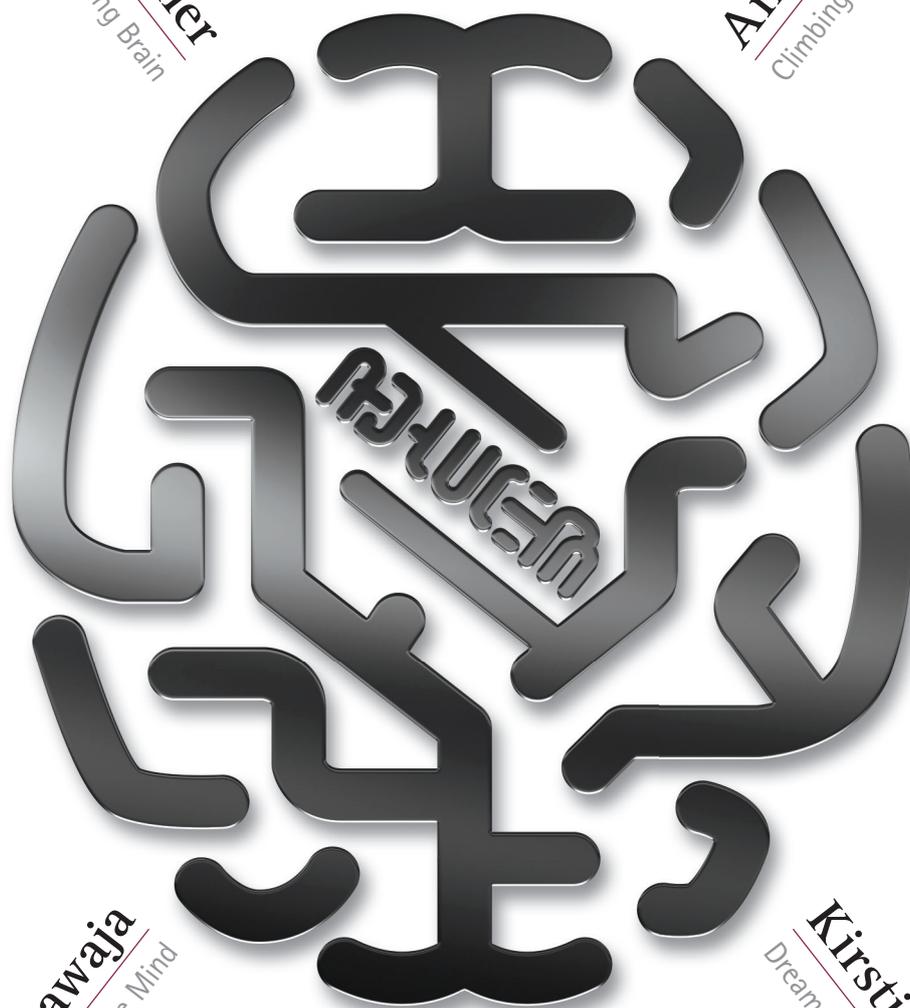




Brenda Milner
The Amazing Brain

Ailsa Stott
Climbing Across Continents



Afshan Khawaja
Medicine and the Mind

Kirstie Whitaker
Dreams and Discovery

the Amazing Brain edition



Welcome

Mrs Sarah Haslam

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this 'new-look' edition of *Withington Onwards*. Inspired by remarkable former pupil, Dr Brenda Milner, an eminent neuroscientist who celebrated her 100th birthday in July, our theme for 2018 is 'The Amazing Brain'. Science careers remain a popular choice for Withington pupils and in this magazine, we explore the myriad opportunities available for those interested in pursuing careers in STEM.

The theme for Founders' Day this year was 'Dreams and Discovery', and it was wonderful to welcome back former pupil, Dr Kirstie Whitaker, Class of 2001, as our guest speaker on this very special occasion. Like Brenda Milner, Kirstie has also forged a career in neuroscience and has carried out pivotal research into child and adolescent brain development. Kirstie's inspirational speech at the Bridgewater Hall encouraged our pupils to always follow their dreams and was greatly appreciated by us all.

This year I have enjoyed meeting many of Withington's alumnae and former staff at various events and reunions. It was a privilege to attend the memorial service of former Latin teacher, Miss Amy Morris, in February. Amy taught at Withington for more than 30 years and was beloved by many of her former pupils and colleagues. Amy passed away at the end of 2017, aged 91, and it was a mark of the respect in which Amy was held that the celebration of Amy's life here at Withington was attended by so many guests, all of whom wanted to reflect on Amy's very special qualities and contributions and share their memories of this remarkable former teacher.

In March, I was very grateful to see so many Old Girls attend our Careers Convention, sharing their considerable expertise across a variety of industries with our current pupils and providing a wonderful example of the alumnae network in action. In the spring,

we held an afternoon tea reunion at the Lindeth Howe Hotel in the Lake District, another hugely enjoyable event, and, in June, we held our popular Annual Open Reunion at school and were finally able to show those in attendance our highly-anticipated new sports facilities ahead of their official opening by Dame Sarah Storey DBE on 5th July.

This year we said a fond farewell to Development Director, Toni Leden, who has retired after four years at Withington. Toni has been a fantastic asset to the Development Team in her time here, lending her considerable fundraising expertise to some very worthwhile campaigns, including the updating of the Chemistry Laboratories and our new state-of-the-art Sport and Fitness Centre and, of course, continuing to build our connections with our alumnae which we hold so dear. It has been wonderful to work with Toni, and we look forward to



welcoming her successor, Mrs Lesley Dowdall, to Withington in January 2019. Lesley is joining us from The University of Manchester and will be using her extensive experience to help us launch a new Bursary campaign to enable more bright girls to attend Withington.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to the many alumnae and former staff who have supported us this year in any capacity. Part of what makes Withington so special is our supportive Withington Onwards community, and it is always so encouraging to know that there are so many keen to return to school and help in any way they can. I hope to meet many more of you in the forthcoming year but in the meantime, I hope that you enjoy this year's edition of the *Withington Onwards* magazine.

With warm wishes for the festive season and a happy and healthy 2019.



A View from the Development Office

Mrs Toni Leden

We hope that you enjoy reading this year's special 'Amazing Brain' edition of *Withington Onwards*, your annual alumnae magazine, bringing you news from your old school and fellow Withingtonians.

As this is my last report before my impending retirement, I feel that it is important to convey a special thanks to all members of the Withington Onwards community who help us to ensure our Old Girl network continues to thrive. Whether it's volunteering at reunions, giving talks to current pupils, providing careers advice or forwarding news of your former classmates, it all helps to keep our community vibrant and connected. It is also important to mention and to thank our donors and legacy pledgers who support the Bursary Fund and other school projects, ensuring that Withington offers the best education and opportunities for all our pupils. This support is highly appreciated by everyone at Withington.

I have really enjoyed communicating with our Old Girls, former staff and parents during the past four years. This year I was particularly inspired by talking to Dr Brenda Milner, Class of 1936, a world-renowned neuropsychologist, still working at 100 years of age. You can read about her fascinating life on pages 9-10 of this magazine. I was also pleased to be invited to a dinner at Manchester Metropolitan University to celebrate the award of an honorary doctorate to Joyce Hytner OBE (née Myers) for her contribution to the arts.

As you will be aware, in May this year new Data Protection laws came into force

(GDPR). The Development Team has carried out a considerable amount of work in the past year to prepare for this and to ensure that our records are as accurate and up to date as possible. We have been providing communications preferences forms with our mailings for several years so that members of our community only receive communications that are relevant and welcome. You have been sent this magazine because you are a part of our school community, but you are welcome to change your preferences at any time.

It has truly been a privilege to work in such an exceptional school with fantastic colleagues, inspirational and interesting alumnae and a busy and vibrant atmosphere. Time flies and the young girls who were in Year 7 (Third Form) when I began work here in 2014 are now in the Lower Sixth and contemplating university courses and career choices.

My successor in the role of Development Director has now been appointed. Mrs Lesley Dowdall will join us in January 2019 from The University of Manchester, and I'm sure she will do a fantastic job of taking the work of the Development Office at Withington to the next exciting stage. You can find out more about Lesley on page 32.

As both the granddaughter and mother of a former pupil I had always felt an affinity with Withington, but it has been wonderful to play a part in the development of the school during the past four years and to work with many inspirational people to help current pupils and future generations of Withington girls to achieve their potential.

Thank you to all the contributors to this year's *Withington Onwards* and do stay in touch with your own updates.

dreams and discovery

It is an honour and a privilege to give the Headmistress's report at our 2018 Founders' Day. We are thrilled that our guest speaker this evening is former Withington pupil Dr Kirstie Whitaker. Kirstie finished her school career in 2001 and in the year 2000 walked across this very stage as an Upper Sixth former.

After leaving Withington in 2001, Kirstie was awarded a first-class honours degree in Physics from the University of Bristol and then a Masters in Medical Physics from the University of British Columbia. She completed her PhD in Neuroscience at the University of California in 2012 and conducted her postdoctoral work in the Brain Mapping Unit at the University of Cambridge. Kirstie uses magnetic resonance imaging to study child and adolescent brain development and is a champion of open and collaborative science. She is a passionate advocate for diversity in academia and tech fields.

One of the walls in our new Sport and Fitness Suite bears a quotation made by the athlete, Gail Devers, who battled through illness to become an Olympian.

It reads:

“Keep your dreams alive. Understand that to achieve anything requires faith and belief in yourself, vision, hard work, determination and dedication. Remember – all things are possible for those who believe.”

Such drive and self-belief was evident in the series of exceptional events we enjoyed in the summer term. Withington hosted its tenth Model United Nations Conference; our annual Citizenship Day saw all of the school involved in community activities;



the Junior School's wonderful production of 'Alice in Wonderland' charmed its audiences; three simply outstanding performances of 'Phantom of the Opera', involving over 100 Withington pupils, rewrote the rule book on what can be achieved in a school production; and Dame Sarah Storey, who performed the official opening of our fabulous new sport and fitness facilities as part of our Festival of Sport, inspired us all with her message: 'Try to be the best version of you'. If ever there was an example of aiming high, thinking big and daring to dream – this series of wonderful events was it.

Like so much that makes up the fabric of our school ethos and values, our school

And how fortunate we are that at Withington, dreams and discovery are not unusual or exceptional but are positively encouraged and openly discussed. This year we once again celebrated outstanding external examination results with 92% of GCSEs at grades 7-9 and 91% of A Levels at A*-B, with an exceptional 43% A* grades. It would be easy to assume that such phenomenal results are inevitable at Withington, but we know that they reflect the sustained commitment of everyone involved and no small degree of dedication, determination and inspiring teaching. All this at a school where there are no scholarships, no academic prizes and the emphasis instead is on collaboration, empowerment and the love of learning as its own reward.



motto has never dated. 'Ad Lucem' has been part of Withington life since the beginning. With its connotations of aspiring for what is right and good, working towards greater understanding, engaging with ideas and finding fulfilment in learning, it continues to inspire us today.

How wise our Founders were: They understood the value of what cannot be measured – knowing how to learn and being motivated to do so. Being creative and curious about the world, being responsible and caring, prepared to dream and to take the initiative. These qualities



Headmistress's Speech

Founders' Day 2018

are as important as ever in our modern world and are what our pupils need to sustain and inspire them in their futures beyond their school days.



We are very proud that our links with our alumnae continue to develop still further and to enrich the lives of our current pupils. The inaugural Sandra Chalmers lecture event with its focus on careers in television and radio broadcasting was a great success as was our biennial Careers Convention, when numerous alumnae returned to Withington to share their experiences and advice. One of our most distinguished alumnae, Brenda Milner, sometimes referred to as the 'Founder of Neuropsychology', reached her 100th birthday and showed little sign of slowing down, continuing her research at McGill University, Canada – a truly remarkable lady.

This year we have said farewell to members of staff who have all made significant contributions to school life. David Verity who taught Physics for 16 years and led the General Studies Department with great dedication and skill. Jane Clark (formerly Maher) who led the History Department for 13 years, inspiring many girls with her love of History, of travel and charitable work and establishing Withington as a leading school for Model United Nations.

Louise Jefferies who worked as Careers Assistant and as the school's first Registrar during her 17 years here. Uzma Asim and Vanessa Scott who taught Biology and Mathematics respectively; Nikki Smythe, Withington's first LAMDA teacher, who saw its popularity grow from 4 pupils to over 150 today, and Simon Leach who, since 1999, has taught many Withington girls the piano. We are very grateful to them all.

This time one hundred years ago, in 1918, the final acts of the First World War were being played out and those who had campaigned for women's suffrage would soon see their dreams realised as a section of women over the age of 30 were to be given the vote.



Various members of staff had been campaigners for women's suffrage and Rachel Scott, wife of CP Scott, who had been one of the very first pioneering students at Girton College, Cambridge, was one of the leading voices in Manchester for women's education. She sat on the Manchester School Board and was instrumental in finally enabling women to attend Owens College, the precursor to Manchester University. Education, she said, was 'not a luxury but one of the first necessities of civilised life'.

What is clear from our archive of Withington history is that none of our predecessors shied away from engaging in a dynamic, active and determined way with the issues of the day and with the world around them. Inspired by their belief in learning so that they could realise their dreams for our school and for the city, they worked tirelessly and tenaciously. The very first newsletters from the turn of the twentieth century reveal a cohesive, warm, purposeful and outward looking community, very similar to ours today.

The Founders lit the lamp of service and created a school which kindled the fires of intellectual curiosity and social responsibility in its pupils. In 1946, Mrs EW Barnes, the daughter of the school's first Chair of Governors, was the guest speaker at Founders' Day and she encouraged the listening girls with these words:

"The future depends on you. That means on the character of each one of you. Ad Lucem, yes, but only if you keep your eyes open and your spirits free."

These words resonate with us today – and just as it has for 128 years, Withington will continue to make the ideals of dreams and discovery possible.





Dr Kirstie Whitaker (Class of 2001)

Guest Speaker Founders' Day 2018

I always used to get bored in Founders' Day speeches. I don't think I've ever paid attention to one of them - we always used to count the organ pipes to try to stay awake - so I can't really expect you to stay awake! Just in case you nod off while I'm speaking, here are the two points I want you to remember:

1. You must dream.
2. It's OK for those dreams to change.

I guess there's also a third:

3. Be gentle with yourself.

I'm going to read to you from my Fulbright application. The Fulbright fellowship is an international exchange scholarship between the US and the rest of the world. It's designed to foster global understanding and collaboration. This is my application to be a scholar in the USA from the UK:

While many physicists of my generation have grown up believing that the investigation of space is the "final frontier", I have come to believe that the most demanding area of research is much closer to home. It was through our observations of the stars and analysis of their radiation that quantum mechanics and particle physics came to be thoroughly modelled and understood, and through the applications of these branches of physics magnetic resonance imaging and positron emission tomography arose. These techniques have revolutionised our ability to look inside ourselves and understand the 100 billion neurons in the brain, their 100 trillion connections and the near infinite number of paths along which a neuronal signal may pass. Put simply, I believe that the greatest challenge is presented to the scientific community in our drive to understand ourselves.

That sounds quite impressive, doesn't it?! A bit cheesy, and the sentences are too long, but quite impressive? It sounds like I had a

plan. A bit of a grandiose plan, but a plan nonetheless. I did not.

I wrote that lying on my couch in Vancouver at 2am with a friend in Australia editing it for me. As a side note, one of the good things about having friends all over the world is that someone is always awake when you need them to edit your last-minute scholarship application!

I got that fellowship and was off to study Neuroscience at UC Berkeley in California, just outside of San Francisco. I loved what I learned about Neuroscience, but, more importantly, I loved the people that I met. UC Berkeley is very proud of its history as a hub of the civil rights movement in the 1960s. And it's close enough to Silicon Valley to have an entrepreneurial 'we can do it' mindset.

I was surrounded by smart, intelligent, passionate people who all wanted to change the world. To make a difference. I came back to the UK in 2012 looking to apply what I knew about Neuroscience to the adolescent brain. I work in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Cambridge. I'm particularly interested in why teenagers are so at risk of developing mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety or schizophrenia.

I knew that there are lots of aspects of our lives that affect our mental health, so, on another whim, I applied to work at the Alan Turing Institute: the UK's national institute for data science and artificial intelligence. It sounds like it was all part of a plan. It wasn't. I promise.

I work with neuroscientists and physicists at the Turing. But I also work with mathematicians, statisticians, computer scientists, social scientists, political scientists, linguists, historians and philosophers. I work with the education team, the IT team and the communications team.

So that leads me to my dream. My dream of 2018. The current dream. I want all voices to

be heard. I want every academic discipline to work together to change the world. I want all lived experiences considered and acknowledged.

I want to hear female voices, black and minority ethnic voices, disabled voices, neurodiverse voices, queer voices, Muslim and Jewish voices, voices of all the world's religions and in every language the world contains.

I want a wildly intersectional understanding of our world. And, more importantly, I don't want to just hear those voices. I want those voices to be leading me. I want them to shape the conversations we have in data science, neuroscience, physics, biology, the arts and humanities, politics, international relations, health care, finance, the law and beyond.

It's a big dream and it's overwhelming. Honestly, on a day-to-day basis, I still have no real clue what I'm doing. I'm here from the future to tell you that no one knows what they're doing. But ultimately, I'm working on my dream. I'm taking tiny baby steps towards my dream.

I know it's intimidating to be told that you have to make a difference. But you do. And you will. So, rely on your friends. Take inspiration from them. Travel the world to find your tribe. Reinvent yourself when you need to. And take care of yourself. Don't let anyone stand in your way. And try your best not to stand in your own way.

I'll finish with a quote from Alan Turing. I'm speaking to the misfits. To the people who don't know where they're going or what they're going to be when they grow up.

I'm speaking to you.

'Sometimes it is the people no one can imagine anything of, who do the things no one can imagine.'

About Kirstie

- 2001–2004:
Bristol University, BSc Physics
- 2004–2007:
University of British Columbia,
MSc Medical Physics
- 2007–2012:
Won the Fulbright Scholarship to
study for a PhD in Neuroscience
at the University of California
- 2012–2017:
Appointed postdoctoral Fellow
at the University of Cambridge.
Kirstie acted as a Research
Associate in the Department of
Psychiatry, investigating white
matter development in typically
developing adolescents compared
to those with depression.
- Along with her research
collaborator Petra Vertes,
Kirstie was named as a 2016
Global Thinker by Foreign Policy
magazine, for 'mapping the origins
of schizophrenia'.
- September 2016:
Kirstie named as a
Mozilla Fellow for Science.
- July 2017:
Kirstie became a Research Fellow
at The Alan Turing Institute,
researching magnetic resonance
images to understand changes in
the brain's structure and function
that underlie the emergence of
schizophrenia and depression.



Florence Bradshaw

Head Girl Founders' Day 2018

The theme of this year's Founders' Day is 'Dreams and Discovery'. We all have our own dreams. We are all unique with individual talents and personalities and I believe that being at Withington enables us all to develop and flourish, encourages us to follow our dreams.

To all the year groups who are dreaming and discovering; being at Withington will assist you to achieve anything that you can ever want to. The countless opportunities the school offers, from trips to extracurricular activities, will enable you to discover something about yourself that you did not know before and might just inspire a new dream for you to chase. My advice to you is to try something that is out of your comfort zone before your time at Withington ends.

A quotation from the American author of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain, perfectly illustrates my point: 'Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did. So, throw off the bow-lines, sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.'

Even though this may seem like a daunting prospect at first, you will look back at your time at Withington and realise how much you have discovered about yourself and others, as well as the number of fantastic memories you have created that you can treasure when you leave.

Finally, to my year group. I really cannot believe that this will be our last Founders' Day here at Withington and that we are the ones walking across the stage to collect our books. I think I can safely say for all of us that our time here has gone by too quickly and as we have dreamed and discovered together we have made some fantastic memories along the way.

We leave Withington into a world that, whilst having a myriad of serious problems to overcome, is more exciting than ever. Whether you eventually go on to study science, language or the arts, or if you go to travel the world, go into politics or work in business, there are challenges and discoveries out there for everyone:

- There are hundreds of mountains that remain to be climbed.
- 95% of our oceans are unexplored.
- The radius of the earth is 4,000 miles, yet our deepest hole is only 7 miles.
- We still don't know how the brain works and what is consciousness?
- We still don't have a cure for diabetes.
- We still don't have an answer for global warming, or how to get rid of all the plastic waste in the oceans or countless other environmental challenges.
- We don't know how Brexit will end.
- We do not yet have an answer for nations to get along and live in a peaceful prosperous world.

All these examples show how exciting the world beyond Withington is, and I believe we can all play some part if we dare to dream.

the amazing brain...



Professor Brenda Milner, 2012

Steven Spazuk had the opportunity to meet Professor Brenda Milner during a presentation at The Neuro, an encounter he refers to as a special moment. He was immediately captivated by her energy and intelligence. In creating her portrait, he pays tribute to the different men and women of science who have contributed to the richness and the reputation of The Neuro. Steven Spazuk employs a unique technique - painting with fire. Starting with a photograph (in this case one taken by friend and collaborator Adrien Duey) as a reference point, he reproduces the portrait using his own technique, which involves capturing soot from candles and torches. The black carbon is then etched using different instruments to let light through.



Dr Brenda Milner (Class of 1936)

CC, GOQ, DSc, PhD

Dr Brenda Milner, sometimes referred to as 'the founder of neuropsychology', is recognised as one of the most important neuroscientists of the 20th century and is a pioneer in the field of neuropsychology. Despite turning 100 in July, this remarkable former pupil is still doing research, lecturing and contributing to the understanding of the human brain. Brenda lives in Canada, where she is the Dorothy J. Killam Professor at the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital and a professor in the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery at McGill University. Following an interview with Brenda, in this article we look back at her extraordinary life achievements and continuing contributions to science.

Brenda was born in Manchester in 1918. Her father, Samuel Langford, was chief musical critic at The Manchester Guardian under editor CP Scott, one of the Founders of Withington Girls' School. Until she was eight years old, Brenda was home schooled by her father. Literature and languages were the focus of this early education and he often took her to theatre performances that he attended in his role as a critic. Brenda recalls, "I remember that there was a complaint, I think it came from the Manchester School Board, as to why I was not in school. There was a knock at our door and it was the truant officer asking why I was not in school. I went upstairs to my father, who didn't get up before noon because he went to bed late after writing his reviews for The Guardian. I remember this so vividly, my father said, 'Go and ask if he speaks German' (I did speak a little bit of German by then). So, I tramped downstairs and I said: 'My daddy wants to know if you speak German?' The officer responded 'no' and I went and relayed

this information to my father who said, 'Tell him he should go back to school.' So, I went back down and told him. That was the end of the conversation!"

Sadly, Brenda's father died from tuberculosis in 1927, so she started attending Withington - where she recalled all the Guardian people sent their daughters - at the age of 9. She and her mother moved to Wellington Road to be closer to the school, so that Brenda could go home at lunchtime to avoid the unattractive school meals. By her own admission, Brenda was a precocious child due to the advanced education in literature and languages that she had received from her father. Although she had a talent for learning languages, she was more interested in science and mathematics because they posed more of a challenge for her. When asked about her memories of specific teachers, Brenda recalled enjoying the sarcasm of mathematics teacher Miss Gearing.

In 1936 Brenda won a Manchester City Scholarship to Newnham College, Cambridge, to study maths. Once she had started at Cambridge, however, she realised that she was not a natural mathematician and would never excel at the subject, so she changed her course to psychology. This was challenging for her, but she found psychology a lot easier than mathematics.

Brenda excelled at Cambridge and, following her graduation in 1939 with a starred first (of which she says she is very proud), was employed to carry out aptitude testing on RAF pilots as part of the war effort. The main goal of this work was to see whether the applicants should be assigned to fighter planes or bombers:

"The bomber pilot was told to go to a certain place and drop bombs no matter

what happened around him. Bomber planes were bigger than the fighter planes, but slower. Their job was to get to Germany - Berlin or somewhere - drop a bomb and come home again. For that you have instruments to tell you your height and your direction. Even though you get sensations that you are moving around and changing levels and so on... you must be able to disregard this instinct totally and go by what your instruments say.

"The fighter pilot's position is changing rapidly, and he must have a clear sense of his position in space. He does not have the time to consult instruments. I went down to the south coast and rode around in planes to get a feel for these different scenarios. We then did half a dozen different tests in the Cambridge psychology lab and based on the results of these tests, we decided whether a particular pilot should be going into a fighter or a bomber."

Following this, Brenda worked in radar research. It was during this time that she met her husband Peter Milner, an electrical engineer. After Brenda and Peter married in 1944, they sailed across the Atlantic Ocean on board the Queen Elizabeth to New York. They were destined for Montreal, Canada where Peter was employed to help set up the beginning of Canadian atomic energy research. Brenda secured a job at the University de Montréal teaching animal behaviour and experimental psychology of memory.

Brenda soon joined the psychology department at McGill University to study for a PhD, linking with the Montreal Neurological Institute to study memory loss in patients with severe epilepsy, who had had parts of their temporal lobes surgically removed in an effort to control their seizures. Case studies that



Photograph by Owen Egan courtesy of the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital

Brenda set up the Brenda Milner Foundation in 2007 to help support a part of the education system that she feels is underfunded: post-doctoral studies. The foundation makes it possible for students who go beyond a Ph.D. to carry on working for a while to get established in a university department. She says:

“The post-doctoral experience is really essential if you want to make a life as a scientist as distinct from going into an industry or somewhere.”

Brenda published following her work with patients known as PB and HM made major breakthroughs in the understanding of the role of the brain's temporal lobes and these findings are now renowned in the field of cognitive neuroscience.

Of course, the technology available to scientists has evolved tremendously during Brenda's career. MRI and PET scanning is now used in the identification of brain regions associated with spatial memory and language. Reflecting on this, Brenda said, “Previously a lot of one's work was done with people, then you had to wait for them to die before you could look at their brains. Of course, their brains would probably change a bit from the time that you tested them. The fact that you could suddenly see the brain in action in correlation with the living brain while they were doing your test was incredible. I can remember how excited we were on those first scans.”

Brenda is known amongst her colleagues as a stickler for grammar and is referred to as the 'Manchester Filter'. “It's true and begins with the fact that I'm good at languages. I like grammar; I like French grammar. My mother was multilingual but had to leave school at 14 because her home broke up. My father had a very high IQ. I did all my Shakespeare with my father so really my knowledge of language came from both my parents. Most of my students were not sophisticated in grammar, so job one was to fix this. I think that is why they called me the Manchester Filter. Sentence structure is so important for conveying clear meaning. Once the students had grammar under their belt, they were allowed to write their thesis.”

Multilingual in French, Italian and Latin, Brenda has always enjoyed the

opportunity to use her languages and believes changing languages regularly is good for the brain. Being multilingual has been crucial to living and working in French-speaking Québec and contributing to the international scientific community. For Brenda's first job at the University de Montréal, she needed to give psychology lectures in French which – although a challenge – she said really helped her to improve her grasp of the language, “If I had not been good at languages, I couldn't have done that.” She loves living in Montreal which she calls a 'comfortable-sized city' with good food.

Brenda says she does not regret leaving England, but keeps up with cricket and Manchester City Football Club by reading the sports page of The Guardian. Cricket has been a lifelong passion for her, ever since her father took her to see Lancashire at Old Trafford as a young child. A true cricket aficionado, Brenda is more interested in the bowling than the flashy batsmen. “I always liked to sit behind the wicket, so you watch the way the ball turns. My idea [of a good game] is a slow ball and a sticky wicket and you watch the ball where it is turning.” She says some of her fondest memories of school are of playing sports, particularly hockey.

When asked what advice she would give to young people interested in a career in science, Brenda thinks that it is important to have a good foundation in biology, mathematics and physics and that ideally students should have some skills in more than one language.

Brenda's long and fascinating career is difficult to summarise. Her extensive body of work and contribution to many significant discoveries in the study of memory and hemispheric function in

The Brenda Milner Centenary Symposium was organised in September 2018 to celebrate Brenda's accomplishments and reflect on all that has been learned in 100 years of neuropsychology and cognitive neuroscience. This symposium showcased a select group of high profile speakers, as well as more informal reminiscences from Brenda's multi-generational 'scientific offspring' and interactive sessions for trainees. Brenda generously funded a former pupil from Withington, Sana Gill (Class of 2008), to attend this event.

Sana's account of her wonderful experience is reported opposite.

language paved the way in the field of neuroscience and are still studied by psychologists and students around the world, including Withington's own A Level Psychology students.

Brenda's work has been recognised with numerous prestigious awards and prizes over the years, but she says that her most treasured honour is being awarded Fellow of the Royal Society. When asked to sum up the greatest success of her career, Brenda claims, “I suppose that most people in the world would say, and maybe the world is a better judge than the individual, probably my work on memory and the hippocampus and in breaking it down. Not just saying that the hippocampus is important for memory but systematically exploring this. I think this is probably where I am quite a good scientist and psychologist, because I can go from that sort of broad literature and say how can I test this? How could I imagine this? That's what I'm good at.” Despite this, she continues, “One person can't claim total credit...Science is a communal affair, not a lonely existence in an attic somewhere.”

Indeed, Brenda identifies her curiosity and interest in people as very important in terms of her success, and the reason she is still working at 100 years old. She encourages other aspiring scientists to be curious and ask questions. “To be a scientist you must wonder why. For me, it was being intrigued by something an animal did. It didn't have to be a human being, it was what a creature did, a worm or whatever, and wondering why the animal turned that way rather than this way. It has to start with a question or something in your environment that you want to know the answer to.”



The Brenda Milner Centennial Symposium

Sana Gill (Class of 2008)

In September 2018, the Brenda Milner Centennial Symposium was held at the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital ('The Neuro') to celebrate this remarkable former pupil's 100th birthday and reflect on all that has been learned in a century of neuroscience.

Former WGS pupil and psychologist Sana Gill (Class of 2008) was lucky enough to attend this symposium, thanks to generous funding from Brenda herself. Here, Sana gives us an update on her achievements since Withington and tells us more about her experiences in Canada...

I completed my bachelor's degree in psychology with cognitive neuroscience at the University of Nottingham in 2011, where I developed a fascination with the workings of the brain. I was curious about the impact that a neurological insult, or brain injury, could have on the biopsychosocial functioning of an individual. A close family member had suffered a neurological insult around a similar time which caused a considerable impact on their life. I witnessed a remarkable improvement in their cognitive and physical function following involvement of a wonderful multidisciplinary team of clinicians (including clinical neuropsychologists) and I wanted to know more!

I pursued a master's in neurorehabilitation the following year which allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the clinical aspects of neuropsychology. I was also given the opportunity to complete a research project in conjunction with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) into the workings of the gene transcriptome and personality traits.

In pursuit of a vocation within the field of clinical neuropsychology, I was fortunate to obtain some work experience as an

assistant psychologist at the memory clinic in the University Hospital of South Manchester Trust (NHS). I then went on to take a second post at North Manchester General Hospital within the Memory and Dementia Assessment Team. I was fortunate enough to gain a place on the doctorate of clinical psychology in 2015 and I am now approaching qualification and receipt of my HCPC registration.

THE SYMPOSIUM

Thanks to WGS and Dr Gabriel Leonard - a longstanding colleague and close friend of Brenda's for over 40 years - I was given the privilege of meeting one of my undergraduate inspirations, Dr Brenda Milner, at a symposium held to celebrate her 100th birthday and mark her contributions to the field of neuroscience over many decades. The conference was held at the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital (better known as 'The Neuro'), part of McGill University, Montreal, Canada. I found myself in the presence of international leaders in the field of neuroscience research, names of whom I recognised from some of the core texts in my psychology degrees and subsequent research.

In addition to the research presentations, several anecdotes were shared about Brenda by some of her colleagues and students over the years. It was wonderful to hear about Brenda's lovely nature, it seemed that she really made the effort to build both personal and professional relationships with her students. It was amusing to hear about the numerous references to the 'Manchester Filter' which described Brenda's meticulous attention to grammar and punctuation. Students shared feelings of apprehension as they would present written work to her and dreaded the 'red squiggles' that would

often indicate that more work needed to be done, something I could definitely relate to from my time at WGS!

The high regard held for Brenda by many was reflected by the numerous gifts and dedications which were presented over the two days including a sculpture, a personalised fanfare, a portrait and special birthday wishes from Prince Phillip and Justin Trudeau. An exclusive birthday dinner in her honour was also held by the Bank of Montreal at the Marche Bonsecours, Downtown Montreal.

When I introduced myself to Brenda, she recognised my Manchester accent right away and commented on how lovely it was to hear the accent after such a long time. Brenda shared some of her fond memories of Withington Girls' School and was extremely excited to tell her colleagues that we attended the same school, as she held my hand.

In October, I was offered a post as a chartered clinical psychologist at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-Disability in Putney, London. Meeting Dr Brenda Milner and to have had the privilege to attend her 100th birthday symposium among world leaders in neuropsychology research was an incredible opportunity and I left feeling truly inspired. I made some wonderful contacts during my time in Montreal and it reminded me to consider the powerful impact that research can have on patient's lives. Listening to several accounts of Brenda's life so far has taught me to stay curious and to stay committed to my values. As an example of a woman who trailblazed a male dominated and medically orientated world, she also reminded me of the fierceness and strength of the female spirit, it seemed that nothing was impossible.

destinations of leavers

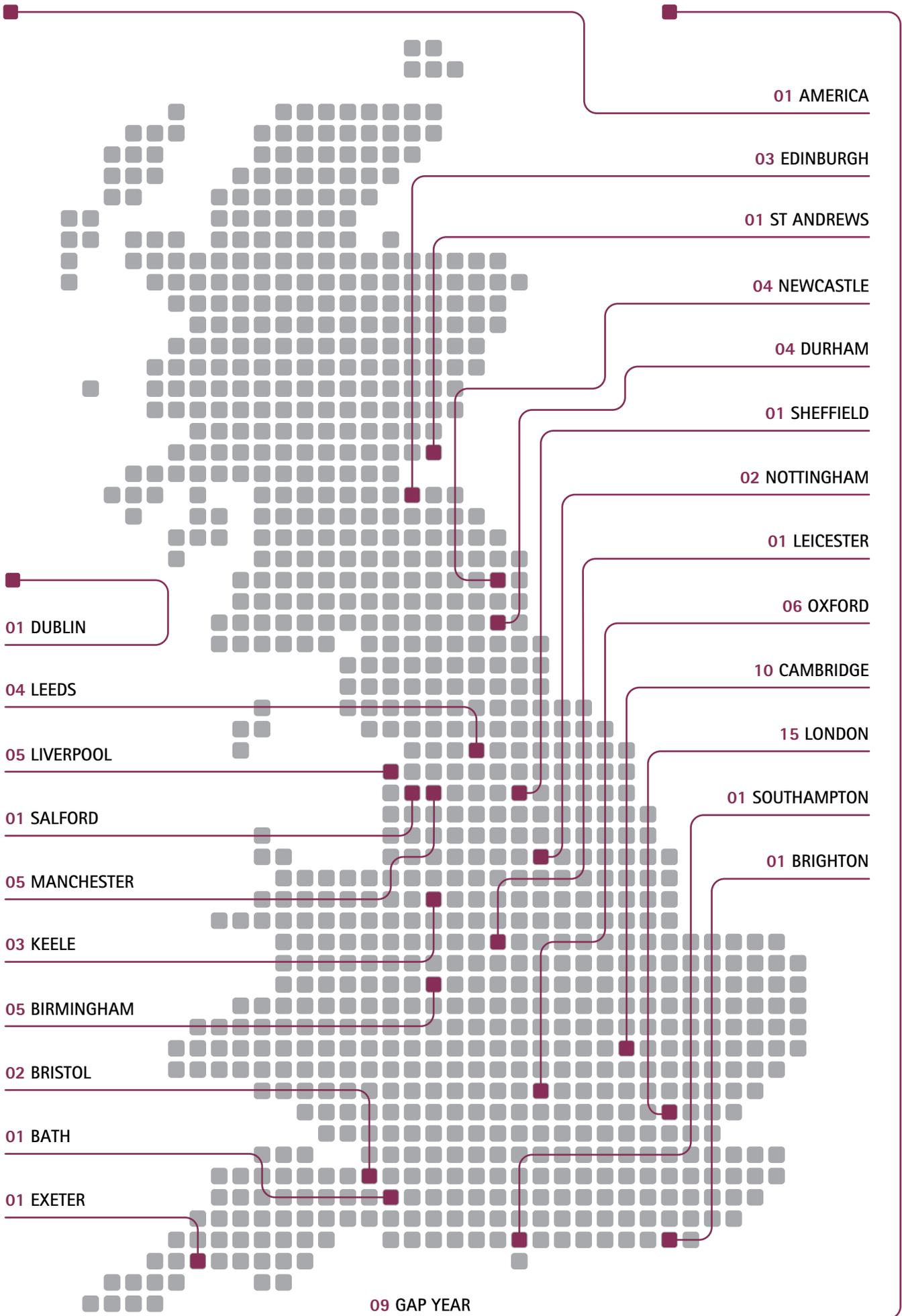
A-Level Subjects

10 Art	38 Biology	33 Chemistry	01 Computer Science	03 Drama & Theatre Studies
10 Economics	05 English Language	13 English Literature	08 French	09 Further Mathematics
10 Geography	03 German	11 Government and Politics	09 History	03 Latin
46 Mathematics	05 Physics	09 Psychology	14 Spanish	

Degree Subjects

 03 Art Foundation	 02 Dentistry	 03 Geography	 13 Medicine	 05 History	 07 Sciences*	 01 Teaching
 01 Engineering	 03 Law	 05 Politics	 01 Computing	 02 Architecture	 01 Journalism	 01 Dance
 02 Business & Management	 07 English Literature	 07 Modern Languages	 08 Social Sciences	 05 Economics & Finance	 07 Medical Sciences	

For more detailed information on the Class of 2018, please visit: www.wgs.org/about-withington/results-and-achievements
Includes 2018 Gap Year pupils. *Courses are grouped by subject area for simplicity



withington *alumnae* constitution

onwards

Careers Convention

March 2018

In March, we welcomed professionals from a range of industries to talk to pupils at our biennial Careers Convention. It was fantastic to see many Withington alumnae amongst the exhibitors on the evening, proudly representing their careers and providing a wealth of inspiring advice and information to current pupils.

Exhibitors showcased a fascinating and varied range of industries from finance, construction, business and technology right through to music and TV production. Girls from Year 9 to Sixth Form were invited to attend a range of career-specific talks, focusing on diverse topics including STEM, journalism, ecology and law. They were keen to make the most of the valuable information on offer to them by asking plenty of insightful questions and seeking guidance on the best routes into their desired careers.

The event had a fantastic atmosphere and there was a real air of excitement in the Hub. Acting Head of Careers, Nichola Watson, commented:

“The Careers Convention was a great success and it provided our pupils with a fantastic opportunity to meet inspiring, enthusiastic professionals from a broad range of careers. My thanks to all who participated and to the pupils and parents who supported the event.”

We would like to thank all the inspirational alumnae and exhibitors who joined us for this successful evening. Having access to the advice and experience of former Withington pupils is invaluable in helping us ensure our pupils receive the most accurate, relatable and inspiring careers guidance.

If you would like to volunteer to help the Careers Department in the future, please get in touch. Whether it's by coming to school to speak to pupils, completing a 'Spotlight On' careers profile for future publications or assisting with mock-interviews, university advice or work-placements, we always appreciate any support you can offer to help us to inspire the next generation of Withington alumnae.

You can log in to our online alumnae portal to update your professional details, or email us on development@wgs.org if you would like to offer help. It is important for us to be able to keep your records up-to-date with careers information, to ensure we can offer the best support possible to our pupils and younger alumnae.



In 2019, we are planning to hold two careers events at Withington. One will mark the return of our popular 'Withington in the City' networking events, focusing on careers in banking, finance and consulting. We will also be holding the second in our biennial Sandra Chalmers Lecture series, the theme of which will be journalism. If you have experience working in any of these areas and would like to offer your expertise at these events, please get in touch.

Thank You Toni!

"It was a great pleasure to work with Toni. During her time at Withington Toni took the Development Team's work with our alumnae and fundraising to the next level, enabling many current and former pupils to come together and our wonderful school to continue to improve its facilities.

The Annual Fund has also made a significant contribution to the experience of many girls at Withington, enabling them to pursue special projects beyond the normal curriculum which would not otherwise have been possible.

Toni is the consummate professional and a person of great integrity. We are very grateful to her and wish her all the very best for what we know will be an action-packed and fulfilling retirement."

Sarah Haslam Headmistress



Diane Hawkins née Hutton (Class of 1975)

Alumnae Governor

Having now completed my first year as Alumnae Governor, what has the experience been like?

I was delighted to be asked to join the governing body and have been truly amazed at this completely different view of WGS.

Founders' Day in the Bridgewater Hall is a much brighter and enjoyable evening than it was in my day: a tedious afternoon counting the organ pipes in the Whitworth Hall. The words of *Gaudeamus* came straight back to me, as well as a vivid recollection of Miss Morris teaching us what it meant.

It is also fun to sit on the front row and have an excellent view of all those fabulous dresses and shoes walking across the stage.

I have attended the Lake District Afternoon Tea and the Open Reunion, meeting many other alumnae although sadly few from my own year. Where are you all?

One of the privileges of being a governor is to visit school during a working day and

sit in on lessons and speak to the staff. The teaching of most subjects has changed unbelievably, with the introduction of electronic devices for all girls, but the calibre and the enthusiasm of the staff remains as high as ever. A highlight has been addressing a Junior School assembly (as part of Ancient History week!) to tell them what WGS was like 50 years ago when I started. I took along my school hymn book, which the girls regarded as a prehistoric relic.

If you have not returned to school since you left, or not for many years, do come back and see for yourself the many changes. The only part you are guaranteed to recognise are the quarry tiles outside what was Miss Hulme's office. If you are in a position to offer careers support, the Development Office would love to hear from you. Toni Leden has now retired and will be sadly missed but in January we welcome in her place Lesley Dowdall who I am sure will have many exciting ideas for the future.

Alumnae Events & Reunions 2019

Withington Onwards in Birmingham Thursday 25th April

Former pupils and staff are invited to join us for an informal drinks event for those studying, living or working in and around Birmingham. Timings and venue TBC.

Annual Open Reunion Saturday 15th June

We are delighted to invite alumnae, former staff and friends of the school to the Annual Open Reunion here at Withington. The Open Reunion is the perfect occasion for a tour of the school and catch-up with your old school friends and teachers over a relaxed lunch and glass of bubbly.

If you are interested in organising a special reunion for your class on the day, please let us know.

2019 Special Anniversary Years:

Class of 1959: 60 Year Class of 1969: 50 Year
Class of 1979: 40 Year Class of 1994: 25 Year
Class of 2009: 10 Year

Withington Onwards in Bristol Tuesday 12th September

Former pupils and staff are invited to join us for an informal drinks event for those studying, living or working in and around Bristol. Timings and venue TBC.

Details of more exciting Withington events will be revealed throughout 2019! Please note that all the dates, timings and venues are subject to change. We will send further details about the above events closer to the time. Events may carry a fee to cover administration and catering costs.

You can find out more and register for all our events online at wgs.org/alumnae/events or by contacting the Development Team on development@wgs.org or 0161 249 3494

firststeps

questions & answers

Charlotte Senn (Class of 2013)

A Levels: Maths, Further Maths, Physics, Chemistry & German
Degree: Magdalene College, University of Cambridge,
BA (Hons) & MSc Natural Sciences

What is your current job?

I am an Assistant International Tax Advisor for EY, working in London. My role involves advising multinational companies of the tax implications of their cross-border transactions. It's great to work with teams from all over the world and you get to see how companies from lots of different industries operate.

How did you get your first career break?

During my third year at university, I decided that I'd like to see what a career in finance would involve. I liked the idea of tax as it's always evolving, so applied for a summer internship at EY. The internship was a great learning opportunity and I became part of the same team of people I work with now. I really enjoyed the experience, so when EY offered me a graduate job afterwards, I didn't hesitate!

When I left Withington, I thought that I would eventually work as a research chemist in the pharmaceutical industry, but I realised during my time at university that finance was a better fit. Although I'm not in the field I originally imagined, I love my job and life in London.

What are the challenges in your role?

My job involves giving technical advice to clients that is specific to their circumstances, so there is a steep learning curve to gain the necessary level of knowledge. Legislation is constantly changing so keeping up to date with what is happening around the world can be a challenge.

I'm also studying to be a Chartered Accountant as part of my training contract, so balancing work and life commitments with study time can be difficult.

What is your next step?

One of the great things about working for a company like EY is that there are so many opportunities to go on secondment to other offices around the world. Once I've finished my exams, I'd love to work in Germany for six months. I studied A Level German at Withington and carried on with this at university, but it would be great to become really fluent.

What advice could you offer to a new graduate?

Internships are a great way to gain experience and try out an industry while you're still at university, but they can be really competitive, so it's a good idea to apply early. And don't worry if you have to try a couple of things before working out what you want to do!



Zara Tso (Class of 2012)

A Levels: Ancient Greek, English Literature, History, Mathematics
Degree: King's College London, Ancient Greek with English Literature (BA Hons)

What is your current position and what does it entail?

I work as an A&R (Artist and Repertoire) at Decca Records, Universal Music Group. Decca is the home of some major culture-defining acts including the Rolling Stones, David Bowie and Billie Holiday.

It's a fast paced and multi-faceted role which includes talent scouting musicians, signing them to the label and then developing them in the way that best serves their artistic interests. It is a relationship of collaboration where it is vital to build a strong rapport with artists and producers so that you step into the recording studio with a shared vision. I also work closely with film and television companies curating and releasing soundtracks. Most recently, I worked on the soundtrack for Guillermo del Toro's Oscar-winning *Shape of Water*.

During my time at Decca, I've worked with some phenomenal talents including Jeff Goldblum, Gregory Porter, Ennio Morricone, Andrea Bocelli and Sheku Kanneh-Mason.

How did you get your first career break?

This won't come as a surprise to any of my Withington teachers, but I spent a lot of my time at university doing extra-curricular. Whilst learning that 99.9% of Ancient Greek vocab ostensibly meant 'to wage war', I firmly entrenched myself in London's music scene by forming an all-female a cappella group, producing two musicals in Ancient Greek and taking on the role of deputy station manager of KCL Radio. I also worked throughout my summer holidays casting for TV programmes and running Classics summer schools. As a result, I forged a network of inspiring people and became equipped with the necessary skills to apply for Universal Music's PR internship. I was consequently promoted into the A&R team.

What challenges do you face in your role?

Sadly, there is still a complete dearth of diversity in A&R and management roles. If I had a pound for every person who told me I was the first female A&R they had ever met, I would probably have enough to compensate for the gender pay gap. However, I am extremely proud to work in one of the two major label frontline imprints (out of twelve) run by a female president and UMG have taken steps to ensure that both women and those of colour are represented in the company.

What are your ambitions for the future?

I've quickly learned how rapidly the landscape of the music business changes so it's difficult to set immutable career goals; they change with every signing and every project as new opportunities present themselves. That said, I would love to sign some 'legacy' artists – those who last and define a cultural zeitgeist, resonating with audiences for generations.

What important piece of advice could you offer to a new graduate?

Our generation is often labelled as 'entitled'. Obviously, it important to be humble and prepared to start from the ground up as those interviewing us will often reminisce that they did. Neither a Gold DofE award or a first from the best university excuses us from making the coffee and learning from those far more experienced than us. There is a fine line – it's also vital that we know our worth as our careers develop and we address important and often uncomfortable issues such as progression and pay rises.

Rose Acton (Class of 2010)

A Levels: History, English Literature, French
Degree: King's College London, History

What is your current position?

I'm the co-founder and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Adia – a startup on a mission to change the way we approach fertility. We want to empower women to understand their fertility health proactively (not after multiple challenges, which is the current system) as well as to educate women on how to plan for pregnancy (as women we are taught how to prevent pregnancy but not how to plan for it!). We provide at-home fertility blood tests and a three-month preconception plan that includes emotional health support.

My main responsibilities are communications, research and operations. As a co-founder no two days are the same, and I'm involved in all areas of the business from designing the product to fundraising. If you're interested, please do check us out: www.adiahealth.com

How did you get to this stage in your career?

My first career break was a summer internship at the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). I spent four years at the FCA in various roles, including as an Assistant Private Secretary to the CEO and on secondment to the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute. I learnt a lot about policy, regulation and communications.

While at Money and Mental Health, I had my second career break. I researched how financial technology could help people with mental health problems. This provided me with an understanding of how to design products grounded in consumer needs, and I became increasingly interested in how technology could be used to solve social problems – both of which led me to apply to Zinc.

Zinc is a social innovation program that builds companies to solve social problems, and their first mission was to improve women's mental health. I knew that it would be a brilliant experience so decided to make the leap. I met my current co-founders on Zinc and haven't looked back since!

What challenges do you face in your role?

When you're setting up a business there are so many opportunities, but when you are a small team with limited resources it's so important to set goals and prioritise. As a co-founder you're never going to have all the skills you need so while you're starting out you have to be very comfortable learning new things quickly.

What is your next step?

My next step is to grow Adia. I just got back from a trade mission to China, which was really helpful in thinking through how we might approach moving to Asia. We've also just been offered a research grant to understand the efficacy of interventions to improve women's preconception mental health, and I'm really excited about the opportunity to contribute to research in this area.

What advice would you offer to a new graduate?

I spent a lot of time as a new graduate worrying about what my career path would be. Looking back, I can really appreciate the approach of just getting stuck into something and learning what kind of work you do and don't like. I could never have predicted my career path and so would encourage new graduates not to worry if you don't have it all figured out (no-one does!) and instead focus on making the most of opportunities when they present themselves. If anyone would like to chat, please do reach out: rose@adiahealth.com

news from the archive



Detail from History Department display. Poppies made by a selection of students from Years 7 to 13. Each student wrote a message on their poppy about why they feel the First World War should be remembered or how the war affected their ancestors.



Miss Hannah Brown

Archivist

Interest in both what the Withington Archive has to offer and in the variety of resources that we have tucked away in the storeroom has appealed to a variety of researchers from different backgrounds throughout 2018.

We have had a visit from a PhD student based at Cambridge who is studying girls' access to politics in the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods. Alongside this visit, we have welcomed researchers gathering information about Old Girls and our very first teachers. We have also contributed information towards a Heritage Lottery Funded project focusing on citizenship during the inter-war years, and we have supplied records showing how we were one of the first schools in the UK to introduce lacrosse into the curriculum.

We have also been lucky to acquire new records and artefacts to our collection. These documents and objects come in all shapes and forms and include a considerable amount of House Year Books dating back to the 1920s, lots of photographs of reunions, documents relating to the first Bursary Appeal in 1976, and the impressive handmade mechanical monkey prop used in this year's *The Phantom of the Opera!*

The archive's collection of School Newsletters and blazers is now full to bursting and therefore we are no longer receiving donations of these items. However, we are gratefully receiving other records and items of memorabilia, especially those that provide new insight into life at Withington. If you happen to find any

trinkets from school days gone by, however small, we would love to find out more! If you do not wish to permanently part with these items, we offer a scan and return service, where we can copy your records for posterity. We can then ensure that these artefacts are given back to you in the condition that they arrived in!

If you would like to arrange a visit to our Founders' Room, where there is a wealth of artefacts, photos and records from throughout Withington's history on display, or you have any enquiries regarding the archive collection, please get in touch via email; archive@wgs.org

I look forward to hearing from you!

100 Years On...

Remembering the Great War

November 11th 2018 marked the close of the Great War, and it seemed fitting to acknowledge this occasion with an article focusing on life at school and all the positive and busy activities that took place during 1918.

The 1917-1919 School Newsletter opens with an overview of the enterprising work that had taken place to support the war effort:

'The School war-work was continued till the close of 1918; the weekly contribution was sent to Lawnhurst Military Hospital; the parcel for the Belgian prisoner of war was augmented by the kind gift of £1 from Mrs. Beattie; and, as a result of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition and Entertainment held on Dec. 6th, we were able to send £177 16s. Id. to S. Dunstan's Home.'

The Arts and Crafts Exhibition seems to be a popular and regular occurrence on the school calendar during the first few decades of Withington. In 1918 'there were more exhibits for sale than in the previous year' and craft projects such as needlework, drawing, sketches, homemade toys and cakes were submitted for competition.

The school Christmas party in 1918 was a little different from previous years 'because of the [Spanish] influenza epidemic'. However, entertainment was organised for a Friday afternoon and 'Dances were given'. As well as informal dancing during celebrations, there were pageants and dramatic performances such as *Scene from the Mill on the Floss* by George Eliot performed during the school year.

Beyond such events, schoolwork continued alongside a variety of creative extra-curricular activities. The sketching club visited Mr Scott's grounds for two drawing expeditions and the newsletter article states, 'It was inspiring to see members in the Lower School competing, and acquiring themselves in a most valiant manner, and the fact encourages the hope that in the coming year will show us even more interest taken and even a yet higher attainment.'

Like today, Withington pupils in 1918 had access to a wide variety of educational opportunities. The 1917-1919 School Newsletter gives the impression that there was a sense of positivity and purpose at Withington, with staff and students looking forward to many exciting activities throughout the years ahead.

guess the production

Across these pages, you will see questions relating to the vast array of dramatic performances that Withington has presented over the years. Take part in our quiz and find the correct answers on page 21.

01	From which play was this photograph taken?	>
BONUS	What year was this performed?	>
02	Marion Weaver played 'The Complacent Su', Stella Newton played 'The Boastful Wei' and Joyce Wilkinson played 'The High Excellency Wang Yun' in which school production in 1948?	<
03	To which 1952 school production does this cast list relate?	>
04	Sandra Brown, Diane Speakman, Sandra Chalmers, Joy Langridge, Wendy Jackson, Aileen Gill and Jane Rasburn were a few cast members in which 1956 school production?	<
05	What year was this photograph taken of the Julius Caesar cast?	>
06	What was the title of this 1970 school production?	>
07	This quote from the 1974 School Newsletter described preparations for which school play?	>
08	This quote described which play performed in 1986?	>
09	What was the title of this play performed in 1988?	>
10	Who composed the music for The Northern Lights?	<
BONUS	Complete the verse: 'We see the light but see not whence it comes.'	>
11	Which play is this photograph depicting?	>
BONUS	In what year was this play performed?	>
12	What was the title of this 1995 production?	>
13	Which production does this quote from the 1997 School Newsletter describe?	>
14	In the play Daisy Pulls It Off, what sports match takes centre stage?	<
BONUS	What is the name of the school where the play was set?	>
15	This set design sheet was used in which 2005 drama production?	>
16	Which year was Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat performed?	>
17	This photo was taken from the school production in 2014. Which musical is it?	>
18	Our 2016 school play Blue Stockings centred around female undergraduates at Cambridge in 1896. Which college was it set in? (Clue: It was the first women's college in Cambridge and WGS Founder CP Scott's wife Rachel was one of its first students.)	>

climbing across continents





Ailsa Stott (Class of 1998)

GP & High-Altitude Medic

For Ailsa Stott (Class of 1998), a demanding career in medicine is no barrier to pursuing her other dreams and ambitions. With a day job as a locum GP, practising in Scotland, Ailsa is also a trained high-altitude medic. When the opportunity arises, she travels to remote areas across the globe as an expedition doctor, with a recent trip to Antarctica marking a huge milestone for Ailsa: she has now travelled on all the world's continents.

As well as her successful medical career, Ailsa is also established as a world-class lacrosse player, having been captain of Scotland's Women's Lacrosse World Cup squad, a member of the GB team for the 2017 World Games and now a coach to the elite.

Here, Ailsa shares her insights into how she expanded her ambitions of becoming a doctor – which first emerged during her time at Withington – to ensure she could incorporate as many of her other interests and passions into her life as possible.

"I loved my time at Withington. I went from Transition through to Sixth Form and was always busy with sport, drama and music. Even today I talk enthusiastically about school and maintain close friendships with Joanna Riley, Mirin Diver, Caroline Smart, Joanna Horrocks and Rosie Hamilton. I've got us back together to play lacrosse on occasion and next year we'll be running the Wilmslow Half Marathon together! Although sport often came before my academic studies, I was ambitious to become a doctor and my Headmistress Mrs Kenyon planted a seed when she said, 'I could see you working for MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières).'"

Upon leaving Withington, Ailsa studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh, before moving to Australia to train in paediatrics. Following this, she undertook a diploma in tropical medicine and hygiene at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. After finishing her diploma, Ailsa began working for Médecins Sans Frontières.

"MSF was a brilliant charity to work for because it combined my love of medicine with travelling to remote areas. Tropical medicine is so interesting; you are treating very different diseases to the ones you see at home. It was a relatively long-term commitment. I did two main missions: nine months in Pakistan (paediatrics and neonatology) and nine in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, I worked in a HIV clinic treating a fascinating tropical infectious disease called kala-azar. We were based right on the border of Eritrea and Sudan, five hours by tractor from the nearest airport!"

After changing her medical career path to become a GP, Ailsa now works as a rural and city locum in Scotland. She explains that being a GP in rural Scotland can often be demanding, but her flexibility as a locum allows her to pursue another passion: travel.

To further this, during her GP training Ailsa added another string to her bow by gaining a diploma in mountain medicine. She said,

"The diploma allows me to be a doctor on expeditions while enjoying high-altitude climbing. I've climbed up Kilimanjaro, in the High Andes and this year in China. Often, the medic position is a voluntary one, but being a locum allows me the flexibility of doing these trips without squeezing them into annual leave. As a doctor you are on-hand for all medical

emergencies and trauma situations, as well as more everyday GP-type problems. You can be single-handedly making all medical decisions. The most challenging high-altitude medic job I had was taking sixteen high-powered business women on a trek up Kilimanjaro. Many people underestimate this challenge, thinking that the climb is possible during holidays and without training. I discovered that most of our guests had never slept in a tent, and their gear was still in its packaging. However, they all stayed safe and 14 of the 16 summited."

Ailsa has recently headed off to Antarctica on a seven-week expedition as a medic, which will involve several trips to the high altitude and extreme conditions of the South Pole. Not underestimating the danger of this trip, she said: "It will definitely be the most remote place I have worked. I must be competent, well-equipped and familiar with all policies on safety and evacuation. High altitude sickness, trauma and mountain accidents will be a distinct possibility."

With a great sense of adventure and curiosity for destinations off the beaten track, Ailsa even managed an impromptu visit to North Korea during her time in China. She visited Pyongyang, the country's capital, and took a detour to the demilitarized zone. "You can't travel freely around North Korea. You have to go on a guided tour and your itinerary is tightly regulated. But it is an interesting time to go, because there is a higher awareness of the country and what it offers. I read a lot about North Korea, and there is nowhere else like it."

Lacrosse is another of Ailsa's lifelong passions. The sport, known as 'the fastest game on two legs', is not yet included in the Olympics and Ailsa has been an

climbing across continents

active advocate in the campaign for its inclusion. Last year the World Games, organised by the Olympic body, included lacrosse in its programme for the first time. Ailsa said, "The top six teams in the world were invited to compete. Under IOC rules, Great Britain had to play as a combined team. I was one of two players from the Scottish team chosen to represent Great Britain, and we came fourth. Also playing was England International and fellow WGS Old Girl Sophie Whitehead, Class of 2012. It was a brilliant experience, and great to be part of history by hopefully taking lacrosse on its first step towards the Olympics.

"In 2017 I played in the World Cup as captain of the Scotland team and we came fifth. We were thrilled to improve our world ranking by beating Israel in the 5/6th playoff, a game that was shown live on BBC iPlayer, and I was delighted to be awarded the Wes Patterson Trophy for outstanding sportsmanship." Ailsa continued, "I have retired from playing lacrosse now, but it was great to go out on a high. I played this season and was named 'Player of the Tournament' at the Home Internationals. It has been an amazing last two years of my lacrosse-playing career, but it does take its toll. I've had a few injuries and I wanted to go out on top."

Although retired from playing at a high-level, Ailsa continues to

pursue her passion for the sport with outreach work and lacrosse coaching throughout Scotland.

"I am self-employed and currently coach Edinburgh University. I visit schools and universities to promote women's lacrosse, but it's a challenge and we are a very underfunded sport. If lacrosse can become an Olympic sport, then investment in the game will improve. I would love to be part of the Olympic Games as a coach, but unfortunately not as a player."

What is clear from Ailsa's varied and fascinating career to date, is that this high-achieving alumna does not believe in sacrificing her hobbies and passions for her profession. In fact, she advises current Withington pupils and her fellow alumnae against narrowing themselves too early in terms of ambition, life and career. She says, "People give up so many things that they are passionate about including sports, travel and hobbies to pursue their professional ambitions. I've tried to be ambitious in different areas of my life at different times, keeping as much going as possible."



Ailsa playing in the World Cup for Scotland alongside fellow Withington Old Girl Chess Gray (Class of 2015).

“Medicine is an incredible career and it has allowed me to combine all the elements I love in life. I feel strongly that medicine is an amazingly privileged career, offering great variability and security.”



Bursary Fund Update

Suzie Hall (Class of 2011)

In September 2018 we welcomed 14 new pupils into Year 7 on means-tested bursary support. In the current academic year, the total number of pupils benefiting from bursaries throughout the school is 104. Of these, 98 are in the Senior School and six in the Juniors. The value of bursaries for the current academic year is projected to be £774,000.

The Bursary Fund continues to provide fantastic opportunities to financially disadvantaged bright girls who would otherwise miss out on the benefits of a Withington education. We are now in the planning stages of a new bursary appeal to raise funds for full bursaries to enable more girls from families on very low incomes to experience the life-transforming education at Withington.

If you would like to learn more about the Bursary Fund, you can contact the Development Office on 0161 249 3494 or email development@wgs.org to arrange a chat.

Did you receive bursary funding during your time at Withington? We are looking for ambassadors to share their experiences and support our bursary campaign in the new year, please get in touch if you can help!

Suzie is the founder of Plastic-Free Me, a small non-profit dedicated to fighting the global plastic crisis. She says:

"We've had a great year for Plastic-Free Me. We've run some successful campaigns and created partnerships with many organisations around the UK.

We are currently applying to register as a Community Interest Company, which is a great option for small non-profits who don't yet want the full legal structure of a charity. Once registered, we'll be able to start applying for serious funding and run even more campaigns and projects.

We're running a Plastic-Free Youth course in Armley, Leeds for six weeks in January, aimed at empowering 13-19-year-olds from more disadvantaged backgrounds: giving them the skills and knowledge to get involved in conservation and training them to lead their own workshops.

I have nothing but fond memories of my time at Withington. Only since graduating and beginning a life outside of education have I truly been able to appreciate what it meant to me to receive such an education. The endless opportunities presented to me helped shape my passions and enthusiasm for science and the natural world, and gave me the confidence to pursue my ambitions. I'm so grateful for the generous donors to the Bursary Fund, and I would encourage others to support the fund however they can to provide this invaluable Withington education to every deserving girl."

save the date

Annual Open Reunion

The Development Team is delighted to invite you to the Annual Open Reunion, on Saturday 15th June 2019, from 11am-4pm.

The Open Reunion is a fantastic opportunity for you to come back to Withington, catch

up with your classmates and former teachers, and have a look around your old school. At next year's reunion, you will also have the opportunity to meet our new Development Director, Lesley Dowdall.

We'll be announcing further details soon but for now, make sure the date is in your diary!

events and reunions



1 Our events calendar for 2018 began with a reflective event, as we celebrated the life of much-loved former WGS Latin teacher Miss Amy Morris, who sadly passed away at the end of last year. On Saturday 3rd February we hosted a memorial service which was presided over by former Deputy Head of Withington Dr Mary McDonald, who worked with her during her time here and was a close friend.

Memories of Amy as a colleague and dear friend were shared by former Classics teacher Catherine Bankes, and there were tributes from former pupils Hannah Murray (née Fox, 1986) Claire Claymore (née Garety, 1991) and Briony Garety (née Young, 1967). Everyone spoke of Amy's remarkable memory and her thoughtful ability to recall the names and small details of all her former pupils and colleagues when she would see them at events, despite the years that had passed since they'd been at school. Dr Michael Fay, close family friend of Amy's and son of former WGS teacher of Maths, Miss Doreen Fay (née Simpson), shared some amusing personal anecdotes. He mentioned their mutual love of plants, and how Amy's passion for identifying them and teaching him their proper Latin names influenced his later career as a botanist.

A beautiful musical medley was performed by Withington pupils, honouring Amy's love of music, whilst a presentation of photos from her life was shown to guests on the screen. Whilst a sad occasion, it was wonderful to see so many guests gathered in the Junior School Hall to pay their respects to this remarkable former teacher. The day had a lovely atmosphere, as fond memories were shared, and a special life was remembered.

2 Later in the spring, we held a well-attended afternoon tea in the Lake District at the stunning Lindeth Howe Hotel in Bowness on Windemere. Along with nearly 30 Old Girls, in attendance were current Headmistress Sarah Haslam, former Headmistress Miss Hulme, members of the Development Team Toni Leden and Penny Knipe and Diane Hawkins, alumnae representative on the Board of Governors. Alumna Pat Moneypenny, Class of 1950, said: "It was a pleasure to sit next to Miss Hulme, former Headmistress, who

came to Withington after I left. I was very impressed with the new Headmistress, Mrs Haslam, and with all she said which completely embodied the Withington tradition and ethos."

3 As usual, in June we held our annual Open Reunion here at the school, to which all Old Girls and former members of staff are invited. We had a fantastic turn out this year, with over 70 guests in attendance. Attendees ranged in age from the Class of 1949 to Class of 2008, and it was particularly wonderful to welcome back a huge cohort from the Class of 1978, who were celebrating their 40th class-year anniversary.

The real highlight of this year's reunion was the tour of the school, which included a first look at our new Sports Centre. Alumnae were delighted to see these fantastic new sports facilities just before they were officially opened by Dame Sarah Storey DBE in July and to hear about the benefits it would bring to the Withington community. Many of our guests were visiting us for the first time since they left school, and some had not returned to Withington for over 40 years. They were interested to find out about the changes that have taken place in the intervening years, both to the school building and to its curriculum, yet many commented on how the school still retained the same special atmosphere and warmth as it had done when they were pupils here.

Many thanks to those who joined us on the day, as well as everyone who volunteered their time to help-out, including current staff and former pupils. The day was a great success, and we are looking forward to the next Open Reunion already, which will be held on Saturday 15th June 2019.

4 On Thursday 25th September we held a very special 'Behind the Scenes' alumnae reunion at Kew Gardens in London. As part of this event, our guests were taken on an exclusive tour of the Jodrell Laboratory, facilitated by Dr Mike Fay, friend of the late Amy Morris.

Mike is head of the Conservation Genetics team in the Conservation Science Department of Kew and, along with his colleague Mark Chase, showed us interesting collections that are not on view to the public, including Kew's DNA

bank, fungi specimens collected by Charles Darwin during the voyage of the Beagle, and samples from Dr Alexander Fleming's work in discovering penicillin.

Mike also told us about the important orchid conservation carried out at Kew. This was a subject close to Amy's heart, and at her funeral donations were collected towards this cause. As a result of the money given to Kew, a bursary has been set-up in Amy's name to support an international student to attend the Orchid Conservation Congress held at Kew next year. During the tour, Mike showed us his book *Plants of the World*, co-authored with Maarten JM Christenhusz and Mark W Chase, which was published in 2017 and includes a dedication to Amy. A signed copy of the book was donated to the school library during her memorial event held at Withington earlier in the year.

It was a sunny autumnal day at Kew, and guests also enjoyed looking around the beautiful gardens. With over 30 Old Girls and former staff members in attendance, after the tour we all enjoyed an afternoon tea and the chance to catch up in The Orangery, to reflect on a very interesting and memorable day.

The final event in our busy 2018 calendar will be the annual Upper Sixth Leavers' Reception, to be held here at Withington on 17th December. This festive gathering will be a chance for our most recent leavers, the Class of 2018, to reunite with their classmates and teachers after their first few months as a Withington alumna. The leavers' reception is always a lovely occasion and a chance for the Development Team to welcome the newest alumnae cohort to the Withington Onwards community.

Our calendar of events for 2019 is quickly starting to fill up, and we have a number of exciting reunions and networking events for our alumnae and former staff to look forward to - both here at Withington and in various locations across the UK. Do have a look at our calendar on page 15 to find out if the Development Team will be coming to an area near you next year. Our new Development Director Lesley Dowdall is keen to meet as many of you as possible and we look forward to another memorable year of events and reunions.

our new SPORT and fitness centre





Elin Donnelly (Class of 2018)

Admissions & Marketing Assistant

Earlier this year, Withington was delighted to unveil its brand-new Sport and Fitness Centre after a year-long building project. In July, we celebrated the official opening of the new facilities with our 'Festival of Sport'. The school's previously functional sports facilities have been renovated and redesigned to offer an inspirational environment in which our pupils can pursue their fitness interests whether at a competitive level, or just for fun. The new centre includes a welcoming reception area, an updated fitness suite, our multi-purpose 'Mind and Body Studio', brand new changing and locker facilities, and easier access onto the Emily Simon Playing Fields.

The official opening of the new Sport and Fitness Centre in July was marked by a special visit from Paralympian athlete Dame Sarah Storey DBE, the most successful female British Paralympian of all time, holding 75 world records. Sarah was given a guided tour of our new facilities by the Head Girl Team and attended our opening reception. She then spoke to both the Juniors and the Seniors about the impact of sport on her life and the importance of getting involved in sport and fitness, saying:

“Whether you plan to be an elite athlete as I did, or whether you are looking for another role in life, our brains work better if we are physically fit and active – if we are doing it for recreation then it helps our mental health and wellbeing and if we are doing it for elite sport, then it helps us to reach that elite level better and faster.”

After her speech, and a glimpse of her impressive collection of Paralympic medals, we were honoured to have Dame Sarah unveil the commemorative plaque, officially declaring our new Sport and Fitness Centre open.

For the rest of the day, pupils and staff alike celebrated our new facilities with a spectacular 'Festival of Sport' featuring activities across the school that included dance, rounders, cheerleading, Zumba and athletics, as well as some particularly amusing WGS staff races! The girls certainly enjoyed the opportunity to be out of the classroom, in the sun, being active and getting involved in sports together.

This event marked the beginning of an inspiring new chapter for Withington Girls' School and has really opened pupils' eyes to all of the sporting possibilities they may not have previously been aware of. Mrs Haslam described the day as “truly memorable” and emphasised that “we want all our pupils to enjoy sport and fitness during their time at Withington, whatever their skill level, developing their abilities and improving their fitness whilst doing an activity they enjoy.”

Since July, Withington girls of all ages have been enjoying the new sporting facilities at Withington, whether it be by taking part in lunch and after school yoga clubs in the Mind and Body Studio, training sessions in the Fitness Suite, or competitive team sports in the newly renovated Sports Hall

and on our playing fields. Our new Sports and Fitness Centre is a space our girls are keen to make use of and proud to call their own.

The new, eagerly anticipated Sport and Fitness Suite has finally arrived at Withington Girls' School and is already proving a big hit with the girls. Sixth Form pupils are still afforded the privilege of using the facility during their free lessons and lunchtimes, but we are now able to offer Year 10 and 11 girls the opportunity of using the Fitness Suite during their core PE lessons.

Access to such a facility has opened up many avenues for girls who previously had not been too enthusiastic when it came to traditional team games, with several girls reporting that they are now members of a gym or are taking up fitness classes.

Living in an era where mental health issues are at the forefront of daily life, keeping fit is an ideal way of relieving stress and looking after both mental and physical wellbeing. There has also been a renewed interest in fitness from the staff, with more teachers accessing the gym during lunchtimes. The introduction of these facilities will hopefully encourage an awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle through the girls' school years and beyond.



Mrs Liz O'Neal Head of PE

Ella Rosenblatt (Upper Sixth)

Ella is currently in her final year at Withington and is busy studying for her A Levels, whilst also deciding what she wants to study after leaving next summer. Despite not considering herself a 'sporty' person she still likes to keep fit.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO KEEP FIT?

"I try to go to the gym at least four times a week because it clears my head and I don't have to worry about things like work when I'm there. I find working out puts me in a good headspace. The autumn term of Upper Sixth is a stressful one so I enjoy being able to look after myself both physically and mentally."

HOW DO YOU THINK OUR NEW SPORTS CENTRE HAS HELPED YOU WITH THAT?

"There's so much more equipment now than there was previously so there's a lot more variety in what I can do. I don't need to take time out after school when I could be working, I can go during my free periods which saves so much time. I also go to the Sixth Form personal training sessions once a week where a professional coach comes in and gives us a proper work out. I think it's important to have a healthy work/exercise balance and this centre really facilitates that."

HOW DO YOU THINK OUR NEW CENTRE WILL AFFECT OTHER SIXTH FORMERS LIKE YOU?

"It's so much bigger and there is so much more variety, so it will appeal to more people because they can do whichever exercise/workout/sport they choose to, rather than there being a limited selection."

It's also something we can do together as I usually go to the Fitness Suite with my friends and we do group workouts. A lot of people who wouldn't normally go to the gym are using spaces like the Fitness Suite and the Mind and Body Studio because it's there, it's so convenient, and it's free!"



Miranda Bate (Lower Sixth)

Miranda is a talented athlete who has played lacrosse for the England U16 team. She also plays netball, hockey, and competes in athletics during the summer months.

WHY DO YOU ENJOY LACROSSE?

"I began playing lacrosse when I joined Withington aged eight. It was really exciting, because I'd never played it before and it wasn't a sport I'd seen offered at many other schools. After a while I joined a club near where I live and since then I've stuck with it and still really enjoy playing and competing today. I'm currently training with the England Development Squad in preparation for the Lacrosse World Cup this coming summer."

WHAT DOES YOUR WEEKLY SPORTS TIMETABLE LOOK LIKE?

"On a Monday lunch I have school netball training and then lacrosse training at my club in the afternoon. On Tuesdays I like to go to the gym to do a weights session. I used to go to my local gym to do this but now that seems silly because I can do it just as easily in school, and without having to pay for membership. This also means I save money and time that I would spend travelling to and from the gym. I have lacrosse training for school on a Wednesday lunchtime and after school. After school on a Thursday I have school netball training again, and hockey training on Friday lunchtime."

HOW DO YOU USE THE FACILITIES?

"My dad works in Manchester, so he drops me off really early each morning which means I can go to the Fitness Suite and get a decent workout done before registration. The PE Department also let me use the Sports Hall on days when I'm not playing lacrosse so that I can play wall ball (practising passing and catching the lacrosse ball against the walls). My friend and I also like to use the Mind and Body Studio if we have a moment in our frees to do yoga. I like to take this time to do some slightly less intense exercise."

Silvia McCarthy (Lower Fifth)

Silvia is a current GCSE PE student and is also very involved in extra-curricular sport, playing netball, hockey, lacrosse and competing in athletics. Last year Silvia competed in the U15 Independent School Netball Cup, in which the WGS team were crowned national champions.

HOW HAS THE NEW SPORTS CENTRE BENEFITED YOU AS A GCSE PE STUDENT?

"In our practical lessons we have to do specific tests for our exam and because we have more space now and more facilities there's more flexibility in what we can do and what we can use. For example, today we were using the Sports Hall to do the bleep test, and we have sessions in the Fitness Suite where we get taught to use specific equipment. Using the machines in a classroom setting means we get taught how to do everything properly and safely too."



HOW DO YOU THINK THE SPORTS CENTRE HAS CHANGED COMPETITIVE TEAM SPORTS AT WITHINGTON?

"There are lots of little things that you wouldn't necessarily think of as being helpful. We have much better, much bigger changing facilities now, not only for our own team but also for teams from other schools when they come to play matches. We can now offer them their own changing room and wash facilities. They can also enter through the sports reception rather than having to walk all the way through school, so it provides them with a nicer and more professional welcome to Withington. I'm proud to welcome them to our sports department."



WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS MEANS FOR SPORT AT WITHINGTON IN GENERAL?

"Withington doesn't necessarily have a reputation for being a particularly sporty school. I think the new centre will make people realise this is a big misconception and that Withington isn't just all about the academics; we're serious about our sport too. I also think it will encourage girls already at Withington to get involved in sports they wouldn't have previously thought of."



Poppy Winnard (Third Form)

Poppy has just joined Withington from Hale Prep and has been getting to grips with WGS Senior School life, including sports.

WHICH SPORTS HAVE YOU PLAYED SINCE BEING AT WITHINGTON?

"In my PE lessons I've done netball, hockey, lacrosse and gymnastics. I've also been going to the Year 7 Netball Club during my lunchtimes and after school on a Thursday. I like being able to meet Year 7 girls from different forms at clubs like this. I'm really enjoying gym because we're currently preparing for the Gym and Dance Display in February."

HOW DOES PE AT WITHINGTON COMPARE TO WHAT YOU WERE USED TO AT PRIMARY SCHOOL?

"It's very different because everything is much bigger and there's a lot more to do. At my primary school we pretty much just used our playground, or occasionally we'd go to the local cricket club to use their AstroTurf. It's nice that at Withington everything is in one place. The changing rooms are also really modern. I also like that in Year 7 we get our own locker room. It's good to have another space just for us and it makes looking after all my stuff much easier."

ARE YEAR 7S TAKING THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED IN SPORT AT WITHINGTON?

"There's lots of choice so it seems like everyone gets to try out something they're interested in. I think people like playing a team sport in Year 7 too because they can go to the clubs and make lots of new friends. We had a special Year 7 Sports Day just after starting, when we got to try out all the new sports before we had any lessons in them so that people could work out what they'd enjoy. We also played a massive game of rounders at the end of the day in our Houses, which was really good fun."

news from the development office

Welcoming Our New Development Director...

Lesley Dowdall

I am delighted to be joining Withington Girls' School and am very much looking forward to taking up the post of Development Director in January 2019.

I began my fundraising career at the Youth Sport Trust before moving to The University of Manchester in 2000. In over 18 years at the university I have had the opportunity to expand and develop programmes for alumni and donors. I have had responsibility for all aspects of fundraising, from the regular giving programme through to the transformational gift strategy and in ensuring that all donors are recognised and stewarded in the best and most meaningful way possible.

Throughout my fundraising career, changing the lives of young people and

providing opportunities through education and sport has been a key driver for me. The ethos and mission of Withington Girls' School resonates with me greatly and it will be a privilege to play a part in the school's ambitions to support even more deserving girls who would benefit from a Withington education, irrespective of their family's financial position. Indeed, having a daughter of my own and being acutely aware of the pressures that society can put on girls, I am yet more convinced of the necessity in supporting girls to develop the confidence and skills to take on the world!

I have been struck by what a special and welcoming community Withington enjoys, which is thanks in no small part to the role its alumnae play within the school. I hope to have the opportunity to meet as many



of you as possible and to learn about your experiences at WGS.

Particular thanks to Toni Leden for her support in making my transition as smooth as possible. I wish her a happy and healthy retirement and many wonderful times on her travels.

The Annual Fund 2018-19

The Enhancing Opportunities Annual Fund aims to raise money for extra educational experiences and items of equipment that provide the best possible opportunities for pupils during their time at Withington. The money raised, through generous donations from parents and alumnae, contributes to valuable learning experiences for all our pupils

We are delighted to announce the following exciting projects that will be supported by the Annual Fund in the 2017-18 school year.

GREEK THEATRE WORKSHOP: £1700

The Classics Department would like to run a Greek theatre workshop for different groups of pupils. The plays of the ancient world often examine moral dilemmas, and many of their political issues still affect our world today. Through these workshops, the Classics Department hopes to highlight why this might be the case and how the themes and ideas expressed are still of relevance today.

It is envisaged that a workshop will be delivered by the Actors of Dionysus, recognised as one of the leading companies performing ancient Greek plays. Rather than simply watching a play, the girls will listen and learn from a classicist and take part in ensemble work directed by the actors.

The workshops will provide invaluable opportunities for team work, leadership and creativity for the girls.

MIND & BODY STUDIO EQUIPMENT: £3200

Our fantastic new sports facilities mean we can encourage more girls to be active in different ways, particularly those who don't enjoy traditional team sports. Physical activity is vital to the holistic development of young people, fostering their physical, social and mental wellbeing, enhancing learning and building character. Dancing and other forms of non-competitive exercise, such as aerobics, are popular with many girls at Withington.

Our 'Mind and Body Studio', located in our new Sports Centre, requires funding to provide a screen, projector and sound equipment to enable the girls to use this space to its full potential for dancing and other fitness activities. This new equipment will allow pupils to play dance music and copy exercise moves from videos. The equipment will also be used for extra-curricular activities such as Yoga, Zumba, aerobics and martial arts.

FUNDING A BURSARY: £12000

We hope that any additional money raised for the Annual Fund will be directed towards our Bursary Fund. Currently, one-in-six pupils at Withington receive financial support through our means-tested bursary programme. We are dependent on raising funds to expand this scheme further to enable more bright girls from financially disadvantaged families to benefit from the opportunities of a Withington education.

We know from experience that bursary pupils bring unique qualities to Withington Girls' School and help maintain the diversity which Withington has celebrated since its foundation in 1890.

If you would like to know more about the Annual Fund, please visit the page on our website at wgs.org/development/annual-fund-2018 or call 0161 249 3494.

We've Done It!

Our New Sports Extension is Now Open!

Building work on our new Sport and Fitness Centre was completed in May 2018. No one approaching the school from Victoria Road can fail to see the stunning transformation of the exterior wall with its huge aluminium sporting figures and stainless-steel lettering. The new facilities allow the girls to have more choice and space to encourage greater participation and enjoyment in extra-curricular sport and exercise.

Inside, the new building is light and airy with some beautiful design features and a sports club feeling. The ground floor comprises a dedicated reception area, smart new changing rooms, lockers and the PE office. Upstairs there is a Mind and Body Studio, intended to be a multi-use space

for activities such as dance, martial arts and yoga, and an extensive Fitness Suite packed with state-of-the-art equipment. The Fitness Suite can accommodate a whole class PE lesson and can be used for training and conditioning teams and elite athletes.

In addition, the existing Sports Hall has been upgraded acoustically and the girls now have direct access to the playing fields from the changing rooms. Visitors and parents benefit from improved hospitality and trusted community groups can use the facilities outside school hours.

Headmistress Mrs Sarah Haslam said, "This fantastic upgrade to our sporting facilities would not have been possible

without the very generous contributions made by parents, alumnae and friends of the school. We are very grateful for their support which will help Withington continue to provide outstanding opportunities for all our pupils."

The new building was officially opened by Dame Sarah Storey on 5th July 2018 as part of our 'Festival of Sport'. You can read more about this fantastic day on page 29. We are very proud of these new sporting facilities, which will take sport and fitness at Withington to the next level and help encourage a healthy attitude towards exercise amongst our pupils, further strengthening the strong sporting tradition first established by our Founders in 1980.



"I really enjoyed working on the sports project and would like to thank everyone who donated and helped ensure its success. Exercise is so important, and it is wonderful to see the current pupils now using the new facilities and pleasing to know that many future generations of girls will benefit from these important enhancements to the school."

Toni Leden

Ruth Bayley's Legacy

Inspiring Young Artists

Former Old Girl Ruth Coney (née Bayley) left Withington in 1947. A talented artist and internationally respected illustrator of children's books, she lived the later part of her life in Scotland and sadly died in 2015.

Her talent for drawing was discovered whilst at Withington and she was very grateful for her education and encouragement from her teachers.

The school gratefully received a legacy of £10,000 for the Bursary Fund from her estate and in recognition of this support the school started the annual Ruth Bayley Illustration Competition, open to all senior pupils.

Led by Head of Art, Mrs Ruth Fildes, this competition has run for the past two years and has encouraged aspiring artists throughout the school. The winner of the award is announced at the end of year assembly and receives a beautiful hand-made glass trophy.

The theme for this year's competition was 'Manchester Means the World to Me'. The entries were judged by artist Helen Musselwhite, who visited the school and delivered a masterclass in paper cutting. The costs of the competition are being covered by a further generous donation from Ruth Bayley's estate.

Mrs Fildes said:

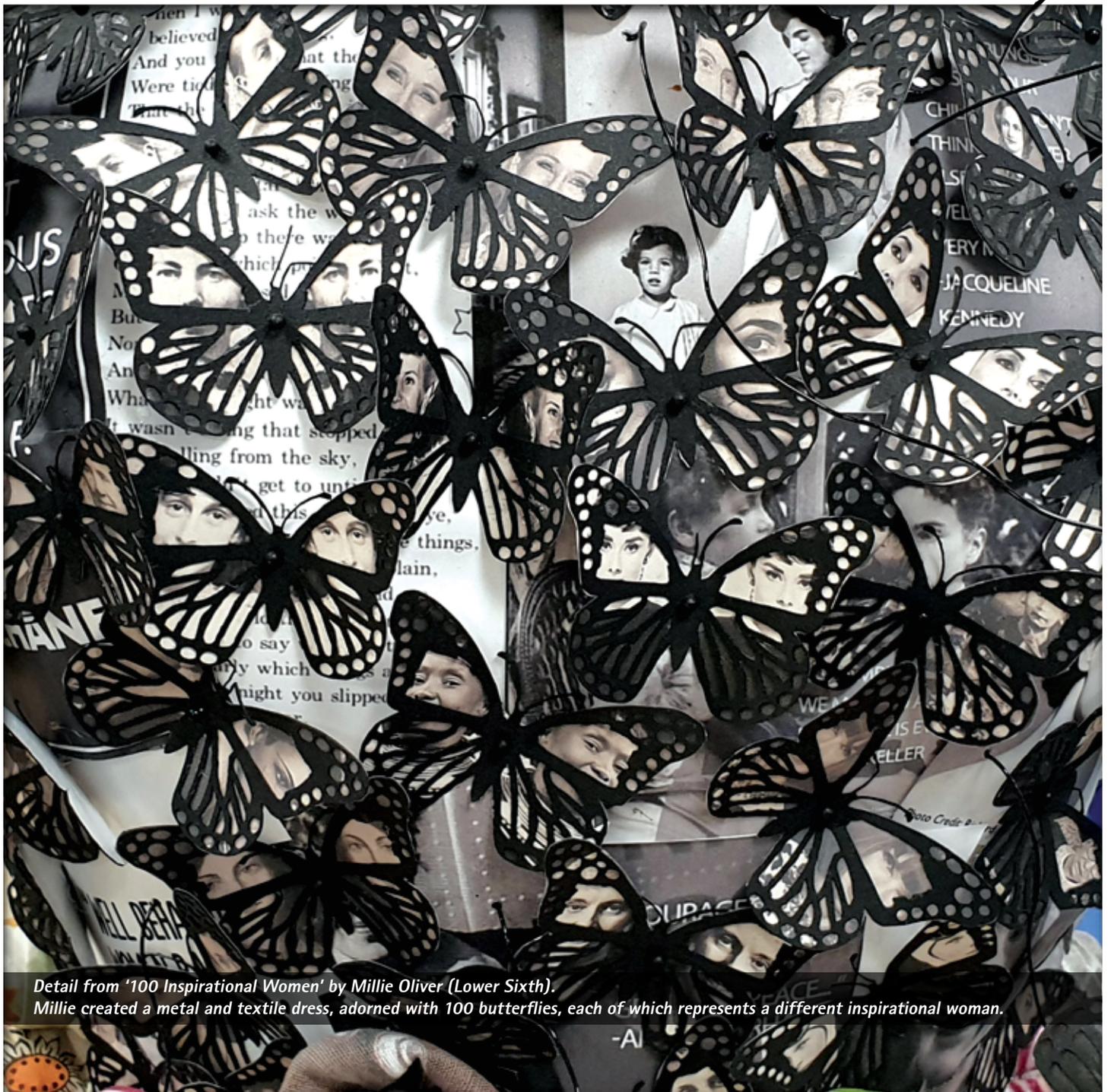
"I thoroughly enjoy working on the Ruth Bayley Illustration Competition during the school year and it is wonderful to recognise the fantastic artistic talents that our girls have."

She organised a number of practical masterclasses to help the girls develop skills in different media.

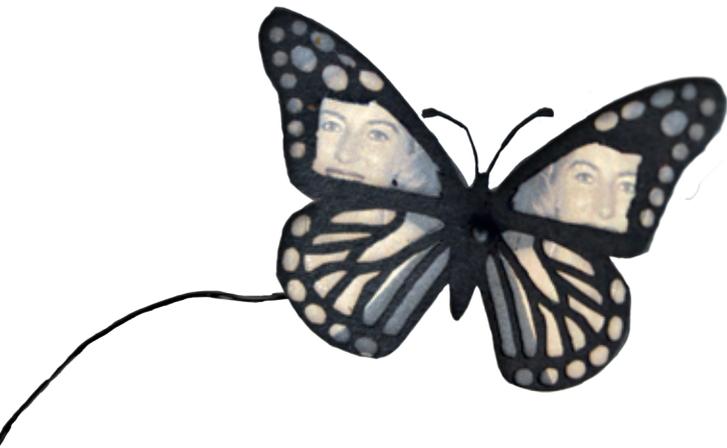
The competition is a great success and the executors of Ruth Bayley's estate are pleased that her old school is encouraging a new generation of young artists.



unlocking potential



Detail from '100 Inspirational Women' by Millie Oliver (Lower Sixth).
Millie created a metal and textile dress, adorned with 100 butterflies, each of which represents a different inspirational woman.



Jennifer Hopkinson (née Preston, Class of 2005)

Teacher & Founder of *The Bursary Foundation*

Jenny Hopkinson's experiences as a teacher in Manchester opened her eyes to the challenges faced by bright pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds when accessing secondary education. Motivated to help these children realise their full potential, she founded The Bursary Foundation. Here, Jenny tells us more about the charity and her vision for its future...

After leaving Withington and travelling with a group of friends from school, I studied Modern Languages with Education at King's College London and undertook a master's in Child Development at the Institute of Education.

I wanted to work in an inner-city school, so when a post was advertised at a new free-school in Ancoats, I jumped at the opportunity. The school building didn't even exist when I accepted the job and I was the first teacher to be recruited. I suppose the challenge of starting something from scratch appealed to me!

I was promised a porta-cabin classroom and I didn't think this could be quite as bad as teaching in a tent in Haiti (which I had done as a volunteer following the 2010 earthquake) so I accepted the challenge. It was there, in my porta-cabin classroom on a disused carpark, that I first had the idea to start The Bursary Foundation.

THE BURSARY FOUNDATION

Inspired by a clever little girl who thought that 'schools like Withington weren't for girls like her', I set about starting my charity, which is all about widening access to selective education. Sadly, there is mounting evidence that too many highly able pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, who achieve well at primary school, are failing to reach their

potential at secondary school. I think that by connecting some of these children with more bursary places at our leading independent schools, and by widening access to grammar schools, we can help lessen this tragic waste of talent.

The Bursary Foundation is all about working closely with primary schools in disadvantaged communities to identify and nurture talent. We also guide families through the application process, helping them to make informed decisions about secondary school and prepare for the transition. It is all about unlocking talent

“If everything is under control then I know I'm not going fast enough!”

and helping create schools that are more socially diverse and have a real impact on social mobility. We take a fresh approach to bursaries that's about the kids, not the schools.

Since starting The Bursary Foundation I have met with some influential business people: philanthropists, educational leaders, even politicians, all of whom help me to shape the organisation and move it forward. Without doubt though, the highlight for me is getting to know our families and mentoring our pupils. It gives me huge satisfaction to see them thrive and grow in confidence.

The role is not without its challenges though, particularly as I'm expected to be a jack of all trades! On any given day, I might be presenting to a group of head-teachers, telling my story to potential donors, taking pupils to Nando's, building a website, attending a sports day...the list goes on. I don't pretend to be an expert in any of these things, so I surround myself

with people who are. I actively seek out 'critical friends' and am not afraid to ask for help. I am also mum to an impossibly energetic two-year-old, so finding a balance can be tricky at times but it all adds to the fun... if everything is under control then I know I'm not going fast enough!

My vision for the future of The Bursary Foundation is simple: to help more highly able pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds realise their potential. To achieve this, we need to work with more families, partner with more schools, and

of course continue to raise much needed funds for more bursary places.

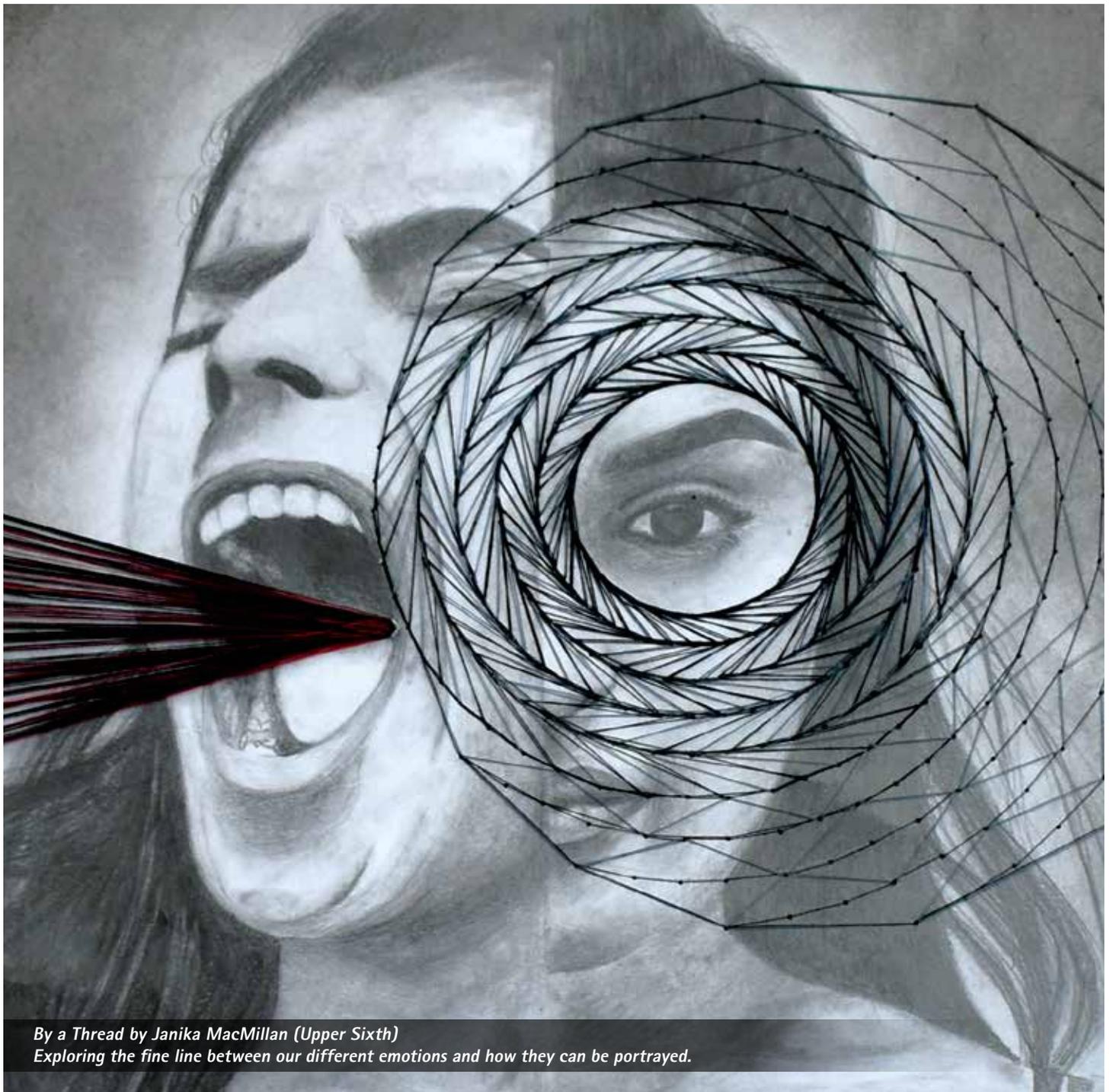
I am thrilled to be working alongside Withington Girls' School to launch The Bursary Foundation. Withington nurtures girls to be their best self and go against the grain. When I look at my best friends now (all WGS girls!) I see bright young women making a huge difference in varied, interesting fields from farming to politics, fashion to architecture, media to education.

ADVICE FOR OTHERS

Be bold. Set off on a path that interests you even if you don't know where it will take you. Talk to people and share your ideas. You just never know when you will strike a chord with someone and you'll be surprised and humbled by how many people want to help. If you want to start your own venture, go for it. Jump off a cliff and build a parachute on the way down!

www.thebursaryfoundation.com

smashing the ceiling



*By a Thread by Janika MacMillan (Upper Sixth)
Exploring the fine line between our different emotions and how they can be portrayed.*



Naomi Mellor (Class of 2002)

Equine Vet & Host of *Smashing the Ceiling*

Since her time as a pupil at Withington, during which she remembers overseas sports tours as a particular highlight, Naomi Mellor has gone on to forge a varied and interesting career as an equine veterinarian. Now a female vet in the male-dominated world of horse-racing and the host of a podcast celebrating women in unusual careers, Naomi tells us more about how she got where she is today...

After leaving Withington I went to Edinburgh University and spent five years there studying veterinary medicine. My career started in a somewhat unorthodox location as I spent my first months as a vet working for a charity in the Cook Islands, a group of islands in the South Pacific. A job in Yorkshire subsequently followed (less glamorous), then stints in Australia and various southern counties of the UK, during which time I completed a further qualification in equine medicine and continued my career in equine practice, specialising in sports and performance horse medicine. After a move for my husband's job in January, we are now resident in Suffolk, and I'm working in the racing industry in the Newmarket region.

Having left traditional veterinary practice earlier this year, my work would now probably fit into the category of a 'portfolio career'. I work part-time for the British Horseracing Authority at race meetings across the south east of England, and undertake research for them into poor performance in racehorses. This work provides collaboration with other areas of both veterinary and human medicine, and I am currently engaged in a research project with a group from Harvard University

into a heart condition that is commonly seen in marathon runners and racehorses. In addition, I run my own business as a locum, with some consultancy work in equine orthopaedics.

I now work mostly in the horseracing industry, which is still very male-dominated and faces enormous challenges in improving its record in diversity, not only with regard to gender but also race and sexuality. The last few years of my career have been spent in a role which has not been filled by a woman before, but fortunately there have been a lot of laughs and only a few tricky situations. I am certainly now more resilient, outspoken and confident in the workplace than I was previously.

“Helping others to develop their careers, particularly in the first five years, is something I find very rewarding.”

Helping to support and mentor other women in their veterinary careers has provided me with a lot of satisfaction. The attrition rate from veterinary medicine, particularly amongst women, is huge, and as a profession we still have very high rates of mental health issues and suicide. Helping others to develop their careers, particularly in the first five years, is something I find very rewarding.

SMASHING THE CEILING

After meeting several women at various events with unusual, quirky and interesting careers, I was really interested to hear the stories of how they ended up where

they were, so earlier this summer I started a podcast, *Smashing the Ceiling*, which tells the stories of inspiring women with unusual careers. It's amazing how often they had travelled a very circuitous route before reaching their goals. I thought that if I was interested, then other people probably would be too, so decided to start interviewing these women as part of a podcast series.

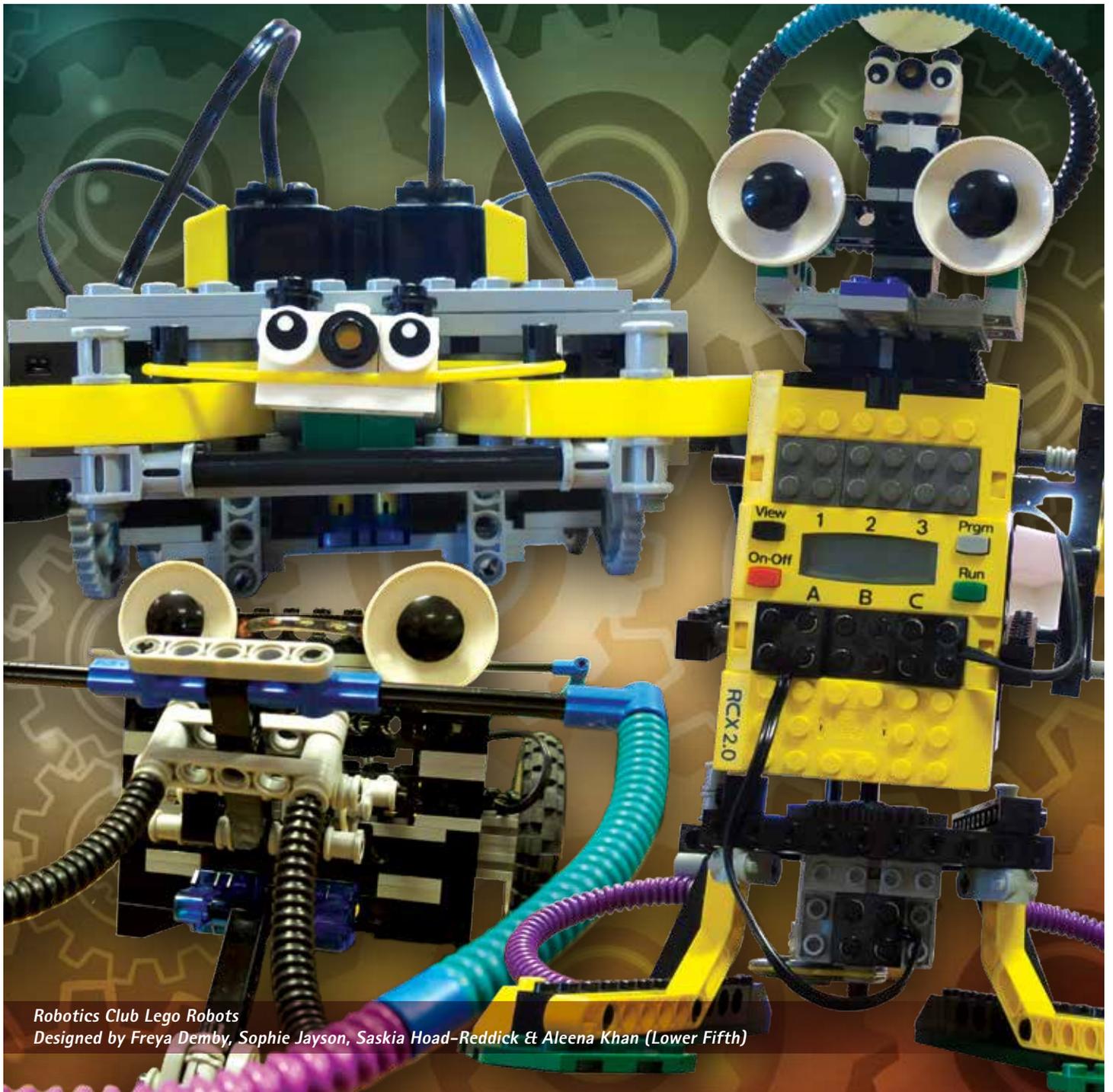
I have no experience in sound recording, editing or producing so getting the podcast out there and promoting it has been a steep learning curve but a brilliant experience all round. I love it. I'm always looking for guest suggestions so if anyone has any ideas please feel free to email me at smashingtheceiling@gmail.com

ADVICE FOR OTHERS

Networking is key. I didn't really understand this in the early part of my career, but recently most of my jobs have come through word of mouth. Speak to as many people as you can about the area you're interested in working in, use social media as a tool to meet people in your field and try to attend as many events as possible to widen your network. I have found women's networks useful so see if there are any for the area you work in.

Listen to 'Smashing the Ceiling' via the podcasts app or on their website: smashingtheceiling.libsyn.com/website

innovation^{and} engineering



*Robotics Club Lego Robots
Designed by Freya Demby, Sophie Jayson, Saskia Hoad-Reddick & Aleena Khan (Lower Fifth)*



Louise Maynard-Atem (Class of 2004)

The Importance of Women in STEM Careers

Since graduating with a Chemistry degree from Nottingham University, Louise Maynard-Atem (Class of 2004) has used her analytical skills to forge a career developing innovative processes and solutions across varied markets. Named one of the 'Top 50 Women in Engineering' in 2018, here Louise tells us more about her work and the importance of women in STEM careers.

After leaving Withington, I studied Chemistry at Nottingham University and realised it was something I really enjoyed and had quite a knack for. I had some vague ideas around what I might do after my course finished, but, in my second year, I discovered consulting. It seemed like the perfect career for me as you didn't need any specific background or skillset, you just needed to be smart. Decision made!

Upon graduating, I joined the Civil Service Fast Stream, which gave me a wonderful insight into how government works and how decisions are made. Working in the Civil Service helped to crystalize my thinking; I realised that I wanted to use the analytical rigour that I had developed through studying chemistry to solve challenging and impactful problems. My subsequent roles in BAE Systems and, most recently, Experian have allowed me to do just that.

I currently sit in the data innovation team in Experian. I'm responsible for designing new data driven products and services for emerging markets. My role is quite a mixed bag because it is global in purview. I am responsible for developing the innovation process that we use to develop new solutions, but this takes on slightly different forms depending on the markets that we're dealing with. Working in product design and development

means I sometimes get to witness the entire product lifecycle, from concept to implementation, which is always an amazing experience.

If I had to pick a specific highlight from my career, it would certainly be being named one of the Women in Engineering Society's 'Top 50 Women in Engineering' earlier this year. Working at BAE Systems presented me with a whole host of opportunities in various engineering disciplines that I never would have thought to pursue, so it was a great to be nominated and even better to make the top 50. It was incredibly inspiring to meet the other women and hear about their work and achievements.

WOMEN IN STEM

The world is rife with preconceptions and biases, whether conscious or unconscious, that throw up challenges on a near daily basis, especially as a woman of colour. I'm sure we've all read the statistics, and the gender pay gap reports that show the massive discrepancy between men and women in the workplace, especially as you climb the career ladder. Whilst I'm often disappointed that more progress hasn't been made, I think there is great potential for change.

The first step is for society to acknowledge that there is a problem, and I think that all organisations have accepted this to be true, at least at a high level. In every organisation I have worked in, there is the appreciation that a balanced workforce is beneficial to the bottom line; and there are countless initiatives to try drive greater diversity and inclusion. It remains to be seen how effective these initiatives will be, but the fact that people are working to make change is a strong and necessary first step.

I take issue with that fact that lots of young girls and women don't feel they can pursue careers in STEM. I think women should be able to pursue any career that they want to. Since leaving WGS I've worked in largely male environments and I've always struggled to understand why that was the case. Withington made me so accustomed to the notion that girls and women can do absolutely anything they set their minds to, and I'm incredibly disappointed that every young girl doesn't get to experience that environment.

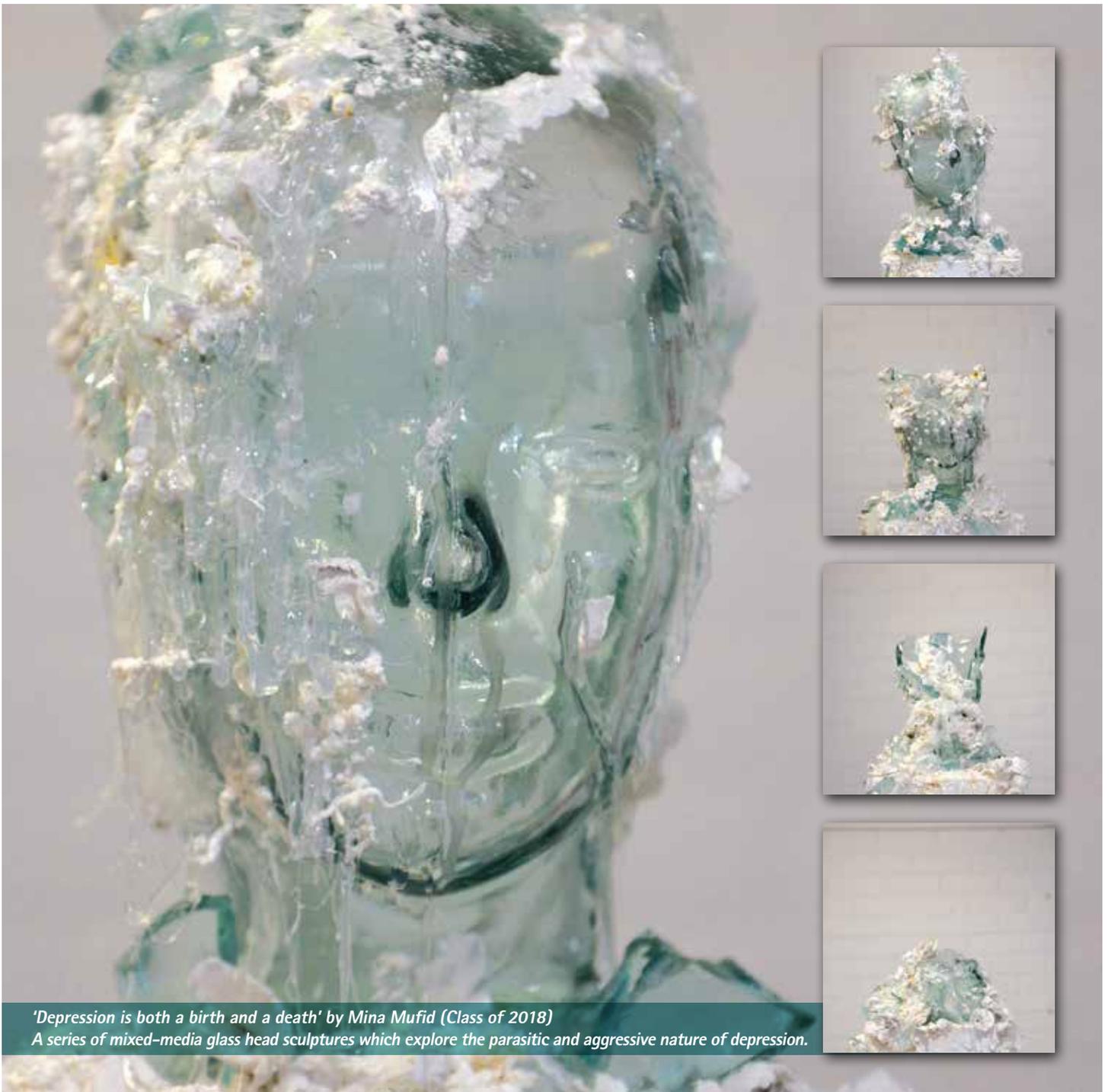
It's important for women to pursue STEM careers because they are some of the most fascinating I can think of. Of course I'm biased, but I genuinely think it's difficult to argue otherwise. They allow you to develop solutions to some of the most challenging problems and have real impact on all aspects of peoples' lives. Today's pace of change is so rapid, and society needs to harness its best minds, not just the best of 50% of the population.

ADVICE FOR OTHERS

The first piece of advice I received whilst at Withington was 'always do what you enjoy, and the rest will figure itself out'. I never had any idea what I wanted to do when I grew up, but I've always pursued the things that I enjoy and am passionate about, and things seem to be working out OK.

The second piece would be: always ask for help and offer help to others. I've learned that people want to help, and they're almost always flattered to be asked, so never be afraid to ask as you never know what that conversation might lead to. I don't think the impact that serendipity can have in working life should ever be played down. It can play as big of a role as talent and ability on some occasions. It all starts with asking questions.

medicine *and the* mould



*'Depression is both a birth and a death' by Mina Mufid (Class of 2018)
A series of mixed-media glass head sculptures which explore the parasitic and aggressive nature of depression.*



Dr Afshan Khawaja (Class of 1989)

Consultant Clinician, Psychiatry Specialist

When Afshan Khawaja joined Withington's Sixth Form in 1987, she was already fascinated by the amazing human brain. So, after achieving A Levels in mathematics, physics and chemistry, she headed to Leeds University to study medicine, specialising in psychiatry.

Now, Afshan is a consultant clinician, trained in general adult psychiatry with responsibility for 13 mental health patients sectioned under the Mental Health Act. She says, "I have the broadest training on the ward leading the multi-disciplinary team in improving patients' quality of care. I am a member of the BMA (British Medical Association) and I represent the doctors on the local negotiating committee, a formal role responsible for improving conditions for doctors. I am also undergraduate training lead, looking after medical students' work portfolios. I'm still very much hands on. I prefer spending my time on the ward and overseeing the daily care of each patient. In the Manchester area there are only about 50 consultants covering patient care."

The current financial climate within the NHS means that part of Afshan's role involves negotiating appropriate support and recovery care for her patients. Patient recovery is an important area of her work as psychosis can become a long-term condition. The key to recovery management is teaching patients to stay in control of their illness. It's about life-long management and treatment.

Afshan's job is varied and demanding. On call, she might attend police stations, A&E or peoples' homes and be first on the scene for specialist cases that make the news. "Even now, after 14 years, I still see new presentations in psychotic experiences. Psychosis is where a person's thoughts are chaotic and disordered. They may hear voices or experience a split

reality, including being unable to manage paranoid feelings. For example, I have dealt with people who are convinced aliens are coming or that the Millennium Bug in 2000 was a real bug. Today, terrorism features heavily. It is interesting to see how current culture influences the symptoms people suffer, but thankfully schizophrenia is not on the rise. However, we are seeing an increase in anxiety, PTSD and general stress impacting mental health."

Manchester is a key area for schizophrenia research and identifying those at early risk. The earlier a patient is diagnosed, the more successful treatment can be. For example, one may have a family history of the illness and in these cases decisions need to be made as to whether to pre-empt a possible case with medicine, monitor and wait for symptoms to arise or organise therapy from the outset. It is important that patients, both children and adults, receive psychological support, helping them to maintain a network of family and friends and lead a normal life.

Other exciting research emerging in this area is the understanding of genetics and why people become ill. Afshan says: "We think that schizophrenia is a result of changes in DNA, with a number of small variations to 10-12 genes, unlike Huntington's disease which has one gene ultimately responsible. The combination of genes and environmental factors may determine whether a person will develop psychosis in their lifetime. Through research we will identify why some people become ill and others not. However, it is very complex, and is not straightforward for psychiatrists."

The fields of neuroscience and psychiatry are becoming increasingly interlinked, but more still needs to be done. Afshan says, "Patients with psychosis may not present in the way that is expected, at which point a neuropsychiatrist may become

involved. They may find an underlying disease which is causing dementia with psychosis. The Manchester Centre of Clinical Neurosciences (MCCN) is one of the busiest neuroscience units in the UK and at Manchester University there are currently neuroscientists, psychiatrists, and psychologists coming together to understand brain receptors, chemistry and anatomy. Despite the fact that some medics are dual trained, there is a shortage of neurologists in Manchester, causing a long waiting list for patients."

Psychiatry has sometimes struggled to recruit new doctors, but it is an area that is fascinating, challenging and important for research and practice. Describing the issues around recruitment, Afshan says, "It is important to attract candidates early, but one of the problems we have is doctors influencing bright students to consider surgery or other areas. Sadly, I think psychiatry as a profession is not as respected as other medical areas. However, when students experience it as part of their foundation year, they are surprised just how flexible and fascinating this area can be. We are on the verge of many radical and exciting breakthroughs in neuroscience and psychiatry. It is an exciting time to join the profession."

Aware of the problems in recruitment for her profession, Afshan is currently working on outreach projects within schools, inviting both Withington students and those from other schools to an event next spring, where they will spend a day with medics, specialists and nurses who work at the Greater Manchester Mental Health Foundation NHS Trust. Afshan's daughters are also Withington pupils and, following in her mother's footsteps, her eldest daughter Zarafshan has just begun a degree in medicine at the University of Edinburgh.

fond farewells

Mrs Jane Clark Head of History



Mrs Jane Clark (formerly Ms Maher) left her role as Head of History to move to Dubai, where she has taken up a teaching position at Kent College. However, as

the lead organiser of WGS annual Uganda expeditions, she maintained her relationship with the school, accompanying 14 Sixth Form girls on a trip to the East African country in October. Mrs Clark has also been responsible for the school's Model United Nations and is immensely proud of our girls many successes in MUN competitions, with WGS teams having won every conference in which they have participated; "the only girls' school to do so," she said. "I have loved my time at Withington. I consider myself to be very fortunate to have chosen teaching as my career. It has given me so much."

Mrs Jill Savage Receptionist



Mrs Jill Savage left Withington to relocate to a new area after three years as the School's afternoon receptionist. With a background in PA

and administrative roles within a corporate environment, this was her first post in education. "I will miss the friends I have made during my three years at Withington and also the girls," she said.

Mrs Vanessa Scott Teacher of Mathematics



Mrs Scott has left Withington to take up a post closer to home, enabling her to spend more time with her two primary-school aged children. "I

am very sad to be leaving Withington," she said, recalling her WGS highlights as having included performing *The Sound of Music* with the Maths staff team for a charity fundraising 'lip-sync' battle, teaching many wonderful girls and working with an amazing department.

Dr David Verity Teacher of Physics



Dr David Verity has retired after 16 years as a Teacher of Physics and 12 years as Head of General Studies at Withington. Dr Verity was also an active staff member

in Withington's extensive extracurricular programme, having run the school's Robotics and Young Engineers clubs, and was the WGS staff representative for the interschool Manchester Philosophical Society (PhilSoc). "I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Withington and have met many exceptional colleagues and amazing pupils. It has been extremely rewarding to see the wonderful results every summer, both in Physics GCSE and A Level and the General Studies A-Level."

Mr Phil Wignall Teacher of Mathematics



Mr Phil Wignall left to take early retirement after joining the Mathematics department to cover a maternity leave last year. Mr Wignall plans to

pursue his interest in music and singing, with hopes to record his favourite songs. His considerable guitar and singing talent has been seen at school, when he won the charity Staff Talent Competition singing Don McLean's *Starry, Starry Night*, earning a standing ovation.

Mrs Uzma Asim Teacher of Science



Mrs Asim left after eight years as a part-time Teacher of Science to take up a full-time post at a school in Tameside. After her first term there, she

will move up to become Head of Biology. She said: "I have been very privileged to have had the opportunity to teach Science to bright and motivated girls at WGS. I will miss the many friends I have made over the years and wish the school, staff and students all the best."

Ms Nicola Kober Teacher of Biology



After joining Withington in September 2017 in a temporary maternity cover role, Nicola has moved on to another Manchester school to take

up a permanent position. Whilst at WGS, she assisted in mock medical interviews for university applicants, as well as being involved in Sixth Form induction interviews. "I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at WGS and have felt so welcomed into the community. I am going to really miss the students and staff here," she said.

Mrs Alice Neal Teacher of History



After three separate teaching stints at Withington, Mrs Neal left to relocate to Chester with her family. Mrs Neal, who is a graduate of Robinson

College, Cambridge, and the Courtauld Institute of Art, originally joined WGS in 2005 as a Teacher of History, leaving to have her two sons before returning to the school as a Cover Supervisor. After leaving in 2014, she returned again last year to teach History to Years 8 and 9 on a part-time basis. "I have loved the times I have spent at Withington. It was the foundation for me settling into the Manchester area and I have made many friends here whom I will miss."

Mrs Nichola Fasa Junior School Secretary



Mrs Fasa has left Withington to relocate to Malta with her husband and three young children. In her two years at the school, Nichola has

particularly enjoyed accompanying the girls on school trips, as well as assisting with the Art Club. "We have decided to have a change in lifestyle and emigrate to Malta. I will continue to look after my family for the next year and then will be looking for a new position, hopefully in a school on the island."

keep in touch

Alumnae Social Networking

Many thanks to everyone who gave permission for their news to be shared in this edition of *Withington Onwards*.

The Development Team continues to build its social networking sites to stay in touch with alumnae- both in the UK and worldwide. These online networks provide us with the opportunity to share alumnae news including careers updates, graduations, weddings, new arrivals, awards, travel and more.

Connect with us via Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn to reap the benefits of the wider Withington community. It is a brilliant opportunity to update us with your news, reconnect with other Old Girls, offer career and university support to the school and stay up to date with the exciting things happening at Withington today. We look forward to hearing from you!



[Facebook.com/WithingtonOnwards/](https://www.facebook.com/WithingtonOnwards/)

'Like' our Withington alumnae Facebook page

[Facebook.com/withingtongirlsschool/](https://www.facebook.com/withingtongirlsschool/)

Follow the school's Facebook page to keep up with day-to-day life at Withington



[linkedin.com/in/withingtononwards/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/withingtononwards/)

Our LinkedIn group is a great forum for offering and receiving careers advice and making professional connections from amongst the Withington community.



twitter.com/WGSAlumnae

Keep up to date with alumnae news and school updates.

Share your Success!

We are always on the look-out for Old Girls who are established in their careers to complete a 'Spotlight On' profile, no matter what sector you work in. These profiles are fantastic for inspiring our current pupils and young alumnae and encouraging them to think about their futures. We publish them in quarterly *School Bulletins*, on an interactive screen in the school's Careers Office, on the website and, of course, in our *Withington Onwards* magazines.

If you are relatively new to your career, you can also complete a 'First Step Career Q&A Profile'. If you'd like to complete a profile or share your news, please get in touch at development@wgs.org or on 0161 249 3494. We hope to hear from you!

Consent Campaign Update

In May 2018 new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) laws came into force which mean that charities like Withington Girls' School now need explicit consent for any marketing activities.

Following this, in the autumn we ran a consent campaign to reach out to our Withington Onwards community and ensure that, in future, we're only contacting you in the way you want to hear from us. Many thanks to those of you who took part in the project, either through an email or a telephone call, informing us of your subscription preferences and helping us to keep our database information accurate and up-to-date.

If you were not contacted during the consent campaign and would like to let us know how to keep in touch with you, or you want to update your consent preferences in the future, you can do so by calling the Development Office on 0161 249 3494 or emailing development@wgs.org. If you would rather update your details online, please visit development.wgs.org/login to create your profile and update your details.

We are proud of our warm relationships and vibrant Withington community network, and these important links are crucial to the ongoing success of the school. We enjoy updating you via this magazine, our e-newsletters, and invitations to reunions and events and we hope that you enjoy keeping in touch with us too.

Mr Matt Kowalczuk

Performing Arts Assistant Technician



After two years at Withington, Mr Kowalczuk has relocated to Stratford-upon-Avon with his family. An active member of the school's Drama

Department, Matt enjoyed helping to run Tech Club and Kino Club and assisted with film-making courses as part of the WGS enrichment programme. He says: "I have really enjoyed my time at the school. The staff and the girls are lovely, and I hope I have been able to pass on some knowledge and skills."

Mrs Louise Jefferies Registrar



Mrs Louise Jefferies has left Withington to take up a post closer to home. Louise joined the School in 2001, working in the Main School Office and also had

two other administrative roles supporting the Careers Department and the Junior School. In recent years, Louise became the School's first Registrar, guiding prospective parents through the admissions process. Louise's daughters attended WGS all the way through from Juniors to Sixth Form. Ella left in 2009 and is now a medical doctor in general practice. Annie graduated in Economics at UCL and is now taking up qualifications as a chartered accountant, working in the City of London.

Miss Nikki Armstrong Art Technician



Miss Nikki Armstrong has gone on to pastures new, having worked as an Art Technician since the Summer of 2016.

Miss Armstrong also had extensive extracurricular involvement, running a 'miniature art' club for Third Form pupils. She also contributed to Art Summer Camps, leading imaginative art and craft projects for boys and girls from all around Manchester.

news of former pupils

VERA COHEN née Betesh (Class of 1934)
OLGA HALON née Betesh (Class of 1938)



In September, Vera and her sister Olga were in the spotlight as Manchester City's mascots for their match against Fulham. Lifelong City fans Vera and Olga have been season ticket holders since their school days in the 1930s. When she visited Withington back in 2016, Vera recalled how one of her strongest memories from school was hearing the matches take place when the team were based nearby at their Maine Road stadium. Before the match, Vera was led through the tunnel and onto the pitch by David Silva, and Olga by Fernandinho. The sisters met Pep Guardiola afterwards, and Vera expressed her hopes that he would be able to stay on as City manager for as long as she had been watching the football- the next 85 years! They were certainly very lucky mascots, as City went on to beat Fulham in a 3-0 victory!

JOYCE HYTNER née Myers OBE (Class of 1954)



In July, Joyce was awarded an Honorary Doctorate (DArt) from Manchester Metropolitan University in recognition of her 'significant contribution to the arts and culture community, and her invaluable support of the Manchester International Festival.' Congratulations Joyce!

BARBARA THACKRAY née Hughes (Class of 1957)

Barbara writes, "I am settling in to life in the Washington DC suburb of Chevy Chase after moving from the Virginia shore last year. I am still in touch with Patricia Clark (née Wakeham) and Margaret Stocks (née Bethell) and always look forward to news of other WGS friends.

I find that living in a comfortable condo alongside a walking trail into central Bethesda, in a friendly community, makes for an interesting retirement. To fill in some of the spare time, I am volunteering to teach English to a couple of recent immigrants, one from South Korea and one from Iran.

I spend a couple of hours a week working through simple math with a gentleman who grew up in Georgia but failed math in high school. He is 61 but currently out of work due to his lack of a Graduation Certificate. During the school year I also join a group of 'lunch buddies' who work on reading with students at an elementary school during their lunch time.

I am volunteering at our local adoption centre for cats and dogs, playing with the kittens that are passing through and the older cats whose life is very boring while they wait. We help the cats get used to being handled and coming out of their cages to play for a while.

Outside of that I enjoy seeing my daughter's family, watching their diving team, hearing William's trombone in school concerts and walking their springer spaniel. Annie is learning to do stage lighting for school plays.

In a couple of weeks I shall be going to visit my other daughter, to meet up in Albuquerque and then spend a week in Berkeley. Berkeley is on the hills inland from the bay, so dog walking is good exercise and even just going downhill for coffee presents some good views.

I still go up to Pennsylvania to visit my autistic son regularly. It gives me a chance to see more green hills and the DuPont estates up there. He lives close to the Valley Forge Park, of 1778 fame. Visitors are welcome if you are going to be in DC or the area."

AILSA CLEGG née Chester (Class of 1958)



Ailsa sent us an updated version of a photograph taken at Withington in 1957! The black and white photo, taken in one of Miss Verity's physics lessons, shows a group of friends including Ailsa Clegg (née McDonald), second from left and Helen Houghton (née Childs), fourth from left.

The second photo, taken in November this year, shows Ailsa and Helen now. Ailsa says, "We both left Withington in 1958 to study Maths at Nottingham University but after teaching careers are now well and truly retired."

SALLY SPEDDING née Wolff (Class of 1961)



Sally writes, "While in France, working on my latest crime thriller, I received news from Richard Foreman of Sharpe Books that I would be receiving a contract for seven books, beginning with *The*

Nighthawk, which is set in this very same area of the eastern Pyrenees. The first in a trilogy featuring John Lyon, a newly-retired former detective inspector from Nottingham CID, who makes a big mistake by straying off the beaten track while en-route to see his sister near Perpignan. The other four books, set near Le Mans, feature a young hotel chambermaid, Delphine Rougier, who, in Footfall, longs to become a gendarme. She will. Thank you again to Sheila Walsh, my inspiring English teacher all those years ago!"

VALERY REES née Apley (Class of 1964)



Valery writes, "Just back from a fascinating trip to Sri Lanka, Mauritius and Australia. Combining work and visits is a great way to travel, as we were able to meet so many people with shared interests but fresh perspectives, as well as seeing some places of great beauty, from a tea plantation in Kandy to the new port in Colombo; bird life and wooded hills in Mauritius, and four Australian cities. Memorable moments there include eating our breakfast watched by wallabies in the garden eating theirs - as well as the magnificent Sydney Opera House and harbour."

Earlier this spring Valery enjoyed a visit to St Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai Peninsula, and its unique library.

DIANA WOOLDRIDGE née Hall (Class of 1965)

Diana writes, "After retirement I fulfilled an ambition dating back to Withington, thanks to Miss Harrison in the Art Room, by doing an MA in Art History at Sussex University. I'm now a volunteer guide at Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, doing talks and tours on 20th century art."

BRIDGET EICKHOFF (Class of 1974)

Bridget writes, "I am very pleased to have been made an Honorary Professor in the School of Engineering in the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences at the University of Birmingham. The professorship commenced in April 2018 and will last three years, giving me a close association with Birmingham as one of the leading academic centres of excellence in rail. I have been involved with BCRRE (Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education) in a number of ways for some years and I look forward to continuing to support work that enhances the influence of railway engineering in both industry and academia."

LORRAINE ROGERSON (Class of 1976)



Lorraine says, "I've been awarded an MA in Creative Writing with a Distinction from the University of Kent. I'm working on a novel set in 1921, about bigamy, betrayal, loss, grief, and the search for solace."

JANE HOBBS née Mamelok (Class of 1978)



Jane says, "After 30 years as a GP (with an interest in education) I was delighted to be appointed as Professor and Dean of Postgraduate Medical Studies in 2016.

I am responsible for medical and dental workforce training and education across the whole of the North West of England from Barrow in Furness to the North Staffs border, Mersey and Fylde coast to West Yorkshire border.

It's a fantastic opportunity to shape the health care service and influence national and local policy and it's been the highlight of my career; however, I am not planning to retire any time soon!"

JANE WOODS née Ailsa Jane Evans (Class of 1980)



Jane writes, "In October 2017, I gave birth to our son Aaron John Baverstock (AJ). In August 2018, AJ was christened. Family and friends including Sarah Haselgrove and

Meryl Wynne (WGS) joined us. AJ is my fiancé Alan's and my first child. Living in Oxfordshire, we recently moved into the house we built.

I attended WGS from 1972 until 1980 (Upper Sixth) and was known as Jane Evans (full maiden name Ailsa Jane Evans). I joined IBM (UK) as a Systems Engineer in 1984, having gained BA (Hons) Business Studies; and married William Woods in 1986. We were married 12 years."

EMMA ANTROBUS (Class of 1987)



Emma writes, "I have a new job as NW Director for the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) which focuses on encouraging young people into civil engineering and career development towards professional qualifications.

Despite not being an engineer myself (I studied Industrial and Business Systems at university) I have spent time during my career working for Alstom in rail engineering and, most recently, on the HS2 project in developing the plans and designs for a new railway up to Manchester.

A large part of my role is promoting the role of civil engineers to government and the wider community, and a key part of that is explaining to young people about the opportunities that a career in engineering can bring so that they maximise their opportunities for learning and access the best routes to further and higher education to fulfil their potential.

In my spare time I am a trustee on two multi-academy trusts in Manchester, responsible for three high schools and three primary schools."

Share Your News!

Thank you to all the alumnae and former staff who have shared their news across these pages. We love hearing your updates, so if you have any news you would like to share for publication on our social media channels or in the next edition of *Withington Onwards*, please email it to development@wgs.org Don't forget to include a photo!

news of former pupils

MARGARET NEAL (Class of 1991)
RUTH NEAL (Former Staff)



Former WGS teacher Ruth wrote to inform us, "My husband Keith and I have just returned from a trip to Kenya with our daughter Margaret (WGS Class of 1991). We spent two nights at Kimillili in the IcfEM Guest House. Solomon and Ruth looked after us wonderfully and send their greetings to Withington.

Ruth took us to Lugulu Girls' School where former WGS pupil Ann Lipson (Class of 1956) spent over 25 years teaching physics. In the 1990s Withington pupils helped raise the money for a bore hole there. I was very impressed at the progress since my last visit in 2001. It remains a leading girls' school in Western Kenya with over one thousand boarders. The Nabies' two daughters went there.

I attach three photos, one showing Ruth Nabie, the deputy head, Mrs Margaret Kataka, Margaret and myself. And a second showing Keith and me outside the school. And one of Margaret giving Ruth some gifts for the IcfEM school."



KATY THOMPSON née Barnett (Class of 1994)

Katy writes, "I have just been promoted to professor, effective 1st January 2019, at Melbourne Law School, University of Melbourne, Australia. My main area of expertise is private law remedies, and I have published many papers and several books in that area."

CHARLOTTE WEST (Class of 1996)



Charlotte says, "I have just started a new role as Head of Compliance for Corporate, Commercial and Business Banking at RBS. This continues my progression at the bank, having previously led the Large Corporate Portfolio Management Team and also worked in debt capital markets. Prior to moving to RBS, I spent five years at JP Morgan and five years at Citigroup working in corporate finance and capital markets."

AMY MCKEOWN (Class of 1998)



Baby Bear Arthur Jack McKeown Dalton arrived on the Ides of March 2018 to Amy McKeown and Matt Dalton. Amy writes that big sister Ivy was delighted and has been a great help.

RUTH MOLONEY (Class of 1999)



Ruth writes, "I was married in November 2017 in Franschhoek, South Africa, to my husband Marc, who is half Swiss, half South African. We live in Rheinfelden, Switzerland, where I use my BA Honours in French and German every day! Jo and Naomi, my best friends from Withington, were my beautiful bridesmaids!"

HELEN THORNLEY (Class of 1999)



Helen writes, "I met with 'my' headmistress Margaret Kenyon in October at a 'First Ladies' event in London. The event was partly celebrating the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918, which gave voting rights for (some) women and partly anticipating the centenary next year of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 which opened the professions to women.

Although I now work in tax as a technical officer for the Association of Taxation Technicians, I started my career with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW). Until the 1919 Act was passed, the ICAEW's Charter did not permit the admission of women and my talk was about the first woman to complete her training with the ICAEW following the 1919 Act - Ethel Watts.

The First Ladies event was organised by the Bedford Society, a society for alumni of Bedford College which now forms part of Royal Holloway. One of the committee members, Professor Caroline Barron, went to Oxford with Mrs Kenyon and made the connection when I said I'd been to Withington and invited Mrs Kenyon to come, which she kindly did.

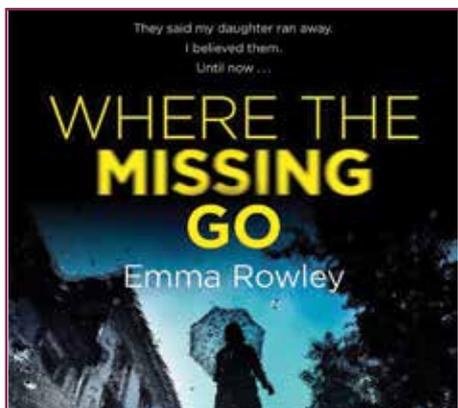
I have to say that presenting in front of Mrs Kenyon was even more intimidating than sharing a platform with Dame Rosemary Spencer (a former British ambassador to the Netherlands) and a number of history academics - not least as Mrs Kenyon knows she sent me out in the world with a number of maths and science A Levels and not a single history qualification to my name!"

CAROLINE HOWE (Class of 2000)



Caroline writes, "I have just been made a permanent member of staff at Imperial College London, where I am a Lecturer in Ecosystem Science in the Centre for Environmental Policy. I am the Research Theme Lead on the Human Dimensions of Environmental Change, looking at biodiversity, ecosystems and sustainable development. I'm also our Athena SWAN chair, championing diversity and gender equality and women in STEM within the department and wider university. I live in Lancaster with my husband and three daughters, Isla, Erin and Orla, so currently playing the commuting mum – spending two or three days a week in London and working from home for the rest of the week. The photo is from when I did Soapbox Science (raising profile of women in science) in Manchester Piccadilly Gardens, whilst also pregnant with my third daughter in 2016."

EMMA ROWLEY (Class of 2000)



Congratulations to Emma whose novel, *Where the Missing Go*, was published earlier this year by Orion. The book, described as a 'gripping, twisty psychological thriller' has received fantastic reviews since its release and makes for excellent, suspense filled reading!

CATHERINE GOODACRE (Class of 2002)



Catherine says, "In April, I became managing editor of Hearst UK's TV and film website Digital Spy, assisting our editor-in-chief and other senior staff and specialising in keeping things running as smoothly as possible behind the scenes. We were named the PPA's Digital Content Team of the Year for the second year in a row just a few weeks ago. It's testament to the collaborative, caring attitude of my talented work family, and after eight years there, they are family now. Here I am with some of them (I'm the one with the purple highlights in my hair, of course)."

SARAH SIMPSON née Heap (Class of 2002)



Sarah writes, "My family and I were on the BBC's Countryfile on Sunday 21st October! We were being featured as part of their 2018 Autumn special." Sarah and her husband were interviewed about their business, The Random Apple Company, who use apples that would otherwise go to waste to create natural, pure juices from their juicing room in Macclesfield. You can find out more about the Random Apple Company at swanscoe.co.uk.

BARBARA DREW (Class of 2004)



In November 2018 Barbara Drew became a Master of Wine, one of only 380 people in the world to hold this prestigious qualification. MWs have proved their understanding of all aspects of wine by passing the Master of Wine (MW) examination, recognised worldwide for its rigour and high standards. Barbara started her career in the wine industry seven years ago and currently works as a wine and spirit educator at the UK's oldest wine and spirit merchant, Berry Bros. & Rudd.

ABBY ROSE SCHLAGETER (Class of 2005)

Well done to Abby for making it onto the Observer's list of '50 New Radicals in 2018' earlier this year. This biennial list praises Abby Rose's work creating 'simple apps that support small to medium-scale farmers to build ecology, profitability and beauty on their farms'.

LAURA HONG née Hazeldine (Class of 2006)



Laura writes, "I would like to share news of the arrival of my daughter Freya Zhehui Hong, born on 2nd February 2018. She is adored by her big brother Noah and is a very lucky lady to have not one but two old Withington girls as her godmothers – Harraj Panesar and Jenny Stones. I have no doubt that she will be spoilt rotten!"

news of former pupils

FRANCESCA PATHAK (Class of 2006)



Francesca writes, "Since leaving Withington and completing my degree in Politics and American Studies at Nottingham, I then went on to study for an MA in Publishing at City University, London. I started

work in 2011 as an editorial assistant for Penguin Random House where I was involved in the publication of numerous celebrity autobiographies including Rod Stewart, Russell Brand and David Jason as well as fiction phenomenon *Fifty Shades of Grey*, Harper Lee's *Go Set a Watchman* and Ernie Cline's *Ready Player One*.

I am now working as a Senior Commissioning Editor in Crime Fiction for Hachette and have spent the last two months on an exchange programme living and working in New York. I have come across some incredible people throughout my career so far, but the absolute highlight was meeting JK Rowling last year. As all of my Withington friends know (and as the teachers probably remember!) this was quite a big deal for me, but luckily the phrase 'never meet your heroes' was not at all relevant in this case!"

ANGELA SAGHIV née Beer (Class of 2007)



Angela Beer, now Saghiv, has married Yaron Saghiv. They were married in Jaffa, Israel, with many Withingtonians attending. Tamar Fyne and Jessica Greenwood served as bridesmaids and Charlie Deans serenaded the crowd for the first dance with her rendition of Billy Joel's *She's Always a Woman*. The Withington girls proudly sang *Gaudeamus* with vigour at a Tel Aviv bar the night before.

ALEXANDRA STRATTON née Lever (Class of 2009)



Alexandra writes, "I got married in June to former MGS pupil, Michael Stratton. Our wedding took place at Delamere Manor, Cheshire. Luckily, we were blessed with incredible sunshine for our perfect day which meant we could have our ceremony and reception outside overlooking the spectacular lake, followed by Israeli dancing and celebrations in the Manor's own nightclub.

My beautiful bridesmaids included two of my closest Withington friends: Bex Wynn and Liberty Bridge, and our witness was Caroline Sciamia. Many Withington, MGS and Man High alumnae celebrated with us. We had the most magical day and are so excited for our future together as Mr and Mrs Stratton."

ROSE ACTON, KIM MEADOWCROFT & STEPH SIDDALL (Class of 2010)



In September Rose, Kim and Steph completed the Coast to Coast Challenge in Scotland. This involved running, cycling and kayaking for 105 miles across the Scottish Highlands - all in support of the charity Bloody Good Period (founded by Withington alumna Gabby Edlin).

They write, "BGP aims to create a sustainable flow (pun intended) of essential sanitary products for people who can't afford them, and to provide menstrual education to those less likely to access it. We raised £3,100 which will buy 18,500 pads! The challenge was long and painful, much like a period...but it was all worth it for the opportunity to raise awareness of period poverty."

They are still accepting donations, please email rose@adiahealth.com for the link to the page.

SUZIE HALL (Class of 2011)



Suzie writes, "This year, I had a fantastic trip across the Americas. I was away for 15 months in total, starting and ending my trip at OrcaLab in Canada. I spent six months in Patagonia, three weeks living on a remote island in the Magellan Strait, and two months working in an isolated ranch on the Argentine coast. I lived in a tiny town also on the Argentine coast, hitch-hiking every day to Punta Norte Beach, where orcas come to capture seals by throwing their whole body onto the beach to grab them. It has been my dream to see this behaviour since I was about 12 years old.

I then spent a month working on a 140ft tall ship - The Adventuress - off the coast of Washington State. Sailing from Seattle to the San Juan Islands, we ran educational programs for children and adults. It was truly one of the highlights of my trip, I made some friends for life and totally caught the sailing bug."

CHLOE PRAGER née Goldich (Class of 2011)



Chloe writes, "I got married to Rob Prager at the Principal Hotel in Manchester in April. Our wedding party was in the same room that we had our Withington Leavers' Ball in 2011, although it looks very different these days! Two great Withington friends were there to celebrate with us, Talisa Ross and Charlotte Lisberg.

I am now living in London and really enjoying my career as a clinical pharmacist at Watford General Hospital."

REBECCA LIVESEY (Class of 2011)

Rebecca writes, "After undertaking pupillage and graduating from my LLM in litigation and dispute resolution with a Distinction, I have accepted an offer of tenancy at No5 Chambers in London. Very

relieved and happy that years of hard work have paid off. Particular thanks to fellow alumna Laura Johnson who has offered valuable guidance along the way!"

CHLOE ADLESTONE (Class of 2012)

"After following my passion for diamonds and coloured stones, I recently graduated as a Graduate Gemologist from the Gemological Institute of America. In the 'Graduate Diamonds' section of the course you learn to grade diamonds, and in the 'Graduate Coloured Stones' section you learn to identify stones. The course was six months long full time. I absolutely loved it, and I am now a Management Trainee at Beaverbrooks the Jewellers."

REBECCA BURGUM (Class of 2013)

Rebecca has joined *ELLE UK* as features assistant. She will be working with the features director and associate editor/culture director, across features in the magazine, including the '10 Things' page. Becky joins *ELLE* having recently graduated from Central Saint Martin's where she founded the magazine *Galchester*.

JESSICA GREENWOOD (Class of 2013)

Jessica says, "After five years at the University of Birmingham I graduated with a masters in Chemical Engineering (MEng) this July and will be moving down to London in September to start my new job in technology consulting with Deloitte."

ELLIE JOHNSTON (Class of 2014)

Ellie got in touch to inform us that she has this year graduated from the University of Edinburgh with an MA in Business Management.

PEARL PALFREYMAN (Class of 2015)

Pearl tells us, "I have graduated with a first from Durham University studying geography (BA) and my dissertation was nominated by Durham for the Participatory Geographies Research Group dissertation prize."

SITARA BARTLE (Class of 2017)

Sitar writes, "I completed my Senior Dinghy Instructor course on the Isle of Man in early September 2018. The continued support and encouragement from Withington, especially during my time in Sixth Form, helped to boost my self-confidence and persuaded me to apply for the course. I'm immensely grateful to everyone who is involved at WGS as it is such a special community which I feel privileged to be part of. The photo shows me on the ferry from Port Douglas to Heysham on my return after having successfully passed the course and obtained my RYA (Royal Yachting Association) accredited qualification."

MAISY DEYKIN (Class of 2017)

Maisy wrote to announce the birth of her little girl, Freya Deykin-Osborne, on 28th August 2018 and says she is absolutely smitten with her!

SUE MARKS (Former Head, 2010–2016)

Sue writes, "I thought I would share just a few words about what I have been up to since I retired from Withington in August 2016.

As intended, my main activity over the past two years has been studying part-time for an MA degree in Systematic and Philosophical Theology. The course was every bit as challenging and rewarding as I had hoped, and I'm thrilled to say I have passed with Distinction; I shall be graduating next month. As part of my MA I wrote a dissertation on the 'dialogue of the deaf' between theology and economics, and I gave a paper on this topic to the Association of Christian Economists in Cambridge last summer. I have enjoyed my return to academic study so much that I am currently applying to pursue doctoral research in this field. Like my hearing, my memory doesn't work as well as it once did, but I am learning how to compensate for this!

I have recently been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, which brings me into contact with people with similar interests in the advancement of knowledge and enhancement of society.

Although I now live in Hampshire, which is close enough for my children to visit for weekends, I am maintaining my longstanding links with the North West. I am a Feoffee of Chetham's Hospital and Library, as well as a Trustee of the WGS Trust, and I travel up to visit my father and brother (who both live in Wilmslow) about once every month. I was delighted to attend the formal opening of the splendid new sports facilities at Withington, and to attend a performance of *The Phantom of the Opera* in the summer. I am looking forward to my next visit to school, and am truly thrilled to see it going from strength to strength!

Our cats Teasel and Willow ("The Brave") are in excellent health and have adjusted well to their new home. Sadly, we had to say goodbye to both our beautiful dogs last year. Barley was eight and Bracken was nearly 13 when they both succumbed to unconnected but untreatable illnesses. We miss them, but have our hands full with Sorrel, our 15-month old black Labrador puppy. Life is never dull! I send my love and best wishes to all at Withington."

lives remembered

Catherine Grigsby née Stott (Class of 1961)



14 April 1943 – 15 July 2018

Catherine lived with her parents in Heaton Moor, Stockport and attended Withington Girls' School from 1954, leaving (much to the consternation of her teachers and classmates) earlier than usual in 1959.

In a 2015 Round Robin of old WGS classmates, Catherine described herself in a succinct, truly journalistic manner:

"After leaving WGS, I went to school in Switzerland, Paris and Rome to learn languages. At age 18, I won the *Vogue* talent contest, for which the prize was a job on the magazine; a heady, rarefied atmosphere for a little provincial girl, but tremendous fun and enabled me quickly to acquire a patina of sophistication!"

Next, she went on to the *Daily Express* as a feature writer,

"The beginning of a roller-coaster ride in Fleet Street that lasted 50 years, apart from a move to the *Scottish Daily Mail* when, at age 20, I married (Sir) George Reid (then a broadcast journalist, later a politician). Back to Fleet Street and several years on *The Guardian* as the profile writer (you name 'em, I interviewed 'em!) and I won The Catherine Pakenham Award for Young Journalist of the Year, and a Granada What the Papers Say Award. The executive life beckoned and I became women's editor of the *Sunday Telegraph* for ten years, a coveted job encompassing fashion, beauty, food, wine and human interest. Then a move over to the *Daily Telegraph* as chief woman feature writer, leading to my most enjoyable job, that of travel writer. A dream job, always sitting at the front of the plane, staying in 5-star hotels - from Acapulco to Zanzibar and everywhere in between, which lasted 20 years and didn't cost me a penny."

In 1994, Catherine married John Grigsby, local government correspondent with *The Daily Telegraph*. During their marriage, they enjoyed restoring a series of homes. They first lived in Blackheath and Islington, and then bought Trafalgar House, an 18th-century naval officer's house in the village of Selling in Kent, where they gave a party for the entire village on the bicentenary of Nelson's great victory in 2005. Catherine only retired when her husband was diagnosed with brain cancer. Catherine nursed him at home in St. Dunstan's, Canterbury, during his terminal illness. He died on 9 October 2012.

Catherine is survived by her daughters, Caroline and Charlotte and three grandchildren, Alice, Sophie and William. Catherine also leaves behind her partner, Ian Cooling, a retired diplomat.

I had known Catherine since we were about 8 or 9, as her father was my father's boss on the *News Chronicle* and she and her parents were wonderfully hospitable to me over the years. I was at her well-attended funeral and burial in Selling, at which I was privileged to read a beautiful poem by Christina Rossetti.

Jane Lewis née Forrest (Class of 1961)

Suzanne Bloom (Class of 1978)



**6th September 1960
– 27th June 2018**

Suzanne (Suzie) passed away in Melbourne Australia, her home for the past 13 years. She was a shining star to all in her circle; vibrant, exciting, caring, selfless, beautiful, magnetic and sparkling.

For many, Suzie's passing was a great shock. She had however been ill for many years with cancer but was adamant throughout her illness, that her condition be kept secret to protect her two children. She was incredibly brave.

She loved her schooldays at WGS, despite minimal contributions to the sporting arena, and a tendency to daydream in Latin lessons! Suzie went off to study at Leeds University where she acquired her BA Hons and a Masters in Personnel Management

In London, Suzie was truly successful and respected in her chosen career in human resources management. I think it is fair to say she was one of the women who broke the glass ceiling in the eighties and nineties, rising to be the human resources director at Pearson, in an era where such senior positions for women were rare. Along the way she also treated people kindly.

She lived by my mother Marlene's motto, "Never stamp on the way up, those you might meet on the way down." In essence, she treated everyone the same, whatever their so-called status or wealth. A very good code to live by. Numerous of her colleagues have written to tell me how Suzie was the first person to believe in them and launch their careers.

Like our mother, Suzie loved to party and indulge in exuberant dancing to Arabic music. There was a serious side to Suzanne as she was a very charitable girl, working constantly on committees to raise substantial sums for social welfare organisations

Suzie was such a devoted mum to Coco who is now 20 and Harry, now 12. I know she spent every day of her second career as a chauffeur for her kids' choir classes, scattered around distant corners of Melbourne.

It paid off; both are fabulous opera singers, with Harry singing solos professionally with Opera Australia, and Coco winning a coveted place in Melbourne University's Conservatorium to study Voice.

On a lighter note, the undisputed highlight of her life was the occasion in her forties when she reached out and touched her hero Donny Osmond's knee through a convenient tear in his jeans. As her son Harry says: "there are no confirmed reports that she ever washed that hand again!"

We will miss her wit, enormous and constant sunny smile, *joie de vivre*, and unique Manchester humour. In memory of Suzie, may I recommend you try to keep on smiling and laughing.

Elizabeth Bernbaum née Bloom (Class of 1983)

Barbara Klein (Class of 1961)



**4th November 1942
– 4th March 2018**

Barbara joined Withington in form 3Y in 1954. In 1965, following A Levels in French, Latin and German, Barbara went to live in the USA, where she worked for some time in the Bank of America in California. It was a period of her life that she very much enjoyed.

In 1979, when her father became seriously ill, Barbara returned to England to help care for him. She continued her working life in retail and took up what would become a big interest in her life, the (Lady) Masons, where she rose to become Worshipful Master of several lodges.

Barbara was a member of the Senior Club and Withington Onwards committee from 2002–2012. She was the Treasurer during this time, keeping the books impeccably. She also helped Val Hempstock (née Winstanley) to organise the school archive material and showed her love of Withington when helping to look after all the written documents and photographs so carefully. Barbara will be remembered for the way she did everything for the Old Girls of Withington with a quiet elegance and charm.

Barbara enjoyed travelling and made regular visits to Germany and Vienna to see her pen-friend Karina and her family. She loved reading and was interested in history, spending considerable time researching her family tree. Upon her death, it transpired that Barbara had bequeathed her large collection of books to Withington Girls' School, which included many interesting history books and classic novels. These books have been a very valuable addition to the school library.

Barbara passed away in a nursing home in Alderley Edge in March 2018 following a long period of ill health. Barbara's funeral was held on Thursday 29th March and attended by a number of her former Withington classmates.

Marie Green (Former Head of English)



1954 – 2018

It seems all too short a time since writing about Marie in the 2004 *Newsletter* when she took up the Headship at Polam Hall School in Darlington, after 14 years as Head of English at Withington.

A gifted classroom teacher, Marie inspired generations of pupils with her enthusiasm for literature. An avid reader herself, she engendered a life-long love of the written word in many. Her reading lists – given as a 'challenge' for the summer holidays – were long-remembered and, by popular request, in 2016 she drew up another to help raise funds for Withington. A lover of drama and the theatre, Marie produced and directed many plays and musicals in her time at Withington. Always inclusive, and finding a role for all those who wanted to be involved, her productions of *My Fair Lady*, *Daisy Pulls It Off*, and a wonderful outdoor version of *Animal Farm*, amongst many others, will be long remembered.

She was a great innovator; one of her initiatives was to train girls in the then Lower and Upper Fifth as guides for Open Days, which was assessed and used as part of their oral communication skills for their GCSE English Language examination. This not only encouraged many girls to overcome their shyness when showing visitors around, but also provided excellent ambassadors for the school. The annual Stratford trips which she and Monica Hastings organised were always memorable. Discussions of the plays at the interval, over dinner, and long into the night with staff, stimulated a great love for the theatre and Shakespeare in many.

In her years at Polam Hall School she worked tirelessly on recruitment of pupils and maintenance of high academic standards in a school she came to love, always retaining a close interest in all the pupils and encouraging them to fulfil their potential.

Her relatively short retirement was very active. She was an extremely enthusiastic and valued member of the Darlington branch of the Rotarians, participating in a great number of fundraising activities and retaining her connection with young people as chair of the Vocational Service Committee, eventually becoming junior vice-president last year. She used her expertise in education as a governor of several independent schools, including Wakefield Grammar School Foundation and the Chorister School in Durham. At the other end of the age spectrum, she was a trustee of the Abbeyfield Darlington Society, taking over as chair in 2017. She spent a great deal of her time visiting and entertaining the elderly residents.

As a friend, Marie was kind, generous and always great fun. She loved puzzles and word games, and she was a crossword fanatic. She was a wonderful source of reading recommendations and visits to bookshops and the Edinburgh Book Festival were stimulating and, invariably, expensive! She continued her love of the theatre and cinema, relishing robust and thought-provoking discussions. Always 'larger than life', Marie is greatly missed, following her sudden death earlier this year.

Dr Mary McDonald (Former Deputy Head)

In Memoriam

Joan Hodgson, former member of staff at Withington, sadly passed away earlier this year. Joan was a key figure in the school office for many years, before moving to Australia when her son emigrated. Further information will be included in the next edition of *Withington Onwards*.

