

# Hywelian Guild Magazine — 2021 —





# Contents

Page	
4	Welcome + Summer Lunch '21
5	President's Letter
7	Dear Hywelians: the Secretary's Letter
8	Who's Who in the Guild
10	Branch Reports
11	GDSTea Party
12	Chloe Smith—Change Maker
14	Who, what and where—Hywelian news
21	Exams—or not!
22	I remember it well!
24	Hywelians in Print
27	Gwlad Beirdd—Eisteddfod poems
29	Happy Events
30	Coronavirus Experiences
46	Archives
47	<i>In Memoriam</i>
55	Life in the Mekong Delta
57	High Living: Peregrine falcons
58	Reminders

Front cover: Chloe Smith, winner, GDST Alumna of the Year Trailblazer Award 2020.

Back cover: Coronavirus: the Aftermath: found on the internet.

# Welcome!

*I note from last year's edition that I said that 2019 had been a turbulent year. How could anyone imagine what 2020 would bring to the world? Who would have thought that a little scrap of viral DNA could cause global havoc, economic chaos and untold misery for millions as they try to deal with the loss of relatives and friends?*

*National governments have adopted various methods of dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic. The majority have instigated some form of restriction on movement and events: what we have now come to term 'lockdown'.*

*Howell's School has not been immune: no exams for students, no concerts and no Hywelian get-togethers. When I sat down to start putting this magazine together, I wondered what would fill it. I had a vision of a pamphlet rather than a proper magazine.*

*Oh ye of little faith! Words have rolled in. You have told us at length of your latest doings. You have inspired us with achievements. You have informed us of the sad passing of Hywelians old and young. Moreover, you have shared with us your experiences of this most unusual year: how the pandemic has affected your lives, your education and your livelihoods. Thank you all so much for your contributions.*

*I also want to thank, as always, Guild Secretary, Sue Rayner and Membership Secretary, Joyce Shields for their unfailing support. Hannah Roberts at School, too, has given invaluable help in providing information and sourcing material. Principal Sally Davis continues to give support and encouragement to the Guild, for which we say a huge 'Thank you!'*

*Lyn Owen (Editor)*

## SUMMER LUNCH 2021

At the time of writing, there is still great uncertainty throughout the UK about what events can and cannot take place.

It is not surprising, therefore, that we are unable to bring you any information about arrangements for the Summer Lunch in 2021.

Rest assured that as soon as any decision is made, we will make sure that you are notified of dates and arrangements. We hope to see you all then.

## President's Letter

*Mrs Sally Davis is President of the Guild and Principal of Howell's School. The challenges presented to her and the staff in this most peculiar of years were enormous. Below she tells us how Howell's thrived in a time of restricted learning.*



WHAT A YEAR this has been! In my entire teaching career, the Covid-19 pandemic has been the biggest challenge I have ever faced. I am confident that we are doing everything within our power here at Howell's to continue to provide an excellent and well-rounded education to all our students, while keeping both them, and all our staff, safe and protected. The guidelines and regulations have sometimes changed from one day to the next, but we adhered to the guidance from Welsh Government as we received it, and we have been grateful for support and advice from the GDST on exactly how to implement all the guidelines.

As I say regularly to the students, we may be wearing masks, but we're all smiling underneath them. It is wonderful to see our classrooms, corridors, labs and libraries full of students again. They have adapted so well to our new procedures, following the one-way system, remembering to wash their hands regularly and using an adjusted timetable to stagger their movement around the school building.

During the lockdown which began in March, lessons continued as normal thanks to our programme of Guided Home Learning, with students following their usual timetables, taught by their own subject teachers. Students who needed any extra support—either with their academic work or their pastoral wellbeing—had one-to-one video calls scheduled with a teacher or the pastoral team, either daily or several times a week.

Weekly form time, year group assemblies and whole school assemblies ensured that all students remained connected with their form and year groups, and with the school community as a whole; the events

that were due to take place during the summer term—sports day, the summer concert, careers events and mental health week—were moved online.

A summer term of guided home learning gave students the opportunity to develop as independent learners. It has equipped them with skills of organisation, time management and self discipline that will stand them in good stead for the rest of their time at Howell's and beyond.

Two Thursdays in August usually see a torrent of students rushing up the stairs to the Great Hall to collect their examination results, but this year the GCSE and A-Level results were all delivered by email in order to keep everyone safe. I am so proud of both the Year 11 and Year 13 students; they had all worked so hard towards their exams, only to have the rug pulled out from under them.

After all the uncertainty that surrounded the results, I was delighted that they were awarded grades that reflected the exceptional amount of work that had been put in by both them and their teachers. The experience has given them enhanced skills of maturity and resilience; truly, they move to the next stage of

their education ready to face any challenge. I am enormously proud of each and every one of them, and I look forward to celebrating everything that they go on to achieve.

When we put together our plans for the reopening of school in September, I was determined that we would give all our students, from the Nursery to the Co-Ed College, the best educational experience we could, which at Howell's is about so much more than what goes on in the classroom. In these wild and woolly times, it is important that our students are still able to take part in choir and orchestra, join sports clubs and enjoy downtime with their friends.

I don't yet know when we will be able to start inviting Hywelians back to school, but I can assure you that we miss you all very much and will open our doors to you as soon as it is possible. Until then, I wish you a healthy and happy 2021, and look forward to seeing many of you very soon.

*Sally Davis*  
*Principal*

## Dear Hywelians ...

*Hywelian Guild Secretary Sue Rayner reflects on a very peculiar year.*

DEAR HYWELIANS,

Well, it has been quite a year, hasn't it? No Hywelian meetings, no Summer Lunch, no anything. So we thought we would ask you what you had been up to in the great lockdown and after – and ask students and staff at school to give us some contributions as well.

So, what have I been doing? Just before the March lockdown, our Editor Lyn and I had been in Vietnam, and I have written elsewhere about what that experience was like. All my voluntary work here had ground to a halt and at first I struggled to remember what day of the week it was as they were all exactly the same. We had that wonderful spell of weather, so I had a good go at the garden which looked better this year than it had for quite a while. Not being very good with technology, I took a while to get to grips with Zoom, but now I have my French class, choir practice and meetings with friends. Indeed, I see some friends, London-based, every two weeks on Zoom, rather than three times a year, so that's a real

plus.

When they re-opened Llandaff Cathedral for a couple of hours each day, I offered to do the volunteer rota to welcome visitors, and at the time of writing I am still doing it. My other voluntary work (in the school archive and with a charity in their office in town) hasn't restarted. However, I have to say I am in awe of what Sally Davis and her staff have achieved to keep everyone learning and to keep them safe now that the students have returned to school. What an enormous enterprise that must have been and still is! Special thanks must go to Hannah Roberts for all the help she had given us in communicating with Hywelians during this strange year.

So, let's hope 2021 will be better for us all, and that we will be able to have real meetings instead of technological ones.

My best wishes to you all

*Sue Rayner  
Secretary, Hywelian Guild*

## WHO'S WHO IN 2021

### HYWELIAN GUILD OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

*The magazine is now also produced in an online version accessible to all, so we have not given private addresses and telephone numbers. If you wish to contact the Guild, please do so via Hannah Roberts at School.*

#### **PRINCIPAL AND GUILD PRESIDENT**

Mrs Sally Davis, Howell's School, Llandaff, Cardiff CF5 2YD

Tel: 029 2056 2019

#### **DEPUTY PRINCIPALS**

Mrs Natalie Chyba,

*Deputy Principal and Head of Senior School*

Mrs Judith Ashill

*Deputy Principal and Head of Prep School*

#### **EXTRAORDINARY VICE-PRESIDENTS**

MISS J TURNER

MRS J FITZ

#### **VICE-PRESIDENTS**

Mrs Ena Davies (née Evans)

Miss Margaret Evans

Mrs Nicola Davies (née Salter)

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Mrs Sue Rayner (née Davies)

#### **ASSISTANT SECRETARY**

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Ms Kerry McFarland

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#### **LIAISON OFFICER**

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Mrs Lyn Owen (née Hawkins)

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Ms Kay Powell

Mrs Helen Graham (née Moger)

Mrs Catherine Coulson (née Johnson)

Mrs Anne Hayward (née Bates)

Mrs Calan McGreevy (née Davies)

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**BRANCH SECRETARIES**

**LONDON**

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**BRIDGEND**

Dr Pat Parry (née Lennox)

**SOUTHERN**

Vacant

**Scottish**

Mrs Caroline Robison (née McLean)

**Thames Valley and Chilterns**

Dr Elan Preston—Whyte (née Jones)

**WEST WALES**

Mrs Catherine Coulson (née Johnson)

**AUSTRALIA**

Mrs Christine Atkinson (née Treeby)

*Officers and Branch Secretaries serve in a voluntary capacity, with appointment approved at the AGM. There is always a welcome to anyone wishing to serve on the Committee: please contact the Secretary for further details*

## Branch Reports

*One of the great assets of the Guild Branch network is the way Hywelians are able to meet up in convivial surroundings to eat, chat and compare notes. This year that has not been possible, so there are no formal Branch reports below. However, we do have messages from the Bridgend, London and Oxford Area branches.*

### **BRIDGEND BRANCH**

Dear friends,

I am thinking of you all at this time [October] as I am usually organising our Advent service and lunch in Cowbridge. Unfortunately, because of COVID we will be unable to meet this year. I hope you are all coping with lockdown in true Howell's spirit! Luckily we had good weather in the summer but it is a bit miserable with early nights and autumn rain and wind.

Sadly, three of our past members have died: Enfys Brown (née Jones) who was our treasurer from 1985 to 2007; Pat Tetstall (née Morris) from Cardiff, a regular member, and Eleanor Hartley (née Pierce) from Barry. I sent a 90th birthday card to Joyce Care in Devon on our behalf; she sent her best wishes to everybody.

*Pat Parry*

### **LONDON BRANCH**

Just as we realised that we would be unlikely to get a viable number for the November lunch meeting, matters were decided for us by the government and London went into Tier 2. I am, sadly, cancelling our booking at the Baltic restaurant. We do have a provisional date for our AGM at the Drapers Hall in 2021. Saturday 15 May is confirmed; I hope we can celebrate meeting up once again. Before that we will have to endure a miserable and difficult winter. We wish you all good health and plenty of interesting things to do to keep you occupied. I am lucky to be in my Herefordshire home so can enjoy the countryside, but shopping trips to Abergavenny will be limited following the latest Welsh edict.

*Diana Paul*

### **OXFORD AREA BRANCH**

I cancelled our Annual Lunch for our group in May. All the members with whom I was in touch then were keeping well. Fingers crossed we shall meet in May 2021.

*Elan Preston-Whyte*

*Hannah Roberts, Hywelian Liaison Officer, records an event that could not have taken place without the modern technology that we often take for granted nowadays.*

*You can read more about Chloe's nomination on the facing page.*

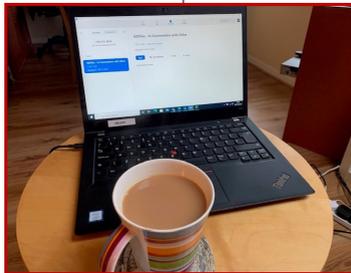
ON SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER 2020, Howell's was delighted to participate in the GDSTea Party for alumnae, to recreate virtually the spirit of the GDST family over a cup of tea or coffee. Alumni were encouraged to get in contact with one another and hold online get-togethers: many schools hosted virtual parties.

Howell's had a very special tea party on Zoom, during which we were joined by the inspirational Chloe Smith (Class of 2013) who was interviewed by fellow alumna Rachel Eling (Class of 1995), Communications and Engagement Officer at Howell's.

Chloe is the co-founder of the Bigmoose Coffee Co, a charity that

mentors, trains and employs vulnerable people in Cardiff. The idea for the coffee shop came after Chloe had spent two years

supporting the homeless population of Cardiff. It was a wonderful opportunity for our former students to find out more about Chloe's amazing achievements and to catch up with one another over a cup of tea—all from the comfort of their own homes!



*Tea time the lockdown way.*



*A good time was had by all!*

*Do take a look at the #GDSTeaparty Twitter hashtag to see more of the celebrations which took place.*

## Chloe Smith - Change Maker

WE WERE THRILLED to learn that Hywelian Chloe Smith had been shortlisted for this year's prestigious GDST Alumna of the Year competition which is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Chloe was interviewed in December 2019 for the GDST Life magazine by Rachel Eling, HSL's Communications and Engagement Officer and herself an alumna of Howell's (class of '95).

Below we outline why Chloe was a worthy nominee.



*"I SPENT TWO YEARS saying, 'Somebody needs to do something about this!', then realised that somebody was me."*

Chloe, who left Howell's in 2013, is the co-founder of the Bigmoose coffee shop – which has been expressly set up to mentor, train and employ vulnerable people in the city of Cardiff. The idea for the coffee shop came after Chloe had spent two years supporting the homeless population of Cardiff, and realising that fundamental change was needed if these people were to be helped back to self-sufficiency.

After school, Chloe started training to be a primary school teacher, but illness forced her to give up. She was working as a graphic designer for her father's company and volunteering to help the homeless in Cardiff.

Chloe's sister was at the time working in London for an organisation offering opportunities for retraining to homeless people. This was the inspiration behind Chloe's idea to open a coffee shop in Cardiff offering similar opportunities to the homeless and vulnerable living on the city's streets.

Bigmoose was created in a run-down building in Frederick Street, just off Cardiff's main shopping street, with the help of a Kickstart grant of £30,000 (raised in just a week!).

Today it is a thriving enterprise, employing 22 people, offering employment, training and mentoring to those who have experienced

homelessness, and to other disadvantaged, vulnerable people, including those with mental health problems.

Chloe says. "It's a lot of pressure on the 26<sup>th</sup> of the month to pay 22 members of staff: people who are relying on us to pay their rent, take care of their

kids and so on. It's a big

responsibility, but I wouldn't change it. I can't imagine working for someone else or having a normal job."

*"Three people have said to me that they would not be here if it wasn't for us. That's why I do what I do."*

*A full transcript of the interview appears in the online Appendix.*

## And the good news is ...

We were delighted to learn that Chloe won this year's GDST Alumna of the Year Trailblazer Award. The Award recognises the achievements of a GDST alumna in the early stages of her career. Chloe is a deserving winner of this prestigious award.

The winner of the overall Alumna of the Year award was Louisa Blake (Birkenhead High School Academy), the founder of Looby Lou's Lovely Lunches, a social initiative that provides lunches to students in primary schools across Wirral.

Dame Rosemary Squire (Nottingham Girls' High School), British commercial theatre owner,

entrepreneur and philanthropist, was the recipient of the GDST's Exceptional Contribution Award.

*Hearty congratulations to Chloe, and to all the nominees and winners in this year's GDST Alumna of the Year Awards!*

*[In the online Appendix are internet links to a film of Chloe talking about Bigmoose, and the whole awards presentations.]*

## Who, what and where

*We love having your news updates—you'd be surprised how many friendships have been renewed following their appearance in the magazine. Remember that many of our readers may not use social media!*

**Nina Shoroplova** (née McGregor, left HSL 1964) has lived in Canada for some time. She writes:

'I've come full circle and am spiralling onward and upwards. For me, life has been all about healing and writing. And, as someone recently commented, reinventing myself.



Photograph by Silmara Emde

My first career at the end of the 1960s was as a physiotherapist, trained in Wales and working in England. When I came to Canada and married, I became a writer. My first book, *Cattle Ranch*, took eight years' research into the history of

Douglas Lake Cattle Company, Canada's largest cattle company. It was a Canadian best seller and a finalist in the Eaton's book award of 1979.

I have been editing books since 2013: I offer a number of editorial services and work on a contract basis with authors. I am well-versed in a number of alternative healing fields, and edit manuscripts for authors who are raising human consciousness; and have edited books on a number of other topics, too.

Between writing and publishing *Cattle Ranch* and *Legacy of Trees* (my most recent publication), I have been raising a family, growing, cooking, preserving and writing about food. I have also written on self-awareness, becoming an author, and training in alternative healing modalities.

I have performed as a singer, musician, and actor; I've directed a number of performances in Washington state, British Columbia

and Australia. In 2006, I started building websites.

And - I am enjoying life!

[A full version of Nina's article is in the online Appendix]



**Caroline Edwards** says:

'I've had to move my events business online and have been supported by the GDST alumnae network.'

Caroline recently ran an online *Back to Work* event at which another GDST alumna, Emma Jones DBE, spoke.

**Rachel Harper** (née Horton, HSL 1980-87) reports:

'We immigrated to Canada (Okanagan Valley, B.C.) in 2012. My husband has a GP practice here, and I work as a nurse a couple of days a week. Our five children finally finished compulsory education this year - over 24 years, it has been fascinating (and sometimes baffling), to observe the changes in the education system.'

Our eldest son lives and works in Vancouver, our second son is married and lives locally, our third son and one of our twin daughters are at the University of British Columbia reading Business Management and English respectively. Our other twin daughter has decided to defer her University place for a year in the hope of being able to have a more normal start to her post-secondary education next year. I'm still as lousy at sports as I was at school but my hairstyle has improved immensely from my 80s perm! I remember my school days and friends with affection, particularly Miss Webb (Mrs Janet Sully) and Mrs Phipps, who taught my favourite subjects History and English.

**Jayne Barr** (née Loxley-Hughes) says:

'Having run my own business as a Marketing Disruptor for the past 16 years, just before lockdown I became an employee again, joining Middlesex University as their first Head of Brand and Creative. This is a brilliant role for me: a blend of strategic and creative responsibilities and in an entirely new market – one whose priorities and requirements have had to change rapidly as a result of COVID.'

I still keep my own business ticking

over with some burgeoning start-up clients, and also have my ongoing work with the Institute of Directors. I am mentor to a few individuals (one through the GDST scheme!)

My husband (an architect), younger son (a product designer) and I have all been working from home in north London since March, which has brought new challenges; on the whole, we manage well. We are all looking forward to at least a partial return to office/campus soon, as we miss those random chats that help spark creativity important in our roles. Having said that, we appreciate we are lucky; our elder son, a behavioural strategist, is living and working in Melbourne and has been in lockdown with an 8pm curfew for the last eight weeks, so it's much tougher for him.

Alumna **Katie Jenkins** (class of 2018), who is currently studying at the prestigious Juilliard School of Music in New York, has enrolled in the Indie Film Music Contest. She has composed a wonderful musical score for the film *Poulette's Chair* directed by Yōjirō Arai and produced by Studio Colorido. The video, which received the most number of likes on YouTube, will be awarded the Popularity Prize.

Many congratulations to **Laura Bleechen** (class of 2016), who has recently been selected to play with the Welsh Rugby Squad in their forthcoming fixture against Scotland. Laura is studying Medicine at Cambridge University and the university's premier outlet for sports news, *The Blue Bird*, has published an interview with Laura. [*This is an amazing achievement: very well done and good luck, Laura, we look forward to following your progress! - Ed*]

**Catherine Foster** (HSL 1941—1949) says:

I do not believe there are many from my years at Howell's who participate in online news. However, just in case, perhaps I should announce that I celebrated my 90th birthday on 8 September 2020. Because of the COVID situation, I joined my Eastern Canada family online instead of flying out to be with them in person - a virtual gathering! My nine (!) great grandsons and ONE great granddaughter live back East with all but two of my grandchildren - a flourishing Foster clan!

I was taken out for a very pleasant dinner here in Victoria, by my one remaining family member and his wife. Fortunately, COVID cases are

fairly thinly scattered here on Vancouver Island, although I am following the advice of Dr Bonnie Henry, our medical health officer, and using a mask when I venture forth to local shops.

PS - Vancouver Island is about the size of Scotland, in case anyone is interested. Miss Fowler probably would have had that statistic at her fingertips!

**Enid Barrell** (née Nash) sends this little snippet—just as welcome!

‘Here is my news for the Hywelians magazine. I am 83 years old, and am busy looking up doggie Christmas presents for my eldest son James’s Christmas present . My husband has made soda bread for lunch: it was very nice; the flour came from Fyfield. I’m reading *London Belongs to Me* by Norman Collins at the moment. I’m a slow reader so it takes me a long time. Best wishes to all!’

**Eluned H Smith** (née Williams, HSL 1965-1962) tells us:

‘I retired from part-time Biology, Science and one-to-one teaching about eight years ago. I'm still happily married to a retired histopathologist and we celebrated 41 years together this summer.

(Actually, our main Ruby Celebration Party was last year, but we both forgot the date this year until one of our daughters reminded us!)

We've been busy with seven lively, (did I mean to type lovely?) grandchildren; sadly, much less so since COVID.

I served The Friends of Worcester Royal Hospital (WRH) as Chair from 2010-2016 and am still on the Committee, helping to sell knitted baby jumpers and raise funds to benefit patients from all over Worcestershire who come to WRH for treatment. We buy special chairs, mattresses, soft furnishings, medical equipment and items which our PFI-funded hospital will not purchase for their staff.

Since schooldays, I've been very interested in all aspects of natural history, especially lichens. I was encouraged by knowledgeable parents, grandparents and expert aunts and uncles. Then during my A-level studies, by Mrs Williams (Willybiol!!) after I'd read John Wyndham's novel *Trouble with Lichens*. I am Secretary of the British Lichen Society, a wonderful organisation which since last year has an increasing presence on Facebook and Twitter.

Any Hywelians who are interested in lichens are warmly invited to get in

touch!

*[Eluned may be contacted via Hannah Roberts at School—Ed]*

**Gabriella Howell** has news of three sisters and a pandemic to share with readers:

‘Emily, Isabella and myself all had different careers at the start of this year, before the pandemic hit.

Then in March, we found ourselves all working for the family firm, BCB International, which produces life-saving and survival equipment for the government, military and outdoor enthusiasts.

Everything changed in March. After seeing reports about COVID19 in China, one of our factories started producing 80% strength hand sanitiser, one of the few which is effective against viruses. Our hand sanitiser and other essential PPE items were one of two main supplies for the Welsh NHS, and other frontline workers across the country. We worked closely with police forces providing protection packs for officers. With normal supplies unable to enter the country from China, it was a race against time to get the goods to all our key workers in the UK. Our two factories worked seven days a week, one of them 24 hours a day for five months.

Emily, my older sister, worked with pharmacies, nursing homes and local government authorities across the country.

Isabella, my younger sister, worked in the media and design department and developed life-saving kits for key front line workers, modified for maximum suitability and durability.

I ran logistics for the production and procurement of hand sanitiser and other PPE items under contracts with the NHS and police forces.

We also ensured that we helped those who needed it. We arranged weekly donations to businesses and charities in the area, and to Yemen and Lebanon. I was fortunate enough to be in a position to help the Muslim Charity in arranging a donation of masks and shields.

For the work undertaken at BCB, I was shortlisted as a finalist for Cardiff Business Awards as a Young Business Person of the Year.

My younger sister, Isabella Howell, who left HSL in 2015, was in Australia when the pandemic started earlier this year, and caught the last flight back to the UK. She joined us in Cardiff to work at BCB. She also created a fundraising video for the Welsh NHS, which raised £20,000 for front line workers in Wales. She hatched the idea, arranged and

worked with the famous faces involved, and created the final product.

Our work with local businesses and charities, and Isabella's video both received substantial media coverage.

Isabella will be finishing her graphic design course in London in November.

Emily is continuing to tour with her political drama *Looking for Mummy* which covers the incarceration of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe in Iran, as well as her acting school. After a slight pause, she is resuming again with classes taking place from August.

My 'normal' job is running our family home, a 350 year-old sugar plantation, Buff House, converted into a boutique hotel in the Caribbean. After eight months' closure, we are now re-opening with a new restaurant and garden suite cottages. I have applied, and been accepted, for a PhD program in early March to complete my thesis on the house and the lives associated with it. With the work at BCB and the closure of many archives and museums, the start of the research has been slow, but I am excited to see where the work takes me.

*[Gabiella's full article and internet links can be seen in the online*

*Appendix, where you can learn much more about these three very talented and industrious Hywelians.]*

### **Goodbye Memory Lane**

**Emma Cooney** (Class of 2017), who has recently entered her final year studying at LAMDA, has had success in the writing world. The Sherman theatre in Cardiff has released *Goodbye Memory Lane*, Emma's audio drama, which forms part of the Heart of Cardiff series of work from local writers.

[For more information on *Goodbye Memory Lane*, visit:

[www.shermantheatre.co.uk](http://www.shermantheatre.co.uk)]

**Maria McCarthy** (HSL 1974-1981) is still living in Sidmouth, working as a journalist for magazines such as Good Housekeeping and Woman's Weekly. She was shortlisted for Newspress Automotive Consumer Journalist of the Year 2020 - the seventh time she's been shortlisted for a major award, although she hasn't actually won one - yet!

Maria has lectured on the publishing industry at various universities including Cardiff and Bath, and under lockdown she started to run online workshops sessions advising aspiring authors

on how to get a book published.

[*Details of Maria's work can be seen on her website:*

*[www.mariamccarthy.co.uk](http://www.mariamccarthy.co.uk).]*

During the summer, Maria enjoyed gardening and swimming in the sea, but one of the high spots for her was when she was able to get her hair cut and coloured again. She says, 'It was way past a length that Miss Lewis would have approved of, but still too short to tie back effectively - and hugely annoying!'



Maria uncut and uncoloured!

**Stella Grace Lyons** left Howells in 2007. She tells us:

'I work as an Art History lecturer across the UK, Europe and Asia. This year, I was booked to give talks as far afield as New Zealand, Paris, and the Netherlands but when lockdown was announced, all my work disappeared in a flash. I decided to embrace new technology by delivering my Art History talks *via* Zoom. Within a couple of months, I had built up a

new audience of people across the UK, Europe, Asia, and America. I'm now growing my business while providing isolated people with a chance to learn about art. I receive heart-warming emails each week from those who have found comfort, solace, and escapism by studying Art History. As many of my regular listeners are over 60, I decided to use my talks to raise over £800 for Age Cymru (who have been doing wonderful work during the pandemic). My career is blossoming, and my daily 'commute' has reduced from hours, to seconds. Every cloud has a silver lining!'



[*visit Stella's website at:*

*[www.stellagracylons.co.uk](http://www.stellagracylons.co.uk)]*

## No exams—but they still came out on top!

*In this most difficult of academic years, Howell's students showed that they could still reach the heights.*

AS IF IT wasn't stressful enough, students across the country this year faced a results day unlike any other: GCSE, AS-level and A-level exams had been cancelled earlier in 2020 due to the safety concerns of COVID-19. Students who were due to sit exams would instead be provided with a grade, based on school predictions and data from previous years. For students awaiting results, these were worrying weeks.

Over half of Howell's students achieved grades A\*-A, with students gaining places at a number of leading UK universities.

Principal Sally Davis said: "These are exceptional results in exceptional times. I am prouder than ever this year of our Year 13 students. They have worked hard, only to have the chance to show what they can achieve taken from them.

"Since they learned that they would not be sitting their exams, they have not been idle. Early in lockdown, one student became the volunteer coordinator of the COVID support group in her area, arranging shopping deliveries and prescription collections for vulnerable people.

Another, an aspiring medic, donned PPE to work in the housekeeping team at University Hospital Wales, supporting NHS medical staff to keep us all safe and well."

A week later, after more uncertainty, staff at Howell's were delighted that the GCSE results reflected the amount of work put in by each student. 82% of grades were at A\*-A (levels 9-7).

Sally Davis, said: "It's been a challenging year for our GCSE students. They are a bold and brilliant cohort and will go on to achieve much in the next stage of their education.

"In the summer term, Year 11 girls completed the ARCH programme, designed by Howell's to bridge the gap between GCSEs and A-Levels. These were designed to improve skills of research and independent learning, ready for the next stage of their education in September. Students started Year 12 ready to face any challenge. I am enormously proud of each and every one of them, and I look forward to being there to celebrate everything that they achieve."

# Ah yes, I remember it well!

*It is always a pleasure (and a reminder of how things once were) to read about the memories of former pupils—although we now call them students! Below Joyce Shields and Barbara Forte share some thoughts and memories. Barbara recently had a fall and had to see her husband go into nursing care, but nevertheless remains cheerful and positive.*

Barbara writes:

'In the land of the living, even if only just, after another fall and time in hospital. My husband is now in a Care Home and my family are all away - one in the Far East until next Spring when he hopes to get back to Canada, one who is due home next month [November] and one who lives in the Midlands, so it's pretty lonely here. Hence I thought I'd write this missive, apt for the 2nd October.

*Monday 2nd October 1939*

What does this date mean to you? well, if you are under 90--not a lot! But for me at 92 (and a half!), it was the day that Howell's School opened its doors to the Day Girls--the Daybugs. The Boarders had been admitted a few days before to 'settle in'.

Why was school so late opening? War had been declared at the beginning of August and most schools had delayed their September openings.

And here we were, many in their

new uniforms (purchased from Evan Roberts) for this was their very first day. We each had a gas mask in its cardboard box: you would not be admitted without it!

Up the steps we went to the entrance that housed the Tower and cloakrooms, and through the Day Room (which now accommodates kitchens and eating areas) to our allotted classrooms. Answering our names on the register to a (then) unknown teacher, sorry - Mistress! - we then made our way down the stairs: NO TALKING and no holding the bannisters! - to the Great Hall, to await the arrival of the Headmistress, Miss Knight. I remember she appeared, somewhat theatrically, having made her way through the Music Cells beneath the Hall and up the little stairs to the side of the stage. School had begun!

We sang our hymns and then said our prayers, the latter while kneeling in the 'upright' position: there was no sitting back on one's heels!

At the conclusion we exited silently, and in fours, descended the stairs, again with no touching the rails!

Thus began the first day at HSL for me and many others. It continued in like fashion for the rest of our school lives.'

*I remember it well!*

*Barbara Mealing (1939)*

*Barbara Lloyd Hughes (1950)*

*Barbara Forte (1976)*

And Joyce adds:

'Dear Barbara,

I really admire the way you can stay so positive. You have written a very good piece for the Magazine that I am sure will be appreciated by anyone who reads it. You really allow your readers to imagine how life must have been back in the forties and fifties. The present generation of Howell's students are so privileged: their views are deemed worthy of expression and their suggestions noted! Imagine that! It is no longer a generation of being "seen, not heard" as it used to be. I remember Miss Disney telling us one day that we, the Upper Thirds, were "less than the dust"!

As for your unfortunate fall, I have often thought that what is needed for older people is a sort of suit that they (I mean we!) could wear that

would right itself as soon as it sensed any lurch towards the floor. It would make us rather like those roly-poly toys that you cannot push over!

Perhaps I should suggest it to some inventor...

Please look after yourself and keep your lovely sense of humour. You are indeed a personification of the word "FORTE-TUDE!"

Hannah Roberts says:

'It was such a pleasure to welcome Barbara Forte back to Howell's last March to talk to the Year 7 History Club. Barbara was a student at Howell's from 1939-44 and she regaled students with tales of her time at school during World War II. The girls were fascinated by how different Howell's was then and asked plenty of questions at the end of the talk. We look forward to seeing Barbara at events throughout the year and are very grateful to her for giving up her time to visit us.



Barbara in full flow!

## Hywelians in print

*We're always delighted to hear about Hywelians who have made it in the literary world. Here we outline some recent successes.*

**Eleri Edwards** is in touch from Manchester and says:

'I would like to tell people about the book I wrote during lock-down! It is called *Madagascar Memories 1973-1995* and tells of the different tasks I did during the time I was a mission partner.'

Here is Eleri's account of her lockdown:

'I AM GLAD TO SAY that the lockdown and the Covid restrictions have allowed me to do some jobs I was trying to avoid! At the beginning, I toyed with the idea of writing the 'living history' which a friend in Madagascar asked me to do a long time ago. I was, though, hesitant to start, not knowing how to do it. Then one day, my sister and her husband said, 'Just start and write down what you remember' - so I did and suddenly it all came back to me.

I really enjoyed living in the past for many weeks! It also gave me a structure to my days and I finished it. With the help of a wonderful person who prepared the presentation and pagination, and an equally wonderful printer (all in Wales) the

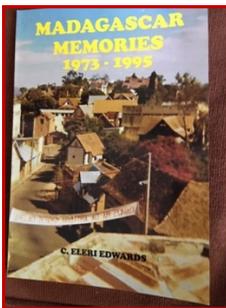
book is now ready and available.

It is in English and tells of the three tasks I was asked to do in the course of the time I spent in Madagascar between 1973 and 1995. It also includes reference to the interlude of four years I spent in Wales during the time when my father died and I worked for the Presbyterian Church of Wales, which was a special time to re-connect with family friends and churches all over Wales. I really appreciated it.

The CWM -The Council for World Mission - was the revamped London Missionary Society (LMS) of former years. It was and is a group of non-conformist churches, first and foremost Congregationalists, who originally founded the LMS, but also includes Presbyterians and others of similar theology. These churches in previous centuries had planted churches in foreign lands on the five continents but by the 20th century the younger churches were stronger than the original 'mother' churches and needed another new relationship with the church worldwide - the new

paradigm was 'Partnership in Mission'.

The mission partner - of which I was one - in those days went to work in a foreign land to witness to the fact that the church all over the world is family and we can share our talents and faith on an equal footing in the service of God and our neighbour and in the preaching of the Gospel. I understood that mission partners are not a permanent fixture but are there to help where needed and to



move on when someone local is there to take over. It was a wonderful experience for me and I hope I communicate something of the wonder of it in the book.

There are five chapters that try to give a time line and explain the jobs and my role in them. Five appendices cover a variety of subjects that relate to my experience there, but are more general or are taken from my diary that year. The final task I was asked to do was to live in a House of Prayer and train the young ladies who wanted to be religious sisters. There were two sisters when I left; there are now more than a dozen,

with a substantial group of novices who will shortly be ready to take their promises. What an adventure!

I hope the proceeds of this book can go to help their work in the local community as well as their life together. I am very proud of them and proud to tell you about my Madagascar saga. A Blessing for lockdown!

Eleri also has fond memories of Howell's:

'I learnt French with Miss Ewart Thomas in Howell's and always loved it. I recall an exhibition we had in the 50s, remembering the school's history: we all dressed up and performed a play, as well as dressing up in the clothes of different eras of the school's history! It was great fun.'

*[Eleri's book is about 150 pages and illustrated with plenty of photographs. Copies are available from Eleri.]*

*You can contact Hannah Roberts at School for more details.]*

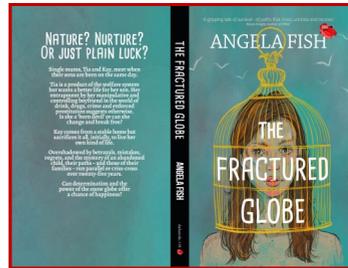


**Angela Fish** (née Kear) is a regular contributor to this section of the Magazine. She says,

‘What a strange year this has been! Thankfully, we have been able to stay safe at home. Despite all my usual book events and school visits being cancelled, I’ve kept busy and have been successful in having two poems published. One entitled *Villanelle for a Soldier* appears in *Onward/Ymlaen! An anthology of radical poetry from contemporary Wales*, and the second, entitled *Simon Says Nothing* is in Issue 26 of *Red Poets*.

A few months ago, I submitted my first, full-length novel (not for children) for publication and I was signed by Darkstroke Books. We’ve been working hard to complete the editing, cover design and marketing plan, and the eBook (for Kindle) will be released on 3 December 2020, closely followed by the paperback. By the time you’re reading this, both will be available!

Briefly, *The Fractured Globe* explores the nature/nurture question through the lives of two single mums and their families over 25 years. It questions whether someone can be born evil; what makes people do the things they do, and whether a person can change.



It’s been good to have had something to focus on, but now I need to redirect my energies to something new. I’ve no idea what just yet, but something will work its way into my mind before too long! I hope that 2021 will be a better year for everyone and I look forward to making the acquaintance of more HSL juniors and introducing them to Ben and Jess, and cabin boy, Tom!’

*I thought the quotation below was particularly appropriate for the kinds of global, national and community situations that currently pertain. I have been having a regular vegbox delivery for a number of years and each one is accompanied by a few words of wisdom from the founder of the company; the quote below comes from one of these articles.*

Lyn Owen, Editor

*“Dogma is seldom the right path;  
wisdom lies in informed compromise”*

## Gwlad beirdd\* ...

*An integral part of any Eisteddfod is the Chairing of the Bard, the ceremony in which the winning poets are chaired for composing a poem. Below are the winning entries in Junior and Senior sections.*

THIS YEAR SAW a number of poets submitting multiple entries for the Senior Bard – clearly rivalry among the Houses peaks for our Year 13s! There were poems which explored conflicts, the environment, and perspectives that affect us both internally and externally in our everyday lives: thought-provoking works indeed. There was an exceptionally high standard of expression, with imagery that was precise, surprising and evocative. A number of poets made good use of form, for example navigating the rules of writing sonnets, as seen in the winning poem written by Will M-R.

### FAITH IN LANGUAGE

*I am not one who would dare to believe  
In the collective fantasies of man,  
My faith could not withstand an evening breeze  
For in the leaves I see no maker's hand.  
But why should we not dare to dance alone,  
With no one staring down on us to judge.  
Unfettered by such judgement we may love  
Set free of all restrictions, save our home.  
I sat alone a month in deafened silence  
And when I heard again, the sound seemed strange  
English was not the language of my race  
Its bars could not unlock my waking cage  
Dim ond iaith fy nghartref all wneud hynny.  
I'r Gymraeg, mae 'nghalon wedi ei chlymu.*

*Will M-R*

\* Land of bards

IN RESPONSE to the Junior Bard topic of 'Wild Wales' there was an array of superb poems from Years 7 to 9 depicting wild landscapes, sheep, and the most beautiful areas of Wales, as well as individual takes on the theme such as rugby, mining, dragons and myths. Congratulations to Mali for her winning poem.

### WILD WALES

*Wild Wales is waking up  
From the slumber of Her winter sleep.  
The daffodils poke their curious noses  
Through the sodden clay,  
That covers Last Year's grave,  
Where yesterday was laid to rest.*

*The rousing breeze stirs the dormant Country  
From her frozen bed.  
The blinking snowdrops open their bleary eyes  
To view the victorious dawning of Spring's triumph over  
The darkness of winter's gloom.*

*The birds busy themselves as they prepare for a new clutch  
The hungry hedgehog, withered by her long sleep,  
Burrows for unlucky worms  
And the dormice, and the field mice, and voles, and shrews,  
Get ready for a new season of, once again,  
Running the gauntlet,  
Thrown down by next door's conniving cat  
Spring awakens, and with her,  
Hope Reigns Eternal.*

*Mali J*

# Happy Events

*It's always a pleasure to record marriages and new arrivals, but this year in particular it seems even better news.*

**Francesca Hogg** (left HSL 2007) married Jason Ford at St Tewdrics House in Chepstow on 29 February.



She says:

'We were incredibly lucky to have our big day before the lockdowns started and it was the last big event that most people went to; there were plenty of Hywelians in attendance! We were also lucky to have our honeymoon in New York with no restrictions after!

**Sophie Knight** (née Silver) has sent us this delightful photograph of new daughter Eilah Arianwen, born 25 February 2020.



**Rachel Williams** (née Cornelius) and her husband Tom welcomed their second child, a baby boy, Dylan Richard Thomas, weighing 8lb 9oz on 22 April 2020. Mother and baby are doing well and Sophie is enjoying being a big sister!



**Alice Poole** (1987-1994) is delighted to announce that she and her husband, Julian Taylor, are now the proud parents of a son, named Alexander Michael David John Taylor -Poole (Alex in daily usage). He was born on 23 July at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, and is bright, alert, active and very cute!

## Coronavirus 2020

*Being 'confined to barracks' by a pandemic from mid-March 2020 affected individuals in different ways. On the following pages, we feature accounts by some of those individuals of their own experiences and thoughts.*



*Protective masks for sale on a market stall in Vietnam*

*Head Girl Frances and Elin (Year 13) write of their return to school life in September 2020, and Hannah Roberts, Development and Marketing Officer describes her lockdown experience. Sureya used her lockdown time to help in the community.*

### **FIRST WEEK BACK**

After being away from school for almost six months, our return was long overdue and highly awaited. Mask and hand sanitiser at the ready, we entered our form rooms, aided by a well thought-out and comprehensive one-way system. Seeing our peers was undoubtedly great, but perhaps the most exciting consequence of returning to school was having live face-to-face lessons after a long term of team video calls. We have now got into the habit of wiping down our desks and chairs at the beginning of lessons, maintaining social distancing from those outside our year bubble, and wearing masks in confined spaces. Additional outside seating has provided a welcome space to study, eat lunch and make the most of the good weather while it lasts. Personal white boards and marker pens allow us to send answers and workings to our teachers, and lessons feel surprisingly normal. Textbooks have been issued for the new academic year; we are all very excited for our college experience to resume, and

look forward to planning what is to come.

*Frances D-T (Head Girl)*

### **HARVEST THANKSGIVING AT LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL**

On Sunday 13 September, we were invited to attend the Harvest Thanksgiving Service at Llandaff Cathedral. During the service we gave a reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians. It was lovely to see how, even with social distancing measures in place, people of all ages were able to come together and give thanks for all that we have. As expected, Covid-19 restrictions meant that some aspects of the service were slightly different from usual. Instead of singing hymns, we were encouraged to clap along to the organ as it played. The service, however, was still really enjoyable, and it was a lovely to be able to celebrate the Harvest Festival with the community.

*Elin J (Year 13)*

## A LOCKDOWN EXPERIENCE

Friday 20 March was a hugely emotional day for me when Howell's closed temporarily to staff and students, apart from the children of key workers, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the end of the working day, with my car piled high with suitcases, house plants and the contents of my fridge, I headed up the A470 to Ebbw Vale to spend lockdown with my mother, unsure of what lay ahead in the weeks ahead. She kindly set aside a room for me which I transformed into my new temporary office:



working from home started immediately. It was a very smooth transition and I was enormously grateful to our fantastic IT team who ensured that everything was set up so well. I had agreed to help staff the school reception desk with the key workers' children. I had three weeks of working from Mum's before doing my first shifts at reception, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Life began to feel *slightly* more normal.

I was then furloughed for a few weeks and took the opportunity to start learning Welsh, improve my

culinary skills and learn to garden, none of which I fully mastered! Having been on furlough, I enjoyed four weeks of coming into school every day and helping with the key workers' children in the run-up to the May half term break. It was a fabulous time during which I got to know the key worker students, staff and parents well, developed new skills, undertook many interesting tasks, and had much fun, including

a very special lockdown birthday, complete with cake and singing! Following the half term break I was back to working from Mum's. This is usually one of the busiest times for me as it's

full of events such as the Hywelian Summer Lunch, Champagne Cycle Challenge and Founder's Day. Instead, we ran our first online events including two virtual Open Days and a virtual Hywelian coffee morning. They were successful occasions and it was lovely to see everyone who joined us - but I have really missed seeing people in person!

In the three weeks before the summer holiday, I returned to school, working back at my desk, for the Reconnect Weeks, when all

students had the chance to return to school to check in with their teachers in person, catch up with friends and prepare for a September return.

Tuesday 8 September was a very special day when all staff and students returned to school. I have loved hearing chatter and laughter back in the corridors and seeing my colleagues and students back in the building; it feels as if some semblance of normality has returned. It was wonderful to see Hywelians at our virtual GDSTea Party – *In Conversation with Chloe* on Saturday 3 October. I really do hope it won't be too long until we can see each other soon in person!

I have always felt very lucky to work at Howell's, but never more so than I do now. It really is a very special place to work!

*Hannah Roberts*

### **BEHIND THE COUNTER**

'Working on the front line and seeing the impact of the virus first-hand has been eye-opening and challenging to say the least.

I'm now a third year Pharmacy student, but the outbreak of the pandemic cut my second year of university short, meaning I was to complete the rest of the year remotely at home. I chose to

balance my studies with working part time in my parents' pharmacies, as I usually do in holidays. This experience, though, was completely different in this unprecedented time.

In the midst of the UK's national lockdown where everything seemed to come to a stop, essential shops remained open, with pharmacies being one of the few places open to the public. There was panic buying of paracetamol, hand sanitiser being bought constantly and genuine fear in the community. Our job was to console the public to the best of our ability and provide aid where we could. We couldn't shut our doors like others. We had to remain in potential contact with the virus every day, and deal with an increased workload of monthly prescriptions being doubled, or even tripled, to allow patients to have enough medication to see them through. Our pharmacists were working around the clock to keep up with demand, while our free delivery service was stretched to the limit. We bought boxes of surgical masks in bulk, and almost every night I would sort them into packs to be sold in the pharmacy the next day. We were being put in a situation which we had never experienced before and sometimes it was difficult to know what to do.

The best thing to come out of this pandemic is the support and appreciation our customers have given us: little things like noticing people saying thank you more, customers taking the time to tell us how grateful they are or how much they value our service, and even a simple Facebook comment thanking us! It has been truly

wonderful to know that we have, along with so many other healthcare and key workers, learned how to adapt and cope to help people through a very difficult time.'

*Sureya Ali, (HSL class of 2018)  
Llandaff Pharmacy*

*Hywelian Miss Eleanor Jenkins teaches Science and Latin at Howell's. She tells us how she had to learn a completely new way of teaching.*

### **THE VIRTUAL LAB BENCH**

Lockdown brought a huge change to teaching at Howell's. As well as having to get used to teaching all our lessons online, we had to figure out the best way to mark student work and give feedback.

In a way, I was lucky at the start of all this. I am in a high risk group, having asthma, so I had to stay home for a few days before the rest of the school went into lockdown. This gave me a bit of time to figure out what I could do and to prepare a few lessons to be taught online. A lockdown had been a possibility for a while, so we had had several training sessions on using the platforms we needed work from. Cathy Darnton was a real gem in

helping us all to become familiar with systems that we had already used to a certain extent , but hadn't really got to grips with until now.

Teaching online was a surreal experience. We used Microsoft Teams to teach live lessons: students and teachers were able to video conference in real time. This allowed us to continue to teach as normally as possible, and gave everyone contact with other learners, as well as the ability to ask questions and have discussions, but it is nothing like teaching in a real classroom. Students did not enjoy being on camera, and I suspect a fair number were doing lessons in clothes they would not wear outside the house! Weren't

we all though? I became a master of the ‘smart top and pyjama’ combination! Not being able to see students, or judge from their facial expressions how they were learning and hopefully enjoying the lessons, made the whole experience both challenging and — a bit lonely. I am used to spending my working days surrounded by cheerful students who smile in greeting, ask questions and (mostly) respond with enthusiasm. Teaching online, as efficient and thorough as we could make it, lacked the personal touch. I couldn’t read over a student’s shoulder while they were working; I couldn’t check in with them to make sure they were on the right track, and I couldn’t have a quiet word if I felt they were struggling. When you say anything

on a video call, everyone can hear you, and you can hear everyone. Students were thus less inclined to talk and discuss ideas. They were very good at answering questions and sending in their work through the appropriate system, but I felt that it lacked some of the joy of being in a classroom, being able to have slightly off topic and random conversations with students.

Nevertheless, given what Covid-19 has thrown at us, I feel online teaching software has allowed us to make the best of the current situation and provide our students with a good learning experience, while maintaining, as best we can, the community experience for which Howell’s is renowned.

*Miss E Jenkins*

*Tabitha is of the generation greatly affected by what has happened this year; or, rather, what has not happened this year. Below, she tells her story.*

### **COVID-19: A MILLENNIAL VIEW**

WHEN I DISCOVERED exams had been cancelled, my initial reaction was joy akin to an orchestra playing the Radetzky March loudly: exhilarating. I then reacquainted myself with reality. I had worked for three years towards a goal, only to have it cruelly snatched from me like a rattle from a

toddler. A part of me is missing: I can’t show family, friends, teachers (and myself) that I can survive GCSEs. Having watched my sister I know it is no mean feat.

My textbooks sit forlornly on my desk, begging me to revisit Fleming’s Left-Hand rule one last time. Since my first day in Nursery, Howell’s has

grown to become my second home, my second family. I miss it. Longing for episodes of *Friends* while studying has become a longing for a Geography lesson with Mr Biebrach or Biology with Miss Jenkins.

Unreality is all around like a bad smell: shopping in Tesco, I expect Tom Hanks to burst from the barren toilet paper aisle, begging me to join his mission to save the world. In the meantime, I have been reading copious books (just as thrilling!) to avoid becoming a vitamin D-deprived vegetable by the end of the lockdown. It's oddly similar to my sister's appearance after her GCSEs...

My classmates and I are keeping up to date *via* social media. It's a concern that we are more worried about the postponement of Prom than our academic future. I have the technological capability of a gnat, and I don't find communication easy. Managing to Skype my grandma really is rocket science.

On a more serious note, this virus really has floored the world: uncertainty is a part of life we all must encounter, but this is unprecedented. Much as I would like to think that my 89th game of Monopoly this week is just as enjoyable as the first, I am worried that I will lose people, that people close to me will lose others. I yearn to complain about Brexit, to book my

tent for the Reading Festival, to find any news article that does not mention a viral outbreak.

To quote the Wisest Man; "I want to break free (from my irritating family)", "I want to ride my bicycle (for the government-mandated hour)", "It's a beautiful day, the sun is shining (from my bedroom window)", "The NHS is under Pressure", "Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy?" As Mr Elmes said when they closed the school, "The show must go on (Boris Johnson reporting from the ICU)", "Which way the wind blows doesn't really matter to me (unless it is fewer than 2 metres in my direction)", "Don't stop me now (I'm implementing social distancing)", "200 degrees: that's why they call me Mr Fahrenheit (states the first Coronavirus patient)". For now, I am a diligent Howell's girl who plans to take up Hebrew, indoor lacrosse and *Krav Maga* to occupy myself productively. I look to the future and resist the concerns that infiltrate my thoughts.

I will conclude my Pepys-like account now, as there is some drying paint to be observed. I do hope to return to school at the earliest opportunity - mainly so I can eat at Sally D's and wear snazzy College-endorsed uniform. All the best to the Howell's gang, I'll see you soon.

Tabitha H

*Holly's account highlights some of the positives and negatives of living during a pandemic*

### **CONTRADICTIONS OF COVID-19**

From where I'm sitting, lockdown can only be described as a bizarre mix of a relaxing, restful holiday and an apocalyptic, global crisis – not a sentence I ever thought I would write. That said, no-one can honestly say that this is a situation they ever saw themselves being in. I certainly didn't expect to have the time to be writing this article over the holidays; only three weeks ago my Easter was fully allocated to revision, with A-levels looming just around the corner. In this respect, whilst many have been claiming that the Class of 2020 have it easy – no exams, no more college and a seven-month summer – I would disagree. I am biased, of course, but it seems to me that eighteen-year-olds up and down the country have had to accept some of the biggest changes in their everyday lives. From expecting the Easter holidays to be filled with revision, to searching for things to do, having to say an abrupt goodbye to friends that you have seen daily for the past seven years, accepting that this summer will, most likely, be spent, not in Zante, but Cardiff and being uncertain as to whether university will even be able to happen in October – and we're not

even going to mention those non-refundable prom dresses...

Of course, everyone would like to say that they have put the time to good use; run a marathon, written a play, learnt Mandarin etc. While that hasn't quite been the case for me, that's not to say I haven't been productive in other ways. Both my sister and I have volunteered to help local residents who may need assistance with jobs or food buying while also going to the supermarket for our grandparents every week. It seems quite ironic that this whole process of social distancing has in fact brought many communities closer together. However, what I have found throughout this whole process is that it becomes very easy to feel pessimistic, bored, lonely and distracted – the feeling of never quite knowing when this is going to end. I have been trying to find some positives. I know many of my classmates will disagree with me, but perhaps this new system of A-level marking is fairer as it takes into account the work we have put in over two years, rather than crammed twenty four hours beforehand; it allows us to be seen as a student rather than just a specific piece of knowledge on a flashcard. It has also

allowed me to catch up on little things I have been meaning to do for a long time such as reading that book (I've been on page 16 on for two years now!), getting rid of old clothes and books, redecorating my room and getting in touch with friends I haven't spoken to in a long time.

It is indeed a strange situation. No-one knows quite how long it will last,

what will happen next academic year or when tinned tomatoes will come back into stock. What we *do* know is that keeping busy is important – and, on that note, it's nine o'clock, which means it's time for a Joe Wicks workout...

*Holly B  
Class of 2020*

*Amani is determined to be prepared for the next exciting stage of her educational journey.*

### **KEEPING POSITIVE AND ACTIVE**

I ALWAYS KNEW finishing college would be a strange experience, but when it ended abruptly on 20 March 2020 I don't believe any of us were prepared for it. The gravity of the situation didn't affect me on the last day; even now, saying goodbye to my fellow classmates and teachers of two to fifteen years doesn't seem final.

Finding out that A-Level examinations had been cancelled was surreal. Yet it is reassuring to know that it is the same for all students in my cohort; there is a sense of unity and comfort in the anxiety we share. Remembering why college ended abruptly, and our examinations were cancelled alleviates my emotional response. It

reminds me that we are helping to protect and save lives—ultimately more important than any examination. Nevertheless, how we feel is valid. I felt quite purposeless and listless initially: achieving the goal of the past two years was no longer in my control. Our final grades would be based on previous work, and it filled me with doubt and worry: would my standard of work be enough to demonstrate what I would have been capable of? I felt frustrated that I would no longer have study leave, when I put blood, sweat and tears into my work, gain confidence in my abilities and master each subject. I will study topics related to my Veterinary Medicine university course during lockdown, and return to my A Level revision. My drive to learn remains, and I want to

ensure I am well-equipped for university life.

Surprisingly, I was excited and overjoyed by the prospect of lockdown. It gave me time to put energy into the music, art and photography projects I had put aside while I had been revising. I appreciated being able to work at my fitness and creativity, and spend more time with my family before I leave for university. Adversely, I do miss my friends and sister. It's strange being unable to see them and do things such as going to cinemas, restaurants and shops. However, we keep in touch through

social media every day and support each other in this unusual time. I've been in lockdown for a month now, and have been creating to-do lists and keeping a record of what I have done each day, as I would have during exam season, to differentiate between each day and create a sense of achievement, important for my mental health and productivity.

Although I have been enjoying lockdown thus far, I am definitely looking forward to celebrating a gradual return to normal life.

*Amani K-A  
Class of 2020*

*Eloise's account of the stages of dealing with a pandemic and its effects on her education and well-being is both thought-provoking and entertaining. The original full length account, written early in the pandemic, can be found in the online Appendix.*

## **A NEW RITE OF PASSAGE**

### **SHOCK**

There is no denying that, though sheltered in school away from the terrifying news and new developments each day brought, we sensed a change in everyone around us. I knew that everything I had worked for these past five years now meant nothing. I sat beside mum, watching solemn-faced officials at their lecterns, and I knew what they would say: 'All GCSE and

A-Level examinations will be cancelled.'

I had just two more days at Howell's: I felt that the plug had been pulled on my future. My dreams and hopes were spiralling away: I felt as if I had lost my identity, and felt bereft.

I often complained about revision and schoolwork, but secretly enjoyed it and was even excited for my GCSE exams, so that I could prove that I could achieve what I

had set out to do. None of this mattered compared to the needs of the country, but I felt that an opportunity to make my teachers proud was stolen.

I felt robbed of the security and confidence to take me into the next years of my life. Despite knowing that many people were facing so much worse, I felt a consuming self-pity, and was furious with everyone, especially the government that acted too quickly. I did not understand why something so important should be decided in a split-second, offhand way.

#### SADNESS

The bus journey into school on that last day with its illusion of a normal school day exacerbated my despair. The last thing I wanted was to face my teachers and friends. I knew that seeing them devastated and frustrated like me would rekindle everything I had worried about the previous night; I was almost too cowardly to face them. We cried and laughed and decided to end our time at school as determinedly as we had started, and I found comfort and strength in being with them. I told myself that if we could not change what had happened, we certainly should not let it ruin our time together. We spent the day reminding each about the strong

friendship bonds we had formed. We had had a far worse time when we lost our dear friend Martha. We shared memories and promised that being apart would only be a minor hiccup in our lives. We made plans for the summer and parted ways almost cheerily, despite a deep sadness I still feel now, at the abrupt end to normality and the loss of the constants I relied on. As I cleared out my locker for the very last time, anger began to swell at the frivolous chatter among those leaving about a doubtful Prom.

Although I had exhausted all my emotions, I had not considered the final blow of saying farewell to my good-natured bus driver, and his comforting musings every day.

Watching the news later that evening, I understood that the decision that I had thought was merely bowing to media pressure was probably the right one. The death count was rising steadily, and the greed of people and shortages in shops signalled that this virus was not something to be ignored.

Perhaps things felt so strange and different in part because of my mother: she has always been a constant source of support and reassurance for me. I have always known that if I am in need of guidance I can turn to her. Mum is

also a teacher in a secondary school as affected by COVID-19 as anywhere else. I feel as if I have grown up with the students she teaches, hearing about her day each evening. I realised that she and they too would be both shocked and upset by the sudden news. Her tireless and determined work to help her pupils achieve *their* goals also felt wasted, and we were sorrowful for each other. Understanding how my teachers might have felt helped me remember that we all have to work together; it was foolish to waste my sadness on something that would not change.

#### ANGER

The weekend before lockdown was a blur of phone calls and preparing for the unknown as the end of the seemingly normal loomed. In my shock at the abrupt end to my time at school and the grief of my peers, I had not noticed how others were handling this *Coronavirus* outbreak. The answer was 'not well'.

The worst aspects of human nature had already become evident. Did a neighbour, living alone, need the twenty-four pack of toilet rolls she seemed to be unloading from her car every few days? Occasional light-hearted news reports showed that some people seemed to understand that it is important to care for each other and offer a helping hand

(while maintaining social distancing, of course), but the acts of selfishness I saw in brief encounters with others was disappointing: the greed witnessed in shops, people panic-buying endless supplies and items they would never use; people pushing the boundaries of lockdown to the extreme, nullifying the efforts of others; many bemoaning their own hardship in being stuck at home, while every day, news reports showed poorer countries who could not manage the costs of COVID-19. Some seemed oblivious to the suffering of others and the terrible losses that many were facing. Partying and playing blaring music, while not against the lockdown rules, seemed totally inappropriate.

#### RESIGNATION

One week into lockdown, I was able to attend a video call session with one of my classes. Seeing my friends eased some of the strain I was starting to feel from being confined by this lockdown. I began to feel increasingly frustrated and useless when other family members were able to help in the community. As an asthmatic, I had to shield at home. Nevertheless, I enjoyed the hour of relative normality and was disappointed when it ended.

As lockdown was extended beyond its original timeframe, I finally

recognised that things would not be quite the same, even after life might appear to return to normal. The effect of this pandemic on economy, trade and tourism has been devastating. My own woes have begun to pale in insignificance. I understand now why the government acted as they did, and would perhaps praise them for it. The whole world is doing its best.

### HOPE

In difficult times, I need to have something to aim for. I will idle for hours, achieving absolutely nothing, unless I have a goal or purpose. However, as communities have shown positive, heart-warming altruism, my optimism for the future is renewed and my love for life and learning restored.

I can start looking forward to the future, to seeing my friends and family again. These testing times cannot last forever, and I am excited about my A-Levels. A new objective for me is to work within the ARCH programme [see p 20] offered by the school. I hope it will give me a sense of purpose and much-needed motivation.

Simple acts of kindness lift my spirits: charitable donations and communities pulling together; neighbours (now friends) dropping off groceries for the elderly and frail; phone calls with family are no

longer a chore but a reason for joy. Applauding our NHS together is enough to make me forget the sadness we all face. Nature, too, warms the soul, with sights of spring all around and a long-overdue breathing space for wildlife.

This time has given me an opportunity to learn new skills: sewing, baking, gardening, and creative writing. Best of all is our postman delivering an exciting brown paper parcel of books. It is wonderful to see appreciation for workers of all kinds, the men and women keeping the county running. Their dedication has inspired me to refocus on my learning.

Things are now beginning to feel hopeful. I hope that my generation will not allow this devastating world event to define the rest of our lives; perhaps clichés about mankind after the virus being changed for the better might be true.

I have found writing this account cathartic and it has helped me to understand two things. The first is that life is not a straight or easy path, and it is something you have to learn for yourself. There will be twists and turns as life meanders on, and the second fact is that, however long and arduous the journey, life, like the river, always gets where it is going.

*Eloise M*

*Charlotte Merry (née Hancock, left HSL 2001) and she and her husband run two restaurants in Perth, Australia. She gives us an antipodean view of running a business under lockdown.*

### **COVID TALES FROM DOWN UNDER**

There's nothing that can properly prepare you for the madness of life in small business and that goes double for the risky game of hospitality. The highs of watching your ideas flourish, the lows of sweeping up after a Christmas Eve break-in, knowing by heart the cost of three different types of carrots and the constant effort and attention it takes to keep everything ticking along.

In the past three years we (me, hubby and best mate) have opened two restaurants in Western Australia. We've worked unbelievably hard, been really successful and in March 2020 we were sitting pretty and planning our next project. The COVID clamp down on hospitality in Western Australia was immediate and decisive. The gamut of emotions was exhausting – this is the right action for public health, why is this happening to me, don't be so selfish people are dying, I don't know a single person who has been affected, how can we help look after those more vulnerable than us, how much financial runway have we got, we're so lucky to live

somewhere so beautiful, I don't have the right to feel hard done by, I should update the Google listings, what happens now...? Everything felt dizzying, isolating and impossible.

The first day of lockdown we sat on the floor of our restaurant and there we laughed and we cried and we played with our dogs and we drank tequila. It was cathartic, necessary and resulted in one simple mantra being painted across the wall of our little office:

*Breathe. Regroup. Make A Plan.*

And so we did. As other businesses closed indefinitely and posted endlessly about their hard luck, we leaned on each other and dug deeper. We pulled a couple of all-nighters, re-wrote both restaurant menus to create fun, accessible takeaway offers, cleaned our cars to become delivery drivers, created ordering, pick-up and delivery systems, sourced packaging, turned excess stock into pickles and preserves, completely updated our websites and kept all our social posts informative and upbeat. We reopened in 48 hours and haven't looked back since. Quick thinking

meant we were able to keep our customers and gain new ones by being a source of good food and good cheer when people needed it most. There's no sugar coating it, there were dark days. We were working 14 hours on both sites, seven days a week, battling with landlords, constantly evolving and taking turns to be extra upbeat so someone else could have a meltdown.

But here's the thing.

We saw the absolute best of people this year. Carly organised a WhatsApp group for her street and her neighbours took it in turns to come pick up and deliver everyone's dinner orders. Liz's house came to pick up coffee in full eveningwear just for fun. Tom from a local creamery swapped us dinner for amazing ice cream. Kate bought a \$50 gift voucher every week instead of coming for her regular Sunday breakfast. The resurgence in the notion of community was astounding and it motivated us constantly to stay grateful and to honour these wonderful souls by being the brightest spark we could be in their day.

I write this from what very much feels like the promised land. The weather is perfect, we are enjoying complete freedoms within our own State, both restaurants are

booming thanks to 'stay at home' tourism and our solitary journey into lockdown is now a memory. This is not an easy industry to make a living out of and my heart breaks for venues back home trying to navigate repeated lockdowns and reinventions. All I can offer is encouragement from the other side of the darkness.

You are so much more extraordinary than you know and what you can achieve when your back is against the wall will stagger you. It seems impossible, but focusing on 'other' when times are hardest is such a tonic and the joy of picking other people up kept me out of my own head and gave me the drive to keep going. I am so much better at my job for this experience. I have a much better understanding of the limits and potential of both the business and myself along with a much clearer vision for both our futures. The pressure cooker of 2020 is more than any of us should have to bear, but it is also revelatory. I write this sitting on the floor after another chaotic day and smile at the simple mantra still scrawled on the office wall. I can hear the others laughing while they're setting up for evening service. I think I'll go join them and raise a glass to the mad, mad world of small business.

There's nowhere I'd rather be.

*Guild Secretary Sue Rayner compares the experiences of being in another country as the world started to realise the enormity of the Coronavirus outbreak.*

## **PANDEMIC - A VIETNAMESE PERSPECTIVE**

At the beginning of 2020, as events in Wuhan were beginning to be regularly reported (and sounding very scary), I was checking the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website on a daily basis. Editor Lyn and I were booked to go to Vietnam at the end of February and as Vietnam has a rather porous border with China, we were wondering whether we were going to get there. But there was no warning from the FCO, and the news was telling us that by the end of February they hadn't had any new cases in the country for more than three weeks. So, off we went, and what we found was interesting.

Like many Asian people, most Vietnamese people routinely wear a mask – some 94% of them. Everywhere we went, there were posters about hand-washing. There were cartoon films on advertising billboards, hand sanitiser everywhere (at ATMs in banks, by lifts in hotels – everywhere there were buttons you needed to push). Anyone could walk into a clinic and get a

test. Towards the end of our trip, there were some new cases in Hanoi, brought into the country by Vietnamese returning from Europe. Although we were in Ho Chi Minh City by that time – some 1000 miles away— our temperatures were taken in restaurants and theatres. People coming from Europe were no longer allowed into the country except for Vietnamese citizens returning home, who were required to quarantine for two weeks, and taken to an army barracks for that period of time. I believe that over a period of time, 65,000 people were quarantined in this way.

We flew back to Heathrow on 11 March, expecting to have some procedure to go through before we could go home, but there was nothing. Once home, we discovered that there were no hand sanitiser or toilet rolls for love or money, which we thought most peculiar!

Vietnam at the time of writing has had just over 400 cases of *Coronavirus* and one death.

How amazing is that?

## From the Archives

THE RESTRICTIONS PLACED upon working in small spaces by the outbreak of *Coronavirus* has meant that, sadly, Janet Sully, Howell's Chief Archivist, and her team of volunteers have not been able to carry out their valuable work in recording and cataloguing the history of Howell's this year, so

there is no report.

Janet and the team are, of course, always glad to receive any documents, photographs and artefacts relevant to their work—so get up into those attics and boxes under the bed and see what you can come up with!

## In Memoriam

*As always, it is sad to record the passing of Hywelians, perhaps more so in this year of all years. We are grateful to those who have provided the memories of friends and family below.*

**Betty Louise Dixon** (née Jeanes, HSL 1932-1937)

Betty died on 21 August 2019 at St Monica Court, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, aged 98. Her years as a day-girl at Howell's were very important to her and, throughout her life, she talked about her time at school with great pride and affection. She was taught English by Miss Bromley who sowed the seeds of a lifelong love of poetry and drama. Her friend Olive Ward (née Matthew) was also at Howell's; when Olive later moved to New Zealand, they remained in constant contact until Olive's death.

Betty married Jack Dixon in 1941 (a Yorkshireman serving as a Warrant Officer in the RAF) and moved to Bristol in 1946. She was secretary of the Bristol branch of the Hywelian Guild for many years, a member of various drama groups. In later years, she rediscovered her talent for singing.

She is survived by three children, four grandchildren and three great

grandchildren.

Gill Thomas informed us of the death of her mother, **Mrs Frances Hay** in January 2020. Gillian says:

'She was a pupil at Howell's from 1933-38 and died at the age of 98. She was a member of the Hywelian Guild: in 2005, I brought her to School for the centenary celebrations (she was then living in East Sussex). She really enjoyed the day and met ladies who were in the same school years as her. Sadly, soon after 2005, she began to suffer with Alzheimer's dementia and spent the rest of her long life in care and nursing homes. Some of her last memories were of attending Howell's. I always showed her your interesting magazine.'

Nick Lloyd has contributed the following obituary of his mother, **Mary Elizabeth Lloyd** (née Winn, 1930 - 2020). He says:

'My mother passed away on 19 January 2020, aged 89. She was a

pupil at Howell's from 1941-46. Leaving Howell's aged sixteen, she attended Mr Davies's Commercial College in Keppoch Street before becoming a typist in the offices of RKO Radio Pictures in Dominions Arcade, off Queen Street. Within weeks of leaving Howell's, she attended a dance at Roath Park where she met David Lloyd; they were married at Llanishen Church in 1950. Although regularly visiting Cardiff, Mary and David moved, firstly, to Leeds, then to Reading



before retiring to Swanage, Dorset. During these years, she regularly met with fellow Hywelians from the South of England branch.

Mary was a loving and supportive wife to David and devoted to her family. She is greatly missed by her five children, fifteen grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren.

Mr John Foster Thomas writes to tell of the passing of his mother, **Denise Thomas** (née Norman, HSL 1936-44)

'My mother died at St Hilary near Cowbridge in October 2019, just a few weeks short of her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday. She was the middle of

three generations of Hywelians: her mother Violet Morgan (later Norman) was at Howell's in the years before the First World War and her daughter Josephine was at Howell's in the 1960s. My mother studied Pharmacy in Cardiff and subsequently owned and ran a pharmacy in Penarth for many years in partnership with my father, also a pharmacist. She was a huge supporter of Howell's, which she always acknowledged had played such an important part in her life.



**Enfys Ann Brown** (née Jones, HSL 1936 – 1943)

Enfys's daughter Jane, (HSL 1969-76), remembers her mother in this tribute:

'Enfys was born in Treforest in November 1925; when she was four, the family moved to Cowbridge. Enfys started in Howell's in May 1936, according to the letter offering her a place from the Headmistress, Miss Trotter. She loved school and boarding in Oaklands; she was good at games, and captained the First Team in lacrosse. During the war, she became a day-girl, travelling by bus

from Cowbridge to Victoria Park and then by foot to school: she had special permission to arrive late for Assembly. Enfys was in school under three Headmistresses: Miss Trotter; Miss Knight, and Miss Lewis. She very much enjoyed Hywelian meetings and was for many years secretary of the Bridgend branch of the Guild, attending branch meetings until a few years ago. She made many lifelong friends at school with whom she kept in touch.

Enfys studied pharmacy at Cardiff University, graduating in 1946 with a BPharm degree. She was a pharmaceutical chemist for Glaxo Laboratories in Middlesex before moving back to Cowbridge in the late 1940s to live with her mother. She later worked in the Royal Gwent, East Glamorgan and Bridgend General Hospitals.

In 1956, she married Cowbridge printer, Alan Brown, giving up work to concentrate on family life: they had two children, Jane and Paul. She was actively involved with many local groups and societies in the Cowbridge area. She took great pleasure in the interests and careers of her family, particularly sports and the arts. Alan was a keen golfer (which rubbed off on Jane!), and they introduced their children early on to theatre, opera and ballet.

After 34 years of happily married

life, Alan died in 1990. Their daughter, Jane, then a physical education teacher, retrained as an accountant and came back to live with her mother. They holidayed together, going to see performances of opera and theatrical works that Paul had designed as his career brought him worldwide recognition. In 1997, Enfys travelled to the Oscars ceremony in California when Paul was nominated for Best Designer.

In later years, in spite of arthritis, osteoporosis and respiratory problems, Enfys never complained. She continued to take an active part in the community until failing mobility confined her to a wheelchair. Whenever possible, she enjoyed the Friday morning service at Holy Cross Church, Cowbridge. She listened to the daily radio service and kept her Christian belief all her life, a source of courage severely tested by Paul's untimely death from cancer in 2017.

Enfys had an excellent memory, a great sense of humour, loved conversation and kept in regular contact with friends, some from as long ago as early childhood.

Next to an open window, the sun streaming in and birds singing outside, Enfys passed away peacefully at home in Cowbridge on 14 June 2020, aged 94.'

[Jane's full tribute can be found in the online Appendix]

**Heather Robertson** (née Kelly, 1930 - 2020)

Heather's daughter Lindsey writes:

'My mother attended Howell's School during the second World War from 1941-46. She was always proud of being a scholarship student at the school. Her loyalty and affection for Howell's lasted her lifetime.

At sixteen, she left school and began working in the Civil Service, Pneumoconiosis Board. Shortly after, at the age of seventeen, she met my father, Norman: they were married when she was twenty.

For many years my mother focussed on raising her four children. When my youngest brother started school, she returned to college to train as a teacher. She then had a successful career, teaching in primary schools in Cardiff, becoming Head of Mathematics in Springwood School, Llanedeyrn.

The last years of her career were spent as a supply teacher, bringing her into contact with children from a wide range of backgrounds. Her great empathy and generosity of spirit left a lasting legacy to all the children and colleagues she met during her career.

Her time at Howell's made a huge

impression on her life. The friends she met at Howells, Beryl Norton (Williams) and Barbara Forte (Mealing) lasted a lifetime. My mother was a proud Hywelian and wanted both her daughters to have the same educational experience; sadly, she had to wait for her granddaughters to achieve this ambition.

For my mother, the important things in her life were her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, but of first importance

was her relationship with my father. My parents had a wonderful marriage and were devoted to each other.



They would have celebrated their seventieth wedding anniversary on 25 August 2020. She is missed by all who knew and loved her.'

Mary Butlin writes to inform us of the passing of her neighbour and friend, **Peggy Hardwidge**:

'When I passed the Eleven Plus and told my neighbour I would be going to Howell's, she said that was the

school she had attended. Over the years we compared notes.

Peggy left HSL just after Miss Lewis had become Head, and also remembered Miss Disney, who left at the end of my first term. Peggy trained as a physiotherapist and in her younger days, was a keen caver. We were neighbours for over sixty years until I moved away. Despite failing eyesight Peggy was reluctant to leave her family home. She passed away in December 2019 shortly after celebrating her 95th birthday.'

We received the notification of the death of Hywelian **Hilary Evans** from her friend, Elizabeth Thomas. We have little information but understand that Hilary left school in 1966 and lived in Nottingham.

John Holding tells us of the passing of his wife **Aileen Elisabeth (Betty) Holding** (née Weber, HSL 1942-46/47), who died on 8 March 2020, aged 91. He says,

'Betty's father was an HM Inspector of Taxes, and was moved at intervals to different places. Betty was born in Wetheral, Carlisle, then lived in Portishead and Faringdon and finally, Cyncoed, Cardiff.

After school, she worked in a settlement in Bermondsey, London. From 1949-1952, she studied at the University of Manchester, and took a degree of BA in Social Administration.

I was at Cambridge from 1945-48, and after three years in the aircraft industry, decided to switch to teaching mathematics. I applied for a Graduate Certificate of Education from 1951-52 at Manchester, near where I lived. Betty and I met as members of the Student Christian Movement; we were married in July 1953 in Cyncoed, Cardiff.

After her degree course, Betty worked for a short time as Personal Welfare Worker in Wallsend-on-Tyne until our first child was born in 1954. (We have four children, most of whom are now retired!)

We, too, moved around the country: from Newcastle-on-Tyne to Bramhall in Cheshire, then in 1959 to Exeter. Here Betty did voluntary work for the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB). She founded, with others, a group known as Housebound Housewives and made many friends.

We moved to Heysham in Lancashire in 1969, and again, Betty did voluntary work for the CAB in Morecambe.

Over the years, Betty met and kept in touch with other Hywelians: Sylvia Horner (née Maskew); June Ridge (née Derrick) in Lancashire and June Thomas (née Perris) in Exeter. I assume they were contemporaries of Betty's at Howell's. June Thomas now lives in Minehead.'

**Hannah Loyns**, (class of 2015), died in February 2020. Head of Drama, Alyson Rees, remembers her:

'Hannah's love of Drama and the Performing Arts started at a very young age, and continued throughout her school life. She was always interested in the process of creating characters and was committed to developing her craft throughout her time at Howell's. Sheer determination to improve was a great asset as she moved from her GCSE course to the demands of the A-Level syllabus.

Hannah had real stage presence and could switch easily from comedy to intensely dramatic roles. I still remember her interpretation of an excerpt from *Mourning Becomes Electra* for her final A-Level practical examination. The minutiae of every movement to decisions on costume were addressed. She was a very fine director and would consider both vocal and physical aspects of characters until she felt them to be

exactly right.

She was the most discerning of students, showing empathy and sensitivity, not only in her acting, but in the collaborative work that is a large part of this subject.

Whatever Hannah turned her hand to, there was a real sense of engagement and purpose, and I shall remember her enthusiasm and desire always to realise her own very high expectations.'

In January we heard about the death of one the youngest of the Howell's community. **Ahana Bahad** had been at Howell's since Nursery, and took time off towards the end of Year 1 to receive medical treatment. Her classmates had been looking forward to welcoming her back to school after Christmas.

Ahana is remembered by staff and girls as a gentle and kind little girl, who had plenty of friends and was always smiling. She was always keen to be involved in any game and loved music and drama, especially Christmas productions. We remember her singing as a sheep in *The Brightest Star*, dancing as a Snowflake in *The Nutcracker* and as a townsperson in *Lights, Camel, Action*. The school hopes to plant a tree in her memory in the grounds of the Prep School.

Mr Richard Phillips writes to notify us that his mother, **Barbara Phillips** (née Vernon), passed away late in 2019. He says:

‘Mum started at Howell’s in the Juniors under Miss Kendall, and left during the war years under Miss Lewis. Although she was hampered by various problems during her last 10 years, she was generally happy and well except for the last few months. She grew up and lived, in Rhiwbina, where my Dad ran a chemist shop until the 70s.

Barbara remained fond of both school and the Hywelians, and I have memories of swimming in the pool in my early teens.’

**Dr Rosalind Irene Bearcroft** (née Chamberlain, 1926-2020)



Rosalind was born in Cardiff in May 1926, and joined Howell’s in 1934, where she spent many happy years and received a wonderful education.

Rosalind decided early on that she would rather be a doctor than a vet. She studied Physiology, Anthropology and Anatomy at University College, Cardiff in 1943, then went on to Somerville College, Oxford, where she met her future husband, Peter. Indeed, when next in Cardiff, she made a trip to Miss Lewis, headmistress at the time, to share the glad tidings. It was after midnight by the time she got there; nothing daunted, she threw pebbles at the window until Miss Lewis awoke and - very graciously - let her in for a chat!

Shortly after the war, Rosalind and Peter hitchhiked to Rome, the first of many travels around Europe. After two years at Oxford, she continued her medical training at University College, London, gaining her MBBS in 1951. She and Peter were married in 1952.

In 1966, Rosalind became a consultant in the developing field of psychiatry, and moved to Barming in Kent. When a local primary school was threatened with closure, Rosalind and Peter bought Barming Place, to become both their family home and a new school site. Life at Barming Place was extraordinary. There were animals (including polecats, a tortoise, and stick insects), concerts, weddings and a Plymouth Brethren church.

Over the years, Rosalind was an active member of many Catholic-based groups, her contribution to them increasing as she grew older. She had many pet projects, including many attempts to obtain a dog for Pope Benedict XVI!

Rosalind's energy, generosity and kindness were legendary. She worked into her late eighties, being awarded Catholic Woman of the Year in 2018. She always went the extra mile: her dedication to family, faith and work was truly impressive. She will be greatly missed.

*[For the full account of Rosalind's life, go to the online Appendix]*

**Lynne Davies** (née Ashton, 1948-2020) has passed away. Her friend Vivienne Brown says:

'It was so sad to hear of Lynne's passing in September 2020. Lynne was at Howell's from 1959 to 1966, when girls still had to wear regulation lisle stockings and school hats. She is remembered from that time by a school friend as 'outstandingly

pretty and vivacious'.

Lynne decided on a career in teaching and attended Caerleon College, Newport. It was in connection with her teaching that she met her first husband, David (?) Clough, with whom she had two sons, James and Daniel.

An increasingly important part of Lynne's life was her Christian spirituality and eventually she became a Jehovah's Witness: Lynne and her second husband, Peter Davies, were actively involved in the Jehovah's Witness community at Bridgend.

The last time I saw Lynne was in the summer of 2014, when I visited her at her home near Bridgend. She looked very well. We had a wonderful walk along the coast in perfect weather and Lynne made me the most delicious vegetarian supper (although not a vegetarian herself). I never thought that might be our last meeting.'

Lynne is survived by her sons, James and Daniel, and her twin sister, Gaye. She was predeceased by her husband Peter (d. 2015).

*Guild Secretary Sue Rayner and Editor Lyn Owen travelled to Vietnam in early March on a culinary adventure. Sue describes how a traditional way of life is threatened by the effects of climate change in south Vietnam.*

### *Life in the Mekong Delta*

AS YOU WILL HAVE READ elsewhere in this magazine, Editor Lyn and I went to Vietnam at the beginning of 2020. It was our second trip, this one having a special interest: we went to learn how to cook Vietnamese food, which we both enjoy. We began in Ha Noi in the north of the country, spent time in Hoi An in central Vietnam and ended in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), having lessons in each city. From HCMC, we travelled further south into the Mekong Delta, to spend a night at a homestay and learn more about the agriculture in this part of the country.

The Mekong is one of the world's longest rivers. It rises on the Tibetan Plateau and travels 2,800 miles through China, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia before reaching Vietnam, where, in the south, it opens out into an enormous delta. The rich alluvial soil and warm humid climate provide the ideal environment for growing rice; three crops can be had annually as opposed to one in the north of the country. The climate here also enables farmers to grow an amazing

range and variety of fruits, including pineapples, guavas, water melons, dragon fruit, jackfruit, apricots and coconuts. They also grow nuts, and a variety of herbs, which are used more than spices in Vietnamese food. Mint, coriander, lemongrass, basil, garlic, parsley and ginger are all very common.

The delta has very many islands where crops are grown, and the islands are bisected by canals which take smaller boats. You usually start out in a large boat and then transfer to smaller craft, which are often rowed by women. The canals are also used as irrigation channels; rice and fruit farms have a network of ditches which are filled with water when necessary to keep fruit trees and rice growing. It is sad to record that this way of life, which Vietnamese people have followed for centuries, is not just changing: it is dying.

All of the countries along the length of the Mekong are demanding more water and electricity to keep pace with population growth and development. So, starting with China, dams are being built all along

the Mekong, reducing the amount of water arriving in the Mekong delta. At the same time, sea levels are rising, and it is the combination of these two factors that is making the delta water more saline, killing rice crops and fruit trees alike. Some farmers, with government assistance, are turning instead to prawn farming; you can see the pens on the river banks. Others are turning to tourism and providing homestays for visitors. The Vietnamese government is negotiating with the countries through which the Mekong passes, and Laos has agreed not to build any more dams for a period of ten years. However, it is unlikely that the other countries will be willing to do the same.

This increased salinity and rise in sea level began nearest to the sea, but is now steadily advancing further into the delta. Houses which were built close to the edge of islands are falling into the river, so people are leaving the delta. A traditional way of life will diminish and eventually disappear. It will also lead to a food crisis, as the delta produces enough rice for the whole country and provides some exports as well. It's a sad state of affairs for a country which has been through so much but which has managed to turn itself into a productive grower and exporter of food.



*From top:  
The mighty Mekong river; vegetables in abundance; a Mekong canal; prawn farming, delta-style*

## High living

*Sue Rayner, Guild Secretary, has been out and about on her peregrinations (ouch!) and managed to capture this superb image of one of Llandaff Cathedral's 'penthouse' residents.*

The name peregrine comes from the Latin *peregrinus*, meaning wanderer. Peregrine falcons are so named because tundra-dwelling birds undertake one of the longest migrations of North American species. The annual journey to South America may be over 15,000 miles.

British birds do not migrate, although upland birds may move to lower land or coastal areas in winter. Most peregrines remain within some 60 miles or so of where they were born.

By derivation, the Latin word also gives us the word *pilgrim*, so perhaps it is fitting that peregrine falcons are increasingly nesting on spires of cathedrals, churches and clock towers in Britain, to the delight of urban dwellers.



## Reminders

IF YOU WOULD LIKE a printed version of next year's Magazine by post, please remember to send Joyce Shields an A5-sized envelope (C5) carrying a LARGE stamp of the correct postage, by the end of September 2021. Joyce may be contacted by email or *via* Hannah Roberts, Hywelian Liaison at School.

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IF YOU ARE NOT ALREADY a Facebook user, you might like to consider joining the Hywelian Guild Facebook page. It's a lovely way to keep in touch (or even get in touch!) with school friends and other Hywelians.

Joyce Shields, our super-efficient and knowledgeable Membership Secretary would be delighted to give you further details of how to join.

The page is only open to Hywelians and is not publicly available.

Contact:            [hywelians@how.gdst.net](mailto:hywelians@how.gdst.net)

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## The Bronwen Jacques Trust

MRS BRONWEN JACQUES WAS one of the earliest Secretaries of the Hywelian Guild. When she died in 1975, she left her house near Gloucester to the Governors for the benefit of former pupils and ex-members of staff. The Governors decided to sell the house and, with the proceeds, created a Trust fund.

Half the money was given to the Cartref Homes in Cardiff with the proviso that two former pupils or ex-members of staff would have priority entry to one of the homes each year. The remaining money was invested and the resulting income is administered by a sub-group of the Hywelian Guild Committee, chaired by Mrs Davis.

The income is available to help any former pupil or ex-member of staff who may be in financial difficulty, whether or not a member of the Guild. The names of those assisted remain confidential within the sub-Committee.

*Hywelians wishing to apply should address their letter to Mrs Sally Davis.*



WHEN THIS IS OVER, may we never  
again take for granted:

A handshake with a stranger,  
Full shelves in the shops,  
Conversations with neighbours,  
A crowded theatre,  
Friday night out,  
The taste of communion,  
A routine check-up,  
The school rush each morning,  
Coffee with a friend,  
The stadium roaring,  
Each deep breath,  
A boring Tuesday,  
Life itself.

When this ends may we find that we  
have become more like the people  
we wanted to be, we were called to  
be, we hoped to be; and may we  
stay that way — better for each  
other — because of the worst.

*- Laura Kelly Fanucci*