Alumni News

Spring 2023

Welcome back to your Alumni News, bringing you highlights from last term and this one so far. It may very well be the Spring term although we are not ready to pack away the coats and gloves just yet. It is the perfect time to get into your favourite chair with a warm beverage and catch up on news from your old school, don't you think? You will find a handy recipe provided by alumna and nutritionist, Leila Lingner, to boost the immune system and fend off the nasty colds in circulation. It is amazing to continue to connect with so many of Luckley's alumni community – a truly diverse, interesting and entertaining group. We have welcomed some of you back for lunch, supported the individual pursuits of others and received interesting news and participation from many more of you. As always, I do hope to hear from you as it is you that makes this newsletter what it is. Do have a look at upcoming activities and events listed under 'Get Involved' and more so, please join us!

The Amazing Mrs Hawkins

We welcomed back Sue Hawkins last term for a quick cuppa and a chat. Many of you will know Sue as Luckley's former Alumni Coordinator. Well noted for her fantastic event management and organisational skills, Sue has a knack of making everything look 'just right' or run 'just so' and was involved with many aspects of School life; volunteering to join pupils on their Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, helping run House events and competitions as well as Pre-University Week, Careers, Mentoring and Speech Day. She showed great commitment to our pupils, her colleagues and to Luckley's amazing alumni community.

Less known amongst alumni is the fact that Sue was also the School's Secretary and Receptionist and over her 15 years at Luckley (2007 – 2022), she spent five and a half years as a Science Technician. Having studied Science and been to Secretarial College, her roles seemed a natural fit. When Sue was first asked by Luckley's Bursar, to take up her post as Alumni Coordinator, she enthusiastically agreed although was not entirely sure what that entailed. With just a cardboard box of files, Sue set up an alumni database and before long was reuniting former Luckley pupils over lunches, garden parties, sporting events and across social channels. Warm and friendly, with a colourful personality, Sue was much loved by staff as well as many of you too. She always went the extra mile when it came to helping others and making events and activities that extra special.

Since leaving Luckley, some eight months ago, Sue has travelled to Oman and Devon (where she visited alumna, Lisa Hutchins), been up to London to the Van Gogh exhibition as well as to see Tina, the musical. Before Christmas, her best friend arrived from Bermuda and the

two went to Cologne's Christmas market. The summer was the start of a new hobby, where she and her husband hit the English waterways kayaking. Sue also keeps a beautiful (and rather large) garden, her green fingers were always on display somewhere at Luckley from flower arranging and Christmas foliage decorations to maintaining the grave of Luckley's founder, Bertha Drake. Her latest muse, is a set of drums, which she intends to master over time through tuition. I have no doubt that she will be playing the perfect drum roll in no time.

Presently, Sue is enjoying her time with good friends as well as challenging herself to try new things, no doubt the reason she remains youthful and energetic. If you see Sue on her travels, do make sure she doesn't leave without her best party trick. No one can reel off the names of the 20 train stations between Wokingham and Tunbridge Wells quite like Sue. I can hear her say now, 'all change!".

Review by Sarah Francis

ALUMNI NEWS

Let's Face The Music

Luckley's music scholars were joined by some of our musical alumni last week, in support of the music department's Festival of Music. Parents, pupils and guests were delighted by a duet on the piano, 'The Scarlet Cape', by alumni, Rachael Gillham (Class of 1993) and Katrina Frayling (Class of 1993). Solo performances by Paige Norton-Edwards (Class of 2021), singing 'Porgi, amor, qualche ristoro' and Chloe German (Class of 2022), singing 'She Used to Be Mine' were also enjoyed. Once again, our alumni came together to enrich Luckley life and thrill current pupils and the audience. We also welcomed Denese Gray, former Luckley piano teacher and Eve Bull, former Head of Music. Our alumni showcased their love of music and provided a perfect example to pupils of what can be achieved through an on-going commitment to their trade. It was an evening of sweet melodies and a wonderful way to start the weekend.

(left to right) Denese Gray, Rachael Gillham, Katrina Frayling

Year 8 dance workshop run by Steph Still

...And Dance

Dance was in the air as we welcomed back Steph Still, (Class of 2009) to Luckley's Festival of Dance day. Steph trained as a professional dancer and offered our pupils first class dance workshops – creating a great deal of excitement amongst pupils. She went on to adjudicate Luckley's House Dance Competition (remember the days of House competitions?) and continued to blow us away with her evening performance that opened the competition. Let's give it up for the one, the only, Steph Still who thrilled us all with her fancy footwork. Visit https://www.facebook.com/Sarah.Francis.LuckleyAlumni to see Steph's tap performance.

Steph Still, solo tap performance, Luckley Festival of Dance

LUCKLEY ALUMNI INTERVIEW

There's No Business Like Show Business

This quick-witted, fun-loving lady knows how to make people smile, even break into laughter. From Luckley's Class of 1962, is former television producer, Gillian Stribling-Wright. Let's face it, even Gill's name is interesting – owing to her decision to use both her maiden names – as her mother remarried after the death of her father. Gill is a woman who knows her own mind and with good reason – she lives life to the full and with a smile on her face.

Early on, Gill was a creative thinker and fun was something she had a lot of. Some of Gill's lifelong friends were former Luckley pupils. She recalls a play that she produced and presented to staff, The Life of Tchaikovsky starring her good friend Jane Woodhead. Designed as a mime it morphed into a comical act that had the front row in stitches, she recalls. And so, a producer was born.

By the late 60s, after local employment as an administrator, Gill found her niche working for the BBC, first as an administrator, then as a production secretary for an early evening chat show "Dee Time" before becoming a script supervisor on Top of the Pops – Gill was on her way up. Her natural talent led her into a researching role for several television series including The Generation Game and Wogan, before moving on to assistant producer and producer for Parkinson. It wasn't too long before she was originating and producing television hits such as Blind Date and Surprise Surprise. Gill was also the overall Network Producer for three 27-hour live ITV Telethons raising a total of £60 million for charity before becoming Controller of Light Entertainment for Television South. Freelance roles saw her produce a documentary on Marine Piracy for the government and a UK/China challenge as part of a Foreign Office campaign to showcase Britain's talents to China.

Now enjoying retirement, Gill has more recently run two charitable events, a dog show and golf tournament. She is also a long-serving volunteer and Trustee at her local branch of the RSPCA and Chair of their Fundraising sub Committee –now stepping down as Chair to spend more time with friends and family. No doubt, Gill's jolly and assertive presence will be missed though she will never stray far from the presence of animals. Her favourite day, a long country walk with the dog, a spot of gardening and a lovely lunch. Sounds perfect.

Review by Sarah Francis

Speaking of Luckley memories, Gill's Luckley classmates became lifelong companions and today she is godparent to several of her friends' children. They share a history that is special and irreplaceable. The cottage Gill and her husband purchased in Georgia, USA was prompted through a connection to one of her dear friends Penny Makin (who died of cancer in 2018.) Their lives were intertwined throughout the years as was the case with Jane Woodhead and Jo Cooper, two other Luckley girls. Jane, too, died of cancer just six months after Penny.

A world traveller at heart, Gill has covered many parts of the African continent, America, the Middle and Far East with a journey on the Niger River to Timbuktu and walking with chimpanzees at Mahale and Gombe being particular favourites. In Africa she loves the fact that humans are just another species and the quiet of being in wild places.

Gill's zest for life is infectious. "Everything more or less fell into place for me, without much of a plan. People spend far too much time worrying about their future" she says. Her advice to her godchildren, "Concern yourself with enjoying today as tomorrow's plans might not work out and something better might be in store, few things are irrevocable." We could all take a leaf out of Gill's book.

Follow us on...

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GET INVOLVED

We do get in touch with many of you directly to discuss opportunities to mentor a Sixth Former, engage in Luckley's Pre University week, participate in 'alumni spotlight' interviews as well as take part in public talks, such as our Luckley Lectures and Luckley's annual Speech Day. Some of you make contact to express your own ideas and interests, which is how some of our events come to being. Class and small group reunions are also held each year and we know from you that these are firm favourites. Please see the upcoming events (below) that you may be interested in joining, as either a participant or as a spectator.

Alumni vs Luckley Games
Saturday, 25 March, 11:00 – 13:30
We have had a brilliant response from some of you to join us for a game of netball and football, playing Luckley's senior netball and football teams for a friendly match. The games will be followed by a lovely Luckley buffet lunch. So far we have 11 netballers, six footballers and three spectators. Of course, the more the merrier so if you wish to come along and watch feel free. If you decide to put yourself out there and play please get in touch with Sarah at sarah.francis@luckleyhouseschool.org.

Lunch for Class of 1969 (and prior)
Tuesday, 2 May, 12:15 – 15:00
We would like to invite all those 'Old Girls' who left Luckley in 1969 or prior to a leisurely lunch to be held in Luckley's Whitty Theatre foyer; accessible from the car park. Lunch will be followed by a short musical performance from a woodwind trio plus the option to have a stroll around your old school should you wish to.

Please register your interest by contacting Sarah at sarah.francis@luckleyhouseschool.org or on 0118 974 3246. Alternatively, you can book your place through Luckley's alumni webpages at Alumni - Luckley House (alumni-online.com). You will need to log in first.

Recipe for Good Health, for Alumni, by Alumni

Alumna and Nutritionist, Leila Lingner shares her homemade recipe for staving off colds and flues. Why not try it at home?

Prep Time: 2 minutes
Steeping Time: 5-10 minutes
Servings: 2

INGREDIENTS
1 tbsp Echinacea
1 tbsp Yarrow
1 tbsp Peppermint
½ tbsp Liquorice Root
¼ Lemon sliced
½ inch piece of Ginger grated
1 tbsp Honey (preferably raw or Manuka)

INSTRUCTIONS
To make blend: peppermint, echinacea, yarrow and liquorice root. I make my blend ahead of time so that it is ready to use. It will keep for up to a year in a tightly sealed glass jar. Place your blend in a tea infuser and add water (preferably filtered) that is heated almost up to boiling point (but not quite). Add the sliced lemon and grated ginger. Cover and steep for 5-10 minutes. Add the honey just before serving.

N.B. You can use the same infused mix twice. Herbs can react with certain medications so please check with your GP if you are on prescribed drugs to make sure there are no linked reactions.

LUCKLEY ALUMNI MEMORIES

by Alumna, Sue Bailey, 1972 –1974

Sue Bailey was schooled at Luckley-Oakfield from 1972 to 1974. In this short time she built lasting memories of Luckley and of life in England, being Canadian and from a military family. She flew back to visit England with her husband, John in June 2019 to join in Luckley's Centenary celebrations. From the memories of Sue Bailey, she shares recollections of Luckley below.

"My sewing teacher, Miss Talbot, was quite strict and yet I enjoyed learning to sew under her instruction. In early adulthood I sewed many of my own clothes based on her teachings. Then it became so expensive to buy material and I didn't think I was a good enough seamstress to continue. Nevertheless, whenever I repair a tear, sew a button, change a hemline or make a Christmas stocking I think of Miss Talbot."

Captured on Social

This staff photograph hung on the wall in the Maintenance Department for many years before being donated to the alumni archives. With the help of the alumni community on Luckley's alumni Facebook page I was able to identify all the teachers photographed and the subject each taught. The year the photo was taken is between 1973 and 1984. If you happen to be in the photo or have more information to add, please do get in touch.

So many of you remember all the teachers pictured and which subjects they taught you all. I am pleased that for many of you it brought back fond memories and got some of you talking. I now have a better picture of who did what and have been able to add this to Luckley's alumni archives. It seems it is a team effort!

(Front row, left to right) Jill Simpson (English), Lynn Stuart (matron), Sheila Daniels (History), Wynn Cornish (Headmistress), Pippa Hargreaves (History), Jean Richards (Art) (Middle row, left to right) Pam Hobbs (English), Kath Craig (Maths), Pam Creech (IT, Typing, Careers Advisor), Annelise Kirkcaldy (German), Rosemary Woodward (Math), Audrey Williams (Head's secretary) (Back row, left to right) Alison Caldwell (Geography), Jane Eales (Physics), Jan Stewart (Physics), Phil Tyndall (Chemistry), Barbara Handley (RE 1982 – 1985), Ann Williams (French teacher)

LUCKLEY ALUMNI MEMORIES

"There are so many memories of 1960s Luckley life that come to mind, once you sit and think. Each term every pupil was given a 2lb sweet allowance; allowing for three sweets after lunch each day and six a day on the weekends. This doling out of sweets was always supervised by a prefect to ensure the rules were followed. Miss Denning organised church collection and every Thursday pupils would go to the bank and withdraw 3 old pence to donate during Sunday service. In the common room we listened to Radio Caroline; a pirate station."

– Avril Salt, Class of 1966

Luckley-Oakfield 1964, School group photo (in part), courtesy Avril Salt

Thank you to Sarah Malsher for sending her Luckley memories in pictures (below), although I am not clear where Sarah Malsher and Jane Howorth are in the photo, sorry Sarah. If you are pictured, please do get in touch and let me know who is who. I would love to save the details to our digital archives.

Luckley-Oakfield 1982, Sarah Malsher and Jane Howorth pictured with Sixth Form students during their last term

LUCKLEY ALUMNI MEMORIES

Talk To Me Girls

Deputy Head Student, Dodie Holmes (née Clark), emailed me with a very specific request. She would love to hear from 'Luckley Old Girls' who were at Luckley in 1959 – the year that Oakfield amalgamated with Luckley in Wokingham. Dodie was one of the Oakfield girls and she is still in contact with several of the 'Oakfield Old Girls', with lunches held in Kirby, Lonsdale. As joint Deputy Head Student with Jennifer Bates (née Davison) of Luckley she recalls Jennifer's parents being very good to her as she was a long way from her home in Scotland. She got to know Jennifer well and was one of her bridesmaids at her wedding. Likewise, Jennifer travelled to Kippford, Scotland last year to celebrate Dodie's golden wedding lunch.

Dodie mentions some of the Luckley girls she would love to hear from and whom she had a lot of fun with; Andy Gale, Penny Bruce, Janey Belchamber, Sherry Belasco and Brenda, whose surname escapes her. Her words, not mine, "Talk to me girls!"

– Dodie Holmes, Class of 1959

Annette Wallace (née Fothergill) and Juliet Relfy

(far left) Edith Hayhurst (née Halstead), joint Head Girl with Penny (Penelope) Bruce from Luckley. (far right) Dodie Holmes (née Clark), joint Deputy Head Girl with Jennifer Bates (née Davison) from Luckley

Marjorie Francis Theresa Leybourne (née Beatty), Class of 1938

In 2020 we received a handwritten letter from Marjorie Leybourne, aged 94. Not long after, Marjorie died and left us with her memories, which we share here. As Marjorie is not on Luckley's alumni database, her Luckley education is estimated to have been between 1934 and 1940.

Miss Drake, Headmistress, her sister Catherine, Miss Gerny and Miss Calander inspired a love for books and poetry. On Sundays, Miss Drake read poetry to the girls in her study, with 'The Hound of Heaven' being a favourite. In the afternoons pupils would take their rugs to the wood and talk, where the oak trees mentioned in the Doomsday book grew. They used to go to church under the railway bridge; on it was written, "Sutton seeds succeed. Sow them and see." Marjorie recalls the girls having chilblains from the cold; she played tennis and lacrosse. Dining was in the gym and the cook was a dear; providing rice pudding browned on the top as well as sardines on toast. At night, in the dorms, the girls would climb out on the roof and watch the moon and stars (which sounds dreamy). Miss Drake was very deaf, wearing earphones hidden behind her hair. During a History lesson one day, a bee flew into Miss Drake's earphones and her response was, "Come in dear." It caused much laughter. Those were very happy days with Majorie's sister Elizabeth joining Luckley in 1935.

IN MEMORY OF...

A number of you have touched base about the death of old friends; our Luckley alumni. We are grateful for being notified so we can recognise and remember former Luckley pupils, who will always be a part of Luckley's community and history. Equally, news of births would be welcomed, as it marks one of life's milestones, whether for the first time or the fifth!

Stephanie Warner, Class of 1956
10 Jan 1940 – 3 Nov 2022

We received the sad news from Stephanie Warner's brother, Martin, that she had passed away on 3 November 2022 at the age of 82. Stephanie was involved in a great deal of activities and clubs, with memberships ranging from the RSPB to Farnham & District Philatelic Society. She was a most generous woman and I understand she used to regularly come into Luckley to help with the archives. How I could use her skills now! She also produced and donated Lacework Treble Clef, which was presented on Speech Day – one of our most important days of the year. In the late 1970s and early 1980s she was the Treasurer of the Luckley-Oakfield Old Girls Association (LOOGA). Dear Stephanie attended four Luckley reunions and donated her beige school scarf, which I have seen in the archives. Her swimming cup was presented back to the school and after a school burglary, her father brought yet another one of her cups, still at the school today. The Warner's have donated books for Luckley's library too. Stephanie made an incredible contribution to our society, spending just over 37 years working for the NHS as a radiographer. We are most proud of her generous spirit and her everlasting connection to Luckley.

Stephanie Warner at Royal Life Centre, 1996

Audrey Williams
Not known – 2021

Luckley-Oakfield's secretary to the Head during the late 1970s and early 1980s sadly passed away in 2021. The news was provided by Chris Gadsby, former Head of Chemistry at Luckley from 1980 to 2007. Audrey is remembered by many fellow teachers and staff; many of whom belong to the Luckley Oakfield School Retirement Fellowship – uniting Luckley teachers who have retired although some that continue to work. Former Headmaster, Richard Blake said he owed a great debt of gratitude to Audrey for inducting him into Luckley's ways. Audrey was the school secretary at the time Mr Blake was welcomed as Luckley's first male Headmaster. Audrey will be remembered as a lovely lady and a good friend to Luckley. Sentiments were shared by Pauline Clayton, Secretary to the Head, Marjorie Ogden, Assistant to the Bursar and many others.

Gill Stribling-Wright's two dear Luckley friends, Penny Makin and Jane Woodhead both died of cancer in 2018 within six months of one another. We remember them both below.

Penny Makin, Class of 1962
24 April 1945 – 01 January 2018

Penny, after many travels in the Middle East and India settled with her husband in Boston, Massachusetts and also had two children. She started an import store featuring clothing, jewellery and artifacts mostly from Guatemala and Mexico. She ran this successfully with her husband Tom until Tom's death in 2008. Gill misses both Penny and Jane a great deal as their lives intertwined for over 60 years. They shared things that only they could understand and find funny. Gill's decision to purchase her holiday cottage in Georgia, USA was influenced by Penny and her husband Tom retiring there from Boston, Massachusetts. The friends shared many travels and adventures together. Gill was at Luckley from 1956 to 1962.

Jane Woodhead, Class of 1962
12 January 1946 – 16 July 2018

Jane Woodhead, a refugee from Oakfield, used to treat Gill's parents like her own. Later in life Gill became godmother to both Penny's and Jane's children, with whom she remains in touch. Jane, having trained at Bart's in London as a nurse started a successful herbal business in Lincolnshire once she had her children. and continued with it right up until her death.

SCHOOL NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

'Our Day Out' by Luckley Senior Drama Club

Our senior drama club provided two nights of superb entertainment with their production of Our Day Out, the musical theatre adaptation of Willy Russell's television play. The cast, the crew and participating staff members; Mr Oliver Bamber, Mr Adam Hartley, Mr Matt Humphrey and Mr Sebastian Phillips re-enacted the story of a group of underprivileged teens on a school trip from Liverpool to Conway Castle in Wales. There was much laughter and applause as all involved played out this thoughtful comedy with energy, passion and style; from the singing and dancing to the set and costume design. Mrs Esther Brown, Luckley's Director of Drama, brought the show to life and reminded us of the importance a school education has on our lives. 'Our Day Out' is a musical adapted from the television play by Willy Russell, which first aired in 1977. It is chaos and hilarity when Mrs Kay's class journey by coach for a day out at Conway Castle, Wales – via the café, zoo, beach and funfair. Inspired by Willy's school trip experiences as a teacher and a child, we travel with this group of underprivileged teens from Liverpool to Wales and find out what happens when you take such children out of the city.

'Our Day Out' cast, Year 7 through Year 13

Luckley Young Artists

Hannah, one of our Year 11 art scholars has been announced as the London West Regional Winner at the ISA Art Competition. Hannah's winning piece went on to receive Highly Commended in the National Final, at the ISA Headteachers Convention in London. Hannah continues to reach new recognition through her hard work and commitment to art. Hannah's watercolour of a horse head was created to hang in our Head's new study.

Sustainable Luckley

The Eco School continue to stay curious about ways to improve Luckley's footprint and biodiversity. They have collectively taken part in the BTO's 'What's under your feet?' science project – leading to an investigation of Luckley soil. Certainly, the worm count is down (having carried out a controlled sample) so the test will be repeated in the Spring to see if there has been any change. With all Luckley's grounds, shrubs and seasonal plants, worms are needed. We hope to see the wildflowers that the Eco School have planted around the wildlife garden, which will keep the bees happy. The bird feeders are kept full and the Eco School hope to start to improve Biodiversity across Luckley; one step at a time. With their Green Flag status to maintain, this year's focus is on Waste, Energy and Biodiversity.

Sport Past and Present

With our up-and-coming Alumni Games in March I thought I would dig out sport at Luckley photographed over the years. If you have any information on who is featured and exactly when the photograph was taken, please do get in touch.

Gym display, 1942

Interhouse cross country race, 2022

Cornish House, sport in action, 1991

Long jump, Sports Day, circa 1986 (Wiebke Arpe pictured left)

Leaving A Gift To Luckley In Your Will

March is Free Wills Month, which prompts me to talk about legacies. In 1918 Miss Bertha Drake and Miss Ivy Barratt, former colleagues and friends, opened Luckley School in Wokingham. It was by invitation from local residents that Luckley was founded, with Miss Drake spending her lifetime devoted to the School. Luckley was a distinctly Christian school and it was Miss Drake's belief that a strong Christian ethos would provide her girls with the strength of character to allow them to work to the best of their abilities. The girls all developed as individuals and pursued a wide range of occupations, interests and lifestyles. Not too different than school life today.

Margaret Galloway, Headmistress, 1945 – 1959

In 1945, Mrs Galloway became acting Head although Miss Drake retained overall control of Luckley, taught small group tutorials and kept in touch with all the girls. In Spring 1959, Miss Drake gave Luckley to the Church Society, her legacy was for her beloved school to carry on in the way that it began. She died two weeks later. It is with great fondness and respect that we remember Miss Drake.

Leaving a gift in your will to Luckley is a very personal and important decision that only you can make. Your donation contributes to funding important projects and initiatives that the School could not otherwise undertake. As an independent school, we are completely reliant on the kindness and generosity of benefactors to ensure the School continues to thrive with the infrastructure and facilities needed. For example, many of the School's capital projects, such as The Whitty Theatre and the all-weather pitch are the result of large financial contributions to the School from generous benefactors. For more information on leaving a gift to Luckley in your will visit https://www.luckleyhouseschool.org/about-us/support-us/.

Stay In Touch

As we aim to continue to bring you news that is both relevant and of interest to you, please do send in your news and suggestions. Or why not put yourself forward for an Alumni Spotlight Interview or volunteering opportunity? Those that have joined us have found the experience to be very fulfilling.

Do get in touch using the contact details at the bottom of each page. Alternatively, you may fancy a visit to Luckley's The Whitty Theatre where there is always a cinematic, musical, theatrical performance or inspirational speaker to entertain.

To find out what is on visit: https://www.luckleyhouseschool.org/the-whitty-theatre/whats-on/.

Bertha Drake, awards ceremony, 1950s