

Polished **CORNERS** 2023



The Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP
Member of Parliament for Chipping Barnet
Class of 1986

Invitation

Please note, that out of respect for our planet, we no longer send postal invitations



POLISHED CORNERS AND FORMER TEACHERS
ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO
THE QUONDAM AGM AND BIRTHDAY LUNCH
ON SATURDAY 9TH NOVEMBER 2024 AT 1PM
FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL, REGENT'S PARK

RSVP BY 25TH OCTOBER 2024:
QUONDAM@FHS-NW1.ORG.UK
OR BY POST TO:

ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICER,
FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL
39 GRAHAM TERRACE, LONDON SW1W 8JF



A VOLUNTARY DONATION OF £10 TO FHS TOWARDS THE
COSTS OF THE LUNCH, PAID ON THE DAY, WOULD BE MUCH
APPRECIATED.

Polished CORNERS 2023

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From the Headmistress, Quondam's President

Dear Polished Corners,

As I write, in September 2023, I have now completed a full academic year leading this wonderful school and, as I said at Prize-Giving in July, it has been the best year of my career to-date. I feel enormously privileged to be working with such extraordinary girls and colleagues and there is no doubt that Francis Holland, Regent's Park continues to go from strength to strength.

The year of course started on a very sad note, with the passing of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. I recall the news arriving during my first ever Quondam meeting and, after that meeting, walking to Buckingham Palace to pay my respects to our longest-serving monarch.

I have very much enjoyed getting to know many Polished Corners and a particular delight was sharing my birthday with several of you at my first formal Quondam engagement in November. Susanne Nedas has made me feel so very welcome and it was an honour to welcome back former Headmistress Vivienne

Chapman (formerly Durham) to FHS for the Quondam lunch. I felt privileged to be able to show her our new Sixth Form Centre, Linhope House, which has really enhanced the Sixth Form experience here at FHS, bridging that all-important gap between school and university.

The official opening of Linhope House took place in March and it was a very special occasion and a wonderful way to thank the donors and all those who made the project a reality. We were incredibly fortunate to be able to welcome back alumna Rhiannon Adams (2003) to cut the proverbial ribbon for Linhope House. She encapsulated perfectly what it is that is so distinct about an FHS education, and she will be our first Polished Corner to venture into space, having been the only woman selected for the dearMoon Crew. We cannot wait to welcome her back after her mission! Furthermore, our Quondam Scholar is benefiting enormously from the invaluable opportunity to receive an FHS Sixth Form education and I am indebted to Quondam for their support with this wonderful initiative.

This year saw the introduction of the Hale Lecture series, with our inaugural talk being given by none other than Baroness Hale herself. Since then, we have welcomed CEO of the NHS Amanda Pritchard, computer scientist Anne-Marie Imafidon, historian and Polished Corner Dr Hannah Dawson and political activist Gina Martin. These talks have inspired us all and we have another exciting line-up for this year. We are also delighted to have been shortlisted for the Independent School Parent Awards for the category of best London Independent School, and our trailblazing Lower Fourth inventors, Team REMI, have done us proud winning a national competition for their innovative room environment monitoring infobot at the PA Consulting Raspberry Pi competition.

Sport has continued to grow and I am thrilled that we are bucking the national trend with our strong participation in sport. We have enjoyed phenomenal success with our intermediate cross-country runners being ranked 4th in the

country and, following the successes of the Lionesses, we are enjoying our own victories in football. We participated in over 110 fixtures over the year, and our fabulous annual gym and dance show and Sports Day showcased the talent of our school only too well. The spirit of the school is strong, if not unbreakable, and our four houses (Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and Neptune) form an integral part of school life. Drama, which has always been a strength of the school, continues to triumph with two stand-out productions from last year, *Grease* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Both were outstanding and so memorable. The musical offerings in the school also never cease to impress. Our choral links with Harrow grow ever stronger and we have enjoyed so many musical evenings, from our Jazz and Swing event at St Cyprian's to our Scholars' recital.

Our pupils and their families continue to give generously to worthy causes; our sponsored walk this year raised almost £20,000 in one



day! The girls here remain busy, busy, busy and the amount that they do and achieve week-in, week-out is astonishing. Our academic year culminated in an incredible Discovery week with 9 different trips, both national and international, spreading the magic of FHS far and wide. There really is no stopping them! It would be remiss of me not to celebrate our outgoing Upper Fifth and Upper Sixth, who have done us proud, collectively achieving some outstanding results in their GCSEs and A levels respectively. Knowledge, Perseverance, Spirit, and Compassion, our four pillars, certainly continue to underpin all that we do.

There is no doubt that it is the spirit and ethos of this school that really set it apart. I recently asked one of the former members of the Head Girl's Team to sum up FHS; she described it as a hug. Our school is a home from home and our shared history anchors us, affording us opportunities to maintain and cherish special traditions and customs, which I have loved being part of this year. The Twelve Days of Christmas was a moment I will certainly never forget, as was the day in January when our grand piano was professionally hoovered just before our 11+ interviews, because of the golden rings that had fallen during that assembly (or should I say cheerios!). A first in my lifetime!

When Francis Holland opened on Tuesday 1st October 1878, just 21 girls walked the halls at number 6 Baker Street. Today, at 9 Ivor Place, we educate over 550 pupils, who will undoubtedly be the difference we need right now in the world. This year we will celebrate 145 years of educating girls here at Regent's Park and whilst our buildings and educational offer might look very different, the soul of this school hasn't changed. Reflecting on sixty years of school life, Miss Moberly Bell wrote that 'Baker Street Girls were not slow to make the most of their opportunities'. This has not changed, and we will continue to build on these

opportunities, to build further on our successes and, whilst shaping the future development of our wonderful school, continue to cherish and protect our FHS DNA.

Community is everything here, and Quondam play such a pivotal and important role here at Francis Holland, Regent's Park. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for the school. We hope that you will continue to stay in touch, and I very much hope to see you soon!

With best wishes,



Katharine Woodcock, Headmistress



Letter from the Chair

Dear Fellow Polished Corners,

I begin with huge apologies for the tardiness of this magazine – much of the delay has been out of my control.

One of my personal joys of being Chairman of our wonderful Quondam is that I have the chance to visit the school – it buzzes and heaves with energy and emanates the warmth that I hope you all remember.

Do please come back and visit at one of the Quondam events – you will be warmly welcomed. Don't miss the AGM and the Birthday Lunch – see page 2. Let's celebrate in style and make it huge! We don't post invitations out anymore so please do respond and make a note in your diaries.

Our school, as always, is thriving! It was shortlisted for the London Independent School of the Year award for 2023 and for The Muddy Stiletto's Best Schools "Special Sixth Form" and "Giving Something Back" award. The LVI engineers won the "Project of the Year" award at the Industrial Cadet Gold Award. The pupils have excelled in their GCSE and A Level examinations.

This year the School said goodbye to some very valued members of staff and, on behalf of all the pupils they have taught over the years, Quondam thanks them all most sincerely and wishes them every happiness in the future. We hope they will keep in touch and see many of you at various events during the year. Among the leavers are Nicola Foy who taught English



at FHS for 24 years, Clare MacDonnell, who taught History of Art at FHS for 11 years, and Karen Mount, who was a visiting teacher for nearly 18 years, teaching Speech and Drama.

The Committee is very sad that Vivien Rose, née Lind, has retired after twenty years! She has been Joint Secretary for several of those years and has been an inspirational member of the Committee. Many of our best ideas are Vivien's and, most recently, it was she who recommended that what the leavers would most appreciate as a leaving gift from Quondam would be the sponsorship of their first drink at the leavers' prom! So much more inspired than a badge saying Quondam Member which would have lain in the drawer for a time before reaching the bin – if indeed the bin was not its immediate destination!

Benita Mathews, née Thomas, has also resigned from the position of Treasurer which she has held for an amazing 48 years. Quondam's members cannot be more grateful and indebted to Benita for all she has done for us. Thankfully, she will remain on your Committee so we will still have the benefit of her wise counsel and wonderful personality.

We welcome Dr Frances Baawuah to the Committee. She left FHS in 1998 and is

a mother to two, is a partner in two large inner-city GP practices, a Trustee of Hello World, and a Governor of FHST. She is a true example of “if you want something done, ask a busy person!”.

We aim to span the ages with our Committee and we are looking for members who left after 2018. The only qualifications are a love of our school, enthusiasm, energy, ideas and time! We meet once a term.

Thank you most sincerely to all members of Quondam who have supported the Quondam Sixth Form Scholarship. We hear from our first Quondam Scholar on page 17. She has clearly settled in well and is enjoying her time at Francis Holland. We desperately want to see our second Scholar start this September but we cannot do it without your help.

We do hope that, despite its very late arrival, you enjoy the magazine this year and that each of you finds mention of those you knew at school and articles which interest you. Thank you to all who contributed to the magazine this year. Huge thanks go to committee members Felicity Forde, Jeannine Addinall, Alison Edelshain, née Day, and Benita Mathews, née Thomas who have helped me put the magazine together. None of us are professionals in this field and our printers have taken on the setting of the magazine as well as the printing. Unfortunately, there have been huge delays in receiving the first and subsequent drafts and, though they are apologetic, it does not save my embarrassment and your frustration at receiving the 2023 magazine in 2024. We were aiming at early November. I have collected and collated your articles myself this year and I can honestly tell you that I have absolutely no natural talent, or any talent, for the job! So I send profuse apologies if I have omitted to print anyone's contributions. Do email me and let me know if that's the case and it will go in next year's!

Mrs Rolfe Johnson's fantastic suggestion of featuring Musical Memories, pages 31-46, brought in a huge amount of material and the memories cover decades. Though I enjoy listening to music I am devoid of any talent but I absolutely loved every single word of these fantastic memories which epitomise the FHS spirit.

Our lead articles are from those with careers in Politics this year. See pages 27-30.

All Mrs Parsonson's girls will be thrilled to hear about her post FHS adventures. In her typically self-deprecating style she says, “ as can be seen, I haven't done much in the last 25 years of note”. I think when you've read her article on pages 24-26, you will, like I do, totally disagree with that statement.

The girls were inspired by their self chosen title for the Writing Competition this year – Be Bold, They took us to the Garden of Paradise, the world of a bird, to a land where people were only 90cms tall, through mythical forests and many more. Please do read the winning entries on pages 54-56.

That's enough from me! Other than to tell you that at this year's birthday drinks' party we were hosted by some delightful girls in the LVth who were entertaining, chatty, enthusiastic and very polished! Do come and meet some of the wonderful pupils at the Back to School Lunch on Thursday 21st March. Invitation on page 7

With warmest wishes to all,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Susanne Nedas'.

Susanne Nedas née Quastel
FHS Pupil 1958-1971
Parent of FHS Pupils 1988-2000

Quondam Events

We are ever grateful to our President for her hospitality and to the catering team for the delicious fare they produce and to Claire Brazer, the Alumni Relations Officer, for all she does to ensure our events run seamlessly. The photos speak for themselves.

The Quondam Birthday Lunch and AGM – 5th November 2022

We were delighted to welcome our new President, Mrs Katharine Woodcock, at our AGM in 2022. Mrs Woodcock arranged the seating in a square which produced a very intimate and inclusive atmosphere. An absolute highpoint of the day was that we celebrated our new President's birthday on the very day of the lunch. As always, no-one wanted to leave! Do come next year.



Valerie St Johnston, History teacher 1966-1987, with some of her former pupils. left to right Julia Strauss, Jennifer Purchase (née Shier), Benita Mathews (née Thomas), Alison Edelhain (née Day), Valerie St Johnston, Susanne Nedas (née Quastel), Manuela Robson, Sara Manning (née Horsley), Emma Horsley, Fezra Fatah

The Quondam Back to School Lunches

We have now had two of these events – they are warm and intimate and delightful. Do join us on Thursday 21st March. Invitation on page 7.

Jeannine Addinall writes: “This was a wonderful and nostalgic, but lively, occasion, with students and teachers past and present happily mingling. After enjoyable and stimulating conversations over delicious food in the Hall, Hana Bayoudhi, winner



Back to School Lunch 2022



Quondam's Birthday lunch

of the Quondam 2022 Travel Scholarship, gave a fascinating presentation about her resulting trip to Liberia to build bridges [literally!] and also answered questions about this very worthwhile journey.

Rarely can so much pleasure and interest have been fitted into an hour! The event was such a good idea, and so appreciated by those who attended that it has been repeated in March 2023, and will be again in the foreseeable future”.

The Quondam Birthday Tea and Drinks and AGM 2023

Some of you told us (we do listen!) that it was difficult to make lunch on a Saturday so the Committee decided to alternate the Saturday lunches with Birthday Tea and Drinks parties.

Ideally, we would like to see the hall crammed to capacity! What can we do to entice you to a Quondam event? Please do email me suggestions at quondamchair@fhs-nw1.org.uk



At The Quondam Birthday Lunch 2022. Centre Mrs Katharine Woodcock, Right Mrs Vivienne Durham, now Chapman, Left Susanne Nedas née Quastel



Quondam Drinks Party 2023



Quondam AGM 2023



Quondam Tea Party 2023

Comments from Attendees at the Virtual Reunions

“I really enjoyed the reunion; it was lovely that you chaired it. It was good to meet Mrs Woodcock. I’m sure she’s going to be splendid.”

“Well done on the zoom reunion. It is a great way for people overseas to keep in touch. Just a shame there were not more people attending. You managed it very well and there was always someone saying something interesting.”

“Thank you so much for organising yet another very successful virtual reunion.

“I really enjoy the virtual reunions. What I like is the fact that the attendees are actually not from my year. It is really interesting hearing the experience of past pupils from other years, especially the years above me, especially the “Good old Heather Brigstocke years”.



First Fund Raising Event for the Quondam Sixth Form Scholarship Appeal

“The Quondam Sixth Form Scholarship is a lifeline for students who aspire to further their education at Francis Holland School.”

by Laure Chan, FHS Pupil 2006-2009

and Jeannine Addinall, FHS Teacher 1981-2012



Laure with Three Headmistresses. Left to right: Vivienne Durham, now Chapman, (Head 2004-2015), Laure Chan, Katharine Woodcock (present Head), Pamela Parsonson (Head 1988-1998)

Jeannine Addinall most generously sponsored this event and saw her magnificent contribution of Laure's fee, triple her investment. Can you think of an exciting event we could hold?

Jeannine writes: I passionately believe in opportunities such as the Quondam Sixth Form scholarship because I have seen so many times in my life how gifts such as these transform the lives of others. It is also the gift that keeps on giving, because what

happens in these lives is passed on to benefit the world in the contributions they later make. I worked at FHS for more than 30 years and know very well the school's ability to give its students the very best-always tailored to the individual-and build their confidence through its strongly academic and also nurturing approach.

Laure writes on her joy of playing to raise funds for the Scholarship: On 5th September, I returned to Francis Holland School Hall to perform a solo violin recital to help raise funds towards the Quondam Sixth Form Scholarship. My connection with FHS began as a student and music scholar from 2006 to 2009. My roles within the music department involved solo, chamber music and orchestral rehearsals and concerts. Those three years were an intense time juggling my musical commitments, academic education and finding a sense of balance in my childhood.

The Quondam Sixth Form Scholarship is a lifeline for students who aspire to further their education at Francis Holland School. It represents an investment in the future, a commitment to providing opportunities, and a belief in the potential of each student. Returning to Francis Holland School Hall to play a violin recital was more than a



Mrs Judy Piercy

musical performance; it was a heartfelt homecoming: a celebration of the past, an affirmation of the present, and a promise for the future. I was honoured to play a part in helping future scholars reach their full potential, just as the school had done for me.

During my time as a student at FHS, I experienced some of the most disciplined moments of my life. My days would typically entail getting up at 5am on weekdays, practising a couple of hours before school, going to school, having my dad pick me up during lunchbreaks 3 times a week for violin lessons with my teacher — Yumi Sasaki, Professor at the Junior Department of the Royal Academy of Music — coming back to school, practising for a few hours afterwards and doing my homework. Every Saturday, I attended the junior department at the Royal Academy of Music, essentially another full school day, so Sundays were my only “days off”, provided I didn’t have a concert or competition and heaps of homework to catch up on! Struggling to cope with the workload, I was extremely lucky to be supported by my headmistress at the time, Vivienne Durham, who understood how important music was to me and the dedication it required to pursue a career as a concert violinist. We have kept in touch over the years, and it was super special to see her attend the fundraising event. Since leaving,



I have returned several times to my alma mater to give ensemble concerts, but the last time I gave a solo violin recital at the school was on my very last day 14 years ago, after which I was home-schooled.

As I grow older, I am finding more importance in building a sense of community and returning felt like coming full circle, a poignant reminder of how far I have come since those days back at secondary school. To have an opportunity to give back and raise funds towards a place where I was supported as a young person in pursuing my dreams and passion is a true pleasure. We managed to raise over £1,000 for the scholarship fund on the path towards the ultimate target of £22,500, which would provide invaluable support to a student seeking to pursue their education in sixth form. The cause united alumni, parents, teachers, ex headmistresses and supporters of the school and their presence and generosity were a testament to the belief that education should be accessible to all, regardless of financial constraints. The success of the evening was a testament to the power of community and the enduring spirit of Francis Holland School.

The Quondam Sixth Form Scholarship Appeal

Where we are at and Where we are going!

Many thanks to each and every one of you who contributed to the Quondam Sixth Form Scholarship – originally called the Quondam Sixth Form Bursary. The committee changed the name to ensure that Quondam's Scholar could revel in the glory of her title.

As you will see from the article written by our first Quondam Scholar (page 17), Polished Corners rose to the challenge and raised the funds needed, which were matched by the Head, from the Trust.

We need to raise £22,500 every other year. We have raised £8,000 so far, but we need your support to help us reach our goal of £22,500 before the end of the Spring Term to allow the school time to interview candidates for September 2024.

It is not just the number of pounds we need! We really want to make this gift from all Polished Corners everywhere so please, if you can, do contribute whatever you are comfortable with!

We are fortunate enough to have a President who is so committed to welcoming a Quondam Sixth Form Scholar to Francis Holland Regent's Park, that Mrs Woodcock has generously agreed to match our funds raised*. Our goal is to raise one year's fees (£22,500) every two years which will be matched by the President. In turn, this will allow us to give the gift of a full Sixth Form education to a talented girl who otherwise

would not have access to the transformational education offered here at FHS.

Join the 150 Coffee Club

A coffee a month (say £5) will bring the fund £60 a year. If you are eligible for GiftAid we will receive £75 in total. Just 150 of our members pledging that amount for two years will raise enough for a Scholarship*.

Join the 75 Coffee Club

Our new Committee Member, Dr Frances Baawuah, has, as she told you in last year's magazine, pledged £10 a month for two years. With GiftAid that will bring the fund £300. Just 75 of our members pledging this amount will raise enough for a Scholarship*.

Join the 15 Club

Now this is plagiarism! Our brilliant Development Director, Tom Robertson, has worked out that a hugely generous donation of £1,500 plus GiftAid per calendar month for one year will pay for a full Sixth Form Scholarship*.

Do you have a good idea for a fund raising event? Please do contact me on quondamchair@fhs-nw1.org.uk

** a two year Scholarship costs £45,000 but our President has kindly matched our funds from the Trust, provided we raise £22,500*

Gift Form for the Quondam Sixth Form Scholarship

Please complete the relevant sections and return the whole form to:
FAO: Quondam Chairman, The Development Office, Francis Holland School,
Regent's Park, Ivor Place, London NW1 6XR



Alternatively, please Google 'Just Giving Quondam Sixth Form Scholarship', or scan the QR code to the right. ***Thank you for your support.***

Personal Details

Name: (please include maiden name if applicable)

Address:

Postcode:

Email:

Telephone:

Gift Details

I would like to make a donation to the Quondam Sixth Form Scholarship of £10 £20 £30 £40 £50 £100 £500 £1,000 Other.....(Please circle one)

This will be a single donation/a weekly donation/a monthly donation/an annual donation (please circle one)
For ____ weeks/months/years (please circle one)

☐ I wish for my gift to be anonymous

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to Francis Holland (C of E) Schools' Trust for £ _____

☐ I enclose a charity voucher made payable to Francis Holland (C of E) Schools' Trust (charity number 312745) for £ _____

☐ I would like to make a donation by credit/debit card:

Please charge my ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ Maestro the sum of £ _____

Card Number:

Start date: / /

CCV number (last 3 digits on reverse of card): Issue number:

Signed: _____ Date DD / MM / YY

☐ I would like further information on leaving a legacy to Francis Holland Schools' Trust

Gift Aid Declaration

If you are a UK tax payer Gift Aid allows Francis Holland Schools' Trust (Registered Charity NO. 312745) to reclaim the basic rate of tax paid on your gift, increasing its value by 25p per £1 at no cost to you. If you are a higher rate tax payer, you can claim the tax relief on your self-assessment tax return.

I confirm that I am a UK tax payer and pay Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the charity will reclaim on my donations in the appropriate tax year (currently 25p for each £1 given). I understand that I can cancel this declaration at any time by contacting Emma Wilkinson, Senior Development Executive on emma.wilkinson@fhs-nw1.org.uk

☐ I would like Francis Holland Schools' Trust to treat this donation, and all future donations I make from the date of this declaration, as well as donations made in the past 4 years, as Gift Aid donations.

Signed: _____

Date: DD / MM / YY

giftaid it

Quondam's First Sixth Form Scholar Writes about Life in the Sixth Form at Francis Holland



The Common Room at Linhope House

It is an understatement to say that FHS has been a wonderful experience, for it has been life changing. The school has and will always undeniably play a significant role in the type of woman I will become in the future. Francis Holland has allowed me to meet people and given me opportunities for which I will always be grateful. This unbelievable experience is something that I will share with pride and will always appreciate.

I have had the good fortune of being able to attend Francis Holland School, Regent's Park's Sixth Form, and to put it simply, it has

been awe-inspiring. Not only has the school continuously offered me opportunities to better myself academically, but it also functioned as a source of encouragement for me to become a strong and independent woman.

Francis Holland is undoubtedly a school that prioritises the wellbeing of all its students, having the happiness of their pupils at the heart of the Francis Holland ethos, seen in its core values 'Knowledge, Compassion, Spirit and Perseverance.' It is precisely this quality of theirs that drew me to apply to the school in the first place.

Francis Holland focuses on guiding all its students to the best of their abilities, while also providing its attendees with the opportunity to take charge and show independence, a combination that they have mastered perfectly. These are just a few of the many reasons why I am proud to call myself a member of the Francis Holland community and am grateful for my opportunity to study in an environment as dynamic as FHS.

A key moment of my FHS experience was without a doubt my first week. Initially, I, like I suspect most students were, was filled with a sense of unease at the prospect of meeting so many new people. However, this feeling quickly dissipated upon meeting the teachers and students who were so friendly and approachable. They all clearly had the intentions, and thankfully succeeded, in making me feel comfortable and immediately went on to make me feel at home and welcomed, something that even to this day, I am grateful for. This was especially evident during form time, which has a vertical tutoring system, which allows students to interact with their older peers in a comfortable atmosphere. It is a perfect opportunity to receive advice or ask any questions from other classmates who had experienced similar issues and could function as a guiding and helpful presence on the matter.

This warm ambience only grew stronger during the following weeks, in which all the teachers took the time to introduce themselves and ensure that we did not hesitate to ask any questions. This is the first of many times the FHS Staff have displayed a sense of devotion towards their jobs of helping students, doing so purely due to a genuine love for their work and appreciation for the importance of their role in all students' lives.

This assistance was something that continued throughout the years, particularly due to

the small classes that allowed lessons to be interactive in all aspects, with teachers having the chance to focus on all pupils individually as necessary, giving students the ability to ask any questions with ease.

Another point of pride for Francis Holland School is the extensive range of extra-curricular activities that they have to offer to all students. This not only provides pupils with the chance to enrich themselves outside of the curriculum, but it simultaneously allows students to form new relationships in a safe and secure environment. It is during these many clubs that students are encouraged to talk to their peers to forge strong relationships that will form a foundation in helping the pupils grow a sense of independence in life. While the teachers are there to help in any manner they can, it is moments like this, that let students naturally meet others and help relationships form. The clubs are kicked off each year with a Clubs Fair, allowing all the pupils to see the range of clubs that they have to offer, and from there, teachers and/or older students run these clubs, giving students a chance to express themselves engagingly.

As one of London's leading independent schools, it is undeniable the important impact that Francis Holland has on the wider community; with its copious charity work and volunteering opportunities, it is clear that the school prides itself in its ability to give back to all those who support it: one of FHS's many admirable qualities. This was something that I was thankfully able to experience first-hand through Mosaic Club: a Sixth Form volunteering opportunity in which students create mosaic pieces with the elderly, aiding them, and taking the time to socialise with them.

One cannot mention all the opportunities at Francis Holland School without mentioning the many sports opportunities available.

Whether you join a sports team and represent the school in events against other schools, becoming an emblem of the strong competitive spirit in FHS, or simply partake in the weekly Physical Education lessons, one cannot deny the range that Francis Holland has on offer. This shines most during Sports Days, a day for all students to come in and give their all. I vividly remember the excitement and anticipation I felt during my first Sports Day, as I cheered for all my peers, and we all enjoyed a sense of camaraderie. It was a truly unforgettable experience.



The Reading Room at Linhope House

While on the topic of a healthy competitive spirit, it is important to mention the Inter-House Cup Competition, which I had the privilege to watch. It was a joy to watch all the students get so enthusiastic about school spirit and while hearing the cheers of my winning house was undoubtedly satisfying, I believe hearing my peers promise a better fight the following year was much more satisfying, for it spoke of so much more fun to come!

Recently, Francis Holland once again showed how they value their students' needs, with the opening of Linhope House. The new Sixth Form Centre is a state-of-the-art facility that can both function as a place of relaxation for all pupils and equally be a place of work and study for students when necessary. The spacious area has provided not only me but all students, a wonderful place to focus on studies while simultaneously also acting as an area to relax and enjoy the moment with friends or alone,

taking a moment to wind down. This, however, is not where it ends, for FHS is always willing to make improvements as needed, regularly having meetings with students to discuss if there are any requests to improve the facilities, leading to the addition of lockers and even now providing a breakfast bar for all students to eat in the morning.

Francis Holland has also been unbelievably helpful in preparing all students for the future from the start in a methodical manner. They help students thoroughly in their journey to Higher Education and the adult world, however different that may look for each pupil. Whether the student decides to apply to university, local or abroad, or an apprenticeship, the school is always ready to provide meticulous help with the UCAS application or let students know about any useful opportunities which may benefit any applicants.

News

Former pupils and staff share their news with our community of Polished Corners

Janet Bruenmer Hyser (class of 1969) writes:

She is living in Chicago, is a retired elementary teacher with 3 grown children and 5 grandkids and enjoys lots of traveling.

Gladys Perint Palmer writes:

Delighted to have been invited to draw the illustrations for 'Crown to Couture' at Kensington Palace.

It was an exhibition about the connections across the centuries using dress as a way of looking at spectacle and common themes.

Jenny Isaacson, née Jaffa (class of 1983) writes:

Jenny Isaacson (née Jaffa) and Siân Keirle (née Edwards) met up recently when Jenny visited London from her home in Los Angeles, California, and they had a wonderful time catching up on their families and reminiscing about their time at FHS.

Jenny's son Nathan is getting married next year, and her daughter Lena recently graduated with a BS in Legal Studies from UC Santa Cruz. Jenny just celebrated her twelfth year working at the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (www.pancan.org).

Siân was made redundant after working



for the London Stock Exchange for over 34 years. She is now thoroughly enjoying her “enforced” retirement, looking after her grandson Doug (4) and volunteering for her local children’s hospice Haven House.

Please see photo bottom left on page 20. Sian (left) and Jenny (right).

Degard, née Gard FHS 1977-1984 writes:

She is living in Hertfordshire and is a full time property developer/investor, a mother of two grown up children and a professional artist doing a doctorate in Fine Art.



Degard has bought a phone box (in situ) outside the British Museum, called “The Visionary Brit Museum” and owns and curates exhibitions within! The photo above of Degard was taken by another Polished Corner, Anna Leapman, who works for Saatchi in their design studio. www.visionarybritmuseum.co.uk for further information!

Below, The History of Flowers by Degard, 2021



Julia Livingstone née Isaacs of class of 1988 writes:

She is living in Muswell Hill in London. She is a medical secretary and PA. She is proud mother to Tasha Adalia (aged 25) who is a branding graphic designer and Saskia (aged 23) who is a Law and American Legal Studies graduate. She is delighted to have broken down the stigma between men and women at the golf club and is the current Women’s Captain of Dyrham Park Golf & Country Club.

Returning Home! Dominique Wenninger née Schulenburg, 1987-1995, writes

After 17 years away, we will be returning to London during the summer of 2024. When we left, bound for New York City, my husband and I had been married for just 5 months. When we return we’ll be a family of 6 - complete with our two daughters, Solara and Skye, our little Mexican rescue pup, Chula, and our elderly cat, Spot! It’ll be our 6th country to country move, and 9th house move together. We’re moving back to London to be closer to family and friends, setting up two new businesses and immersing our girls in the British culture firsthand. Our eldest was born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and our youngest in Los Angeles, California. They have spent nearly



half their lives living in Mexico City where they attended a British International School, and are currently in an American school 15 minutes outside of Washington DC.

Each chapter has gifted them and us, something unique - the gift of a second language, the gift of exposure to diverse cultures, the gift of lifelong friendships we'll carry with us forever. As a family we have experienced adventures beyond my wildest dreams, and have a diverse and wonderful group of friends dotted around the globe.

I worked in the food industry after graduating from York University with a degree in Psychology, later setting up my own business in children's entertainment and birthday parties. As we kept moving, I sold the business and became a full time mother, volunteering at our schools, learning Spanish and being an unofficial tour guide

to all the friends that visited us over the years. I am in the process of setting up a new business, importing Mexican textiles, and my husband is also opening a new business. We never seem to make it easy on ourselves! We met over strawberries when I worked as a buyer at Sainsbury's, importing berries from California, and I never could have imagined the life we'd build together.

We're all very excited, and both Solara (13) and Skye (11) will be applying to FHS as potential future Polished Corners! I have such wonderful memories of my years at FHS (1988-1995); forever grateful for my Francis Holland friends. Together we've navigated our teens, careers, motherhood, and everything in between. Meeting up in London, and different places that we've lived; holidaying together, and staying in touch through Skype, then WhatsApp - ever thankful for technology. I am so looking forward to connecting with other Polished Corners over these next few years!!

Nasheed Qamar Faruqi, FHS 1992-1996, writes:

Nasheed is a British-Pakistani screenwriter and director, working in documentary and fiction. Her most recent film, *Re-Reading Fanon*, is an hour long documentary about the psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon.

Her first documentary - about David Hawkins (a US POW who chose China at the end of the Korean War) - was nominated for AHRC Research Film of the year in 2017.

Nasheed was an Arts Council of England Fellow on the Clore Cultural Leadership Programme in 2015/2016. She has an MFA in Filmmaking from Columbia University

in New York and read English Literature at Wadham College, Oxford. She also has an MA in Modernist Literature and Theory from London.

Nasheed now lives in Cambridge with her husband and two small children.

Editor's note: Do read about Nasheed's life at university on page 50.

Arpine Berberian, chemistry teacher at FHS, Regent's Park from 1969-2005 writes:

At the reunion lunches over the years I have met many of my old girls, some have attended these lunches often. I could name numerous girls but prefer not to in case I leave some out.

The most recent Polished Corner I met was Branka Marjabovic who is now a Consultant Oculoplastic Surgeon at Moorfields Eye Hospital.



Mrs Berberian teaching Chemistry in the 80's



Ariane Sampson of Class of 2007 writes:

She is a specialist orthodontist and has opened a new clinic in Mayfair offering dentistry, orthodontics, dental hygiene and oral microbiome testing, as well as holistic health services such as acupuncture, massage, infra-red sauna, osteopathy, physiotherapy, and personal training.

Harry Clayton, teacher, 1999-2021 writes:

I am living in Muswell Hill and have just qualified as a London Blue Badge tourist guide and working full time guiding tourists and visitors around London sites.

Life After Francis Holland

by Pam Parsonson, Headmistress 1988-1998



I recall taking an Assembly in February 1997 in which I told the School that I had become a granny on 29th January when two of my three sons had sons, Benjamin and Christopher, both born in the same hospital with mothers in adjoining rooms about 8 hours apart!

They were the first two of my 13 grandchildren, and they are now 26. I have 7 boys and 6 girls in 'my collection' ranging from 26 to 14.

I retired in the summer of 1998 and almost immediately organised my daughter's wedding at the beginning of August that year from our flat in Harrow on the Hill where Stuart and I had lived since leaving a house in St John's Wood. I used to drive to School earlier and earlier as time went on, and parked alongside the school before taking a morning swim in the pool which had been built a few years before. The wonderful caretaker Vic, husband of Eileen who has worked in school until recently, and whom some readers may remember, always checked that I didn't drown.

Soon after then Stuart and I retired to the cottage we had acquired in 1971 and in which I now remain, Stuart having died in October 2021, aged 90.

I am very fortunate to have 4 caring children who keep an eye on me and visit when possible.

My main occupations remain: golf (only 9 holes in fair weather), bridge, running a tournament for charitable causes during the winter months, dog walking with my two golden Labradors aged 12 and 2, playing the violin (as badly as ever but with tolerant members of a quartet and in a small string orchestra) and also of course gardening which occupies most of my time.



Pamela Parsonson at work in her garden



Hazel and Bramble

As I get older I feel the garden gets bigger and more needy so the present plan is to put more down to grass, increase shrubs and plants attractive to bees and butterflies.

I have acted as Treasurer to the Holt Area Caring Society for over ten years till finally I persuaded someone to take over, have done a bit of reading with children in our local primary school before the onslaught of Covid, and from time to time coached grandchildren in maths as they approached A Levels.

So, as can be seen, I haven't done much in the last 25 years of note, but I am lucky to have had a very long and happy marriage and kept



Pam's late husband, Stuart, with Tim and family July 2021

in touch with many friends over the years. Also I have been blessed with good health over the years.

The link of the School with Harrow remains since the present Head is married to a Harrow master, just as I was, and the musical link is in fine shape too I believe.

So far I have no great grandchildren, but hope to live to see one or more. Nowadays careers offer so much as to deter from having children, but I would always advise grappling with both children and job so that in old age you can enjoy the benefit of accepting guidance rather than offering it all the time!



Pam on small plane



Pam on safari with her family

Once all our children had married and flown the nest, Stuart and I had several cruises choosing small boats and mainly in the Mediterranean. As well as several visits to South Africa where Tim lived in Jo'burg and then Cape Town.

When on my own I spent Christmas 2022 with his family and enjoyed a trip to Rock Camp, a safari park in Botswana which they have access to for a week each year.

This involved a flight to Jo'burg and then another in a tiny plane just for us (very unecological) but effective and 'not too tiring for Granny'!

We had lodges around a watering hole, and I loved watching families of elephants come to bathe and wallow just 50 yards away.

Each morning and evening we were taken for rides in a land rover by an amazingly knowledgeable guide and saw lions at close quarters, (once with a kill of antelope which they devoured), hyenas and families, hippos, leopards, and much else including birds about which our delightful Justice knew so much.



Photo of leopard



Become a Councillor

Your borough needs you!

by Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler (née Richards at FHS 1973-80)



When you have settled in an area, albeit London or the countryside, you live in a borough where local politics matters. Councils have control over their council tax rate and what services you receive and at what cost.

It is extraordinary how many residents do not realise that they can influence how their borough performs.

The best way to do this is to stand for election. This is often motivated from a personal angle of grievance that matters are not quite right/very wrong and one is spurred into action through this. I would argue that this is one way but there is another more overall view; that those of us who can, by dint of education, should use our abilities to help people who struggle to help themselves and their families.

I believe I was strongly political although I didn't know that that's what it was when I was a child. I was fortunate to be brought up by caring and highly motivated parents who didn't just speak about injustices but actively tried to help. This took many forms, delivering monthly newsletters for the church for example- very good practice for politics as it turned out!

At Francis Holland, I felt able to speak out although perhaps I overdid it at times!

I organised a ban the beret petition and remember standing in the playground at break time encouraging my fellow pupils to sign my petition. I also argued forcibly to be able to bring packed lunches and had a certain amount of success with that.

Who knew at that time that it was the start of a career in local politics?! I was first elected in 2006-2014 straight into the administration of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. In 2014, we lost the election, and I lost my seat. I was re-elected in 2018 to date. I am now the Conservative Leader of our group in opposition.

I have learnt so much during this time, met wonderful people and been able to help my community. Small things matter in parks - can we have a bench etc. - large things matter too - why are damp and mould repairs not properly done in our social housing, parking, traffic, recycling rates, street lighting, cleanliness of streets, the number of bins - I could go on!

So to all old girls, I would say, consider standing for election to your council. You can achieve successes for your local area which improve the quality of life for all.

If any old girl wants to talk about how to become a councillor please do get in touch with me through the Alumni Relationship Officer at alumni@fhs-nw1.org.uk

A Life in Politics

by *The Rt Hon Theresa Villiers, MP*



Although it is some years since I left Francis Holland School, my time there still exerts a big influence on my life.

Communicating effectively is at the heart of any career in politics and the rigour I learned at Francis Holland has provided the foundation of the writing and speech-making skills I have relied on in my 24 years in elected office.

Of all the subjects I learned at school, history was always my favourite. It is, after all, the study of the political struggles of the past. My history teachers, Valerie St Johnston and Gillian Blyth, helped me develop the ability to analyse information objectively and construct a coherent argument on which to base a conclusion. Without this grounding, I do not believe I could have achieved my lifetime ambition of becoming a member of Parliament. It has helped me every single day of my life in the 37 years since I emerged from the school and headed out into the world after completing my A Levels in 1986.

I also feel that there was an atmosphere at Francis Holland that encouraged aspiration – a sense that with hard work and determination, you could pursue whatever path you wanted in life and achieve your

goals.

The reality was, in those days, there were many barriers faced by young women wanting to compete with men for jobs and success. Thankfully many of these barriers have since been removed. But I find it striking that when I was first elected as an MP in 2005, I was only the 263rd woman to become an MP. I was only the 33rd woman to be appointed to the Cabinet when David Cameron asked me to become Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in 2012.

Although much progress has been made, these numbers are a reminder that politics is still a tough option for women to pursue, even though it is over a century since we were first given the vote in this country. There can be no doubt that women in public life often attract a far greater share of toxic and hostile comment from media and social media than their male colleagues.

But despite its drawbacks, if time were turned back and I had the chance to decide whether to do it all again, I would. Politics still provides the opportunity to change things for the better. You can still make a difference to people's lives.

For example, I retain a sense of pride for playing a part in the success of the London 2012 Olympics as the Minister for Transport overseeing the operation of getting people to the Games which saw the public transport system carry more people than at any time in its history.

As Northern Ireland Secretary I was able to show off Northern Ireland's political transformation and its physical beauty to the world when County Fermanagh played host to Barack Obama and the leaders of the G8 group of the world's largest economies.

Chairing over five months of cross party talks in Northern Ireland was gruelling for me and, at times, frustrating; but it did secure two major agreements between Northern Ireland's political leaders, continuing that inspirational journey which began with the Belfast Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

And there could be few days to match the excitement of bringing Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, to the Paint Hall Studios in Belfast to meet the cast of Game of Thrones and view the Iron Throne (on which Her Majesty politely – and wisely - declined an invitation to sit).

Of all careers, politics is one in which fortunes can fluctuate dramatically. Like a game of snakes and ladders, you can be up one day and down the next. After being dropped from the Cabinet by Theresa May, I returned to Government in 2019 as Environment Secretary in Boris Johnson's first administration. A key task for me in that role was to present an Environment Bill to Parliament which has now become law and is being used to set demanding legally binding targets on a range of issues

such as cleaning up our waterways, increasing recycling, cutting down on plastics pollution, and protecting our natural environment.

I feel strongly that there can be few things in life more important than conservation of nature and green spaces for future generations. That has been a priority for me throughout my journey in politics and it always will be.

With a general election only around 12 months away (or less) if any of my fellow Polished Corners wish to come and campaign with me in my constituency in Barnet, please do feel free to get in touch with me via the School's Alumni Relationship Officer email address below.

I look forward to welcoming you to the campaign trail!

The Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP

Member of Parliament for Chipping Barnet

***Contact me through
alumni@fhs-nw1.org.uk***

Theresa is in the back row in the pink check shirt in the photo. 3rd from the right.



A Brush with Politics

by Oriel Hutchinson

I almost made a career of politics, but in Islington, it is a bit of an uphill struggle to get elected, if one stands for the Conservative party.

I believe I did, however, get the highest swing in the country when I stood for a seat on Islington Council, in the Canonbury Ward as I had the backing of TV celebrity actress, Linda Robson. I had helped her late stepfather to secure injunctions against two major bailiffs, in the Clerkenwell and Shoreditch County court, after he got two clamps on his car. He had been ill in bed with cancer and had not changed his Congestion Charge exemption badge from orange to blue, or got an MoT! [The Mail on Sunday reported that he had, in fact, paid out £450 to one bailiff, who “omitted to bank the money”.]

Ironically, one time, in the late 70's, Miss Blyth, so perturbed by the number of her J History class who spelled “Parliament” incorrectly in a recent piece of homework, said that the next girl who had spelled the word incorrectly would be summoned to the blackboard to attempt the correct spelling.

I was the next person and so she called me up and I stood there, petrified, and humiliated, for what seemed like an eternity, repeatedly getting it wrong.

I think Miss Blyth helped me in the end.



My commitments ... *something has got to be done locally*

1. I will fight to get every Council leaseholder and tenant on the cheapest possible water tariff from Thames Water, saving around £100 or more per home per year. Cut Council Tax by £100 over 4 years.
2. Fight for the Rose Bowl Youth Club in Canonbury, which has been shut down under “mysterious circumstances”, re-staffed and re-opened quickly. Have more provision for the youth and toddlers.
3. I will fight to stop the Council, HFI, PARTNERS or their agents from charging residents and tax payers for sub-standard works, or works not done at all, or for delays in repairs and refurbishment works.
4. Increase the number of points for those on the council accommodation waiting list, who were born in Islington and who have been down on the waiting list for years.
5. I will see to it that no Islington Council contract lasts longer than 5 years, unlike the current 30 year contract for Council house refurbishment one with Partners, brought in by the LibDems.
6. Campaign to reduce the fat cat salaries paid to over 20 LBI and 4 Cambridge Education staff.

My self: I was born in Islington 45 years ago and live in Canonbury. Yes, I'm embarrassed to admit, my mother paid to give me a wonderful education. I am a Christian which is a roundabout way of saying that I know the difference between right and wrong. And, just in case I forget, I married a man from Limerick City and have a ten-year-old daughter and a twelve-year-old son.

My Islington: I've fed the ducks in the New River by Canonbury Road, once patted the cows and got caught by one or two cow pats at Sheringham Road, played football on Highbury Fields and pushed swings in Rosemary Gardens, been ill from eating something buried in onions while standing on something called the North Bank, and you might be surprised to know and still bitterly regret the closure of Jones Brothers on Holloway Road.

My politics. We must feel safe in our homes and on the streets. That is basic. I believe in efficient well managed, public services. I seek stark improvements in failing services, like Secondary education and housing.

Promoted and printed by Richard Bunting on behalf of Islington Conservative Federation.

Liz Rolfe Johnson's Memories from the Music Department 1980 – 2013

I arrived at FHS on June 5th 1980 for an interview with the Headmistress, Miss Holt, and was immediately offered the job as Head of Music! No having to teach the “prepared” lesson or taking the statutory rehearsal, but little did I dream that I would be there 33 years later!

The term started on September 10th. The teaching and rehearsal area was very small – a room at the back of the hall, with a few

recorders, some English folksongs and a set of Pergolesi’s “Stabat Mater”. However, what was immediately evident was the abundant enthusiasm and the untapped potential of the girls. It was all very exciting and I felt that I’d landed in heaven!

Miss Holt gave me carte blanche and was always very supportive. I immediately signed the school up to the “Youth and Music” scheme, and in my first term took parties of

FHS Rialto Venice. 2007



girls to seven operas, musicals, and several concerts. This was a wonderful scheme which I used for many years, introducing pupils to all forms and periods of music, and which of course was on our doorstep.

Having only previously taught in a mixed senior high school, I was a little unprepared for a very lively first year, many of whom were already proficient on their instruments, (Lisa Friend, flute, Gabby Panas, piano, Julia Strauss, flute and Abigail Hercules, who could already play a concerto on her recorder!)



Noyes Fludde 1981

Benjamin Britten came to the rescue when in the following June, all the first years were involved in a production of “Noyes’ Fludde.” The main parts were mostly sung by first years with the remainder as animals, wearing wonderful 3D head masks made by Julia Jeffries and the Art department. The gossips were Upper IV pupils (Alex and Claire Loewe, Andrée Cooke, Sophie Edwards and Jane

Brand) all of whom recently came back to sing at Miss Sifleet’s memorial service. Howard Arman sang the part of Noye and John Valentine roared “The voice of God” from high up on the rood screen. Instrumentalists throughout the school played in the orchestra, Tamik Irani co -produced, Sue Drummond was the choreographer, the Art department was fantastic and my (future)



Rose Pavilion Group St Petersburg tour 2005



South Pacific full cast photo

husband was designated to build an ark which could be dismantled in three pages of music! St Cyprian's, a church without pews, providing an excellent performance space.

The "Gossips" went on to be "perfect young ladies" in the "Boyfriend" produced by Miss Jo Green and which was my first full production at FHS. While at university, Jo was the wardrobe mistress for the Cambridge "Footlights" and she was also a fantastic seamstress making many costumes for productions over the years. I'm sure many of her costumes are still to be found in the FHS drama cupboard!

The musical year followed the seasons, starting with the full Autumn concert in October at which there were performances from two orchestras (full and string), four choirs, Mr Abbs' Pink Ladies jazz band, Mr Thorne's jazz group and various sixth form solos. Orchestral works such as Beethoven's 5th Symphony and Mozart's 40th reflected the quality of instrumental playing throughout every age group. I was always

amazed how the concert came together, from scratch in six weeks – but it always did. What had, a week previously been a complete shambles suddenly metamorphosed into glittering performances!

Every break, lunchtime, before and after school slots in November were filled with rehearsals for the main school production and interspersed with music for the carol services. These services were always very special and became synonymous with Britten's "Ceremony of Carols" and excerpts from Handel's "Messiah". I tried every year to exclude these tried and tested works, but was always met with "NO! – it's our last Christmas!" The services included choral Christmas works, vocal and instrumental solos and a performance from the String Orchestra – usually Bach!

The "Hodie" was sung as a Processional and Recessional from my very first Christmas, with lit candles and at the end, faint giggling from the girls as they stood in the dark outside in Glentworth St, singing their last few "Allelujahs"! We also sang

it at Francesca Dimpfl's beautiful winter wedding – with slightly different text! (courtesy of Mrs Cohen). I notice from my 1980 diary that the first rehearsal of the “Hodie” was on November 14th – by the last few years, rehearsals were two days before the services! There was a hard core of those who knew it accurately and a few added each year who thought they did! (I think most of the school knew it by osmosis, as they did “This little Babe.”) As usual, these services ended with organ and congregation swelling to the sound of “O come all ye faithful” with even the altos finding that they had top G's for the descant! It was always very special to see many old girls after the evening service.

FHS musicians were involved in the annual Christmas concert for the Lansdowne Club. These began as background music but eventually became full concerts of Christmas music and readings. Our visits to the Butterworth Centre, for patients with dementia and mental illness were always very important. Christmas carols remain in their long term memory and the girls always brought great joy to the residents and their carers.

The last assembly of the Christmas term ended with the whole school singing “The Twelve Days of Christmas” with each year group (year 12 were always allocated Five Gold Rings) standing and sitting as they sang their specific day – complete chaos but great fun. Was it perhaps one of my best or worst ideas?

Editor's note: see paragraph 8 of our President's letter – the tradition continues!

The Spring term started with mock exams and for the music department this included GCSE and A level recitals. These were always very important since they constituted a third of their final mark. I was an external examiner for the London Board and I can

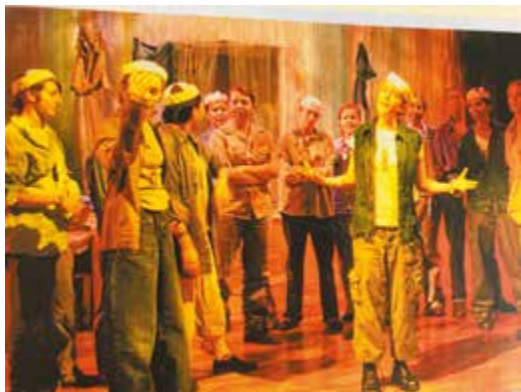


Krakow tour 2010- full choir

verify that the standard of FHS girls was always nationally at the top of the scale.

During this term, there were tea time concerts for Associated Board candidates, a Piano Concert and a String Concert, the latter full of virtuosic playing and performances of technically challenging works, such as Bach's “Brandenburg Concerto No2”. Each year there were two “Nightingales” concerts, where up to seventy girls stood up and sang a song of their choice. There's only one way to learn to perform, and that's to perform!

Vocally the Spring term was given up to learning a major choral work which was performed with Harrow School at the end of term. We have Mrs Parsonson to thank for this collaboration. Francis Holland pupils (and staff!) benefitted hugely from these concerts which introduced them to major and often very difficult works such as the Brahms and Verdi Requiems, Haydn's “Creation” and “The Seasons,” Mendelssohn's “Elijah”, Elgar's “Gerontius”, Handel's “Messiah”, Walton's “Belshazzar's Feast” and the wonderful “B Minor Mass” and “St Matthew Passion” by Bach.



Sophie Hytner in South Pacific 2006

What an amazing gift, to be able to teach these major works to teenagers and a huge thank you to David Woodcock for his exhilarating performances. How many girls' schools have the opportunity to have this amazing annual experience in the Harrow Speech Room with a full professional orchestra? Of course it was important that every note was known and every nuance adhered to, but what was much more important, was that the girls retained a deep and lasting love of the music.

The Summer term concerts, often in St John's Wood church were lighter affairs, and where we said "goodbye" to our UVI, many of whom had played and sung since their first year- but not before they performed their swan song, often in close harmony and always without any help from the staff!

One of the most creative parts of my job was writing and rearranging music for the school production. Kate Oakley and I worked together on twenty six productions. It was a collaboration which was exciting and innovative. Kate always started work on it before the summer holidays, appearing in September with complete set and costume designs, and a detailed working knowledge of the piece. I on the other hand would not start rehearsing until after the Autumn concert. These productions were a sheer

delight, seeing the girls metamorphose into the various characters, with such confidence and accuracy. Kate and I produced "Cabaret" three times and each production was very different. Jo Cohn and Catherine Hopper played Sally Bowles and Eliza in "My Fair Lady", Claudia Solti and Ellie Piercy as "Schneider", and Franny Dymond as the "Emcee" in the first two productions. All of whom have become professional performers. Later performances included "Amadeus" (which included 33 musical extracts), "South Pacific", Martinu's "Greek Passion" at the Royal Opera House and my personal favourite, "Guys and Dolls". For the latter, Stuart Steen from the West End cast of "Cats", contributed to the choreography. The girls, knee pads attached, were rehearsed at 7.30am for an hour in the gym three mornings a week. It certainly gave them a taste of what was expected from professional performers! They were of course wonderful, and stole the show.

What the audience were perhaps unaware of, was how many pupils, parents and academic staff, gave up their precious time for these productions. Over ninety were involved in the 2010 production of Cabaret, and I would like to say a massive thank you to all of you who helped throughout the years. The productions were always accompanied by live music with FHS pupils playing challenging scores, but without the brilliant piano playing over the years of Peter Thorne, Simon Williams, Chris Glynn and Oli Lallemand, there would have been chaos!

The music department continued to grow and thanks to Mrs Gillian Low's influence, we acquired a brand new department with two teaching and rehearsing venues and several new practice rooms. No longer did girls have to sit on the floor! An amazing and dedicated peripatetic team guided and encouraged the

girls, and the timetable in the junior part of the school enabled us to have one listening and one composition lesson each week. Numbers in the exam classes grew and we had several choral scholars go to Cambridge, (Sophie Edwards, Danielle Rolet, Sophie Hytner, Zoe Silkstone and Thea Waxman to Oxford). Helen Smee, who many times accompanied the choirs especially on tours, gained an organ scholarship to Peterhouse College and now has her own girls' choir in Oxford!

Memorable external performances included representing the South East at the National Festival for Youth at the Festival Hall, performing two new song cycles at the QEH for the Composers Guild, 125th Service at St Paul's Cathedral, Llangollen International Eisteddfod (with music written especially by Peter Thorne), prize giving at the QEH, but I suppose the most memorable were the Music Tours!

In 2003 we went to the beautiful city of Prague followed two years later with a very memorable tour to St Petersburg. My first visit there had been in 1974, and boy, how things had changed. We stayed at the huge Hotel Pribaltiyskaya, which included a massive lounge area, several bars, a row of shops and even a bank! The choir had amazing exposure, singing at the University, in a summer palace, and on Russian TV. The last, most stunning venue was the throne room at Catherine the Great's summer palace at Tsarskoye Selo. Despite the imposing environment and a large audience, the girls were superb - disciplined and accurate and produced a glorious sound. The only other British person to have performed there was Elton John! And so, how to follow this tour? Well, being responsible for all the music at a mid-day Sunday service in Basilica San Marco in Venice could be the answer. Five unaccompanied motets (including the

difficult "Hymn to the Virgin" by Verdi) with no rehearsal at the venue was possibly one of my most scary moments with the ghosts of Gabrieli and Monteverdi in evidence! Of course, I need not have worried, the Franny Holland girls were superb! We sailed into Venice each morning in our own Vaporetto from Lido di Jesolo and together with two more secular concerts spent a wonderful time there. We now had enough string players in the choir to be able to create a fabulous string orchestra (reminiscent of Vivaldi) – again, how many choirs can do this!

There followed a very successful tour to Boston and a final one to Krakow in 2010.

All these tours were accompanied by wonderful FHS staff (including Kate Oakley's detailed risk assessments) who gave up their half terms and also many parents who came to support the concerts. Always noisy and happy, these tours were all such fun and wonderful music making. Thank you!

How many people can say that they enjoyed and have had the privilege of going to work in the same place for thirty three years? Francis Holland is a uniquely extraordinary school, the girls spirited and naughty but great fun, with a vibrant staffroom and supportive parents. A recipe for success? Absolutely!



The Boyfriend 2000



Musical Memories

Joanna Strand née Cohn

(Francis Holland School 1987–1992)

Very soon after I started at FHS, I auditioned for the school play and was surprised to be given the lead role of Sally Bowles in “Cabaret”. The experience was wonderful but little did I know at the time, that performing would become my future career.

When I joined FHS at the end of Lower IV, I had no particular passion for music, but by the time I left the school, I was determined to become a singer. And I can say this is pretty much all down to Mrs RJ. One of my first memories of music at FHS was sitting on the floor of the music room listening to “Night on Bare Mountain”, and being asked to imagine what it was about. I had never really listened closely to classical music and it blew my mind.

Another early memory was at the piano with RJ. We wanted to see what my voice could do, so I was singing scales, and they just kept getting higher and higher. We sort of found my voice that day! Soon I was singing in ‘Madrigals’, our school chamber choir and I remember the joy of singing Palestrina in the gallery of St Cyprian’s. I am still friends with my old choir pals.

Liz also taught me so many beautiful arias for school concerts, helping me to establish a good vocal technique, which has carried me throughout my singing career.

She was an amazingly inspirational, demanding and supportive teacher. Through her, I discovered a life long love of music and singing and was equipped with the technical skills to carry me forward.

I went on to train at The Royal Academy of Music at postgraduate level, and studied composition at The Juilliard in New York.

Years later I was performing with opera companies, and then in the West End in shows such as “Phantom of the Opera” and singing my own jazz shows at Birdland, the Carlyle, The Crazy Coqs, Pizza Express Dean Street in London and 54 Below in New York.


My albums are all on Spotify under the name Joanna Strand.

However, I’ve recently changed track and am about to start on an MA course at the Royal College of Art as a Leverhulme scholar. My Instagram account is [*@jocohnprints*](#).

Graziella Cacace

(Francis Holland School 1989–1996)

My time at F.H.S is inextricably linked with memories of hymns, concerts and musical theatre which provided a significant part of the soundtrack to my teenage years.



For the first five academic years, five days a week, early in the morning, we crowded into the hall on the wooden varnished floor, cross legged, knees touching in sympathy, for the daily ritual of Assembly. After this time passed, in the Sixth Form, we convened casually on the balconies for the same purpose at the same time of day, admittedly in lower numbers, but somewhat louder in voice, hoping to inspire the juniors to sing, or merely releasing our repressed teen angst.

Assembly introduced me to the fundamental staples of Francis Holland songs, from the booming Kipling school anthem (which the 11 year old me delightedly noted bore a striking resemblance to the theme tune from “Inspector Gadget”) to the favourite hymns that I still find myself humming from time to time or happily rediscovering at friends’ weddings like “As the Bridegroom to his Chosen”. This hymn time was a warm up for the lungs and had the intended effect of clearing the sleep from our eyes and minds as we fumbled with the hymn books, uttering desperate hushed whispers of, “what page?”, or helpfully thrusting the book open at the correct point directly into our neighbours’ line of sight. This was all despite Mrs Parsonson announcing the page with the name of the hymn loudly; the message was so often extinguished by vigorous flicking of over three hundred books.

Then, there were the individual class assemblies each form was required to produce at least once a year. These often involved some sort of unorthodox use of popular music or topical rendition. I remember penning a song for our third form assembly about environmental damage called “One Reason Why” sung by the whole class and accompanied by the wonderful Hannah Paniale on piano. Finally, there were the eponymous “Leaving Assemblies”, where the Upper Fifth and Upper Sixth would usually perform to contemporary music or at least bond and mime to it with

some sort of tearful sentimental unity. Our Upper Sixth “Leaving Assembly” ended with much hugging and mass karaoke of the theme tune to “Friends”. At the time, I remember that I thought it rather trite, but time and adult experience now makes me consider the lyrics strangely insightful and prophetic!

The mutually complementary relationship between Music and Drama at Francis Holland was a tour de force at which the school excelled. In the first few months after I went to Francis Holland, aged eleven, I was on my way back from lunch to the 3M classroom when I heard a chorus of loud voices and the noise of an orchestra in full swing emanating from the hall. I remember thinking that it was one of the loudest things I had ever heard, apart from fireworks and the live DJ at my grandmother’s seventieth birthday party. I paused with my hand on the brass handles and contemplated pushing gently to peek in- something everyone at FHS will remember doing. Your fingers would imprint the handles with condensation for a second, as if registering this secret crime of nosiness. When the doors were closed to the hall, it always meant something was going on and either it was not to be disturbed, or you weren’t meant to see it. Furthermore, it could risk the wrath of staff, particularly the indefatigable Mrs Rolfe-Johnson (affectionately known as Mrs RJ), the head of music, who fiercely guarded the privacy of her rehearsals. Curiosity may kill cats, but it may also drive courage into shy young girls so, nevertheless, push and peer in I did and I shall never forget what I saw.

Inside, the orchestra was playing at full volume with the choir in front at the foot of the stage, on which was an exuberant Sarah Truman dressed in full costume and in character as Mozart conducting. This was the part of the rehearsals for the school adaptation of “Amadeus”, and my first taste of Francis Holland’s marriage of music and drama which

continued throughout my time there. Beneath Sarah, in a feat of superhuman dexterity which I later learned was nothing out of the usual for her, Mrs RJ was simultaneously directing the orchestra, the choir and Sarah, whilst also paying heed to an animated Mrs Oakley. Later, two beautiful seniors came on to sing the Rossini's "Cat Duet" and I was spellbound. I decided I would have to be in the next musical production. And I was!

The next year, it came about that the opera "Noyes Fludde" was chosen. I auditioned, belting out "Walking in The Air" and found myself cast as soloist Ham. That I was terrified, I will not lie. Not only did I have to dress up as a boy, but I could not read music and still cannot to this day, but Mr Williams and Mrs RJ helped with lots of extra time put in, playing my part and making a tape for soloists to listen to. The finished production involved only one external professional - a tenor and featured nearly the whole school-either dressed and made up as pairs of animals (complete with self made masks) or featuring as planks of wood in the ark; there were blue fabric sashes for waves, seniors dressed as punk "gossips", dancing doves and ravens and there was even the Reverend Edge precariously installed in the rafters of St Cyprian's Church as God. Somewhere knocking about in one of my cupboards is the old VHS video of the whole thing.

And, who can forget the themes of the gym and dance classes that formed a key part of our third and lower fourth years in the 1990s, the Puppet song from "Barnum" - cue Mrs Drummond to the music- "and pull the string move u-hup and down" and the theme tunes from Van Der Valk and Dr Zhivago, the latter of which will forever be punctuated with the fantastic mime of Mindy Gareh with a red rose in her mouth sidling up to an unimpressed Jessica Sarjeant on a wooden bench in the Gym and Dance show circa 92.

Junior and senior choir were open to all and I joined both and also Chamber Choir. One of the most important musical memories for me was the annual Christmas service featuring "A Ceremony of Carols" by Benjamin Britten. Despite the fact that this concert always involved a large quantity of same music every year sung by the same choirs, I recall that it was always approached with a kind of hysterical anxiety at the end of Autumn Term.

Looking back, I think we all knew it so well, we just complacently trotted through the material in rehearsal making repeatedly lazy mistakes to the horror of Mrs RJ who was always trying to do about a million other musical things as well as perfecting this at the same time. I recall that there was, amongst other things, always great concern surrounding the lyrics of the second verse of "Oh Come All Ye Faithful". To this day, which Polished Corners amongst us do not exaggerate the timing of the phrases "ver-her-gin's womb", or hear in their head "veh-hairy-God, BEE-gotten not created"?

Despite the glitches and stress, every year in early December, as we gathered there on the cold grey stones of St Cyprian's, something wonderful happened. I remember standing silent and motionless as the lights went out in the Church in the evening performance, my eyes straining for what seemed like forever into the thick velvet blackness waiting for a flicker of candlelight from the procession singing the a capella "Hodie". Eventually the softly sung Latin came floating up the nave of the church, gliding into our ears with a kind of magic for audience and choir alike. The old favourites "As Dew in Aprylle", "I Synge of a Mayden" and the divine lullaby "Balulalow" would drip down in dulcet honey tones from the raised platforms where we sang and "This Little Babe" and "Deo Gracias" would pulse and smart with militant urgency and

determination. Before we knew it, the a capella choir had snaked back out again, taking the light with it, and we were left as we began in the dark winter night in the church awaiting the springing on of the now unbearably bright lights and springing up of RJ in a joyful sometimes even tearful relief to applause! If ever there was a live metaphor for the festival of Christmas and the coming New Year it was this!

I still sing Britten, often to myself, at Christmas wherever I may be in the world, although these days I am far more likely to be joined by the howling of my little dogs than any choir. Thank you, Francis Holland, for giving me so many musical memories. The music I heard and performed at school gave me focus, security, comfort and joy and I am definitely still reaping the rewards of it.

Helen Smee

Class of 2007

'I was totally captivated by the musical offerings at FHS from the moment I arrived - I simply couldn't believe how much was on offer. 20 years on, I still can't believe how much we packed in! I was, at one point, a member of Senior Choir, Senior Chamber Choir, Orchestra, String Orchestra, Pink Ladies, Jazz Quintet, and several chamber

ensembles - I can't imagine how I had time to do a bit of hockey as well...! I would happily have spent all day, every day in the attic music rooms. Concerts at St Cyprian's, tours (Venice, Prague, St Petersburg), Harrow choral society concerts, carol services, St Paul's Cathedral for the 125th anniversary, school musicals...

Having left FHS in 2007, I went on to Cambridge where I held an organ scholarship at Peterhouse alongside reading for a degree in Music. The passion for choirs that I'd developed at school remained, and I then did a Masters in Choral Conducting at the Royal Academy of Music (back to Baker Street!).

Since then, I've had an incredibly enriching career in music - mostly directing choirs, but I've also produced operas, taught piano, organ and theory, and since 2014 run a choral festival (Voices of London). I spent 11 years as Director of Music at St Mary Merton, and in 2019 took up the post of Director of Frideswide Voices, the girls' choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford (www.chch.ox.ac.uk/frideswidevoices). I am passionate about widening access to high-quality music provision for all children and young people, and much of my work is around outreach and partnerships. In 2018 I was awarded the Members' Award from Action for Children's Arts in recognition of my work in this area - I'd highly recommend joining ACA if you're interested in this vital work!



Helen Smee in her last term at FHS



Helen Smee with Jessie Edgar (2001) and Sophie Lumley on the FHS choir tour to Venice in July 2007



Helen Smee in 2022 conducting choristers and lay clerks of Chris Church Cathedral Choir (credit Hugh Warwick)

I (and many others) have been so fortunate to have had such an exceptional musical start in life - the opportunities and training I received at FHS were extraordinary, and entirely down to the inspirational leadership of RJ (as she will always be to me - like Madonna, only one name needed!). She and Mr Thorne were fabulous role-models, both as musicians and teachers, and I am still constantly using the skills, tricks and musical ideas which they imparted all those years ago. The music department was phenomenally well-appointed, and really did set me up for a career in music (especially working with choirs) just as well as some of my colleagues who attended specialist music schools. Nobody will need me to point out that Elisabeth Rolfe-Johnson was (and is) a one-off (!), but the degree to which she and the other members of the music department have shaped my life is hard to overstate. I feel very lucky indeed to have benefitted from a golden era of performing arts at FHS!

Helen Smee
Artistic Director, Voices of London
voicesoflondonfestival.com
conductor | organist | pianist
helensmee.com

Jessica Dean-Smith, née Jackson

Pupil 1979-1986 recalls:

Mrs Rolfe Johnson established the Madrigal choir whilst I was at Francis Holland, which I joined, having been encouraged to audition for it by friends, due to singing hymns loudly in school assemblies.

It was great to be part of a cohort of singers and I really enjoyed the concerts, church services etc that we participated in. I drove Mrs Rolfe Johnson to distraction by regularly being late for the early morning rehearsals, but her enthusiasm was infectious and she expected high standards from us all.

I still sing in a choir, having developed a lifelong enjoyment of it at Francis Holland.

Julia Strauss

Class of 1987

Music was a huge part of my academic and extra-curricular life during my time at FHS during the 1980s and continues to be something that I enjoy immensely.

O Level music was fun and the four of us who were taking it weren't remotely fazed that Mrs Rolfe Johnson decided to bring forward our exam from June to January even though that meant learning a new set piece. Quotes from Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony and Sibelius' Violin Concerto are still embedded in my brain now! We must have done some work for A Level but it's the gossip I remember most fondly!

I'm extremely grateful for the organisation of Youth and Music tickets which enabled me to see so many concerts, operas and ballets (highlights included hearing Ella



Julia playing the flute with Lisa Friend who is now a professional flautist.

Fitzgerald and Kiri Te Kanawa). What a brilliant scheme!

Performances at school ranged from playing the recorder in IIIJ for Noye's Flood to playing the piano for Miss Holt's final assembly after I'd already left (thanks for the almost no notice, Miss Addinall!), and singing as part of a surprise choir for Mrs RJ's retirement party.

Two other events particularly stand out: being the only student in the band for The Boyfriend, I was invited to join the teachers in the staffroom during the interval; this was obviously very cool, but then the moment was slightly ruined by being glared at by Mrs RJ for returning late for the second half!

Another event was a concert in St Cyprian's where my O Level flute trio composition had to be performed – not on firm ground which would have been daunting enough but on what I think was basically a plank with a flimsy rail high up at the top of the rood screen! Health and Safety Regulations were clearly not a thing in the 1980s!

Thank you to Mrs RJ, Mrs Friend and all the piano and flute teachers at FHS who were so inspirational!

Kate Oakley

English Teacher/Head of Drama, 1985-2018,

Musical Equals

It may not be totally unique, but it was definitely special. Throughout my thirty three years at FHS, colleagues on the staff were encouraged to join in with music making and, indeed, learning. If you loved singing, the Wednesday lunchtime Senior Choir was a must, and the additional challenge of the Senior Chamber Choir a privilege. For me this meant 'bumping' the back row sopranos and preparing for concerts in St Cyprian's in the summer and autumn terms. We sang anything from music theatre medleys – such as Lerner and Loewe's oh-so-singable tunes from "My Fair Lady" - to four-part Mendelssohn motets. Many a Polished Corner will recall singing Bach's duet "Wir eilen mit schwachen..." both from the concert platform and the back of a music tour bus, by and from the heart. We sounded the trumpet in two parts, courtesy of Purcell, and we loudly and proudly claimed "I Got Rhythm", courtesy of George Gershwin. When Christmas approached, we sang "This Little Babe" from Britten's "A Ceremony of Carols", relishing the tumbling, overlapping lines in the final section. At Easter we prepared the soprano and alto lines of huge choral works, performed with the choir and orchestra of Harrow School: over the years, this meant Requiem settings by Verdi, Mozart, and Brahms; Handel's "Messiah" Elgar's incredibly moving "The Dream of Gerontius"; Bach's dramatic narrative "Matthew Passion" in German and his glorious B-Minor Mass in Latin. I recall singing Walton's "Belshazzar's Feast" twice, with its massive orchestra and percussion section right in front of the sopranos, playing so loudly you thought you might burst. I know from my own experience at school that the music you perform as a teenager stays in your heart and head pretty

much forever. The philosophy of shared learning, shared experiences that the music department provided drew staff and pupils together. From a teacher's perspective, it nourished your relationships with your pupils, learning and performing alongside each other. The pupil who forgot her copy of "Great Expectations" last week, or failed to hand in her homework, or whose attention wandered while you were explaining the difference between a simile and a metaphor yet again... well, she was your peer when it came to singing a smoochy arrangement of "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square", and her top notes were almost certainly better than yours. Cause to celebrate and admire. My own memories are of singing. But several colleagues played instruments and were welcomed just as warmly into the school orchestra. Indeed, the music department has also welcomed musical parents too, and I think that says something important about the school and its philosophy of encouraging creativity, expression and collaboration.

Music and Drama

I got into directing plays by accident. It was 1986. Two key members of staff, both "Lizzies" were absent – Elizabeth Pinchbeck was unwell, and Elisabeth Rolfe Johnson was on maternity leave. Ann Holt, the Headmistress, came up with a brainwave solution. Frances King (RE) and me (English) were summoned to the study. Would we put on a Nativity Play, using girls from the Thirds, the Lower and the Upper Fourths, and do it in St Cyprian's? Neither of us had much of a clue, but somehow John Arden's "The Business of Good Government" happened, and my involvement in FHS Drama began. The following year, back from maternity leave and full of energy, Director of Music Lizzie RJ persuaded me to work with her on a production of "Cabaret", a collaboration that lasted for more than 20 years. It worked like this. Every other year

we produced a musical ("My Fair Lady", "The Boyfriend", "Guys n Dolls", "South Pacific" and Shaffer's "Amadeus" – not technically a musical, but a play with an awful lot of music, which we decided to perform live, instead of simply using recordings). I would fillet the script: dialogue was my responsibility, anything sung was RJ's, and most of the time we rehearsed separately. The challenge was to join these sections up, which meant a lot of adjustment, communication and negotiation. We had lots of conversations that began, "You know that bit where so and so comes in stage right? Well, I had an idea that we could...." Every other year, I directed a "straight" play. I put the word "straight" because virtually all of my productions had music in them; all of the music was specially arranged or composed and all of it was live. FHS musicians love to perform, and no opportunity was to be missed. I am eternally grateful to those string and wind players, and sometimes singers who provided incidental music for productions of "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "The Merchant of Venice", "Twelfth Night", "Much Ado About Nothing" and "The Crucible". I think my most precious memories are of song settings for these plays. A haunting two part version of "Go Down Moses" was sung, lying on the floor under sacks, by the cast as prisoners in Salem's jail at the beginning of Act 4 of "The Crucible", and its yearning refrain "Let My People Go" has stayed with me. Even more beautiful was RJ's eerie setting of Puck's words "Now the hungry lion roars, and the wolf howls the moon....", apparently written on the back of an envelope on her lap, during a particularly tedious staff meeting. Perhaps I shouldn't have mentioned that.... But creativity breaks free at unlikely moments. I would like to say a personal thank you to all those girls who danced, acted, sang and played in two decades of musical drama. You know who you are, and you were all FABULOUS (darling!).

Manuela Robson

Class of 1989

Whilst having lunch with Felicity (Forde) earlier this summer, we were discussing musical memories and remembering that my twin sister (Deborah Amdor, née Robson) and I used to play the guitar and compose songs at school. We were quite often a feature at end of term concerts or assemblies and one Christmas sang our own composition (originally titled 'A Merry Christmas') with our guitars at St Cyprian's as part of the school carol concert.

I was clearing out quite recently and came across a song that we had composed called 'FHS and All that Jazz!'.
 Here are the lyrics (picture opposite) - they are hilarious, but quite endearing! I don't quite recall at what occasion we played and sang this in front of the school but we definitely did!

Rosemary Morton Jack (née Rentoul)

In the pre 'O' level year - it must have been 1959 - my piano teacher Miss Jordan suggested I should play the hymn for school assembly. The idea struck me with equal amounts of terror and excitement being a bad sight reader. The hymn was 'Firmly I believe and truly' and when the day dawned, in spite of hours of practice, nerves were uppermost. At the final chord, relief took over. The following year it was "I vow to thee my country", an altogether grander hymn needing a great deal more work. When I play it now, always from memory learned all those years ago, the oak panelled hall and happy school days come to mind and suddenly I'm 14 again!

FHS + all that Jazz Verse 1st

1. At 8.50 the bell starts ringing and that is just the beginning of school. There's work to be done we've got to slog on but all that Jazz will keep us moving along. (Chorus)

2. What goes on in the staffroom we will never get to know and if we knock too loudly an angry face is bound to show. (1st part chorus)

3. In the classroom, on the sports field to rival schools we'll never yield and if by chance they're winning we'll turn the tables and send them spinning away. (2nd part chorus)

4. School's supposed to end at 4.00 but that's when we race for the door but of course there's still our prep. but all that jazz will keep us moving along. (Chorus)

Chorus - When ever, if ever you're feeling down + so so blue forget all your troubles and listen to all that jazz

remember FHS + listen to all that Jazz
 Someday, One day you've something good to celebrate kick up a party + listen to all that jazz remember FHS + listen to all that jazz

Chords - Verse - 6th fret up

D D7 Em A7 D D7 Em A7 D.

Chorus

D D7 G A7 D6 A7 D6 A7 D
 D D7 G A7 D6 A7 D6 A7 D.

Change of key last chorus

E C7 A B7 E A B7 E A B7 E
 C C7 A B7 E A B7 E A B7 E

Music at FHS in the 1960s and early 1970s

by Jane Whitlock Blundell, née Armstrong (Class of 1972)

My earliest memories of music at FHS are of classroom music in Transition (c. 1960) with Miss Yule – a choice of tambourine, triangle or bells, which must have made quite a racket for nearby classrooms. In the lower school we also had class ‘singing’, and sang English folksongs in two parts – repertoire which I was later glad to know though even then it seemed old-fashioned. Further up the school, we had music appreciation, and there was ‘orchestra’ for those who played a suitable instrument. It must have been frustrating for our music teachers that we were such a small school and it was hard to put together a good range of instruments – I remember several levels of violins, a single cello and a couple of clarinets but not much else at one point. However, our teachers did wonders with musical arrangements, and in the late ‘60s Miss Glass had us improvising, in the spirit of the times but rather to our bewilderment. We did lots of playing in small groups; a photo from the 1970s shows us enjoying ourselves!

I had piano lessons (to a very modest level) in one of the music rooms at the top of the school with Miss Rooum with her wonderful beehive hairdo. My piano playing was never more than basic, but it was enough to enlist me in the group of those who were required to play people in to the Hall in Prayers and accompany the hymns. Having to play one’s pieces in public and keep the hymns going steadily was a surprisingly good discipline.

A lot of extra-curricular music was on offer to schools in the 1960s and 1970s. We sang in the Royal Festival Hall with the Ernest Read



Music at Francis Holland School c. 1970

choir, and I remember the sense of power and unanimity as several hundred schoolgirls sang ‘With verdure clad’ from Haydn’s Creation in unison, ornamentation and all. We were able to explore the hidden regions behind the stage pretty freely, which was exciting, and I’m sure wouldn’t be allowed now. We went to Robert Mayer concerts, and, most memorably, to a lot of opera, mainly at the English National Opera, with Youth and Music’s cheaper tickets for schools. A number of different teachers accompanied us, and it was good to realise it wasn’t only music teachers who were interested.

The culmination of music at FHS for me was A level music with Miss Lefanu. Nicola Lefanu went on to become a successful composer, and taught composition at King’s College London and then York, where she was Professor of Music, so Heather Brigstocke made an inspired appointment. Nicola’s teaching was wide-ranging, covering the syllabus fully but also moving well beyond it, and she expected excellence in everything – writing style as well as musical content. When I went on to Oxford tutorials in music they were actually a disappointment in comparison. Her lessons were the best possible preparation for later study and indeed wider enjoyment of music.

Here are some more notes for you...

Sophie Hytner – 2002-2009 (Class of 2009)

My happiest memories from school are all to do with music. I definitely have Mrs RJ to thank for that! Making music with her always made me feel happier and more confident - even confident enough to sing in front of a room full of scary Harrow boys! Eek! The passion she poured into the music dept was totally contagious. I always felt lucky to sing in so many special places, from Prague, to St Petersburg, to Boston, to Lords. And it's thanks to her (and her note bashing) that I know so many wonderful pieces off by heart: Chichester Psalms, Dream of Gerontius, Matthew

Passion, Ceremony of Carols, the list is endless! Mrs RJ instilled a love of music in me that I'll have always. Basically, it was a fab time! Xxx

Sophie is now a psychologist, and is still singing!

Emma Marshall (Class of 2009)

Mrs RJ always encouraged us to perform, from when we were her 'little weeds' in the thirds, right up until sixth form. Thanks to Mrs RJ, we had the opportunity to sing and play in so many venues, from the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, to the Long Room at Lords, not to mention St Paul's Cathedral for FHS's 150th anniversary. I learned so much from being involved in the orchestras, bands and choirs and will always be grateful to the music department for those memories!

Emma now lives in London, working as a solicitor

Flora Bourne – 1999-2004 (Class of 2006)

Mrs RJ gave so much time, dedication and energy to the music within the school. As a result it was such a high standard, particularly the choirs which were fantastic. I still use the choral singing skills I learnt at FHS and I can still sing "The Pobble who had no Toes" written by Mr Thorne for the Llangollen International Eisteddfod, from memory... 23 years later, I have many happy memories of all the choir tours.

Flora now lives in Manchester, and works as a GP.

Charlie Porter (Class of 2009) 2002-2007

We were rehearsing Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius" which we were going to sing at Harrow School. I remember being really happy when Mrs RJ said that we were doing well, since it was a very difficult work. When she gave out praise, you felt as though you had absolutely made it!

Charlie lives in London, and is a business manager at Amazon

Dot Bourne 2002-2007 (Class of 2009)

I'm going to do a shout for the "Ceremony of Carols". The all-time greatest (and most fun to sing) Christmas repertoire of all time ! I get excited when it's included in carol services or played on the radio. I sing along, much to the confusion of companions and fellow audience members. My memories at FHS during the run up to Christmas, were lots of choir rehearsals and concerts. Looking back, I loved it... getting to skip a few lessons when we were outside of school, getting pizza on Baker Street before the services at St Cyprian's and then the excitement of sitting at the front with my pals. It made Christmas an even more exciting and magical time.

Dot now lives in London , working in textile and rug design.

Dora Burrough 2002-2007 (Class of 2009)

I remember going to the Butterworth Centre, and singing Christmas music and carols. It was super emotional, as we were on the dementia ward. The staff and patients always joined in with the carols. It was always a privilege to take part.

Dora now works in music, running part of Island Records' promotions team.

Laure Chan, FHS 2006-2009, writes:

Reflecting on my time at FHS, I remember certain musical moments vividly: the excitement performing solo in St Cyprian's Church to the whole school for the first time, class performances during group music lessons and our regular chamber and orchestral concerts.

The most emotional moment of my whole experience at Francis Holland was my last day, when I performed Sarasate's Zigeunerweisen (Gipsy Airs) in front of the whole school during a morning assembly - the whole room stood up to give me a standing ovation, and friends and teachers were crying. I said goodbye to my classmates after the performance and left school at the age of 14 to become homeschooled and dedicate the rest of my life to my musical career.

Editor's note: Read about Laure Chan's performance at the first fund raising event for the Quondam Sixth Form Scholarship on page 13.

Polished Cats



***Ros Heath née
Rosamund Leach
FHS. 1972 - 1984***

I have had an association with cats all my life; brought up with Siamese cats, I progressed to Burmese after meeting a Brown Burmese cat with its 'paint-brush' like tail (a Burmese trait) when I was around 16 or 17 which belonged to some friends of ours. I purchased my first pair of Brown Burmese cats when I was 21 and about to leave home.

About 19 months ago my elderly Brown Burmese cat, Cosmos, died. He was 19.5 years and very arthritic. He had been one of 3 cats, the last of these 3 to die.

Fast forward one month later, I took on a rescue Brown Burmese (1 year old) and two Tonkinese kittens which I found when searching for more Burmese kittens.

I had a first aid course scheduled for the Saturday at work and there were two Tonkinese kittens in Cheltenham 'needing' a home. What better entertainment than

to visit kittens on a Friday evening (I was staying away from home for the course).

Well of course, I fell in love with these Tortie CPP 'tonks' kittens (girls) and made the unilateral decision that they would be joining the Brown Burmese male neutered cat which I was collecting from Grantham after the course. So I collected them one week later, after work. A few days of one cat and two kittens being unsure of each other but they soon gelled and Teddy the Burmese and Mimo and Biscuit have become great mates.

They have been so entertaining! They are amazing climbers - doors, staircases, bannisters. Limbo dancing under cupboards as kittens too. And very affectionate. They play their part too when I treat children (I am an Osteopath).

And then an email came from the Burmese cat club, any suggestions how to help this aggressive 4 year old lilac Burmese, Mooshi? Any medications that I knew of, possibly? I didn't know of any medications that would help but found myself offering him a home! I wasn't the most popular person at home..... that was the beginning of December 2022



and despite a few ups and downs, Mooshi is very much a part of our lives. He hasn't integrated with the others but they manage to co-exist alongside each other.

We went from having one cat at the beginning of the year to four by the end!

Life with four cats is very definitely never dull!



Cyn Pike née Haslam, (Class of 1967)

Here are Trevor and Henry our British Short Haired cats. They enjoy a fight every night at 10.30 but tolerate each other the rest of the day!



Rachel Mead (née Goldin)

FHS 1985-1990 introduces Max, her Polished Cat.

Acquired as a tiny stray, he's been a special part of the family for 10 years now, and is extremely good at polishing himself!

We love him dearly, as all you cat lovers in particular out there will fully understand!

Pet hates: doorbell ringing, vet visits, the sound of tin foil

Pet loves: tuna, the outdoors, sofa snuggles in winter



**Nick Stevenson, (Staff
1980-1990)**

was adopted by a polished cat of a peculiar sort!

Readers might like to see the feeding station that I installed in my garden for the benefit of the local bird population. It has not proved to be very successful.

My Life At University

by Writer-Director, Nasheed Qamar Faruqi who left in 1996

When I was applying to study English at Oxford, Mrs Parsonson, quite wisely but gently as was her way, suggested that I apply to Saint Hilda's, which had been her own college. As the product of an all female household and all girls schools I wasn't having any of it. I wanted to see how men and boys argued and compete with them, to be like them and alongside them (problematic, I know, but reader I was only 18). So I applied to Wadham (which had the highest ratio of applicants to places at the time). If only I get in, I thought, then I will feel clever. Funnily, that's not how it works.

Mrs P was onto something. Women's colleges offer a special and safe space for women in universities which have evolved primarily to meet the needs of certain kinds of young men. I was at university from 1997-2000 and many things have changed since, but I'd probably advise a young woman applying to Oxbridge today to apply to a women's college.

I spent the three years of my undergraduate degree feeling a bit lost in a fog of disbelief and unbelonging. I was lucky that my tutors Robert Young and Bernard O'Donoghue both instinctively understood and embraced the perspective of outsiders or I'd have been truly sunk. Robert and Bernard have over the years become friends as well as mentors.

I love so much about my time at university, but I don't think I ever felt that I, an irreverent and mouthy but decorous brown woman, really belonged in Oxford. Nor did I ever feel able to articulate myself or my thoughts fully in those years. It took time for me to recapture the freedom that we had been given under Mrs P's leadership at FHS. University had its glories and gave me an education and grilling that is bountiful in its rigour and depth. But it was not without its challenges which I suspect Mrs Parsonson foresaw that afternoon as we pored over the prospectus.

Quondam Travel Scholarship Winner, Isabella Fisher Turner, Climbs Mount Kilimanjaro in Support of Dig Deep



reach the summit, let alone exceed my initial fundraising goal. Thank you.

Approaching the end of my second year at the University of Edinburgh, I was looking for a challenge in conjunction with a charity. This is when I discovered Dig Deep. Dig Deep believes every resident in Kenya has the right to access clean water, safe toilets, and hygiene. Without these vital services, the spread of diseases

In August 2023, I climbed and summited Mount Kilimanjaro in support of the charity Dig Deep. This adventure was an incredible, unforgettable, and rewarding experience. I want to start by extending an enormous thank you to those who made this possible. Without the support of my friends, family, colleagues, the kindness of strangers, old teachers, the University of Edinburgh, and Quondam, I would not have been able to

increase and means more time is lost to sickness. Home to 1 million people, Dig Deep works in Bomet County, which is one of the least resourced areas of Kenya. Here, 2 out of 3 people do not have clean water, over half do not have safe toilets, and children do not have access to basic hygiene education.

The charity adopts an integrated approach, collaborating with the Kenyan government,

local businesses, and communities to provide these basic necessities. They use two strategies to create sustainable, transformative change. Dig Deep's 'practical immediate solutions' include building rainwater harvesting systems, wells, and constructing safe hygienic facilities. This, in tandem with their 'long-term partnerships' approach includes: planning projects, monitoring and digitising data, and training the community and County government.

This summer, I was also producing two plays at this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival ('The Booth' and 'In Loving Memory of Mary Mort'), and unfortunately, due to this commitment back in Edinburgh, I was unable to visit Bomet County like some of my other team members. However, my team leader, Grace, had the privilege of seeing the profound impact of donations like this first-hand.

From Grace: "Visiting Bomet and the wonderful team that makes everything happen there was such an important experience. The in-country office and team run on a very small scale, but the impact they have is huge. The team works to fit new toilets, provide clean water sources, and educate the community on efficient hygiene. It is difficult to comprehend how much work goes into a sanitation project on this scale without seeing it in person. I was lucky enough to be able to visit many of Dig Deep's sanitation projects, both completed and in planning. Seeing the before and after and the wide impact they have on the local communities was truly eye-opening. Never have I met such grateful and kind people, even during times when clean water is scarce. We were shown such immense hospitality and felt so welcome. I was grateful to be able to share this experience with the team and stress how crucial the fundraising effort was to the success of this work. I think they will agree with me when I say moments like these make you realise how fortunate

we are. The work that Dig Deep does is just incredible, and I can't wait to see the charity grow and continue to fund amazing projects for more deserving people."

My fundraising consisted of a combination of car boot, Vinted, and bake sales (the years of tuck charity-bakes served me well), as well as approaching family, friends, and businesses. One of my most significant supporters was Soul Cycle, who helped me create an incentive-reward scheme for all those who donated. My initial target was £1500, yet with the enormous support behind me, I surpassed this goal.

After months of fundraising and with my plays in safe hands, I set off for Tanzania in late August. My first night in Moshi was filled with a mixture of excitement and nerves; despite running around the hills of Edinburgh and tirelessly breaking in my walking boots, the only experience I had under my belt was Silver Duke of Edinburgh!

Our climb followed the Machame Route, where the terrain shifts between diverse ecosystems. As we ascended higher, we moved from rainforest to moorland, and alpine desert to arctic cold, trekking for an average of 6-8 hours a day. Fortunately, I lucked out with a brilliant team of all current Edinburgh University students, or past connections to the city from all walks of





life; vet med students, doctors, a gymnastic teacher, a budding Navy electrical engineer were only just a small sector of the team. Out of 22, 18 of us reached Uhuru Peak, standing at a whopping 5,895m. My time away was filled with constant giggles, perhaps due to the altitude at times, and I have met some fantastic new friends for life.

Summit day was by far the hardest thing I have ever done in my life. After walking 8 hours the day before, and a brief 2-hour nap, we rose at 11 pm to begin our summit climb at midnight under the stars. Walking in pitch black, surrounded by the lights of Moshi and Arusha, our path lit by our dodgy head torches and the stars above, is a memory I will never forget. Something else I will also never forget is the cold. Freezing doesn't quite cut it. The sun gifted us with a wicked sunrise at 5:30 am, boosting our morale for the final push. We finally summited at 7:40 am. At this point, my system had been running on pure adrenaline and Tangfantastics, and boy was I glad to see the summit sign!

The trek was demanding but hugely rewarding. If anyone is interested in an

uphill adventure and most definitely a mental battle, I could not recommend Mount Kilimanjaro enough, particularly through our providers 'Dig Deep Challenges' and 'Trek2Kili.' To avoid the history of exploitation and ensure ethical practices, please verify your provider is associated with KPAP. Dig Deep is partnered with Kilimanjaro Porters Assistant Project (KPAP), to ensure mountain crews receive fair wages, treatment, and safety. Dig Deep not only creates change for people's health to improve, but the Kilimanjaro guides and their extended families also benefit from your presence, relying on their support and experience to help you ascend the mountain. To say that the crew was phenomenal is an absolute understatement. Their care and expertise are invaluable in making the climb possible, and I am incredibly grateful for the fantastic team around me.

Once again, a heartfelt thank you to Quondam for supporting my challenge for Dig Deep. Your generosity has made a significant impact, and together, we've contributed to transformative, sustainable change in Bomet County.

Quondam Writing Competition Winning Entries

The Winner of the Junior Category was:

Amara Anderson, year 7
“Two for Joy”

His sheeny navy feather glinted in the moonlight as his mother cowered over him, the wind whispering through her tail.

“Calypso, one day you will have to leave your nest,” His mother, Marigold, cawed over the shushing trees. The young chick gave a twitch of acknowledgment; he was not going to be persuaded anytime soon. With large, black eyes Calypso stared out at his fluttering siblings with a reluctant sigh of longing. His mother was right. He couldn’t stay here forever. The black trees stirred as the moon cast ribbons of light on their branches and Calypso’s mother inhaled a deep waft of the whispering winds and let her calls drift into comforting words...

“The sky is nothing to be afraid of. The sky is there so you can embrace it, so you can learn from it, so you can love it. Nothing feels quite the same when you soar over woods draped with sashes of sunlight, or when your feathers ruffle in a Spring zephyr as you wheel through the air. Imagine gliding across a black sky as the sun hid from view, when the earth is plunged into darkness but the sky still guides you. And flying through clouds whether they are flocculent or wispy, whether the sky is indigo or azure blue...” Marigold flitted her gaze to her wide-eyed chick, expecting a spark of enthusiasm to ignite in Calypso’s pupils. But in vain. So she spun her head to gaze at the canopy of trees they were nestled in and continued:

“I remember once as I fluttered through the sky on one of my first adventures alone, the sky was grey. The last of the sun had vanished beneath a jagged horizon line of bushy trees and hills and I felt I was deserted. Deserted of my siblings, of my parents, of my friends. But that night I realised the sky is one of our best friends. As I flapped over the bleak landscape, the sky gifted me a beautiful phenomenon. A rippling, magical cloud alive with more colours than the rainbow drifted out of a hazy mist in my eyeline; a mesmerising gift from the sky reassuring me that I would never be alone. A mother-of-pearl cloud. I felt it was flying towards me as if it was a road I must take. And so I did... and you feel so different when you take a bold step from your comfort zone and flutter into the embracing hands of the sky.” Calypso swept his gaze to his mother’s understanding face, finally that spark igniting in his eyes. Glaring at the fluttering cloud of chicks taking their first flap in the skies, Calypso stared down at his talons, gripping to his nut-strewn nest like he was afraid he would suddenly take off. Should he do it? The sense of being free and having boundless space sent a tingle down his feathery spine. He would be able to soar as high as he wished, as far away as he desired and as close to the humans as he wanted. But then uncertainties flooded into his mind... Would he fall? Would predators target him? Would he crash into something? Would he –

But his mother had been brave. And so could he. With tear-brimmed eyes and trembling talons, he shuffled unstably towards the edge of the branch. One more step, and there was no going back. Tossing away the negative thoughts that threatened to inundate his mind, he lifted his webbed foot. He fluttered his wings. And, stepping boldly, leaped into the air...

And he was spiralling, gushing, falling through thick blankets of leaves, down, down, down and then suddenly, his wings beat faster and steadier and he felt himself rising... and dipping... and then rising again. Soon, he was soaring through pillows of clouds, where his vision blurred and then he emerged into crystal blue skies. Below him, green and golden fields patchworked the face of the earth like duvets and, as Calypso dipped once again, his quivering belly brushed against the bold fuchsia pink of succulent blossoms. As he looked below him, a snaking, rippling ribbon of water manoeuvred its way through the park, bringing cantering deer and whirling mosquitoes in its wake. His mother was right; the sky had gifted him an exhilaration so strong, so reassuring. He was flapping and gliding, cawing and soaring and as he glanced back over his shoulder his siblings were poking each other, pecking the air curiously. He felt like he had been travelling for hours, but he'd only flown a few metres. Calypso gradually descended, floating like a feather back onto his nest where he had taken his first bold triumphant step.

The Winner of the Senior Category was:

Hana Preston LVIBS
'Bloodied Flesh of Adam'

ADAM.

He feels his anger before he understands it. His fury that this — the creation — is a bloodbath. No serenity. No Eden. Only screams, as Adam watches the bone wrenched from his ribcage, snapped sharp from his skeleton like kindling from a burning tree. He is a forest fire; the flames lick up past his collarbones as ichor pours from the cavity which creation has left. They will not detail this horror when they write the story down.

The bloodied flesh of Adam lies, unmoving, on the ground. The prophets will call this beautiful. He can still taste the blood between his teeth.

Bone of my bones. Woman. The way her body arcs in the new sunlight is almost glorious enough for him to forget the fact of his missing rib — that she has been *made* from him. That all her daughters will carry the shame of being created from something halved. She is all softness, and flowing curves — and he resents her. Resents the hole in his side. Resents how lovely it is when she smiles, because she does not *understand*.

Except there is no room for hatred in the garden of Eden. No room for anything except two creatures, hand in hand, etched further deep into each other than either is capable of understanding. Weighed almost to a breaking point with the sheer force of this guilt, Adam buries it. Fashions it into this tiny seed, forces it deep into the coolness of the disturbed soil. And who is he to panic when a sapling starts to sprout there? Who is he to comment when the darkness emerges, gnarled and rotten, from the earth?

EVE.

The voice in the air around them is quick to explain the sapling: *tree of knowledge. Fruit. Forbidden.* The words are as new to her as they are inviting, and she finds herself settling deep into the salaciousness of a word like *forbidden* before she even truly understands it. She steals away from Adam when the sun sinks from the sky that night, footsteps whispered against the new grass, and watches it. Watches the leaves as they curl up into the moonlight. Watches the roots as they writhe, serpentine, through the soil.

The world is still new to her, and she presses her hands deep into the dirt as if discovering exactly what it is to be *aware*. It's damp,

washed cold by the nightfall, and she shivers at the feeling. Dew on the grass. Lights in the sky. So much to be seen, and felt, and talked about. Except she does not tell Adam — and she does not know why.

The tree grows — keeps *growing*, keeps curling further up into the air with each passing day — and Eve is left to wonder whether being created for the role of *second place* was ever supposed to come without its consequences. A mere vessel. Something inferior.

To be born *woman* is to be born *enslaved*.

On its first birthday, the tree bursts with the promise of ripe fruit. Some has fallen from that lustrous foliage already, and Eve watches from a distance as the ants begin to devour it from within: they flesh its syrup out, unthinking. Driven almost to madness by the saccharine sweetness which seeps into the open ground.

This time, when the voice in the air warns her of this danger, its sound is quieter. Softer around the edges, slinking between each vowel like a serpent through damp reeds. She glances across the way at Adam, tilling soil, that scar across his ribs pulsing with each laboured breath. She thinks of the anger. *His* anger. Thinks of the way he scowls at her, with that calloused hand splayed wide across the chasm in his chest. Thinks: ***be bold. Make this difference. Before it is too late.***

This time, when the voice in the air murmurs that word — *forbidden* — Eve lets it devour her.

Her aching fingers close firm around the skin of the fruit: here, for the first time in this garden, is something made for *her*. It comes away from the branch with a soft *snap*, a rustling of leaves, some distant murmur as natural order resets itself. (The clouds in the sky look no different. The outlying hills are

unchanged.) When Eve returns to Adam that evening, there is a strange expression on his face. She does not speak — he does not look at her. She tries not to think of those fallen fruits rotting into the damp grass: those open wounds. The cracks in the earth.

Thin slice of moonlight. Scar across Adam's ribs. Primordial glow seeping in from outside this cave, gentle as it bathes the space in a strip of light. It catches Eve's arm. Adam's tools. The fruit. She turns to look at the man she was made for, and almost jumps at the sight of him staring right back. His eyes are the same brown as hers, and his expression suddenly very earnest. When he blinks, the shadows of his eyelashes soothe almost down to the corner of his mouth.

I really am sorry, he murmurs, and she lets the feeling hold her still for just a moment more. Gently, she lifts a hand. Presses it to his cheek: the smoothness there. The impossible firmness of the line of his jaw.

I know.

Beat.

Me too.

When she turns to take hold of the fruit, he does not move to stop her. Only watches as she presses the pads of her fingers to its skin, brings it up to her lips.

Something in the air shifts (something untouched and terrible, infinitesimal and cataclysmic, all at once) when she finally takes the bite. The skin of the fruit tears, audible, and Adam can only watch as their fate is sealed. When she passes it to him, juice dripping in rivulets down her chin, Eve's eyes glint with the relish of this ineradicable sin.

To be born *woman* is to be born with a *choice*.

Obituaries

Obituary for Marion Harvey (née Dreyfuss)

***by Rabbi Alexandra Wright, née
Levitt***

It is with great sadness that I write to let Quondam know of the death of Marion Harvey (née Dreyfuss) on 23rd September 2023. She was 66. Marion was a pupil at FHS from the age of 4 to 17. She left following A-Levels in 1974 and trained at the London School of Pharmacy. She went on to do a PhD, researching into a particular antibiotic and worked as a pharmacist throughout her working life, in the last twenty years at her own pharmacy, Keats in Hampstead.

She was a brilliant scientist, linguist and all-round student, conscientious, diligent and meticulous in everything she undertook.

She leaves her husband David, her daughters, Katie, Ollie and Nikki, sons and daughter-in-law, Yuval, Daniel and Anne, and five delightful grandchildren.

She is greatly missed by her two great friends, Vivien Rose (née Lind) and me.

Obituary for Sandra Hesketh

***who died suddenly in June 2023 by
Eleanor Allen, née Shacke Andersen:***

"I knew Sandra Hesketh at school from the Junior School until she left for Sherbourne. We remained friends for years, even though she travelled widely. She held a variety of different jobs from working in a solicitor's office in the city, to being a residential social worker in a children's home in Paddington. Recently she lived in Peckham where she had many friends and was heavily involved in

volunteer gardening projects. I will miss her terribly."

Obituary for Sarah Codacci Pisanelli (née Butterwick)

by Lucy Lubbock



Sarah Codacci Pisanelli 1958-2022. Sarah joined the 6th form in 1973, from Cobham Hall. Sarah was highly intelligent and resilient, she plunged into the life of a day girl with gusto and made many friends. Sarah achieved excellent grades and went onto study Italian at Vassar in the States, graduating with a 1st. She worked in banking and married Giulio they have three adult sons and a baby grandchild. Sarah was also well known as an influential head of Learning Enrichment at the Harrodian School. She retired last year but tragically cancer rapidly took hold and she passed away peacefully just before Christmas. She will be greatly missed by many.

Quondam Committee

Quondam Committee

We are so sad that, after twenty years as a member, Vivien Rose, née Lind, has decided to retire from the Committee. Francis Holland and Quondam owe her great thanks. She has been a most inspirational member of the Committee and will be hugely missed.

VACANCIES:

Are you interested in joining our Committee? We meet three times a year, usually at 630pm on a Monday and we can set up a Zoom link for those unable to attend in person.

We try to represent the generations of our membership and particularly need members who left after 2018.

We are also looking for a new Treasurer as Benita Mathews, née Thomas, who has held this position brilliantly for an amazing 47 years will retire at the AGM next year. She will, thankfully, stay on the Committee. Beware, she is a very hard act to follow! Quondam is hugely indebted to her for her devotion and accuracy. Thank you, Benita!

We also need a new Chair as I will also retire at the next AGM. You need to have served on the Committee for a year before becoming eligible for that position so please do get in touch asap.

Qualifications needed are enthusiasm for and love of Francis Holland, Regent's Park, innovation, and commitment. Please do contact me at quondamchair@fhs-nw1.org.uk to hear more.

Our Newest Member

We welcome Dr Frances Baawuah, who left school in 1998, as our newest member. Frances is a true example of "if you want something done, ask a busy person".

Frances is a GP and is a Partner of two large London GP practices. Frances holds numerous and impressive community positions. She was appointed as a Governor of FHST in 2021 and chairs the Safeguarding sub-committee. She is proud mum to Eliana and Johan.

Your Committee works for the benefit of former pupils and staff of Francis Holland School, Regent's Park, where they meet in school three times a year. Here are its members:



President, Mrs Katharine Woodcock.



Chairman, Susanne Nedas née Quastel. Class of 1971.



Treasurer, Benita Mathews née Thomas. Class of 1970.



Joint Secretary, Alison Edelhain née Day. Class of 1972



Joint Secretary, Felicity Forde. Former Pastoral Deputy Head.



Amelia Slocombe, Teacher Liaison Representative.



Jeannine Addinall. Former Deputy Head.



Isobel Apter. Class of 2011.



Dr Frances Baawuah. Class of 1998.



Nadia Demetriou Ladas. Class of 1988.



Shivani Gohil. Class of 2015.



Georgina Guy née Nedas. Class of 1995.



Maria Hadjipateras. Class of 1979.



Jennifer Purchase née Shier. Class of 1973.



Manuela Robson. Class of 1989.



Lucinda Sanford née Nedas. Class of 2000.



Julia Strauss. Class of 1987.



Srutti Suresan. Class of 2014.

News from the Alumni Network

The Francis Holland School, Regent's Park Alumni Network welcomes all those who attended the School, both pupils and staff alike. In this section, you'll see just what some of the members of the alumni community have been up to, but of course the best way of keeping up-to-date with your former classmates or colleagues is via the Alumni Network! The Network enables you to directly contact former pupils and staff and keep up to date with events, stories and news from both the school and alumni communities. You will also receive news and event invitations by email via the Network, and of course this magazine!

If you haven't already, please join us here: <https://alumni.fhs-nw1.org.uk/home> or scan the QR code below to access the Alumni Network



Alumni contact details

Stay in touch with us by email, social media or post. Details above!

Email and Post

You can contact Alumni Relations Officer, Claire Brazer, by email at alumni@fhs-nw1.org.uk or by writing to:

Alumni Relations Officer,
Francis Holland Regent's Park,
35 Bourne Street, London SW1W 8JA

Social Media

We have a Facebook page dedicated to our alumni which you are all encouraged to 'Like'! We also have an alumni LinkedIn group. Please do follow the School on Instagram and X [@FHSRegentsPark](#) for all the latest news.



Francis Holland Regent's Park Alumni Network



Francis Holland Regent's Park Alumni Network



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Class of 2023 Leavers' Prom

On Thursday 29th June, the Upper Sixth cohort gathered at FHS for a very special Leavers' Evening, marking the end of their school careers and the start of their journeys as Francis Holland alumnae



The evening commenced with touching speeches from Headmistress, Mrs Woodcock, Head of Sixth Form, Mr Gridelli and outgoing Head Girl, Saskia, who all reflected on the cohort's remarkable impact on FHS throughout their school careers. Mrs Woodcock and Mr Gridelli encouraged the girls to embrace the challenges that lay ahead with confidence and optimism, reminding them of the strong foundations they had built at Francis Holland. Susanne Nedas, Chair of Quondam, then welcomed girls as life-long members of our treasured Quondam, reassuring them the friendships and memories they have made at FHS will stay with them ad infinitum.

This was followed by the awarding of our Upper Sixth academic and special prizes to celebrate the girls' various achievements in academic and extracurricular activities, and contributions to the School community.

Following the Prize-Giving ceremony, students, parents and staff then gathered in the playground for a delightful evening drinks reception, after which students headed to the Hall to dance the night away.

What a wonderful way to celebrate such a brilliant cohort who will be sorely missed. We wish them the very best of luck as they depart FHS for their exciting futures, and we can't wait to welcome them back as treasured Francis Holland alumnae, and the youngest members of our community!



Official Opening of Linhope House

The School welcomed award-winning portrait photographer and FHS alumna, Rhiannon Adam to open our new Sixth Form Centre, Linhope House

Back in March, we welcomed award-winning portrait photographer and FHS alumna, Rhiannon Adam to open our new Sixth Form Centre, Linhope House. Guests, including our generous donors and esteemed members of the FHS community including former Headmistress Mrs Parsonson, gathered to celebrate the official opening of our state-of-the-art new Sixth Form Centre, which has increased FHS's dedicated sixth form space by 300% (663sqm) and offers the perfect environment for the transition from school to university.

Following the champagne reception in Linhope House's modern, Scandinavian-inspired Common Room, Headmistress, Katharine Woodcock, welcomed and thanked guests before outgoing Head Girl Saskia spoke about the significant impact Linhope House had on her education and incoming Head Girl Isabel introduced Rhiannon Adam as the evening's guest of honour.

Rhiannon, who left FHS in 2003 before attending both Cambridge University and Central St Martins, is a true inspiration for

our current students. She has been chosen as the only woman to partake in a civilian trip to the moon as part of the dearMoon Crew, in recognition of her pioneering creative work which champions female empowerment.

Reflecting on her fond memories of FHS, Rhiannon offered words of thanks to the School for instilling her with the confidence, creativity and ambition that have shaped her life and career, showing how 'FHS girls can really do anything'. This momentous moment was marked with the unveiling of a commemorative plaque which will be proudly displayed in Linhope House for posterity.

Following the speeches, Rhiannon, the Headmistress and Chairman of the Governors, Patrick Sherrington, officially unveiled the Legacy Wall adorning the foyer of Linhope House, inscribed with the names of current FHS pupils. Guests were then invited to tour the building and take in its impressive features, including an innovative Think Lab, an elegant Reading Room, and ample collaborative learning and study spaces.



Hale Lecture with guest speaker alumna, Dr Hannah Dawson

As part of the School's Hale Lecture series, in March we were honoured to welcome Class of 1994 alumna, Dr Hannah Dawson, who delivered an inspiring lecture to our older pupils.

She marked International Women's Day with an insightful whistle-stop tour of the history of feminism, covering writers from Virginia Woolf, to Simone de Beauvoir, Jane Anger to Sheryl Sandberg. In addressing the structural phenomenon of sexism and the importance of intersectional feminism, Hannah stressed the need to bring people at the edges of power into the centre in order to bring justice for all.

Dr Hannah Dawson is a Lecturer in the History of Ideas at King's College London. Her most recent publication, 'The Penguin Book of Feminist Writing' is available to buy online or from all good bookshops.



Alumnae Speak to Upper Fifth Pupils about Sixth Form Life at FHS



Former pupils, Annie Harrison (Class of 2021; currently studying Linguistics at the University of Cambridge), Eva Perez (Class of 2020; studying History at the University of Oxford) and Phoebe Bor, (Class of 2020; studying Fashion at Central St Martins) returned to FHS in September 2022 to join current Upper Fifth students in the Linhope House Common Room for an FHS Sixth Form Q&A session. The speakers took it in turns to inform the pupils about A Levels (the most popular topic!), EPQ, gap years, study advice, and why they chose to stay on at FHS for Sixth Form.

Our three alumnae were also treated to a tour of Linhope House from Mr Gridelli, commenting on how they wish they'd had the opportunity to study in the Sixth Form centre, noting what an asset the individual study rooms are whilst marvelling at the enviable space the pupils have in the building.

Our thanks go to Annie, Phoebe and Eva for taking the time to return to Francis Holland and answer our pupils' many questions.



50 YEAR REUNION of Class of 1972

by Alison Edelshain (née Day)

If I am totally honest, I had completely forgotten that 2022 was the 50th anniversary of our leaving school. As I am normally on top of such significant dates, there were clearly some deep psychological influences at work and an unconscious reluctance to face such a momentous fact. The last time I had felt this way was when I reached my 50th birthday and had decided to completely ignore it – a strategy which was totally demolished when arriving at work, I was faced with several enormous balloons with huge 50s written all over them attached to my desk..... (I won't share with you the dark thoughts that crossed my mind about my fellow HR department members and their treachery)!!

However, fortunately for the Year of 1972 leavers, Matti sent me an email in the autumn asking if we were going to do something to celebrate. Of course, we were! Massive last-minute scramble trying to find a date most people could do. In the end, we ran out of time to celebrate the anniversary in 2022 and went for 3rd February 2023 instead. What was very satisfactory was that I was able to contact eighteen fellow classmates, many of whom were seriously trying to see if they could come. In the end we were nine but out of a class of 24 who left the school 50 years ago and were living all across the world – that was still no mean feat! (Special mention here to Renée who came over from the Netherlands especially for the event).

We decided to meet up at school first as several people wanted to see around the school and especially inspect the brand new sixth form centre in Linhope Street. Claire Brazier (School Alumni Relations Officer) kindly met us outside the school and we all trooped over to Linhope Street to meet several of the current prefects who generously gave us a tour of the pristine new, spacious area for the fortunate 2023 sixth formers. Then back to the main school building for some delicious cocktails and canapés and to enjoy looking at the wonderful selection of memorabilia from our years at the school so thoughtfully left out for us to inspect. The new Head Mrs Katherine Woodcock then joined us and we shared with her some of our favourite memories and had some photos together. Finally, we left the school and walked to Côte Marylebone in Devonshire Street for dinner to continue updating each other on our news and sharing the many happy memories of our school days. A lovely way to mark the 50th anniversary and we shall look forward to celebrating together many more times again in the future.



The Health Society

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Cosmetic & General Dentistry
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Classes of 2006-2021 Alumni Reunion at FHS



In April, the Classes of 2006-2021 met up at FHS for a lively reunion

Francis Holland School Alumni Association, Headmistress, Katharine Woodcock, Chair of Quondam, Susanne Nedas, and current and former teaching staff welcomed back alumnae from the Classes of 2006 all the way to 2021 for a special reunion at FHS.

Forty guests enjoyed the champagne and canapés reception, which offered former pupils the chance to reconnect with classmates and their teachers, all the while enjoying a photographic display of memories - and the ever-popular class yearbooks from associated years, which provoked many a smile and gasp of delight!

Headmistress Katharine Woodcock welcomed guests, encouraging more alumni reunions at FHS, while Susanne Nedas recounted her days at Francis Holland, speaking of the incredible bond she has with her classmates, comparable to a familial bond of cousins.

Many thanks to all who attended for making the evening such a warm and happy one. If you'd like to organise a reunion for your year group, do get in touch via email at alumni@fhs-nw1.org.uk

Alumnae exhibit at School Careers Fair

Six alumnae returned to Francis Holland School as exhibitors at the 2022 Careers Fair. Events Producer and alumna, Ali Gillum (Class of 2010), Specialist Orthodontist, Dr Ariane Sampson (Class of 2007), Senior Account and Brand Manager and Class of 2013 alumna, Zoe Silkstone, Consultant Emma Wong (Class of 2011), Teacher of Classics, Zoë Cannell (Class of 2013) and Television Broadcaster Rosie Wright (Class of 2010) spoke to pupils and parents at the event.

Our alumnae joined a total of 36 exhibitors and guest speakers. The evening began with an enlightening talk from Dr Luisa Affonso, Chief Economist at Ofcom and former Academic Economist at the University of Cambridge, in the School Hall. Pupils and families then made their way around to speak to different exhibitors, all of whom offered their invaluable insider knowledge, expertise and advice to pupils. Guests also had the opportunity to listen to an informative talk by British Airways Pilot, Alex Smith.

Special thanks go to our alumnae exhibitors for giving up their time for the benefit of our pupil and parent communities.



Francis Holland Regent's Park University Destinations by Student 2023

Overseas Universities:

USA:

Dickson, Nevis, Chemical Engineering, University of Notre Dame, Indiana

Joshi, Mihika, Biochemistry – University of Southern California

Europe:

Monticelli, Marta, International Relations - Erasmus University Rotterdam

Abbatista, Olivia, Business Administration - IE Business School, Madrid

McLavery, Orla, Geography and Sociology - Trinity College Dublin

UK Universities:

Ahmud, Sabrina, Law - City University of London

Banga, Natasha, Mathematics with Finance – University of Exeter

Basak, Ilayda, Mathematics with Finance and Economics - City University of London

Batty, Shannon, English and Film Studies - Royal Holloway, University of London

Baird, Olivia, History - Exeter

Bossom, Cara, Modern and Medieval Languages – University of Cambridge

Breuss-Burgess, Anna-Claire, Computer Science – University of Edinburgh

Brown, Charlotte, Geography - University of Manchester

Butt, Aisha, International Media and Communications Studies – University of Nottingham

Cachules, Nila, English Literature - Durham University

Campbell-Butcher, Molly, Classics - Durham University

Daniel, Dagmawit, Biomedical Science – University of Warwick

Datnow, Eve, Applied Social Sciences – University of Sheffield

Dyos, Chloe, Spanish and English Literature – University of Edinburgh

Ernst, Keya, English Law and German Law – King's College London, University of London

Fishlock, Amelia, Liberal Arts – University of Exeter

Garcia Soga, Ayana, French and Italian – University of Warwick

Ginty, Alexa, Geography – University of Bristol

Gleeson, Aura, Economics – University of Manchester

Grainger, Camilla, Animation – Falmouth University

Haruni, Maya, Jewellery and Objects – Birmingham City University DEFERRED ENTRY

Haruni, Ruby, History of Art – University of Birmingham DEFERRED ENTRY

Helmy, Sofia, Social Sciences – King's College London

Hill, Marni, Biochemistry - University of St. Andrews

Hill, Amber, Film Studies, King's College London, University of London

Hoegel, Greta, Psychology – University of Exeter

Jahangir, Alizay, Business and Management – Royal Holloway, University of London

Jacobs, Poppy, Politics and International Relations – University of Manchester

Jacobson, Lucia, International Relations – University of Leeds

Lamble, Eloise, Psychology – University of Sussex – DEFERRED ENTRY

Ludwick, Annika, Media and Culture – University of Liverpool

Manji, Chiara, Geography – University of Exeter

Martinez, Chloe, Mechanical Engineering with professional placement – University of Bath

Meti, Dea, Mathematics and Statistics with a Professional Placement – Queen Mary University of London

Mitcheson, Alice, Geography - Durham University

Nahal, Amelia, Equine Sports Therapy and Rehabilitation - Writtle University College

Naini, Laila, Mechanical Engineering - University of Leeds

Newell, Ella, Product Design Engineering – Loughborough University

Obomanu, Joanna – History - University of Birmingham – DEFERRED ENTRY

Orlik Law, Milla, Liberal Arts – University of Warwick DEFERRED ENTRY

Pantoja-Rosero, Ana-Sofia, Level 4 Film Production - London Screen Academy

Pantoja-Rosero, Sara, English – Royal Holloway, University of London

Redmond, Aoife, Biological Sciences Foundation (1+3) - University of Liverpool

Shah, Saskia, Geography and Transport Studies – University of Leeds

Slinn, Rose, Sociology - University of Leeds

Shivalingham, Isha, Sociology – Durham University

Taberham, Lara, English Literature – University of Warwick

Teeger, Saskia, Veterinary Medicine with Intercalated BSc Year – Royal Veterinary College

Ustinova, Alice, Veterinary Science – University of Liverpool

Von Baeyer, Clara, Psychology – Durham University

Wellingbrook, Ella, Sociology and Criminology – University of Warwick

Whiu, Sophera, Psychology in Education with study abroad – University of Bath

Post-A level applications:

Atherton, Sadie, Psychology – University of Bristol

Brown, Sophie Liberal Arts – University of Birmingham

Frankel, Scarlett, Criminology – University of Bristol

Gibbons, Grace, Biochemistry with Industrial/ Professional Experience – University of Manchester

Green, Tilly, Marketing and Management – Newcastle University

Masuk, Iffah, Neuroscience with a Year Abroad - Queen Mary University of London

Siddiqui, Yasmeen, Archaeology and Anthropology – University College London

Yoong, Janna, Medicine – Queen Mary University of London

McDonnell, Helena, Geography – Durham University

Wheeler, Katie, Audio Production – SAE Institute

Hamilton Smith, James, Social Sciences with a Foundation Year – University of Sussex

Art School:

Cheatle, Maddy, Kingston/Also has a deferred place to study Sociology and Philosophy – University of Manchester for 2024

Coleman, Ondine - Royal Drawing School

Dagtolglou, Isabel - Manchester School of Art

Dreyer, Eva - Kingston School of Art

Lomnitzer, Olivia - University of the Arts London, Central Saint Martin

Boller Smith, Cora - Kingston School of Art

Gap Year:

Ahmed, Sophia

Banthia, Jia

Carreras, Phoebe

Collier-Wright, Amaya

Crenian, Lara

Gishen, Charlotte

Goodling, India

Gupta, Mahika

Ideh, Okite

Osei, Caitlyn – reapplying for medicine after a Gap year

Male-Wolstenholme, Parker

Thackray, Belle

Ward, Darcey

Shaikh, Amelie Rose

To be decided:

Read, Clara



**Quondam Welcomes its New Members
Class of 2023**