common Market.

After 2000, staff and students began to see some advantages in a House system, particularly where friendly competition could take place in the fields of sport, drama and singing. We now have four houses named after former Headmistresses. They are: Benton (1886 - 1918), Walker (1918-1926), Potter (1927-1953), and Boddington (1954-1969).

The Junior School followed suit as well. Today the Junior School houses are named after significant women: Bronte, Parks, Curie and Pavlova.

#### ONLINE ARCHIVE

To view past school magazines, old photos, and relics that make up South Hampstead's history, please visit:

<http://southhampsteadhighschool.daisy.websds.net>

# Bursary Stories

*“By sending into the world authoritative young women who believe in themselves, the school helps to give women a strong voice. It's vital that these women come from all kinds of backgrounds.”*

LARA FIEGEL

— Class of 1998, assisted place

*South Hampstead High School has been opening its doors to women from all backgrounds for generations.*

During the war, many refugees were offered the opportunity to resume their studies at the school as they fled war torn Europe and found refuge in London. Through the direct grant (1945-1976) and Assisted Places scheme (1979-1997), able girls from all backgrounds received financial assistance to attend the school. At times, up to 30% of our pupils were beneficiaries of these schemes.

These days, we provide bursaries through our own South Hampstead Bursary Fund which is funded through the generosity of our community and we are committed to increasing this support as we look to the future. As we look towards our 150th Anniversary in 2026, our priority over the next few years is to seek to transform more young girls lives through bursaries.

**Here, three alumnae from different generations reflect on their experience as 'Bursary' pupils at South Hampstead.**

## Susan Nowak (née Berry) (class of 1966)

### DIRECT GRANT

*Susan (née Berry) Nowak is a freelance journalist now specialising in beer and food writing. She was the first (and to date still is) female Chairman of the British Guild of Beer Writers, and was previously editor of a small group of weekly newspapers based in Hertfordshire.*

When, aged five, I became a pupil at the new and progressive George Eliot primary school off Finchley Road, I had no idea that the school was named after a woman who had to take a man's name in order to become one of the greatest novelists of all time; nor that I, too, would earn my living as a writer.

But I must have blossomed there; certainly my parents were astonished when I gained such a high grade in the 11+ that I was given an interview for a free place at South Hampstead High School and was able to present the then Headmistress, Miss Boddington, with three little essays I'd written which apparently showed 'imagination'.

The following autumn I duly made the switch from a classroom where sun streamed through glass to one which seemed more Victorian in style, with narrow windows above head height.

No matter. Life immediately became richer and far more complex. I was swept from that room on a tide of literature introduced to me by the teacher who inspired me, Miss Pettoello – I didn't find out until the sixth form that her first name was Laura. Thanks to her, I still devour six library books a week and read Shakespeare for pleasure (though to this day it still rankles that I was cast as Andrew Aguecheek in the school's production of Twelfth Night...); but that 'imagination' thrived

## Dhatri Navanayagam (class of 2007)

### SOUTH HAMPSTEAD BURSARY

*Dhatri Navanayagam is a Strategy Director at WPP, the world's largest advertising company, and lives in New York. She develops global campaigns for diverse clients including Google, UN Women and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.*

'When I was three years old, my father suffered a stroke and a heart attack. He was disabled and unable to work. My mother became a full-time carer. We ended up losing our home and were placed in social housing. It was a tumultuous time and financially difficult. Not having a safe, stable home is exhausting, expensive and emotionally draining. However, despite these challenges, I had a loving childhood and my parents ensured my sister and I never went without anything. What I value the most about my upbringing is the strong sense of aspiration that my parents instilled in us. There was never the sense that we should hold back on our dreams or lower our expectations, given our challenging personal circumstances.

At the age of eleven I was awarded a bursary at South Hampstead. The bursary opened up a world of opportunities for me and placed me in a nurturing environment in which my self-confidence grew and my aspirations broadened. I value how the school encouraged my peers and I to set our ambitions high and to try new things out – nothing was out of our reach if we set our minds to it. But what I appreciate the most is how the school equipped me with a deep understanding of my worth and value in life and how to confidently articulate that in the world.

as I was introduced to heroes from Heathcliff to Sydney Carton to Becky Sharp...and learned how to express my wonder on paper.

To be honest, reading and writing were pretty much all I was good at. Had I known that the alchemy of hops, malt, yeast and water resulted in beer I might have paid more attention in chemistry lessons – but a French 'A' level did mean I also got to know Gide and Sartre, and can now order a meal in Bordeaux.

Today I often disregard the rules of grammar. And I will start a sentence with a conjunction if I like, whilst infinitives it is my hobby to split, and I like to carry a well worn cliché about my person. But to break the rules you have to know them and I couldn't have had a more rigorous grounding in grammar, vocabulary, spelling and essay construction.

I'd like to say that school dinners fuelled my greed for fine dining, but it would be a lie. Also, South Hampstead was remiss in one respect – home economy was not on the menu so I left school at 18 unable to cook and certainly unable to originate recipes as I do now. So it must have been serendipity that immediately landed me a summer holiday job in a café off Baker Street – in fact, the owner offered me a pay rise to stay on because my apple pies had gained a following. Instead I went off to Regent Street Polytechnic to study journalism two months later. It was to be years before those separate strands entwined again.

But South Hampstead has given me a love of literature and the written word. It is the greatest gift you can give to anyone – I hope to bestow it on my tiny grand daughters.

It is on leaving school and entering the workplace that I have realised just how valuable this is – the quiet self-confidence to not sell yourself short, and to not allow others to put limits on your ambitions, no matter how well-intentioned they are.

I now work in advertising and I am using my skills in communications to drive positive social change, most recently at UN Women where I developed global gender equality campaigns focused on tackling issues such as the gender pay gap and violence towards women and girls. Some of my most meaningful achievements have involved using communications to challenge harmful cultural attitudes and to mobilise vulnerable communities in holding powerful institutions accountable.



LARA FEIGEL

## Lara Feigel (Class of 1998)

### ASSISTED PLACE

*Lara is Professor of Modern Literature and Culture at King's College London. She also works as a journalist, writing regularly for The Guardian and is a published author.*

Right from the start, I immediately felt welcome at South Hampstead. It was the first time I felt I fitted in somewhere and valued for my rather nerdy skills and enthusiasms (solving maths problems and writing very long stories). I remember the teachers were very kind and that it was easy to make friends because you were partnered with people for work and form time.

I think the most unusual aspect of my time there was the genuine friendships and intellectual collaborations between girls from different years and between girls and staff. I felt like so many of the staff were genuinely interested in my thoughts, and in developing my interests and talents. Ambition was encouraged without it necessarily feeling like swottiness – there was a lot of silliness too. And I felt able to try out aspects of grown up life – editing a magazine, interviewing well known figures, giving public talks, arranging panel discussions – because there was a sense that we took ourselves seriously as citizens of a community engaged with the wider world.

My parents were separated and I lived with my mother, who couldn't work because she'd been disabled by an accident and had severe mobility issues when I was a small child. At the time I started at South Hampstead, she was retraining as a psychologist, doing a part time degree at Middlesex University. She did her best for me financially but there was no way I could have gone to South Hampstead without a full bursary. I was really delighted to get the assisted place.

As a recipient of financial assistance, I hardly ever felt disadvantaged, but it did mean that I couldn't go on the foreign trips, which were too expensive for us, and I felt left out because these were often the places where new friendships were formed or existing friendships developed. I was aware that most of my friends had much larger houses than mine, but I rarely felt that they were snobbish about this.



DHATRI NAVANAYAGAM



SUSAN NOWAK (NÉE BERRY)

I really thrived at school and gained confidence as a writer and a thinker and someone who felt able to take on the world on my own terms. I think it is less likely this would have happened elsewhere – it was the particular set of influences at South Hampstead that enabled it. I still feel that it's the values I formed at school that guide me today.

My time at South Hampstead taught me a number of things. I learnt the importance of clear, original thinking. I learnt that women could do everything that men did and had as strong a voice to project. I made a set of kind, brilliant, thoughtful friends who continue to challenge me today. Having the chance to attend South Hampstead gave me the confidence to talk, argue, laugh and fight as an equal with some of the most brilliant minds of my generation and to believe in myself as a woman whose voice had a right to be heard.

After I left South Hampstead, I studied English at Oxford, had a couple of years travelling and doing internships in publishing, then did an MA and PhD and got a job in the English department at King's College London, where I've been for ten years. Over the last decade, I have also published four books, and done a lot of journalism (I write regularly for the Guardian). I am a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and have been awarded a series of prizes and grants within academia – for example, a European Research Council Starting Grant and a Philip Leverhulme Prize.

If you would like to share your 'bursary' experience please do contact us and if you would like to support our bursary funds, please visit our website or contact [development@shhs.gdst.net](mailto:development@shhs.gdst.net)

ALUMNAE SING AND CELEBRATE

# Spring Reunion

# 2020

*On Sunday 8th March, 170 alumnae spanning nine decades joined us for our 4th Annual Alumnae Reunion.*

This was a very special day of celebration as we welcomed alumnae who had supported our Waterlow Hall Campaign to mark the completion of the project. As part of the day, our Come & Sing choir met in the morning to rehearse with our Director of Music, Dr Steve Collisson. After lunch, they performed a rousing mini-concert dedicated to the memory of former Head of Music Jean Middlemiss who passed away earlier this year.





## Nesta Phillips

1920 - 2020

*Nesta joined South Hampstead in the 1950s as Head of Classics and spent 25 years passing on her enthusiasm of the ancient world to countless South Hampstead students. She passed away in August 2020 shortly after her 100th birthday. In her memory, the sixth form classics prize will in future be known as the Nesta Phillips Prize for excellence in classical subjects.*

### A student's memory by Valery Rees (class of 1964)

I was taught by Miss Phillips in 1961-1964, taking O and A level Latin. I am not quite sure how Miss Phillips caused me to fall in love with Latin, as I had always planned to follow the sciences. It may have had something to do with the way she made us work things out for ourselves with challenging Unseens, patiently waiting for offerings, not minding if they were wrong, but somehow guiding us to find a better answer. Virgil was always a joy. Even scansion! She showed us how clever Cicero was in shaping his arguments for the law courts, and made us find out about his life. How she explained the intricacies of the Odes of Horace to us is, in hindsight, something of a miracle. But she certainly fostered a love in us for all the things that were so dear to her.

In 1963, she led a trip to Greece that was amazing in every way – and open to those of us not in the Greek class. She made the ancient world come to life, be it the bull-leapers in Knossos, the Panathenaean procession or the charioteer at Delphi.

When I left school, to read History, I thought my Latin days were over, but it turned out not to be so. I was already using my Latin, and appreciating how well we had been taught, and when I was then asked to teach it, I naturally turned to Miss Phillips for advice. Her kindly mentoring and wise direction matched the care she had given us as pupils years before.

We soon became good friends, though for years I felt unable to accede to her repeated invitations to call her Nesta. Such was her natural dignity that it seemed to me a huge impertinence, even so many years after leaving school – despite the warmth and charm of her personality. However, on turning fifty myself, I took the plunge, and did not regret it! We were by then colleagues at St James School, and after I moved on we continued to meet, and spoke regularly on the phone after she left London for her home in Swansea. I was glad to have been able to visit her there in her last years.

Over the past weeks I have been gathering material, my own memories and those of others, to provide a fitting obituary for Nesta in The Times. Until this appears in print I am not at liberty to share it on these pages, but the very fact of spending time on it has brought sharply into focus the huge influence she had on shaping my ability to think clearly and constructively, to analyse, to present and to work from a sympathetic understanding of the student's needs. I know I am not alone in feeling huge gratitude for all she gave us.

### Recollections from a colleague and friend By Elizabeth Runnacles (née Piachaud) a former teacher at South Hampstead High School

After I joined the staff of South Hampstead High School in September 1969 I rapidly realised Nesta Phillips was a power in the land — as a mine of information about the whole ethos of the school, its pupils, staff and parents, plus its role in the wider community of the Girls' Public Day School Trust and the local Hampstead community. As I learnt to navigate my way, Nesta became a source of wise counsel, especially when I joined her as an Upper VI Form Mistress – cum guide and mentor. I owe much to her in teaching me how to collate the UCAS applications to Universities and Higher Education. Her wise advice, to think ahead and so hopefully avoid confrontational situations, did I think, help me to avoid possible pitfalls and challenging situations.

Nesta showed great initiative when she organised the first school trip overseas to West Africa on the "Minerva" – still afloat! She loved travelling and with her intrepid spirit, she came to know very well the classical world of Greece, Italy, France and the Near East. She took many groups of post-Ordinary Level girls along Hadrian's Wall and she had an encyclopaedic knowledge of all ports of call – and it was always great fun.

In December 1977 I left South Hampstead, but I kept in close touch with Nesta. She became a greatly valued friend and was often involved in my family's social activities.

Looking back over Nesta's long and very interesting life, I was fortunate to listen to her recounting her early memories of her childhood. Both Nesta's parents were grammar school teachers and greatly valued education, so were naturally very proud when she gained a place in 1939 at Newnham College, Cambridge. This appreciation and emphasis on the intellectual aspect of education continued throughout her life.

To sum up Nesta, I would apply the following adjectives— intellectual, intrepid, indomitable, but above all INSPIRATIONAL as a teacher and as an amazing friend.

A fuller version of this tribute and others from alumnae are on the school website: [www.shhs.gdst.net/news/remembering-classics-teacher-miss-nesta-phillips/](http://www.shhs.gdst.net/news/remembering-classics-teacher-miss-nesta-phillips/)



## Jean Middlemiss

1926 - 2020

*Jean Middlemiss was Head of Music at South Hampstead High School from 1957 until 1972 and installed a lifelong life of music in so many of her students. She passed away in February 2020, aged 94.*

### By alumna Susan Blum (class of 1973)

Arriving in 1957 as the head of music at South Hampstead High School in north London, Jean Middlemiss was shocked to see a curriculum in which music played such a small part. Here was a "community of lively youngsters," she wrote, "many of whose backgrounds were steeped in the mid-European cultural heritage where music is a serious part of everyday life and not a frill or mere social grace." Recognising the need for bright teenagers to find an emotional outlet, she wrote of squeezing "the music inch by inch into the timetable."

Jean was successful in producing a programme that incorporated large choral works with the local boys' school, operettas and a performance of Britten's A Ceremony of Carols at the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

She was clear-eyed, disciplined and warm and was hugely interested in and sympathetic to the ongoing lives of those she had known since their adolescence. Her energies were expansive and inclusive. Many alumnae owe Jean a lifetime of playing and singing. She was an inspirational teacher and great friend to both staff and pupils. Her standards were high but she was also noted for encouraging even the most musically challenged pupils. She was also a wonderful pastoral leader. She leaves a terrific legacy at South Hampstead – many of the innovations she introduced for music remain today.

After 14 years Jean, a musical dynamo who in her nineties would partner silk embroidered jackets with trainers, took leave of the high school. She set out overland through the Soviet Union in 1971 to Matsumoto, Japan, where she took up a six-month Churchill fellowship to study with Dr Shinichi Suzuki. His method of teaching music, inspired by the way children learn to speak before learning to read, and advocating an early start, encouragement and repetition, resonated with her. She went on to study in the US.

From 1973 until her retirement in 1989 Jean was the music adviser to East Hertfordshire. She pioneered the Suzuki method, incorporating it with other teaching philosophies, the Kodaly concept, and Dalcroze Eurhythmics, to set up music centres in the county. "It's everything that is important in life," she wrote of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, "not just music, because it's all about expressing yourself and your own emotions and feelings and learning to communicate with other people."

Music remained central to Jean throughout her life and she played in string quartets, the North London Lieder group and the Chelsea Opera Group, as well as singing in local choirs. In retirement she

was a proactive accompanist in day centres and care homes, leading residents to sing songs including from musicals and the Second World War. They were often younger than her by a couple of decades.

Jean believed that everyone had music in them, and encouraged the making of music and musicians. Yet her energies extended beyond that. She had an attentive intelligence, was interested in the whole person, and always thought the best of people. She particularly focused on the importance of community. Jean never married, but she had many friends and kept a book detailing the dates of all their birthdays. She sent out cards annually. By June she would have already posted 200.

The original version of this obituary appeared in The Times and is available at: [www.thetimes.co.uk/article/jean-middlemiss-94-pioneer-of-suzuki-string-teaching-who-saw-musical-potential-in-all-ppxstj2f8](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/jean-middlemiss-94-pioneer-of-suzuki-string-teaching-who-saw-musical-potential-in-all-ppxstj2f8)

You can read more recollections of Jean from alumnae on our website: [www.shhs.gdst.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Jean-Middlemiss-Booklet-for-reunion.docx.pdf](http://www.shhs.gdst.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Jean-Middlemiss-Booklet-for-reunion.docx.pdf)



JEAN MIDDLEMISS

Taken in 2016 at a reunion for the class of 1966

## Miss Joan Selwyn-Jones

1924 - 2019

*Miss Joan Selwyn-Jones will be remembered with gratitude and affection by the thousands of alumnae to whom she taught French during her 27 years at South Hampstead.*

Susan Hamlyn (née Robert) (class of 1971) remembers her former teacher

In an era perhaps more notable for teachers many of whom could be described as “formidable” or “redoubtable”, Joan was straightforward, kindly, gentle, patient and humorous. She was also an outstanding teacher. She was born in Caernarvon, an only child, and spent her youth in North Wales, taking her degree in French and German at the University of Wales in Bangor, followed by a DipEd. Her first job was at The Mill Mount Grammar School in York but her love of France and all things French was calling her. She spent several years there, first at the Lycée in Versailles and then at the Berlitz School nearby where she taught English to businessmen, all the while polishing her French and her accent which was perfect.

Her father’s sudden death brought her home and she took up her first GDST post at Wimbledon High School where she remained for two years. In 1957, she moved to South Hampstead where she spent the rest of her career. Her mother moved into a flat in Aberdare Gardens and they lived there together, the palpable, gentle affection between them enchanting all who visited.

Joan’s eyesight was never good. She wore immense contact lenses which, somehow, giving her an open-eyed, smiley look, further endeared her to her classes. Her teaching – whether of grammatical niceties or the great French classics – was thorough and meticulous but never pedantic or dull. Learning from Joan was pleasurable because of the care she took to ensure you had grasped what was needed before moving on to higher things. Her elucidation of everything from Beaumarchais’ Figaro to Camus’ La Peste were scholarly without being didactic. And she always enjoyed sharing a laugh.

After the death of her mother and with ever-worsening eyesight, Joan moved into a private flat in sheltered accommodation in Barnet – asserting over and over again that it was the best decision she ever made. Joan loved her flat, and never short of friends, she was quickly at home in Livingstone Court where, since her death on August 10th 2019, she is much missed.

Despite the limitations of her life, she was always open to the lives of others, interested in everything and everyone and never self-pitying. She was particularly interested in ancient history and archaeology, music (she had a lovely singing voice), her local church and, as ever, all things French. She hugely enjoyed conversation and her friends pay tribute to the breadth of her knowledge, interests and experience, enthusiastically shared.



A particular delight was her god-daughter, the daughter of one of her staunchest friends and former South Hampstead colleague, Mrs Aldon Williamson.

Her former pupils perhaps best convey Joan’s warmth and character. Virginia Krusin will never forget Miss S-J describing her first visit to Mont Blanc and how she suddenly saw the great snow-capped mountain before her, shining brilliantly in a deep blue sky. Virginia recalls, “I have never seen Mont Blanc but the reality could not be more beautiful than the scene she painted.” And Jane Sebba expresses what many others feel: “She was an excellent teacher and took no nonsense but we didn’t give her any because we recognised her talent and wanted to learn all she could teach us. On the back of the solid grounding she gave me, I went on to study French at A Level and I’ve continued to use the language up to this day. I will remember her with great fondness and gratitude.”



## Carol Goldblatt

*Administrative Assistant*

1942 - 2019

Words and photo by alumna and daughter,  
Lydia Goldblatt

We are sad to announce that South Hampstead’s former Administrative Assistant Carol Goldblatt passed away on 31st December 2019. Carol was a valued colleague and parent at the school for 15 years.

She first began working at the school volunteering in the library alongside Librarian, Naomi Greenwood. She quickly became indispensable and worked there for many years, before UCS poached them both! She also worked in the modern languages department, utilising her talent for languages to run conversation classes in French and German.

Loving both music and education, Carol was very happy helping out in the music department through the years when her younger daughter participated in Diana Kiverstein and Andrew Parmley’s choirs. She accompanied them on many a choir trip, memorably to the USA in the 1990s when the girls sang at the White House, and at the top of the World Trade Center.

She was fondly known by the girls as Mrs G, and is remembered by staff for her superb organisation of all departments, particularly in the music department. Her daughters, Melanie and Lydia, comment that she has been variously described to them in recent months as outspoken, intelligent, warm, funny, quirky, stoic, elegant, sage, fiercely independent, unflappable, poised, a dear friend, a lady of class and culture, action and knowledge and ‘always, always up for adventure’. She will be greatly missed.



## Helen Strange

*Chair of Governors*

1943 - 2020

Headmistress Vicky Bingham reflects on a valued  
mentor and great friend

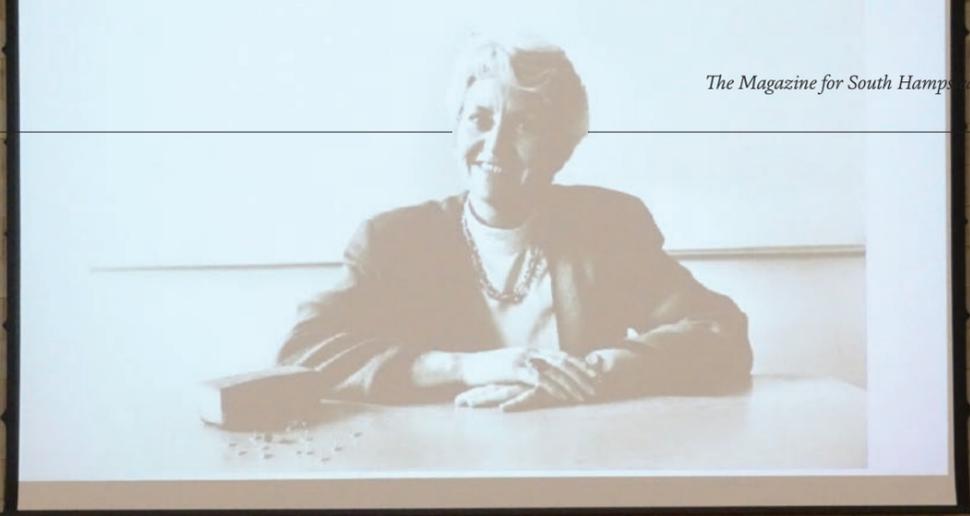
Helen Strange was a Governor at South Hampstead from 2015 and Chair of Governors from 2016 until 2019. She was instrumental in my appointment as Head and I owe Helen a huge personal debt. Her warmth, kindness and passion for life touched so many and she was someone who always gave fully of herself to others, and brought joy to everything she did.

Helen described her time serving South Hampstead as one of the most satisfying things she did in her career. Her passion for the school and her interest in its community was infectious. She never forgot either a name or a detail and she attended as many of the school events as she was able, including our 140th anniversary dinner where she was one of the speakers. She was a superb ambassador for the Waterlow Hall campaign and the perfect figurehead at fundraising events and meetings. As a musician herself, this was a project dear to her heart.

As Head, I always enjoyed my regular meetings with Helen. She gave me wise counsel and always helped me to see the positive, and indeed the humour, in everything. Helen supported me in the appointment of four members of the senior leadership team, and together we recruited no fewer than five new governors. She chaired meetings with grace, efficiency and attention to detail, and made sure everyone had a voice.

Most importantly, Helen was always there when we needed her, our champion, our listener and our friend. She always put people at the heart of her counsel to me. She embodies everything we stand for as a school and I am proud to have worked with Helen. She will remain a role model in my career and my life.

Helen is survived by her husband of 50 years, David, by three children and five grandchildren, and by countless happy memories of all whose lives she touched.



**AVERIL BURGESS ASSEMBLY**  
In conversation with Headmistress  
Vicky Bingham

## Events



**WATERLOW HALL FESTIVAL**  
Helena Bonham Carter and GDST alumna  
Olivia Coleman open Waterlow Hall Festival



**WATERLOW HALL GALA CONCERT**  
Professional cellist and alumna  
Gemma Rosefield

### Averil Burgess Assembly

Averil Burgess OBE, Headmistress of South Hampstead High School from 1975 to 1993 and former president of the Girls' Schools Association, returned for our 'In Conversation' assembly earlier this year. She was joined by some of her former pupils who are now parents of South Hampstead pupils themselves. The assembly was followed by breakfast in the Oakwood library and proved a wonderful opportunity for all to reminisce about their school days together.

### Music In the Garden

Our Music in the Garden event brought together some of our outstanding current music scholars with professional musicians from our South Hampstead community including Clio Gould (class of 1986), Helen Hathorn (class of 1981) and Eliza Millett (class of 2014).

To celebrate music past, present and future at South Hampstead and to promote our Waterlow Hall project, our Director of Music Dr Steve Collisson put together an outstanding programme of Brahms, Elgar and Mendelssohn all played within the beautiful setting of Sir Clifford Curzon's original music room at Millfield Place.

Guests included former heads, governors, staff and alumnae. The sun chose to shine on this exceptional event, which came about thanks to vision of the Chair of Governors Helen Strange and the generosity of alumna Susie Whitmore (née Bach) (class of 1985) who hosted the event.



MUSIC IN THE GARDEN

### The Waterlow Hall Gala Dinner November 2019

More than 300 South Hampstead parents, alumnae and supporters gathered in the Banking Hall in the City of London to celebrate the success of the Waterlow Hall fundraising campaign and help raise the final funds. Guests included governors and three former South Hampstead Headmistresses who were 'danced into dinner' by South Hampstead's Salsera band playing a selection of Latin American dance tunes.

A hush descended as Deputy Head Girl, Kate, performed the beautiful poem 'Music' by Walter de La Mare, over a virtual reality tour of what it might feel like to hear words spoken in our new, state-of-the-art hall. The silent and live auctions included more than 60 fantastic lots, many of which were donated by our alumnae community.

This memorable, celebratory evening raised over £100,000 towards our Waterlow Hall Campaign.



FOUR HEADMISTRESSES AT THE GALA DINNER

### The Waterlow Hall Festival Spring 2020

As the doors opened to our new, state-of-the-art hall we welcomed the award-winning co-stars of the Netflix series, The Crown: Olivia Colman (GDST Alumna) and Helena Bonham Carter (class of 1984) to our grand opening of our Waterlow Festival. The celebrations began as pupils, staff and Mrs Bingham cut the ribbon to the new building alongside our two very special, surprise 'royal' guests.

The festival got underway with two spectacular gala concerts, as over 300 pupils performed in the stunning new Waterlow Hall. Former Headmistresses (Mrs Averil Burgess, Miss Helen Pike, Ms Jean Scott and Mrs Jenny Stephens) joined alumnae, donors, sponsors and governors past and present – alongside numerous other campaign supporters – to enjoy two celebratory evenings of music which culminated with a mesmerising Elgar concerto by cellist and alumna Gemma Rosefield (class of 1999) accompanied by the South Hampstead Symphony Orchestra. Gemma was one of three sisters to have attended South Hampstead, where she began to learn the cello and sing in the choir in the Junior School.

Other festival events included the ground-breaking play Emilia, a lecture by Professor Alice Roberts, school concerts and the Alumnae Come and Sing Reunion Lunch.



## Class of 1968 Zoom Reunion

BY ALUMNA GILLIAN CLOSE

This is a special year for us when we had hoped to enjoy some celebrations as we turned 70. The older members of the year group had squeezed in theirs before lockdown. Some of us younger ones said we would stick at 69 until we could celebrate in the way we wanted to. On 31 March, we raised a glass, sang Happy Birthday and heard about what everyone had done or was planning to do. 27 of us took part. We enjoyed it so much that, since then, we have had a monthly Zoom meeting, with 35 of us taking part in at least one. Others have also kept in touch during the flurries of emails that we have exchanged reflecting on shared experiences. We have felt a closeness with each other and mutual support as we have got to know people beyond our schooltime friendship groups. We have laughed together. Who would ever have expected that we would all be in contact more than 50 years after leaving school!

## Class of 2014 Reunion

In October 2019, we were delighted to welcome the Class of 2014 to South Hampstead in 2013/2014 for an alumnae reception.

The event was organised by our alumnae captains – one of the many leadership roles available to Upper Sixth students. Dozens of alumnae came back for the event: a chance for them to reunite and reconnect, while also giving the current Upper Sixth an opportunity to ask questions about life after South Hampstead, university and careers. The girls welcomed the chance to quiz their predecessors who are starting out in a variety of interesting professions, including Finance, Graphic Design, Human Rights, Management Consultancy, Software Engineering and Teaching.

Many of the returning alumnae had never seen the Hopkins-designed building, so were keen to explore the school. After drinks and canapés in the lower exhibition area, they were given tours of the 7-storey building by current students.



### SOUTH HAMPSTEAD

## In the News

South Hampstead's eco initiatives have been hitting the headlines with The Times and Independent Education Today reporting on our school-wide initiatives to be as carbon neutral as possible by our 150th anniversary in 2016. Our headmistress Vicky Bingham discussed the benefits of an all-through school in The Week's Independent Schools Guide and our Director of Partnerships & Employability Dr Rachel Osborne is interviewed in The Telegraph on How to Help Your Teen Choose the Right Degree.

The Week Independent Schools Guide September 2020

## South Hampstead is selected as the best school for green ideas

"South Hampstead High is ahead of the curve" and is recognised as the best of the best for green ideas in the latest issue of The Week UK Schools Guide.

Full article at: [tinyurl.com/Best-Green-Ideas](https://tinyurl.com/Best-Green-Ideas)

The Week Independent Schools Guide: March 2020

## The benefits of an all-through school

Headmistress Vicky Bingham stresses that continuity, enduring relationships, shared experiences and collective memories are powerful anchors in a rapidly changing world. At an all-through school, students can benefit from consistent ethos, values and pastoral framework.

Full article: [tinyurl.com/the-argument-SHHS](https://tinyurl.com/the-argument-SHHS)

The Times: 4 January 2020

Independent Education Today: 20 February 2020

## Climate Change: South Hampstead High School head gives herself a green dressing down

Headmistress Vicky Bingham has vowed to buy no new clothes for 365 days and inspired the students to make all sorts of environmentally-friendly personal pledges of their own. The sacrifices have grown into a school-wide project, with students asked to point out to the school any environmentally unfriendly practices it has.

Full articles at: [tinyurl.com/how-green-is-your-school](https://tinyurl.com/how-green-is-your-school) & [tinyurl.com/365-Club-in-The-Times](https://tinyurl.com/365-Club-in-The-Times)

The Telegraph: September 2019

## How to Help Your Teen Choose the Right Degree

Director of Partnerships & Employability Dr Rachel Osborne is interviewed in The Telegraph on How to Help Your Teen Choose the Right Degree. She advises on how whittling down possible course options is all about research and talks about how South Hampstead's Futures Programme starts equipping its pupils for life beyond their school years from Year 7.

Full article: [tinyurl.com/choose-the-right-degree](https://tinyurl.com/choose-the-right-degree)



CONNECT WITH

# South Hampstead

## *Keep in touch*

### SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER

Email us at [alumnae@shhs.gdst.net](mailto:alumnae@shhs.gdst.net) to receive our termly newsletter with updates on careers and networking opportunities, news about the alumnae community and invitations to events.

### FOLLOW US

 @shhsforgirls

 [linkedin.com/school/south-hampstead-high-school](https://www.linkedin.com/school/south-hampstead-high-school)



## South Hampstead *Speaker Series*

Alumnae are welcome to join us for the South Hampstead Speaker Series events which are currently taking place online. The Speaker Series is an opportunity for the school and local community to come together and hear from distinguished guests with a myriad of different perspectives on the world.

Previous speakers have included British educator and contemporary historian **Sir Anthony Seldon**; anthropologist, TV presenter and author **Professor Alice Roberts**; behaviour Scientist **Dr Pragya Agarwal** and science journalist **Angela Saini**. Look out for details on our next alumnae newsletter.

Sunday, 9th May 2021

## *Spring Alumnae Reunion 2021*

The reunion lunch is open to all alumnae and former staff. Each year we focus on inviting selected groups of alumnae to celebrate anniversaries since leaving the school, however everyone is welcome to attend and put together a table for the event.

We will be organising specific year group reunions for the classes of **1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011** and we are looking for year group reps to encourage their friends to come to join us. If you would like to help out, please get in touch.

No one knows what the social distancing restrictions will be in 2021, but whatever happens, we will hold a Covid secure alumnae reunion this summer either at South Hampstead or online.

## *Tell a school friend*

There are many South Hampstead alumnae who are not on our database. If you're in touch with an old school friend who does not receive communications from us, please do let them know about the South Hampstead Alumnae and GDST Networks and encourage them to sign up at [www.gdst.net/alumnae](http://www.gdst.net/alumnae)

## *Offer careers support*

Our recently graduated alumnae have found themselves in a very challenging job market. If you are in a position to offer careers support or could hire a South Hampstead alumna, please let us know.