

FARNHAM GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL: OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER NO. 46 2016

www.farnhamians.org/oga

AN IMPORTANT LATE ADDITION FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am sorry to have to tell you that our secretary Gill Picken will be resigning from her post at the A.G.M. in September this year. She has been a great asset to the Association and has done a tremendous job sorting out the membership lists, and been the champion organiser of all our recent parties. Her efficiency and enthusiasm know no bounds and she will be sorely missed.

This means that from the A.G.M. onwards we will be without a Secretary unless SOMEONE comes forward to take Gill's place. Without a Secretary, the Association will cease to function and our Lunch, Reunion and A.G.M. cannot happen. We will not be able to circulate the Newsletter as we will not have up to date membership lists.

This would make 24th September 2016 our final event which would be extremely sad.

We also need more members for the Committee as we have been working with short numbers for some time now.

If you would consider either of these opportunities, please contact me (details below).

Pat Turner (Atkinson)

OFFICERS 2015/16

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Committee: Gladys Sheath (Rummery), Claire Burden, Sandra Cranswick (Philpott);

Iris Gatfield (Parrott); Jean Spencer (Allen); Jill Permain (Wells)

DEATHS

Nancy Smith died in Romsey on 26th August 2014. She had left FGGS c.1947.

Joan Mansell (Malton) died in 2015. She left FGGS 1948.

Margaret Wood (Oglesby) died on 20th June 2015, at Cheverels Care Home, Maiden Newton.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Looking back over the year for the Old Girls Association, the highlight must be the Joint Party with the Old Farnhamians held on 16th May. It was well supported and with the boys to do the heavy work, life was made easier for us. Cyril Trust organized entertainment by the ladies choir "In Accord", which was very well received. In addition to being an enjoyable event it also made a good profit for the OGA funds.

Sadly I have to report the death of David Picken, our Secretary's husband, on 28th September. He and Gill worked together on so many projects, and her loss is immense. He always supported her in her work for the OGA and was there manning the bar at the joint party in the summer. On behalf of the OGA I send our heartfelt sympathy and our prayers for strength to face her life without him.

At our Reunion and AGM, Gladys Rummery (nee Sheath), our Treasurer of many years, gave her final report before handing over the accounts to Jane Gates (nee Hurdle). We are indebted to Gladys for her many years of service (so many that she has lost count) and to Jane for taking on the job. Gladys wrote "I would like to thank the Old Girls Association committee and members for the lovely "Lady in Black" climbing fuchsia, you so kindly gave me for "services rendered" as Treasurer. I have enjoyed my time on the Committee and will certainly miss the challenges sometimes imposed. My grateful thanks to Jane for taking over as Treasurer, as I am certain she will make sure the accounts continue to "stay in the black". I wish FGGS Old Girls Association a continuing successful future and hope to see you at the next meeting".

Sadly, because of a slow recovery from a stroke, Christine Ayres, nee Pelling, has tendered her resignation from the committee. We are grateful for all the years of faithful service and support which Christine gave us.

I would also like to thank all those on the Committee, who give their time (and cooking skills) to keep the OGA going, especially, Jill Goddard our editor. Without them, we would cease to exist.

In addition to urging you to keep in touch, especially if you can no longer come to our meetings, please think about what you can do to for the association, the committee could do with your help!

During the AGM it was decided that we would have only one event per year and that would be a Reunion lunch followed by the AGM in September.

After the A.G.M, Elizabeth Birch (Cassell) (FGGS 1955–62) gave an extremely interesting talk on the Native North Americans, and the effect that education had on their way of life.

The OGA has now been invited to join with the boys and Farnham College to support an event on the 5th June to celebrate the 90th Birthday of Queen Elizabeth II (see below for more information).

On a personal note, I celebrated my 80th birthday with several parties. One of which was with my twin, Maureen Turner (Bleeker) in Holland, which she gave for her family in a restaurant in the dunes overlooking the sea. The following week she and many of her immediate family travelled to England to join us for dinner at The Princess Royal Hotel in Runfold (which I would recommend) and spend time with my family. John and I also celebrated our Emerald Anniversary.

Another highlight was our holiday in Tuscany with our daughter Anne and her family (making a party of 11) in a beautifully appointed villa up in the mountains with a great pool. We took the opportunity to visit Florence, Lucca, Barga, Pisa, and Sienna, and take advantage of the local vineyards.

We also attended several Squadron Reunions this year, meeting up with old friends. I still enjoy my singing with the Farnham and Bourne Choral Society at Menin Way, where I see Julia Beeken (Wilson) and her sister Diana Owen, who is our rehearsal pianist. And I am still lucky to be able to play tennis with a group of older members of the tennis club.

I trust this year will be kind to you and yours and that you are blessed with good health and heart, and hope to hear from, or see you, at one of the events.

Pat Turner (Atkinson)

OLD GIRLS' NEWS

Audrey Bailey (Kemp) started at FGGS in January 1939 at West Street School, so attended the opening of the new school in Menin Way. She still has the programme (and rightly wonders how many are left!). Audrey left the school in 1945 and is now 86. In May 1951 she married Les, so this year will have been married for 65 years. They have two daughters and husbands, two granddaughters and husbands, and two great grandsons, both under a year. They retired to Fordingbridge in the New Forest in 1980 and joined rambling groups and dance clubs. They used to enjoy long distance walking, but unfortunately Audrey has macular degeneration and now has limited sight, including for reading and writing.

As many of you will know, and as our Chairman mentioned in her message, 2015 was a very sad year for **Gill Baston** (Picken) as her beloved husband David died in September and life is proving to be very tough.

2015 started off well with celebrations for David's 70th birthday in January with a few days stay in Sussex and with another short break at Stone, near Stoke on Trent for Gill's 71st in April – ancestor country for Gill. At the end of April they had their usual two week holiday at their time share in Madeira.

Just after they got back they heard that the hotel was bankrupt, all future holidays were cancelled and they had lost their money.

Worse was to follow. David became ill in June, suffering from bouts of indigestion, loss of appetite and sudden weight loss. After a lot of nagging, David reluctantly visited the GP and further tests finally confirmed that he was suffering from stomach cancer which had already spread to his liver. Sadly he deteriorated rapidly and he died at St Luke's Cancer Centre with Gill, and daughters Emma and Julia at his bedside.

The funeral on October 7th was overwhelmingly attended with his eulogy read by Gill and David's parish priest and a moving tribute given by John Hicks, an old family friend. A magnificent sum of £1,200 was raised for Onslow Ward at RSCH in David's memory.

Family news is much happier. Gill's eldest grandson Scott is his first year at Liverpool University studying popular music, granddaughter Bethany equalled her brother's record of 10 GCSEs, all grades As and A stars, and is now studying A levels at Reigate College. 10 year old Toby is in his last year at junior school. Julia and Rob have just celebrated their 6th wedding anniversary, and grand dog Dexter is about to have some company. Tara and Tamara, Gill's two black and white cats, are moving down to Bristol to live with Julia and Rob. They await Dexter's reaction with interest.

Gill has still managed to keep in touch with a number of old girls. She let us now that sadly **Sylvia Butler** (Hopkins) is also a widow as her husband Ken died in October. Her son Kerin has remarried, an American girl called Dina, and has gone to live with her in the States, where they are very happy.

Jennie Quickfall (Yarney) is planning to move from her house to a retirement flat also in Farnborough. Sylv, Jen, **Sheila Harvey** (nee Knight) and Gill still meet up.

The "class of '53" seem especially good at keeping up with one another. **Elaine Beavis** who lives in Portsmouth, still sees **Kay Kemp**, **Libby Stokes** and **Jutta Jebans**, amongst others. Elaine had a short holiday to Crete in October to join the second birthdays of the dogs she used to care for, as they have moved out there.

Annie Burrough (Wilde) left school in 1975 and went into the Civil Service after 6th Form College. She had various office jobs since then with her final full time employment as PA to head teachers, first at Eggar's in Alton and then latterly at Bohunt in Liphook. Anne now lives on the outskirts of Monmouth with her husband Rob, flat coated retriever Ruby, cat Dexie and two chickens, Babs and Madge. They have a lovely house with views of the Wye Valley and Brecon Beacons and, on a very good day, the Black Mountains. Their grown up sons, James and Stephen, live in Farnham and Alton. James is the manager of Bourne Estate Agents in Guildford and Stephen runs a tree surgery business, Trees and Such. (Just in case any of you locally want to use their services!). After 19 years working in various IT posts at McLaren in Woking, Rob decided to set up an IT Support and Consultancy business of his own. Anne has now been recruited by him to do the admin, which is very flexible so she has time to walk the dog, grow vegetables and be a churchwarden of the village church.

Life in Wales is pretty good. If anyone lives or visits near Monmouth, Anne would love to meet for a coffee and share memories of FGGS.

We heard from **Brenda Davies** (Bloomhead) who is in close touch with her cousin **Stella Davies** (Bolt). Brenda had had a mixed year in 2015 with visits to the Isle of Wight and Hertfordshire and also to family members. She had a bad fall, breaking her ankle and leg, and has also had chemo during the year, so some tough times. She recently visited **Margaret Lehmann**.

Norah Ransom (Davies) has also been in touch, from Penmark where she and her husband are well and were looking forward to a trip to Church Stretton, Norah had been in touch with **Jean Bowdrey** (Parratt), who had been one of the guests at Norah's 21st birthday party.

One of a number of old girls in New Zealand is **Rosemary Dewey** (McManus), who is now 82. Last year her daughter celebrated her 60th birthday with a big family party. Rosemary keeps active with a three day walking and social trip to Picton with her walking group last March after which she drove to Mapua where her son is building a home next to a lake complete with ducks, geese and pukekos. She also visited Norfolk Island last year, an interesting historic place of Mutiny of the Bounty fame. As well as walking, Rosemary belongs to a Book Club and Probus, and has seven great grandchildren.

Proving we are never too old to learn, **Val Duffel** (Hysom) shared her Apple Mac lessons at the Apple Store in Exeter, where they are learning a lot, although a little slowly. Understandably, her sons are impressed! Aside from the new computer, Val enjoyed a wonderful holiday with her eldest son and his family in the winelands of South Africa in October/November.

Peggy Dymott (Barnfield) is well, still enjoying golf and lots of gardening. She is in close touch with **Anne Griffin** (Burrill) and spent Thanksgiving last year with her and her family in Brussels.

Freda Carter was married soon after leaving school and moved to Woking where she had three of her four children. From there they moved to Bedford for eight years. After her husband's death she moved to Harrogate with the children to be near family. Freda trained as a teacher and spent the rest of her working life teaching Religious Education in a comprehensive school which she thoroughly enjoyed. Since retiring, she has taken up painting, enjoyed long distance walks with a group, remarried and done a lot of gardening. Her second husband died in 2014 so she is starting yet another phase of her life.

We have again, thankfully, received a lovely letter from **Sally Davies** (White) in which she shares the working life of her farm and caravan site with school friends, working colleagues and caravan site visitors.

Sally started her recollections with the winter of 2014 which was largely grey and dull. To cause a diversion Sally and Brian took a day trip Pwllheli on the train, on a beautiful day of brilliant sun although very cold with snow on the tops of the Snowdonian landscape. Being "ancient", they have passes that allow free train transport over the winter months. Other local ancients also use this free service so that the two carriage train is usually packed to capacity. In traditional style for the visit, Sally and Brian enjoyed "posh coffee" and a shopping trip which ended up with five bags of shopping and included a yard broom and a large tin tray (both items being a severe handicap on the very crowded journey home).

The early weeks of the year were somewhat dominated by a difference with the Council over the bill for their caravan site rubbish disposal following a hit and miss set of collections through 2014. After numerous acrimonious communications, Sally made a formal complaint to the Lord High chief of Gwynedd Council. Within a couple of days the Chief of Refuse Collection for Gwynedd was in touch and visited. There was a complete climb down. The service for the 2015 season was exemplary.

Lambing was again something of a non-event. Sally and Brian had not introduced a ram to the ewes so only those who were served by Hovis through the wire of his bachelor paddock were likely to produce offspring. In all about 10 lambs were born, almost all without help. The woodland planted in 2005 has proved to be much easier to maintain than the long hours and cares of a normal lambing season as well as the day to day maintenance of the original much larger flock. And it provides shelter and food for the wild life.

Sally and Brian planted more than 30 leylandii trees on one of their lane boundaries soon after they took on the farm in 1982. These provided shelter for the vegetable garden and the orchard but over the past few years had romped joyously outwards and upwards without any attention. They all threatened telephone cables or anyone using the lane in the event of a gale. After a slight domestic difference (Brian wanted to take down the trees himself), all of the trees were felled by contractors and there is no longer the apprehension when gales threaten and there is enough firewood for years.

The wildlife on the farm continues to provide Sally and Brian with pleasure and sadness. Six young Canada geese hatched but disappeared before they were able to fly. The culprit was likely to be an otter of which they have several or maybe a badger as the local population is escalating. Sally no longer feeds them but they are about the farmyard every night and she fears for the ground nesting birds, the oyster catchers and others who would have no protection against the brocks.

Sally's diary entry for a July day probably characterises her summer. It started with a trip into Dolgellau to pay the July instalment of income tax (and avoid penalties for late payment) and was followed by a morning of lots of visitors at the door and on the phone - really hectic. Preparation of sheep and hen food and a few swipes at weeds that have sprung up in the row of runner beans come next before gutting and filleting macerel caught by a friend. The barbeque for the fish produces a huge amount of smoke at the same time as a swarm of flying ants appear ... In the end, it was a still warm evening with the lilies at their best and outperforming the fragrance of burning oak logs as they died down to embers. Finally it was silent and Sally and Brian enjoyed peace and a beautiful sunset.

Sally's letter also recalls the upsides of sharing her bed with Tonker Dau, the bigger of the two Tonkinese cross cats, as he is allowed to sleep with her and Brian. On a particular night Brian was snoring. Not the usual gentle heaving of breaths but a series of tempestuous gusts followed by wails as from an ill-tempered set of bagpipes. The performance was happening twice or three times a minute with real welly. Dau was clearly in the line of fire from the regular blasts. He turned himself over and gently inched his way up the bed to apply a sharp left, right, left, with his black furry paws onto Brian's face which resulted in Brian stirring, turning over and ensuing his slumbers, quietly. Job done, Dau clawed his way back down into his usual position. And they all went back to sleep.

It was a mixed year for garden produce with a disappointing summer weather-wise and everything being late. For some reason that Sally cannot now recall, she grew an excess of tomato plants (at least 150 plants). They all did well and everyone on the caravan site and in the village were trying to

squeeze tomatoes into every meal as the lovely autumn weather ripened them faster than they could eat them! The raspberries and runner beans were also good but the courgettes failed and some of the broccoli stems grew so tall that the whole plants blew out of the ground in a gale. It was worrying that again there was a complete absence of cabbage white butterflies. Sally had a real concern that these creatures, that have been a part of the garden scene for most of her life, have seemingly disappeared.

Sally devoted much of the autumn to writing letters of harangue to the Environment Agency and elsewhere regarding the state of their roadway following the work they commissioned on the seawall in 2013. She found it iniquitous to demand access to contractors for work to be carried out and then when the work is finished and the contractors leave major damage that Sally and Brian are expected to pay for the repair. This is an ongoing battle so hopefully there will be better news on this issue before long.

So another year ended. It was a good one in many ways as Sally and Brian are both hale and hearty and at home on their farm. Sally wrote as a gale was wuthering in the chimneys and driving fallen leaves against the windows. There was a curious mauve sunset with a silhouette of flying ducks struggling to make it home to their roosting site on the saltings

Nos da. Cofion Annwyl. Creigiau'r oesoedd. (Good night. Cherished memories. Rocks of ages.)

Pamela Deakin wrote to us to let us know that her novel, "The Power of Love" was published last year with some good reviews. What an achievement! It was selling well on the island (Ibiza) and on Amazon and should also be available in main distributors (Smiths, Waterstones etc.) as well as some local bookstores.

Writing from Horndean, **Jill Golding** (Bates), a cousin of **Stella Davies** (Bolt), let us know that she and her husband Mike are settling into their new home, along with their large five year old ginger Tom cat. They have two sons, one living in North Camp and one in Hove.

Sheila Langdon-Davis (Henderson) continues to be a wonderful correspondent, sending news of life in South Africa. It can be a very difficult environment these days with frequent power and water shortages and all sorts of economic problems. Sheila is pleased that her two grand and great grandchildren have settled in the UK, in Ripley and Chipping Norton. Her granddaughter is working hard to get to St Margaret Hall College at Oxford (Sheila's old college) and her grandson is aiming for Cambridge. Sheila has had a number of falls recently and has had to take life a bit more carefully but she still keeps in touch by post with extensive family who now cover all continents from New Zealand, Australia, Thailand and India, to Italy, Morocco, Kenya and Chile (a stamp collector's dream!). She still has very happy memories of FGGS.

As journeys to visit friends become harder, and disliking mobiles, text and Facebook, **Elsbeth Hutchinson** (Morley) continues to send Christmas letters with her news. She is hoping to give up (paid) work in psychotherapy this year, though she hopes to write more, especially around attachment theory, siblings and position in family, and couple therapy. She is very settled in her home in Haggerston, next door but one to her sister Ann (who rides valiantly on her new motorbike – she is 84...).

Shirnah James (Arnold) contacted us from Torpoint, Cornwall. After leaving school in 1949, she studied a degree in French and English, plus a PGCE (not that it was called that then!) at Exeter and taught at various schools both full and part-time and with a break of 12 years to bring up three sons, finishing with a 12 year stint at a girls' grammar school in Plymouth. Sadly, Shirnah was widowed about four years ago after a marriage lasting nearly 55 years. She has two grandsons both of whom are now married. Shirnah still enjoys regular holidays, particularly on cruises (evidenced by her writing paper being from the "Adonia").

Edna Jeffers has been in touch with us from Cumbria, where she lives with her daughter and son-in-law in an annex to their home. She has quite a quiet life, helping in the garden when she can, especially in the autumn, as picking up all the leaves from their trees is quite a task – it certainly gives her some exercise. She mentioned in her letter that she recalled that **Margaret Chadwick** lived in Kendal and taught her daughter at Blackwell School, Bowness.

Margaret Shoobridge (Markham) left FGGS in 1957 wanting to go to a teacher training college but was told by the Head at the time (no names, no pack drill) that she would never make it and so she left and became a research technician at the Animal Virus Diseases' Research Institute at Pirbright. She decided to continue education and enrolled at Guildford Technical College and there met David, a farmer, and her future husband. However, one of the rules of the Institute was that you did not have contact with farmers so this career was short lived and she decided that she would instead become a police woman.

She joined the Kent County Constabulary because her father was, at that time, a serving policeman in Farnham.

David and Margaret married on a snowy day in January 1962 and she moved to the family farm in Capel which is just outside Dorking. They were blessed with two sons and have seven grandchildren, and in 2015 celebrated 53 years of marriage.

Margaret did not give up her dream to teach and secured a place at Gypsy Hill. But for various reasons this was not to be, instead she immersed herself with the playgroup movement and patience won out in the end as later she secured a very satisfying, rewarding and interesting job as a Domiciliary Craft Teacher with West Sussex Social Services. This involved teaching people with various physical, visual and mental health problems and it was during this time, while with West Sussex that she eventually gained her teaching certificates. This was a great time for her and later led to becoming a Lecturer at the RNIB Redhill College.

Throughout this time Margaret lived on the farm and supported the family in their lives, interests and sports and using her love of cooking, she catered for various occasions at home and in the village. Margaret often counts herself lucky that she did not go from schoolroom to college and back to the schoolroom but has been able to use the life experiences gained along the way.

2015 was another good year for **Deborah Press** (Robertson) and her family. It included an Easter family holiday to Brussels with visits to 13 museums in just three days. Deborah's breastfeeding education business and voluntary work are both going well and when not working, she has completed a pre foundation art course and is now lino printing. Her husband, Graham, is now a course leader in special education at the University of East London. Imogen, their daughter, works with an innovative and exciting theatre company in London and Ambrose is in his second year at the Courtauld Institute, London,

Alicia Read has had another year of wonderful travels. In the summer they had an adventure, crossing the Atlantic both ways on the Queen Mary from New York to Southampton, flying to Istanbul and cruising the Mediterranean to Rome; thoroughly enjoying all the historic sites. They saw temples ruined by earthquakes and vandals, and now modern day terrorists are repeating history.

In January they went to New York again and joined the Queen Mary to sail to New Zealand via Cape Horn. They won't miss the icy roads of Canada for a few months.

Another old girl who is now in Cornwall is **Janice Rogers** (Paget) who wrote to us from Marazion with her memories of the school and of her life since then. She remembered the school fondly, including of Miss Sylvester who was her form mistress the first year she was at FGGS and again in Vb. She recalls happy days of a cycling tour round youth hostels in Somerset, shepherded by Miss Sylvester and Miss Margaret Powell. Janice was at FGGS from 1942-49, during and after the war. When she started Grey Coat Hospital shared the building. She remembers a long crocodile of girls walking along the road to a lovely spacious house – Shide House, as FGGS buildings were bursting at the seams. Janice thoroughly enjoyed her schooldays and will always be grateful for what she considers was a first class education. She was Head Girl in 1948-49 and remembers getting into terrible trouble at Christmas because she joined those girls helping the GPO deliver parcels for the last few days of term. Dear Miss Inman considered this totally inappropriate for one of her lofty position. Tears were shed!

Janice left school and attended Chelsea School of Pharmacy where she trained to be a qualified pharmacist. She then worked in St Luke's Hospital, Guildford and St Georges Hyde Park Corner before transferring to retail pharmacy when she needed the increased salary to start married life! Janice married an Old Boy of FGS who was a policeman in the Hampshire Constabulary. They had a long and happy marriage living in Aldershot and Basingstoke, with a son and daughter being born in 1961 and 1963. Their son, Clive, lives in Sydney and is the editor of a Classical Music and Arts magazine, while their daughter, Georgia, is a biology teacher (although about to retire) at Hinckley Wood in Surrey. They have two splendid granddaughters, Eleanor and Cleo, both at Birmingham University.

When Janice's husband retired from the police force they moved to Cornwall, with which they had been in love for nearly 20 years. They live in a beautiful valley called Poltesco on the east coast of the Lizard peninsula. For the last few years of her working life they bought the village pharmacy at Mullion on the west coast of the Lizard. This was very hard work but very rewarding. They retired in 1996, looking forward to many years leisurely retirement. Unfortunately, as often happens, God had other ideas. Janice's husband died in 2005 at the far too young age of 70. Janice then lived in a lovely big five-bedroomed house with a big garden and her elderly Westie (then a four year old) and rattled around. Having never driven, Janice down-sized and moved to her present little house in Marazion with a lovely view of St Michaels Mount. Here she lives quite happily although her health is not of the best. She has many friends, some of who are also involved with her local parish church.

Pauline Rothwell (Bailey) has written from Beaconsfield with an update on her husband's health as she is a full time carer for Derek. They have good and bad days and have a lot of care and attention from their family and the nursing and medical teams including a local well regarded hospice at home service.

Liz Shaw (MacRae Masters) keeps in touch with a number of old girls. She was put in touch with us by her friend **Brenda Ingles** (Lewis) with whom she travelled to the school from Guildford from 1959-66. She was fascinated to read the tribute to Mrs. Hadwin, but can't get her head around thinking of her as "Mildred". Liz too was taught by her and remembers her as an inspirational teacher. She did 'A' level French but wasn't one of the high flyers. It was her third subject and she went on to read History as a degree subject. She has kept in touch with **Hilary MacNeill** (Donald); who also got the bus from Guildford, joining it at Puttenham. As Liz moved away from Surrey she hadn't realised that Mrs. Hadwin went on to teach at Guildford County School and probably taught her cousin there. A small world!

Liz has now returned to her roots and lives on the Isle of Skye where her mother was born. Since moving to Scotland she's developed a new career as a writer. She had a historical novel published over a year ago by The Islands Book Trust called, 'Love and Music will Endure'. Liz would be pleased to join us at sometime to tell us more about her life and new work.

Angela Sudekum, 1958-1962 wrote to let us know that she will be 70 in July and wondered if there might be any reunions of her year group (she joined in the second year). She recalls Miss Inman as Head, Mrs. Hadwin – who she also remembers very fondly - as a class teacher, as was Mrs Bowley, a Geography teacher. Angela still keeps in touch with one or two pupils from the school.

Rosemary Walker (Godfrey) had a memorable trip to the UK in the summer to celebrate the Diamond anniversary of the Waverley Singers, the choir that started in her home in Waverley Lane. They had a very special day in Guildford Cathedral. She also visited Cumbria and a number of "northern" haunts, including Lancashire and Yorkshire. However Rosemary had a difficult spell on her return with several weeks in hospital with heart problems, pneumonia and a blocked lung. After a cardioversion procedure, she is slowly getting better.

OLD SCHOOL NEWS

Many of you know that there was a joint **Old Girls' and Old Boys' party at Menin Way on Saturday 16th May** 2015 when over 100 former pupils of Farnham's grammar schools met for a spring tea party. From the outset there was a warm atmosphere as guests from over 40 schools years reminisced and caught up with classmates and friends. They enjoyed a buffet with plenty of homemade cakes, and took part in tours of the school. In a special appearance, the gathering was then joined by "In Accord", a harmonious and expert a cappella group. When the group first started to entertain the guests, they had to fight to be heard at first over all the chatter, but they soon won over and gave lively renditions of old and new favourites. They also proved that you really are never too old to learn and by the end of their session they had the guests singing in four part melodies.

Overall it was a very enjoyable afternoon and many ex pupils and staff will already be looking be looking forward to the next joint event. It wouldn't have happened without the sterling work of Cyril Trust, Gill Picken and Mike Mehta and members of both OFA and OGA Committees. It was also a very successful event financially, with over £900 profit. Some of the funds were used as a donation to South Farnham School and the Head, Sir Andrew Carter, has written with his thanks, saying the support is "much appreciated and will contribute towards learning resources and supplies for the children at South Farnham School".

Don't forget that there is a Farnham Girls' Grammar School **Facebook page** for anyone looking to contact other old girls. Elaine Shepherd is one of the editors.

In his office at South Farnham School, Sir Andrew Carter now has the **table presented to former Headmistress Miss King** which was repaired by her nephew and gifted to the school.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Queen's 90th Birthday Celebration Garden Party takes place on **Sunday 5th June 2016**, from 12.30pm and will be held at Farnham College, Morley Road. It is jointly organised by the OGA, Old Farnhamians' Association and Farnham College and is a great opportunity to catch up with old school friends, see the College and celebrate a very special birthday.

A buffet lunch will be served from 1pm, and entertainment will be provided by a cappella group.

Tickets are now on sale from Farnham College at £10 each from 1st March 2016. They cover food, a glass of wine and a slice of commemorative cake.

Please contact Farnham College Reception (01252 716988) or Cyril Trust on cyriltrust@btinternet.com.

It was decided at last year's AGM that we will in future only have one gathering per year and thus we will not be having our usual Spring Party. The Queen's Birthday Party is a one-off event. However on **September 24th we will hold our usual AGM and Reunion** 12.00 for 12.30pm, at Menin Way - earlier in the day than usual as it will be preceded by a buffet lunch party.

OBITUARIES

Miss Sparshott's sister, Margaret, sent us a copy of a beautiful eulogy she gave for her dear sister Elizabeth following her death in 2014

"Elizabeth was 10 years old when I was born, and she thought I came especially for her, an answer to prayer, her own little sister. When I was a child, she taught me to love books. On my tenth birthday she gave me my first book of poetry, an anthology compiled by Walter de la Mare called 'Come Hither', which I use to this day. She read Shakespeare's plays with me and gave me all the best parts to read.

I was a neonatal nurse, and lectured and wrote about the environmental care of the newborn baby in hospital. All my working life Elizabeth encouraged me and supported me. She supported me over the writing of my first book, and would not allow me to give up when it regularly came back from the publishers. She told me not to give up hope, and I obeyed her, as I usually did. She was so proud of me, as I was proud of her. There was much of which she could be proud. She was three times headmistress, in Ludlow, Farnham, and Coventry. In all these schools I believe she was much loved and respected, by both pupils and parents. She was Vice Chairman of the Headmistresses Association, and was invited to one of the famous tea parties at Buckingham Palace.

She died on 11th November 2014 at the age of 90. After her death, when her house came to be sold, I found among her papers, cuttings from newspapers praising her and quoting her, especially from her last school in Coventry, a big comprehensive in that industrial city, where both girls and parents were tough. But although authority came naturally to her and remained with her, she was never vainglorious. She was a lifelong teacher, counsellor and friend. Our mother, too, she loved and supported after father's death, although with them the caring was mutual. Elizabeth retired early in order to care for mother when she grew frail.

Most of all, Liz was happy, she was fun. I never minded the years passing, because Elizabeth was always ten years ahead, happy at forty, fifty, and sixty, even seventy - it was only after she reached the age of 80 that things went wrong for her. You can imagine the pain suffered by someone so optimistic, intelligent, authoritative, to lose the confidence and self-control of a lifetime's independence. She would say: 'it is like living in a fog.' Nothing made sense. And since she had already witnessed the slow descent into Alzheimer's of our own father, she knew what awaited her.

In these later years our roles were reversed, and I became the carer and counsellor. Towards the end, she herself needed the tender loving care she showed to so many others. And tender loving care she surely received from the staff of her nursing home, to whom I am eternally grateful, for the care they took of her.

Elizabeth was never afraid of dying. Even towards the end when the fog descended, she would say that she felt herself supported by the loving arms of God; she spoke of 'going home'. One of her favourite quotations was passage written by Mrs. Adeline Whitney, which expresses this love:

"The Everlasting Arms": I think of that whenever rest is sweet. How the whole earth and the strength of it, that is almightiness, is beneath every tired creature to give it rest; holding us, always! No thought of God is closer than that. And He fills the great earth, and all upon it, with this unseen force of His love, that never forgets, or exhausts itself, so that everywhere we may lie down in His bosom, and be comforted".