



*St Anne's College*

**ALUMNNAE  
PERSONAL  
HISTORIES**

A STUDENT-MADE COLLEGE HISTORY ARCHIVE

Hello! My name is Amy and I was the St Anne's College Women's Representative for 2020-2021.



As part of my role I started collating **personal histories** of women who have studied at St Anne's, so that we as a student body can remember and reflect on the progression of women's lives at our college.

I hope that you will enjoy being able to explore the college's memory archives with a strong personal touch. The entries are in chronological order, starting with the first to matriculate.

A huge thank you to all of our alumnae who submitted their stories to this project and helped spread the word. I loved hearing from every one of you.

*Thank you!*



Two accounts from current students have also been included to represent the student experience during the coronavirus pandemic.



# Eileen M. Steel

née Page,  
joined the Society of  
Oxford Home Students

1934

I was sent a list of the various kinds of accommodation available at that time for what were still misleadingly called Home Students. The original Home Students were the first women to be at Oxford, and as they were almost all daughters of dons, they didn't need accommodation – hence the name which I found quite difficult to explain. People outside Oxford thought we were Domestic Science students! A famous Home Student who was still alive in the 1930s was Annie Rodgers. She did a Balliol Scholarship as A. Rogers and won it, but of course couldn't take it up as she was a female. She was quite a character even in her 90s and used to come to the Terminal Service in St. Mary's chancel, held on the first Sunday of term, and sit huddled in her gown and cap, her face covered with a good growth of hair! She had proved her point that girls were as good as boys academically, and as worthy of an Oxford education.

There were two large hostels, one run by Anglican nuns, the Wantage Sisters, in Banbury Road, called Springfield St. Mary, and I stayed there for my interviews, and wanted to go there, but couldn't because priority was given to Anglicans. The other was the Roman Catholic Cherwell Edge at the end of South Parks Road. Then there were smaller hostels for anything from five to six to twelve to twenty students run by ladies called hostesses. I've no idea whether the houses belonged to them, and they were paid salaries, or whether the whole was a business of theirs, but they had to exercise control over their students, according to the rules of the college.



# Eileen M. Steel

A book was kept just inside the front door, and in that we had to put down that we were going to be out after 11.00pm. If we were to be out after 11.15 we had to go to our moral tutor and say why we wanted a late pass. We also had to get permission to be away for a night during a full term; if you didn't do the correct number of nights you had to stay up after the end of term. So there was no going away for weekends. The chaperone rules were still actively in existence too. We couldn't have men in our rooms at all, and if we were invited to a male college we were supposed to take someone else as a chaperone! You were not supposed to go in a car alone with a man nor in a punt! Public houses were out of bounds, and bulldogs (university policemen wearing suits and bowler hats) went round turning people out and reporting them to their colleges, and generally keeping law and order. The gates of the colleges were locked at 9.00pm and the men's colleges exacted fines for those coming in later, graded according to the length of the delay. Every undergraduate was supposed to wear a gown in the city after dark. Most of these restrictions disappeared during the 1939-45 war and never returned, as so many of the post-war generation had served in the forces and were considerably older than the usual undergraduate. Incidentally we had to wear gowns to lectures and tutorials, and Miss Lane Poole made us wear caps as well.

Miss Lane Poole, an old student, was in charge of the Pass Mods people and took us for Latin, and Miss Hugon taught us French.





# Eileen M. Steel

My fourth subject was Greek Tragedy in Translation and for this we went to University College to be lectured by an impressive person, Colonel Farquarsan, who wore a dinner jacket under his gown at this 5.30pm lecture. For Latin and French we climbed to the attics of the Clarendon Buildings and we had to wear caps and gowns, the caps at an angle approved by Miss Lane Poole. She was a Classicist, and was very strict, especially with the four geographers in the first year, as she looked on Geography as not quite respectable!

The only tutorials for the first two terms were those with Miss C. V. Butler in Political Economy. She was a real Oxford character, wearing shapeless garments, and often a hat which she was continually pulling down over her straggly hair. She cycled about with a basket crammed full with books and papers, and her study where I often went for tutorials in Norham Gardens was a big room with piles of books and papers on every available surface including the floor.

Oxford was a transformed place when we returned for our Trinity Term. I shall never forget St. Giles with the trees all coming into leaf, and North Oxford gardens full of flowering shrubs, and trees, prunus, lilac, cherry, etc. etc. The five of us reading Geography made our way for the first time to the School of Geography with anticipation mixed with trepidation.



# Eileen M. Steel

We were Peggy Walker, Dorothy Paine and Mary Odell, both in Cherwell Edge, Joy Bulman who had done Honour Moderations (Classics) in March and had changed to Geography and me.

Early on in the term I was initiated into the joys of punting by Catherine and Margaret. SOHS had about six punts which were kept at Tim's Boatyard by the Dragon School. SOHS also had canoes, but before you could use them you had to have a swimming certificate. On May Day a group of us got up before dawn and went down to Magdalen Bridge to hear the choir singing the hymn to the sun. There was no hooliganism then, quiet while they sang, both among the crowd on the bridge and on the many punts in the river below. We then watched the Morris Dancers and the children who were going among the crowds selling bunches of cowslips.



This submission was sent in by Elizabeth M. Steel, daughter of Eileen, who was a member of St Anne's from 1966-67 when completing a Dip.Ed.



# Gillian Rogers

née Edmonds,  
matriculated

1947

I matriculated in 1947. I lived at Springfield St Mary, which was run by the Wantage sisters. Food was still rationed. They gave us our butter rations to use as wished. (I could not stop licking mine away.) They also gave us NAMCO. (National milk cocoa.) Once a week we cycled up with many others to the cake factory to get a cake.

We were only allowed 3 late night passes a term and did not go away at weekends.

I had such a delightful tutorial partner, Christine Fox (later Speirs.) We were friends for life.

I read English Language and Literature, and was so proud when Miss Griffiths said to me once in a tutorial, 'Gillian, you are showing faint signs of intelligence.'

I tried to get into acting but the OUDS were frightening, Ken Tynan in his green jacket was its star. My only parts were as a shepherdess in *The Tempest* in Worcester Gardens and a fairy in 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' (At school I had been Cobweb, then Lysander and then Bottom, all parts with words.) But I joined a St Anne's group that did play-reading with a group from Teddy Hall.

I attended lectures by Tolkein and C. S. Lewis. (I would have tried to get their autographs had I known they were going to be so famous.) The lectures C. S. Lewis gave on *Paradise Lost* were wonderful. (I learnt that the Cherubim were up at the top of the order of angels with the Seraphim and not little chubby angels down at the bottom.) I also remember Lord David Cecil.



# Gillian Rogers

I wasn't interested in politics. I joined the Liberals because they had punt parties. Jeremy Thorpe was there. He wanted us to go electioneering and promote proportional representation. I had no idea what it meant, but I learnt. I went with the Liberals to a country fair and had a go at bowling and to my astonishment won a pig, but I could not take it to Springfield St Mary so I gave it back. I stayed on another year to do a diploma in education. I loved my time at St Anne's. It set me up for life.

In 1950 I won the Eugene Lee Hamilton prize, (open to both Oxford and Cambridge,) for a Petrarchan sonnet. I was meant to collect my prize at a dinner at Oriel College but received a letter saying I could not as I was a woman. So Oriel still owes me a meal.

photo from 1948,  
featured in a local paper

left: Christine Fox  
right: Gillian Rogers  
on their way to a  
tutorial with Miss  
Griffiths

the caption read: 'A wonderful view of the  
horse chestnut trees in the Woodstock Road'





# June Eastwood

(1947-1950)

matriculated

1947

A party that I remember well was on my own 21st – not on the river in March, but in the large common room at number 11, Bradmore Road. Mum and Dad had come up the previous weekend with the large cake they had made and iced, and a big box full of homemade cakes and another of cakes from Auntie Winnie. Milk was still rationed and we all had to take the very small jug that we each bought to the kitchen at breakfast time. Mrs Somerville gave us half of our daily ration to use in our own room and kept the other half for cooking puddings or custards. I got used to drinking black coffee. Mrs Somerville managed to save us some extra for a party so that we could have one cup of tea each – the rest was fruit squash to drink.

Matters of discipline were dealt with by the university “policemen”, called proctors, and I expect they still are, even though the “regulations” must have changed. We had to wear our undergraduate gowns, a small, sleeveless, waist-length gown, at all times, day and evening. Postgraduate students wore a BA gown – though not always when cycling, except for short distances. When I lived at Upper Wolvercote – near the north park and ride station – I used to wear it to and from halfway up either the Banbury or Woodstock Road.

The other time when we had to wear particular dress was in “examination schools” for exams – ordinary lectures for the English faculty were held there at other times. The men wore black suits, white shirts and black shoes and tie.



# June Eastwood

We wore black skirts, black stockings and shoes, white blouses, black tie and black cardigan. The idea was to have a calm overall effect in the room, with no distracting flashes of colour. It did give a very quiet atmosphere. I made a lovely dirndl skirt out of some of our blackout material, which was "matt" on the inside and a smooth, almost silky texture on the outside.

I don't suppose the "work" arrangements have changed much, even if the discipline rules have gone. We had lectures, books to read and essays to produce for a weekly individual tutorial. Our tutor was called Mr Paget, a strict but fair and very helpful tutor. We had met him at our interviews.

During the first two terms, we had set subjects to study – I can remember two, my favourites, I suppose, the history of geography and geology. I had already done something about each in my extra work in the third year of sixth form. For the geology, we had to choose an area that we knew, make a detailed physical map to show its special characteristics, and make a model to show contours and features. That was easy. When I was in U.V. (the "O Level" form), I had studied a small area of Wales, round Tal-y-llyn Lake, and had drawn a map naming the glacial and river capture features of the area. I redid the map and made the model, which I still have.





# June Eastwood

Work was the most important part of our life in Oxford, although we had plenty of time for friends and other activities as well. The evenings, after 10 pm, were times for coffee and talks with friends at the hostel, followed by more work time – times when we “put the world to rights” and exchanged our own family news.

Cakes were not the only rationed item for which we had to queue. Oxford had a large indoor market – is it still there? I’m not sure. On Saturday mornings, we again had to go early to join a queue at one of the stalls for 15 denier nylons – only one brown colour (nice) – and only one pair per person, until the short supply ran out. We were not always lucky. We went as often as we could save the money. I can’t remember the price – but they were expensive – but such bliss after lisle stocking. We all went bare-legged most of the time, even in winter, rather than wear the lisle, and we could only wear the nylons for evenings out and Sundays.



# Joy Whitby

matriculated

1949

When I joined as a student in 1949, St Anne's was still a Society and the Library was our only communal building. We lived in various hostels. There were thirteen of us at 13 Norham Gardens which was run by Miss Nairn, a formidable Scottish lady. It was also home to Marjorie Reeves, St Anne's distinguished history tutor. Miss Nairn treated her like a Head Girl and in many ways Norham Gardens felt like a school boarding house with strict rules to preserve our moral safety. No male visitors after 10 pm.

This was a time when well brought-up middle class girls tended to know very little about sex except its dangers. Might a kiss lead to pregnancy? To be seen at a concert with another girl was an admission of failure or worse still, lesbianism. Marriage was a goal. So when I got engaged in my first term, I felt safe and protected. The engagement lasted all my student days and ended amicably. But looking back, I realise how much of my time at Oxford was wasted as a result. Instead of seeking out wonderful lecturers like Isiah Berlin I followed my rowing fiancée to the Henley Regatta.

As a sixth-former I thought Philosophy sounded interesting so I signed up to read PPE but couldn't manage Economics. I switched to History and chose various subjects without much understanding. Though dutiful about my studies, I was never academic or sufficiently focused. I won an essay prize about the 1832 Reform Bill but have no memory of its context.



# Joy Whitby

Content warning: mention of suicide

I remember sharing it with Jennifer Dawson who also lived at 13 Norham Gardens and later became a successful novelist. Tutorials with Iris Murdoch were a privilege but I can't have been a rewarding student. She used to stand on her head to liven things up. What were my other subjects? I don't remember receiving any informed advice and can't imagine why I chose Colonial History. I hope I was suitably critical.

It was a time before there was official concern for the mental welfare of students. I remember being shocked by the suicide of a boy who threw himself out of a train. Jennifer suffered from what we now recognise as clinical depression and had to take a year off, recovering in a mental hospital where she wrote *The Ha Ha*. When I visit St Anne's today and see the notice board offering advice on counselling as a matter of course, I realise how much times have changed. We had to manage without professional help and, no doubt, much unhappiness could have been avoided.

My worst memory is of sitting Finals. At Oxford, the importance of getting a good degree looms large in your last year. So it was mortifying to end up with a Third. I thought I would die of shame. But I didn't die. What had seemed so important was soon forgotten. The Oxford Appointments Board helped me towards a career that didn't depend on academic qualifications.





# Joy Whitby

What St Anne's did provide was an invaluable three years of learning about life. Of thinking for oneself. Of achieving independence of spirit. Of understanding the importance of remaining open-minded and curious. That, I hope, is what it still provides for its lucky students today.





# Sylvia Hiller

née Wooldridge  
(1953-1956)  
matriculated  
**1953**

## Highlights

- Being able to go out on my own without telling anyone – I had been at boarding school for 12 years, including the weekends.
- Studying the subject I loved most, Zoology.

In retrospect (not knowing at the time how important these things were)

- Listening to Watson and Crick explaining “their” structure of DNA
- Taught by Tinbergen (animal behaviour pioneer)
- My tutor Bastock was one of those who worked out bee communication – not believed by the establishment
- Early teaching on ecology – a new science ridiculed as nature study
- Lectures by E. B. Ford, a geneticist and woman hater who would not lecture unless there were enough men in the class
- Roger Bannister ran the 4 minute mile
- Wonderful music – local and imported – mostly free choral in chapels/churches and orchestras in London

## St Anne's

- All students were in hostels of some kind. The only St Anne's building was Hartland House – admin only – wonderful principle – Lady Ogilvie
- Lived in Springfield (now demolished), run by nuns. More accommodation round the corner in houses on Bevington Road.



# Sylvia Hiller

- Women only – a plus I think. The ratio was about 10:1, so there were sometimes too many men (!). Many of them were on closed scholarships (in from particular schools), many did not seem interested in their subject, wanting to row, play other sports, act, etc.
- Regulations – no visitors after 10.30, exemption until 11pm three times a term. No men before 2pm or after 5
- Rooms had a bed, table (or desk), chair and drawers. We brought our own comfy chair. No heating – meter for own electric heater. Shared bathroom down the corridor, ditto for the toilet. No kitchen – we could have an electric kettle (I think) and some kind of heating ring.
- Meals – set times, no choice, basic. Coffee arrived!! Cafés began selling cappuccinos. Would go there to meet up with friends – never to the pub.
- Leisure – many clubs. I Scottish danced, sang, went to the cinema, went on the river, went to concerts, many sat around with friends and talked (!)
- No email, of course. Letters from parents took days. Difficult to phone – pay phone in corridor



# Sylvia Hiller

Study was mostly in libraries (there was only one room at St Anne's). Work had to be read aloud to tutors. There was one essay a week and research was required from scientific journals in the Bodleian. All notes and essays were in long hand, no photocopying of journals or anything. Lectures (for me – science) plus practicals every morning, some from 5pm. Took notes in long hand. No handouts.

Marriage was not allowed!! If you got married you were sent down! A girl in my year met an American who was returning to the States – she wanted to visit in the vacation, her mother went with her to ensure returned, she didn't!! Got married and stayed there.

The theory was that your place was 'special' and if you didn't use it someone else could. Socially you were not expected to 'work' after marriage, but support your husband!! So it made sense I suppose. As far as I recall, all our tutors (except the Principal) were spinsters.





# Jane Wingfield

née Trump  
matriculated

1953

I came up to St Anne's from Chelmsford County High School which had had almost no Oxbridge entries. It seemed my general essay 'None of the arts explores the senses of taste, touch and smell' pleased Dr Reeves who said "Trump, that sounds a lucky name – we haven't had one of those". Lucky for me!

I began in Musgrave House in South Parks Rd. At the first dinner I wasn't used to being waited on. The others around the table were discussing their crammers. I had never heard of such a person. We each had our own little butter dish as butter was still rationed.

I shared a room with Diana that year before having my own. It was run by Miss Fairbairn with Dr Reeves also there. The door was locked at 10.30 but we could be let in until 11 so she knew just how late I'd been out. However, I had a fairly quiet life. Later, in my Dip. Ed year I lived in digs at an eccentric retired clergyman's house where we 4 catered for ourselves. He rang a bell every evening for prayers down stairs.

After Oxford I taught at Manchester High School where I'd done my teaching practice. Then Nigeria, Tanzania, and New Guinea before coming to Canberra. My husband Ralph, whom I'd met in Nigeria, was teaching here at the Teachers' College. I, too, taught in the Adult Migrant Educational Classes for people who wanted English for living in the community the elderly, pregnant etc. I am still in touch with a couple of these students. Otherwise I have a quiet time at home in an empty nest. We had had 3 boys and I now have 6 grandchildren, but not in Canberra. I keep busy with U3A and my garden club.



# Juliet McMaster

(1956-1959)  
matriculated

1956

October 1956 arrived, and I "went up" to Oxford; to St Anne's College, to read English. Once women were allowed to enroll for an Oxford degree (finally!) St. Anne's, one of the five women's colleges, started its existence as the "Home Students' Society," since it didn't have residential buildings, but farmed its students out to a number of different "hostels." I was assigned to Springfield St. Mary, which consisted of three converted houses on the Banbury Road, joined together by passageways, very close to the central St Anne's building with library, Senior and Junior common rooms, Principal's office and tutors' rooms. So in a sense your college residence was like a college-within-a-college. One got to know the students in one's residence, and the students in one's discipline; otherwise it could be a bit hit and miss about getting to know all the students in the College.

There were twelve first-year students in Springfield, in various disciplines. They were a congenial bunch, the Springfield girls. The hostel was run by Anglican nuns, and there was a chapel for those who wanted to use it. But the nuns simply ran the place, arranged for our meals, cleaning, and so on. Oh yes, and locked the doors at 11 p.m.

Knowing the rules and breaking them was an Oxford sport. So was climbing in after the 11 p.m. curfew; and there was a whole genre of climbing-in stories. I was still in my first year when I decided I wanted to be prepared in case I felt the need to break the curfew and climb in. And I went exploring.



# Juliet McMaster

The central house of Springfield was joined to the next one, Hartfield, by a ground-floor glassed-in corridor, with bars on the windows. But I discovered that the horizontal bars were spaced widely enough that one could climb through, if one just had a friend on the inside who would kindly leave the window unlatched. I experimented, climbing out as well as in. And I could do it. So when the time came, and a boyfriend, Brian, invited me to go to Stratford on his motor bike to see a play (was it Julius Caesar?), I was prepared. And in I climbed! (kind friend inside having left the window on the latch).

Punting was a great recreation in the fall and especially the summer term. Our usual place to get a punt was Timm's Boathouse, a bit north of us up the Banbury Road. We could bike there, and hire our punt, and punt up the Cherwell at our leisure, and bring fresh-baked bread and cheese and fruit. We usually didn't bring a bread-knife, as we established a tradition of "riving" the bread instead. Very satisfactory!

On one pleasant summer day I was punting with Brenda and Jill, and we were passing a group of town guys bathing and picnicking on the bank. They jeered and whistled at us girls punting ourselves, and I tried to speed up to get past them. Uh-oh, mistake! On one strong push I got my pole dug in so deep in the bottom that it stuck, and I had that crucial decision to make of whether to stick with the punt or the pole.



# Juliet McMaster

I made the right decision and stuck with the punt. But it was very humiliating to put up with the jeers and whistles. We were about to man the paddle to get back to the pole we'd left behind. But one of the guys swam to the pole. I thought he was going to bring it back, and was preparing my "Thank you so much!" speech of the rescued damsel, when he proceeded to swim off up-river with it. I suppose I was meant to beg and plead. But instead I dived off the punt and swam after him. He had the pole to manage, and I caught up with him. And when I lunged to grab the pole, because it was across his shoulder, I ducked him. Then I swam in triumph back to the punt, and he was the one who got jeered!





*Alison Martin Holmes*

matriculated

1959

I was born and raised in China by two Oxford parents (St John's and St Hughes') and had always known I had to go to Oxford. I was accepted by Somerville in 1959 and I was thrilled. It had not been an easy path to get there: I was a little older than the average 18 year old, had been in a variety of jobs and situations, and had also met my brother's moral tutor. We were in love and so together we went to talk to Dame Janet Vaughan about getting married during my student years. She said very firmly that "A don's wife life was a full time job" and that, were I to get married before graduation, I would be sent down. Downcast we went away to rethink our tactics. William suggested speaking to Lady O as St Anne's was known for its eclectic and forward looking approach. How different that encounter was. All she said, mildly, was "We would recommend that you only have one child before Schools". I don't remember if she said that children were indeed a full time job. So that was the beginning of my three years at St. Anne's. I was sorry not to have Mary Lascelles from Somerville as one of my tutors but the richness of having Dorothy Bednarowska, Elaine Griffiths, Patricia Ingram and Kirstie Morrison was unbeatable. Tutorials with Hugo Dyson for Shakespeare, Peter Bayley for Spenser, John Bamborough for C18 added to the abundance of drinks, friendship, and scholarship. Lectures with Helen Gardner, Iris Murdock, John Bailey, and the wonderful Valedictory lecture of Tolkien are living memories. Truly Oxford and St Anne's have been the greatest of gifts. Thank you.

# Devaki Jain

(1959-1962)  
matriculated

1959

It feels bizarre if not weird to acknowledge that the story I am going to tell, about my joy and life at St. Anne's, is sixty years ago!!! Sixty years ago, that is between 1959-62, I was an undergrad at St. Anne's. I joined to do the PPE Hons course. I was an adult student as I had already graduated in India with a Bachelors in Arts, and then at Oxford with a diploma in Economics and Politics. But I felt that was not enough. I wanted a formal Economics degree and so joined St. Anne's in 1959 and graduated in 1962.

In a sense it was an adventure and it was possible to have that adventure because of the kind of leaders we had at St. Anne's at that time - namely Lady Ogilvie and Ms Marjorie Reeves. These women were remarkable pioneers in what used to be called women's education. Considering that I came without scholarships, no family backing but just an ambitious and adventurous interest in getting the Oxford degree - they took me in and then vigorously helped me to get various types of grants from all kinds of foundations like the Cadbury Trust, the Spalding Trust to pay for my fees.

Since I could not afford the college accommodation, I found a room in an amazing house which was called 1 Canterbury Road. In a way it was a kind of hostel plus also a Russian Orthodox church and was being managed by the Russian Orthodox community.



# Devaki Jain

There was a Professor Zernov who taught, I think Russian or the orthodox religion, I am not sure, at Keble College and his wife used to run a boarding house in London largely for the refugees from Russia; but also for others who were students. So in Oxford they took me into this house which they called St. Gregory and St. Macrina house and gave me a small room for just 30 shillings per week, of course without breakfast. I bought a cycle for just 1 pound in that little lane, that runs across Banbury and Woodstock, whose name I have forgotten.

All this did not seem a burden but a great joy to be able to cycle to St. Anne's and then come back and cook one's meals and so forth. The dining hall was built at that time, and there was an extraordinary event when Queen Elizabeth came to inaugurate it and we were all lined up. We were all supposed to do a curtsy and shake hands and I remember how lost I was about that ceremony. There was another Indian girl at the same time. She was smarter than me. She had already come from Bombay one year ahead and her aunt and uncle were part of the Indian freedom struggle led by Gandhi. She simply would not accept the idea of bowing to the queen of England as that was the hateful empire.

The other wonderful experience I had was to befriend Rose Dugdale.





# Devaki Jain

Rose was in the first year and when she came to the second year PPE, she was elected president of the college Student's Union. Even though we were so different, she was a debutante - light golden hair, pink cheeks, big made with a very, very upper class British accent, and I was a total misfit or a total new type of person. She befriended me and then invited me to spend a few days in the extraordinary home she had in London - being as she was a lord's daughter. Rose, as you might have heard, later became a rebel and joined the Irish I.R.A., is supposed to have stolen the paintings from her father's house to raise money for them. It was all a big exciting adventure and then she was imprisoned and I think she stayed in jail for many years. I wanted to visit her. But I am glad to tell you that Peter Ady, our economics don at that time, did go and visit her in prison as a gesture which was so typical of those times.

But what might be interesting for those of you who are now in college or recently graduated is that the quad is just the same. That wonderful building with the senior common room and the library and the lawns was the same as it was at my time. All the other new buildings are all new but the culture, the feeling on the campus is the same. The room that has become, the room where all the dons keep their mail, was Peter Ady's office and that's where I used to have my tutorials with her.



# Devaki Jain

The other tutorials in Philosophy and Politics - Politics, Jenifer Hart usually asked us to come to her house and for Philosophy Iris Murdoch stayed in one of the houses that later has been broken down. I think it was in Bevington Road. And for general philosophy we went to Lady Margaret Hall where we had a wonderful tutor called Mrs. Martha Kneale.

Recalling those times, I think they were some of the happiest and the most free times I have ever had in my life: free to do anything I liked, free to bicycle to wherever I liked. I used to bicycle all the way up the Banbury Road and then take my cycle in, put it down by the river, and jump into the river, have a nice swim, come out, lie on the grass. I used to wear the bathing suit and clothes over it. I cannot believe I did that because when I go back there these days I cannot find that spot.



*Maureen Gruffydd Jones*

née Woodhall  
matriculated

**1959**

I matriculated in 1959. When asked "Why did you choose St Anne's?" I reply: "I didn't; St Anne's chose me!". I applied to read English, the most popular subject for girls in 1959. I had already been rejected for English by St Hugh's and St Hilda's, and was told I would not be offered a place to read English at St Anne's, but would I like to come for an interview for PPE? I had to look up PPE to discover what it was, and was intensely nervous at my interview with Iris Murdoch, when she asked "Why did you want to read English?" By that time I had decided I didn't want to read English, I wanted to read PPE, so was delighted to be offered a place. There were six of us reading PPE in my year. My tutorial partner, Jessica (née Meyersberg), remains my closest friend more than sixty years later. She was my bridesmaid, when I married Daniel Gruffydd Jones in London in 1969; Daniel and I were in fact introduced by another close friend I met at St Anne's: Kay (née Harrison).

Others who matriculated in 1959 to read PPE included the notorious Rose Dugdale, responsible for a spectacular art theft in Ireland in 1974 to support Irish Republicanism; for Christmas 2020, Jessica gave me a fascinating book (Amore, Anthony M (2020), *The Woman Who stole Vermeer*, New York: Pegasus Books) and I was astonished to read of the part my former tutors, Peter Ady and Iris Murdoch, played in Rose's remarkable story. But my own memories of Rose are not as vivid as my memories of others at St Anne's in 1959.





# Maureen Gruffydd Jones

Another in our small PPE group was a student from India, Devaki, who is now an Honorary Fellow of St Anne's, and has endowed an annual lecture series, the Devaki Jain lectures. Thanks to the Development Office, I was able to contact Devaki in 2014, and met her at St Anne's, where we were delighted to renew a fifty-five-year-old friendship (Photo 1).

When I look back to my time at St Anne's, it is the friendships I made that are now so important. Of course I relished my academic work – I am grateful that I read PPE rather than English – and I remember thought-provoking Philosophy tutorials with Iris Murdoch in her Bevington Road study, baffling economics tutorials with Peter Ady, in her room right by the doors to Hartland House, and stimulating politics tutorials with Jennifer Hart. I probably enjoyed politics the most, I think I was best at philosophy, so it was slightly surprising that I became an academic economist and enjoyed more than forty years researching and teaching the economics of education at the University of London. But it is the friendships that I made at St Anne's, that have endured for more than sixty years, that now mean the most to me.

Of course, I made other friends in Oxford; I sang with the Oxford Bach Choir, the Opera Club, and several small chamber choirs; I fell in and out of love, I enjoyed idyllic punting trips on the Cherwell, but now, my fondest memories are of the time spent drinking coffee and chatting with my friends at St Anne's.



# Maureen Gruffydd Jones

There were ten of us; Judy and I both lived in Bevington Road, but we would usually meet in 58-59 Woodstock Road, where the other eight lived, including Jessica, Kay, as well as Belinda, Frankie, Janet, Sandra, Sally and Vyvyen. Jessica and I were reading PPE, Frankie and Sally, Modern Languages, Vyvyen, Modern History, while the other five were all reading English. We supported each other when we took finals in 1962 (Photos 2 and 3), and I gave a party to celebrate the end of finals (Photo 4). Jessica, Kay Frankie and I celebrated our graduation together (Photo 5). Amazingly, we are all still in touch, sixty-two years later. In recent years, we have tried to meet once a year for a reunion lunch, even though Jessica and Sandra now live in USA, and the rest of us are quite widely scattered. In 2009, we celebrated fifty years of friendship with a lunch in the Upper Common Room at St Anne's (Photo 6). In 2012, we all clubbed together to donate £1,000 to the cost of the new St Anne's kitchens. The Dining Hall was completed in 1959, our first year, so we decided to name our little group 'The Fifty-Niners', to commemorate the year of our matriculation (Photo 7). Age and disabilities prevented us from celebrating another reunion in 2019, but we have remained in touch throughout the pandemic of 2020-21. I am truly grateful for the enduring friendship of the 'Fifty-Niners'!





# Maureen Grubbydd Jones



1. Maureen with  
Devaki Jain, St  
Anne's, 2014

2. Ready for  
Finals: Vyvyen,  
Jessica &  
Maureen, 1962



3. Ready for Finals: Kay, Judy &  
Frankie with Maureen (they're  
over!), 1962





# Maureen Grubbydd Jones

4. Party to celebrate  
the end of Finals, 1962



5. Frankie, Kay, Maureen &  
Jessica celebrate graduation





# *Maureen Grubbydd Jones*

6. Reunion in the Upper Common Room, St Anne's, 2009



7. Plaque to commemorate the contribution of 'The Fifty-Niners' to the cost of St Anne's new Kitchens, 2012



# Jenny Grove

matriculated

1959

## YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD ST ANNE'S GIRL DOWN

I never thought of myself as a militant but in the early 1960s, Oxford was a surprisingly reactionary place. In the Oxford Union, for example, women students were not allowed to take part in debates but were relegated to the gallery. Unfair, I thought - so I decided on a plan.

I persuaded Rose Dugdale, who later became more notorious for her links with the Provisional IRA, to join me. Disguising ourselves as men, with borrowed tweed jackets, scarves and brogues, and tipping off the press, we joined the queue and edged our way into the debating chamber. When asked to move along, I didn't say a word, just grunted and hoped my scarf wouldn't slip to reveal my ill-fitting wig.

Following the press sensation, I canvassed for support among men's colleges and wrote letters to newspapers. Some replies were surprising. G.R. Addington Hall of Queen's College declared that, as a student, he'd planned to support our cause but had changed his mind on discovering the existence of women 'capable of such unladylike activities as demanding membership and registering protests.' H.K. Davies of Upminster, Essex, complained haughtily, 'It would seem that women undergraduates are today still suffering from the same illusions as they were when I was up at the University.' A Mr Anthony Smith made an impassioned plea for the Oxford Union to remain a private club for men undergraduates.





# Jenny Grove

In the end we won the vote. Then the problem was who would speak. At that time few women had experience of debating but friend and supporter Sarah Caudwell Cockburn had some skills and became one of the first women to be invited to take part in a debate as a full Union member – Sarah spoke and made everybody laugh. (Under the name Sarah Caudwell she later wrote several crime novels).

A couple of years later, married with a small son and rather short of money, I made a brief visit to Oxford and met my former tutor, Peter Ady, who asked me how I was doing. Anxious to make an impression, I mentioned my one literary achievement – I'd written a ten-minute piece for Woman's Hour and been asked to read it on the programme. Peter Ady smiled and said, 'You can't keep a good St Anne's girl down!' Now that was something to remember.





# Jenny Grove

## THE GATECRASH

## GIRLS



Preparing for battle . . . Rose Dugdale and Jennifer Grove in male disguise before gatecrashing the Union.

**T**WO girl students disguised as men last night gatecrashed a male fortress—the debating floor of the Oxford Union Society.

It was the first time that women had seen the inside of the society—in which the likes of Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Gaitskell learned their oratory.

### Wore wigs

The girls—one a blonde—sat for two hours during a debate on the traditional first motion of the Michaelmas term — “that this house has no confidence in Her Majesty’s Government.”

The blonde—22-year-old Jennifer Grove—wore a dark wig and her companion an auburn one.

Both had on duffle coats and scarves borrowed from men friends.

Sympathisers also gave them membership cards to get into the debate.

The girls, from the newest Oxford girls’ college, St. Annes, are campaigning for the university’s 1,200 women to be given the right to join the Union.

Before they went to the debate the girls went for a try-out at their “local.”

The landlord, who knows them both, asked: “What will you have, GENTLEMEN?”

DAILY SKETCH, Friday, October 20, 1961





# Jenny Grove



## **MEN WERE GIRLS!**

**I**T'S happened! Two girls have got into the famous men-only Oxford Union Society and stayed for the whole debate.

Their secret? They were disguised as men. They are seen being made-up in the picture above.

It was the first time the all-male Oxford University fortress had been breached in its 160 years history.

The girls are Rose Dugdale, wearing glasses above, and Jennifer Grove, 22, both of St. Anne's College.

Before entering the

debating hall, they called into a public house where they are known. The landlord asked: "What are you having, gentlemen?"

Why did they do it? Miss Grove said: "We gatecrashed to draw attention to our appeal to be allowed to join the Union."





# Jenny Grove

## STRANGERS

*Disguised girl students break into a men-only fortress*

Express Staff Reporter

**T**WO girl students disguised as men sat undetected through a debate of the men-only Oxford University Union last night.

They wore wigs, thick, high-necked sweaters, men's jackets — and trousers.

They joined the men students in heckling during the debate—on the traditional Michaelmas Term motion "That this House has no confidence in Her Majesty's Government."

And the speakers they jeered included Mr. Michael Stewart, Labour's "Shadow" Housing Minister—and a former president of the Oxford Union—and Mr. Denzil Freeth, Parliamentary Secretary to the Science Minister, and once vice-president of the Cambridge Union.

The girls, 22-year-old Jennifer Grove and 23-year-old Rose Dugdale, are the first women to gatecrash the 160-year-old Oxford Union.

Their raid came only three nights after Cambridge girl students were ejected from a Cambridge Union debate.

### To a pub

But Jennifer and Rose, of St. Anne's College, Oxford, were confident of their disguise.

Just before entering the debating hall, they called in at their favourite pub. The landlord looked straight at them and asked: "What are you having, gentlemen?"



Rose (left) with Jennifer—in gatecrashers' uniform

DAILY EXPRESS FRIDAY OCTOBER 20 1961



# Jenny Grove

having, gentlemen?"  
Jennifer has been campaigning for more than a year for Oxford's 1,200 women students to be allowed into the Union.  
She said last night: "We gatecrashed to draw attention to our case. All other methods have so far failed."  
The union has voted in favour of admitting women students, but the vote failed to reach a required two-thirds majority.  
Membership includes the right to use the union's licensed club-room, billiard-room, and library.

Further articles appeared in the Daily Mail on Friday October 20th 1961, the Oxford Mail on October 20th 1961 and the Cherwell on October 21st 1961.

Jenny writes of this picture, "the press reporters who took the photo provided us with an empty bottle of champagne, glasses and ENO's Fruit salts and NO genuine Bubbly!"



*Posed hurriedly by Daily Mail Reporter with empty champagne bottles. Glasses contained water October, but extracts were "..." and they weren't made effervescent by ENO'S FRUIT SALT*

Four St Anne's students celebrating their success in February 1962

Pictured from left to right: Jenny Grove, Rose Dugdale, Bernice Holroyd-Rothwell and Sarah Caudwell Cockburn



# Christine Brown

née Beer  
(1959-1962)

matriculated

1959

At school I was good at languages and at playing the violin. I was expected to go to university, and decided that there was less emotional involvement in languages, so it had to be German, because my Viennese refugee parents had brought me up to be bilingual, and French because of Piaf and the smell of Gauloises. I'd stayed at school, a girls' Grammar School in Leicester, into the 3rd year of the 6th form, partly because I had a wonderful violin teacher at school who said I could get the LRAM teaching diploma during that time, and partly because my Headmistress wanted me to apply for Oxbridge – I wanted to go to Bristol. I was interviewed first at St Hugh's, got onto the reserve list, and in the 8th term was interviewed by Ruth Harvey for German, Mrs Barnes for French, and finally Lady Ogilvie – and really wanted a place there. The night before I stayed with a 3rd year in Bevington Road and was made so welcome. Ruth Harvey prodded me into giving the right answer about Urfaust – why was Margarete wearing a red dress? I'd very little idea at that time.

I left school after Easter, gained the diploma, and spent the next 5 months working in a souvenir/toyshop in Colmar; that time convinced me that I really wanted to study, rather than go straight into a job. I learnt a lot of Alsacien, some French, acquired a boyfriend, played my violin -my comfort blanket – and grew up a lot.





# Christine Brown

At St Anne's I lived in Park Town for the first two years and I think I remember Enid Roberts. My room was opposite the front door, near the phone, so I was kept busy, summoning people for their calls. There, I made friends, learnt to smoke, toasted crumpets on the gas fire, and gradually learnt to study. In the third year I had a big room with a crimson carpet overlooking the Radcliffe anemometer, where we rehearsed quartets in music hours.

We went to Mme Hottot in South Parade for French prose, to Ruth Harvey for German in her room in a house on the Banbury Road and to various dons all over the University for tutorials, reading out what I'm sure were inadequate essays. We borrowed books from the Taylorian, all with useful sidelinings for essays. Blackwells for set texts. And I played my violin in orchestras and chamber groups, for college evensong and for the Opera society, and through that had a social life. As a woman I had rarity value and so got invited to play in the University String Quartet and a memorable production of Britten's 'Turn of the Screw'.

At that time you felt a failure if you weren't out every night/evening with a different man – I was a failure.



# Christine Brown

It was a very intense life, tutorials, essay crises, emotional upsets – I spent a lot of time crying over boyfriends – but so stimulating! Ruth Harvey was my personal tutor, a great scholar, a good listener, a medievalist, who was said to rewrite her lectures every year, unlike other dons who were rumoured to churn out the same material year after year. I remember going to hear Dr Starkie on Baudelaire – very English pronunciation. I came out with a second, and with a mind sharpened by 3 years exposure to scholarship.

It was a golden time. St Anne's gave me security and freedom to study. I remember being told on arrival that these three years were our time. We had adequate grants, and comfortable living. From Oxford I went to London to the Board of Trade as a translator, not very fulfilling but a good base for theatres, concerts and lots of playing. From there I went to Vienna to find my root and study violin, came back after 2 years to marry someone I'd known at Oxford, produced 3 children and played semi-professionally in Dorset. 40 years ago we came to Leeds, divorced, I worked as a peripatetic violin/viola teacher, used my languages on Youth Orchestra trips in Spain, France, Italy Germany and Austria, and after retiring took a BA and MA in Classics at Leeds University.

I'm grateful to St Anne's, and Oxford, for giving me these years to develop critical skills. Thank you.

# Rosemary Chambers

née  
Constable Maxwell  
matriculated  
**1959**

I went up to St. Anne's in the autumn of 1959 to read history at the age of just 18, almost straight from my Convent school at Woldingham. It was like a dream come true and I was the first of my large family to go to University. My father had gone off to fight in the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign and then into the Royal Flying Corps and my mother, being an American from Texas, had as she described, a limited education at a 'Ladies' seminary', where few if any girls went on to College. I lived in a Hostel at 11 Norham Gardens run by the Sacred Heart nuns and I matriculated along with my next door companion Mary Grey, who read Classics and is now a Doctor of Theology, living close by near Winchester. Friendships from St. Anne's are long lasting. Fortunately my first term coincided with the opening of the first-ever communal dining hall. Every night it was open for us to have supper and it was a great venue for meeting the other students as well as providing us with affordable meals. We rarely ate out, perhaps once a term we would visit La Cantina as an exceptional treat, but I had the good sense to open an account in my mother's name at the local Health Food shop. (She was very keen on healthy foods...) and I would treat my friends to lunches of 'vegetable cakes' on the floor of my small bedroom, while pouring our shillings into the meter to try and keep warm. Fortunately the shop did not confine its foods to the healthy variety, and by the time my brother went up to Oxford he managed to persuade them to order in bottles of gin...





# Rosemary Chambers

At a recent reunion of St. Anne's graduates we all discussed for some reason what we used to wear. College gowns were of course worn for lectures and 'sub fusc' for the more formal occasions, usually with black shoe laces round our necks. No female students wore trousers, with the exception of Rose Dugdale, who achieved certain notoriety later on when she became a militant member of the IRA and was sent to prison. Her name cropped up again quite recently in a front page of the Times. My friends recall me gliding along The High, with bright red painted nails, clad in voluminous circular felt skirts, probably made by my older sisters. I have often wondered why felt had become so popular, and my curiosity was satisfied a few weeks ago when reading Anne Glenconner's 'Lady in Waiting.' Felt was not taxed in the fifties!

My moral tutor was Miss Marjorie Reeves, an expert medievalist and I dutifully attended her lectures on the early Anglo Saxons, becoming an expert on Celtic crosses and penannular brooches, which were her obsession. I fought the battle of Mons Badonicus and revelled in the Arthurian legends, enjoying the continuing debate on when the Romans actually left our Island. The coins they left behind make a good case for them being in no hurry to leave, because in the early 5th century there was absolutely nothing for them to go home to. I also attempted to translate the Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastica Historia* and Voltaire's *Lettres Philosophique*, though I never quite understood why he entered our syllabus as he came from such a different time zone!



# Rosemary Chambers

I have never been able to find my way anywhere, and was even recently diagnosed at a Memory Clinic for having absolutely no 'spatial awareness'. Not surprisingly I could not find the way of the barbarians in and out of the Roman Empire and I failed the Historical Geography paper in Prelims.

I loved my time at Oxford, it was a magical period: intellectually stimulating, with new friends to share ideas discussed all through the nights when we were not in an essay crisis, canoeing, punting and picnicking on the river, poetry and play readings in Worcester College, debates in the Oxford Union, chaired by the charismatic President, Peter Jay, walks along the Cherwell with my staid and rather Dickensian boyfriend, a budding lawyer from Wadham. He was called Martin Mears, and he told me he would throw himself into the river if I did not continue to go out with him, (I actually went off to become a NUN). He evidently did not carry out his threat, because several years ago I read in the News of the World that he had gone on to be the first 'outsider' head of the Law Society. He seemed an unlikely candidate for the job, which was why he made news, coupled with the fact that he was instrumental in changing the divorce laws, probably as he had a lot of experience on the subject, having been married FOUR times. The caption in the paper read: 'The Loves and Lives of Martin Mears'. I was happily not mentioned in the article, but I dug out numerous letters I had received from him and showed them to my children just to enlighten them that I did have another life before they came into it...





# Rosemary Chambers

On the academic front I made a huge mistake in Trinity term, choosing as my European History option: 16th century Spain and the Price Revolution, a long period of destabilising inflation, under a don from Trinity College who must have found me as uninspiring as I found him. I had little background in economics so the going was hard and I even began to wish that I had followed my original instinct and read English. My father died very unexpectedly during this time, so I was possibly in a state of emotional crisis, I resat prelims, failed and that was the end of my short-lived Oxford career. Life however went on, I studied Art History in Rome, acquired a degree in Education and taught Divinity for 33 years in a girls' secondary school. My time as a Nun lasted only two years and I then went on to marry a wonderful man, (a St. Catherine's College graduate), and together we had 5 children and 17 grandchildren.

St. Anne's came back into my life when I attended a talk by Tim Gardam, then its Principal, in Winchester several years ago. There I met a variety of wonderful alumni, including Stella Charman and Tessa Cunningham. The South of England St. Anne's Society is a thriving, friendly and stimulating group, and we meet regularly for Book Club meetings and theatre outings. I feel blessed to have been welcomed into this group and will always be grateful for the wonderful year I had at St. Anne's.

# Su Reid

née Massey  
(1961-1966)  
matriculated

1967

Oxford is golden memories: horse chestnuts along Bevington Road (though one night someone planted 'bird-scarers' in them, which popped and woke me up), peaceful if damp afternoons on the Cherwell, walks to The Trout at Godstow.

I read English, taking Schools in 1964 and then staying on for two years, with a State Studentship to begin a B.Litt - which I finally wrote up and submitted successfully four years later while I was also a Lecturer in English at Aberdeen University.

My undergraduate years were wonderful. English was the largest subject group in St Anne's with 20 in my year. Mainly, I just felt incredibly lucky and privileged to be there. I was elected JCR President, which mostly meant I consulted weekly with Lady Ogilvie, the Principal, about ongoing events, and about any undergraduates we thought needed cheering up. We had some excellent tutors who knew us well, and entertained us generously, both in College and when we were 'farmed out' - in my case to Merton in my second year. I was overjoyed to be part of Oxford. We were marginal, in a simple women's college, but so grateful to be allowed in at all. There was lots of good music, and endless excellent scholars to listen to. There was glamour, by association: I remember one Sunday lunchtime in Eights Week when an American brought her handsome Christchurch boyfriend in to Hall, complete with his white blazer. He was in the eight that was Head of the River. Wonderful! (Of course, there were no women's boats.)





# Su Reid

I worked hard in my third year, but in my second I learned to sail off Port Meadow; I was part of the backstage production team for the OUDS Major (I probably should have asked my tutor for 'Acting Leave', but since I wasn't actually acting, I didn't); I stayed out illegally late at night and climbed into college after the lodge shut at midnight - dangerously clambering over walls and windowsills in very high heels. I shudder to remember. I also made some very good friends, both in St Anne's and in the 'men's colleges', and some of these friendships are still alive and important now.

My postgraduate years were much less successful, as I look back. There were few other postgraduates in St Anne's, especially in my last year when my friends, mostly in the year ahead of me, had all gone down; and my work was no longer supervised through St Anne's. In fact, it wasn't really supervised at all. I spent two years working with only rudimentary support. Arrogantly, at the time I was pleased to be left to my own notions, but in retrospect, and after an academic career in other institutions, I think it was unfortunate. Postgraduate 'research' in English just wasn't most people's priority. There were relatively few of us doing it even in Oxford, and fewer anywhere else in the country, so that it somehow was enough just to be there. I did, and read, lots of things in those two years, and, like many of my friends, I landed a coveted academic job; but actually writing the B.Litt only seemed to matter after I joined a much more earnest regime in Scotland.

That was a wonderful place too, and extremely different. It was there, not in Oxford, that I met and married my husband.

# Nina Lambert

née Bostock  
matriculated

1967

My time at St Anne's wasn't typical, in that I met my future husband on the Aldermaston March and discovered that he and I would be contemporaries at Oxford the following autumn. I was only just 17 when I went up, and they were years of courtship during which I probably spent more time at St John's than in lectures. So I knew his friends as well as I knew my Eng Lit crowd. We travelled together around Europe in the long vacs, and mostly worked for cash in London otherwise. We went on to have two daughters, now around fifty, but were divorced and he died before the millennium. He got a First in French and Spanish, I got a Second and went on to teach in the maintained sector for my whole career.





# Ruth Deech

matriculated

1962

4 of us came up to St Anne's in 1962 to read Law, and there were about 10 women and 150 men in the whole year. For the first few lectures in Schools, the men would not sit next to us or even in the row in front or the one behind! There was very little social life in college: we went out to all the university societies and social life in other colleges and made friends all over the university. The college rules were draconian, and you could be sent down for being out too late or having a man in your room when you shouldn't. There were some tutors who still gave you the feeling that women were surplus to requirements, and there was one, the late John Barton of Merton, who completely neglected his duty as a tutor, turning up late with his huge dog Montague Burton, and giving out reading lists in Afrikaans relating to Roman-Dutch law. He chose to lecture early on a Saturday morning, banking on nobody turning up. I refused to go back after the first tutorial and taught myself Roman Law entirely from a textbook.

Because there was no college law tutor, we were sent out for all subjects, and had the good fortune to be taught by some marvellous lawyers. Ian Brownlie, Jeff Hackney, (we thought he was an old man – he was maybe 24), Maurice Cullity, John McMahon, Roy Stuart, and Sir Humphrey Waldock regaling us with his appearances before the International Court of Justice. For property, Ron Maudsley, who asked me gently in the first tutorial, "what is a fee simple?"



# Ruth Deech

I put the same question to a tutee from Hertford a few years later, one David Pannick, now Lord Pannick QC, who just looked at me, and I knew right away he was cleverer than me, and that he knew it! Lectures were given by Herbert Hart, and Rupert Cross, (he was blind and his reader was Belinda Bucknall of St Anne's, later QC). He had a partiality to sexist jokes, as did David Daube, ("men's Rhea"). Others included Gunther Treitel, and John Morris. We attended Brian Simpson's lectures because he was so funny, and David Yardley's because he was so good looking. We wore gowns, were addressed as Miss, we were given sherry

Did we get intellectual stimulation from the law course? There were no human rights, or equality, or EU law, judicial review was in its infancy. What we discussed and studied was only dimly related to the great issues that were to appear just a few years later - contraception, abortion, capital punishment, suicide, homosexuality, divorce, trade union laws. There was much too much Roman Law and the syllabus was dominated by Jurisprudence. We pored over the Concept of Law, we deconstructed Denning, Hohfeld, Kelsen's grundnorm (fellow tutee Margaret Higgins, now Lady Wilson, and I used to amuse ourselves by sketching little grundnorms), American Realism, CK Allen, Austin, Maine, Hart-Devlin-Fuller. We grappled with Marshall & Moodie, Some Problems in the Constitution, which remained problems as far as I was concerned.





# Ruth Deech

Then by serendipity in the Geldart I found Wolfgang Friedmann's Law in a Changing Society, which opened my eyes and changed everything for me. He was murdered by thugs in Harlem a few blocks from his university, Columbia, a few years later.

In those days you could apply to both Oxford and Cambridge colleges and I was finally admitted on my 9th attempt. I was interviewed by the legendary law don Peter Carter, who said – you are here again Miss Fraenkel, and I said I will be back next year if you don't take me, and he gave in.



Baroness Deech returned to St Anne's in 1970 as a tutorial fellow in Law, a post she retained until 1991 when she was elected principal of the college, retiring in 2004.

# Jane Darnton

née Baker  
matriculated

1962

1962/1964. Partitioned half of what was a very lovely room in 27 Banbury. No hall Sunday breakfast: a grapefruit and a piece of sliced white bread provided. October news of the Cuba Missile Crisis: the end of the world when we had made such an effort to get to Oxford? Austerity meals in hall. Nadir was ground up herrings left over from the previous evening followed by prunes. Iris Murdoch swinging a gin bottle crossing Bevington garden to her study. News of the assassination of Kennedy heard in the Dining Room lobby on 22nd November after dinner. The coldest winter 62/63 with [donated by Lady Ogilvie] extra shillings for our electric bar heaters and the Cherwell frozen. Individual tutorials a privilege. Played University hockey in the Parks where there were no other female sports. Moved to the incomplete Wolfson Building in a digs crisis. Lovely sun for Eights Week with the college barges still on the Isis. Honour Moderations in Science: five sciences over two academic years. Zoology lectures in an ancient Science Museum theatre: creepy getting out in winter darkness past the dinosaurs. One male lecturer really did refuse to lecture to a group of girls only.

1964/1965. May morning. Punts parked in the prime spot immediately under Magdalen tower. Magdalen Commem. with the Rolling Stones live. Working for Schools [not then called Finals] on the lawn with cheap cherries from the market. Exams in University Schools with ending exit to the rear for champagne: no trashing in those days.





# Jane Parnton

The careers office advising secretarial or teaching careers only as suitable for girls. I ignored my appointment.

1965/1966. Back to Oxford for a year to follow a BSc [equivalent to a present MSc]. Nominally attached to College but living out in digs and having very little contact.

Socially. Approximately six men to every girl in those days: one was never short of invitations. College was in loco parentis as we were under 21 so rules were strict. Return by 11pm through the Lodge gate: any later meant a special exeat. Easy climbing-in routes were available. Having a man in one's rooms overnight was unheard of [almost: but I am not telling on her now!].



# Hilary Langley

née Knight  
matriculated

1964

Content warning: mention of suicide

I came up to St Anne's in 1964 terrified that I wouldn't fit in because I came from a working class, dysfunctional family which had never sent anyone to University.

As I learnt at a young age that "love" for a day came only after success, I had become an unhappy workaholic. After failing to commit suicide at 15, I was threatened with prison if I tried again and, when offered a place at St Annes, was told to refuse it because the Oxford suicide risk was too high. My school insisted however that I must accept it.

After such a difficult childhood, St Anne's saved me. I loved its atmosphere and quickly made friends although I was terrified throughout my first term that I would fail Prelims and be sent down.

Having coffee at The Copper Kettle with friends after lectures was wonderful, as were the coffee and tea sessions in our rooms. Suddenly I began to relax and enjoy all the work for our history tutorials. Going to the Union was wonderful, although I never dared to speak and I loved the various University societies we joined, buying hot dogs to eat on the way back from meetings. I gradually gained the confidence to become College NUS Secretary – becoming an unofficial travel agent – and also Secretary of the College History Society. In my second and third years I joined my friends in the St Mary's hostel and loved the early morning cycle rides into town, especially on frosty mornings, with the sun shining through spiders' webs.





# Hilary Langley

Unlike my friends, I couldn't afford to buy books but the College library and the Radcliffe Camera were brilliant and my local library sourced all the books I needed during vacations.

Our second year was wonderful, with walks in Port Meadow and the University Parks, the May morning celebrations and cooking meals together at our hostel. I even met a boy whom I began to love but neither my father nor my sister approved of boyfriends, verbally attacking him when they met to such an extent that our relationship ended shortly afterwards. My devastation was such that I threw myself into my work and, during my third year, saw little of my friends. I was terrified of failing my degree and therefore got a first!

I loved the way that tutorials taught us to think, see both sides of an argument and reach a reasoned decision, abilities which fitted me well for my career in the Civil Service and the private sector.



# Rachel Larkinson

née Newton  
matriculated

1964

I came from a remote village in the Lincolnshire Fens, sixteen miles from Spalding, where I went to the local High School. However, I was not the first person in my family to go to university; my father, a teacher, was a graduate of Durham University and my mother could certainly have benefitted from a university education, had she been given the opportunity.

Nevertheless, one of the first adjustments I had to make on coming up to St Anne's to study Classics was that I was not the genius my parents and teachers supposed I was, being almost the first from my school to obtain an Oxbridge place. There were plenty of people on the Greats course, some of whom had been studying the Classical languages since the age of eight, who were infinitely more able and self-assured.

My first adventure was when I came for interview. Much was new to me and though I must have been told about the Lodge closing at 10pm I didn't realise the relevance of this information until, after an evening chatting with other candidates, at about 10.30pm, when they dispersed to rooms in college, I myself, who had been given a room at Norham Gardens, found I could not get out! Having no idea where the Night Lodge was, I made my way into the gardens in Bevington Road to find a side door, but, of course, they were all locked. We never locked our side door at home! Eventually a tutor spotted me stumbling around in her garden, getting increasingly desperate in the frosty December night and shepherded me through her house to the outside world!





# Rachel Larkinson

I must have had one of the smallest rooms in college in my first year, at the top of 58 Woodstock Road. There was no room for an electric fire, except high on the wall, and anyway I couldn't afford to keep feeding it with coins, so one memory is being constantly cold. Yet I liked to look out on the row of shops opposite, the traffic and people going about ordinary business. It gave me a foothold in reality as I explored the strange new world I had entered.

Lady Ogilvie was the Principal when I arrived and she was most kind and encouraging. One minute she would be telling me to have more confidence in myself, and the next checking whether I had a hot water bottle. The atmosphere changed somewhat with Nancy Trenaman. I remember her asking us all how many of us had written to thank our Local Authorities for our grants. None of us had, of course. We didn't realise then how fortunate we were to have free tuition fees and hefty maintenance grants, which enabled us to leave university debt-free.

At St Anne's I met so many interesting people, not just those who became famous, Frances Cairncross, Polly Toynbee and Edwina Currie, but people who became friends for life. Even my tutors, Miss Hubbard and Miss Matthews, kept in touch with me at Christmas.

Through all the years that followed, living at home and abroad and tackling a variety of jobs, I have never lost the feeling of being part of the family of St Anne's and being grateful for its embracing of diversity and for the friendships and opportunities in life that it gave me.

# Ruth Le Mesurier

née Armitage  
matriculated

1965

The 60s were swinging and students were revolting when I arrived at St Anne's to read Physics. I did not "swing" very much but I remember queuing outside WH Smith in The Corn to buy the latest Beatles and Stones singles, 6s8d each or 3 for £1, and I saw my first mini-skirt at St Anne's.

We passed the small new University Computer Department in Parks Road on our way to lectures in the Natural History Museum, nodding to the dinosaurs on our way up an impressive staircase to a surprisingly modern lecture theatre. We were supposed to spend half of each week doing practicals in the Clarendon Laboratory and I had looked forward to devising interesting experiments. It was disappointing to find that our experiments entailed taking lots of readings on apparatus already set up for us, with pre-printed instructions nearby.

Calculations were extremely tedious as we had to use slide rules, a small improvement on Log Tables but electronic calculators would not be available for several years. Theory study was more challenging and I ended up with a Second (they were not split in those days, as I was happily able to explain in later job interviews).

I worked back-stage for various college drama productions but the most exciting was in summer 1967 when I was the Company Manager for an OUDS production of Agamemnon.





# Ruth Le Mesurier

This was first performed in LMH gardens but in the long vac we took it to Greece and performed on the stage at Delphi. 1967 was the final year before it was cheaper to fly so the whole company travelled by train from Victoria station across Europe to Athens. I was in charge of all the passports which caused some surprise at the border checks, especially at the strict Yugoslav borders, as I looked the youngest in the whole Company. We arrived after three days travel, spent a week in Delphi and put on two shows. The Wardrobe Mistress and I dressed as handmaidens and stood on the stage behind Clytemnestra. Politically our trip was a bit tricky as the Greek Colonels had just started their 7 year junta and I believe that some of them attended one performance, amidst strict security.

After Finals I returned to Greece for a holiday in Rhodes. Relaxing on a ferry at the start of our return journey I realised with horror that I had no job lined up and I needed to earn a living. So began three years confirming that school teaching was not for me. I eventually started a career in IT where I discovered that even my frustrating experiences in the Oxford labs had taught me some skills which proved invaluable.

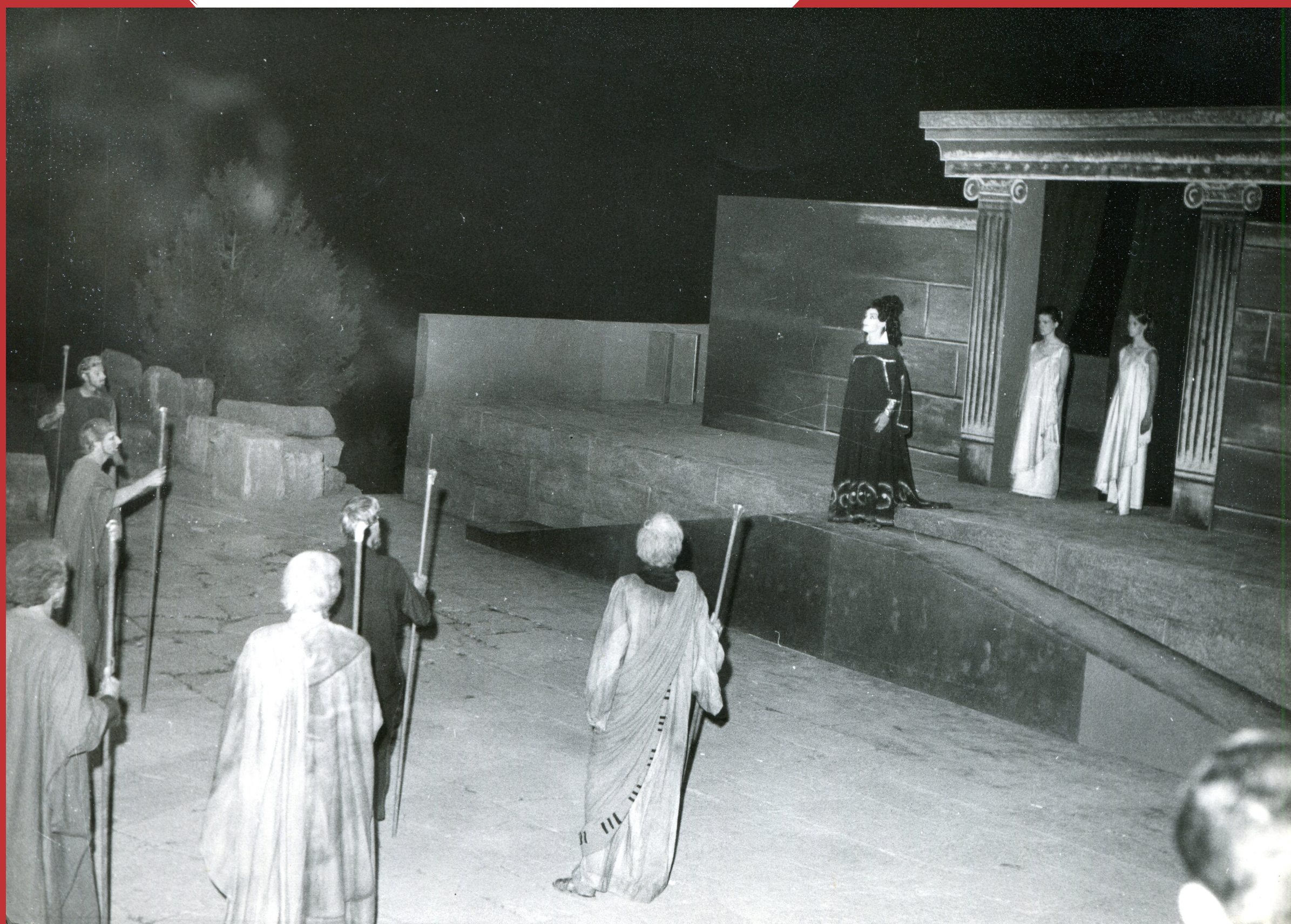




# Ruth Le Mesurier

1967 OUDS  
Agamemnon  
in Delphi

Ruth on stage





# Barbara Edwards

née Cuffe  
matriculated

1966

I came up to read PPE, switching from maths, in October 1966. It was all women, one of 5 colleges, and rather like a boarding school, except we were allowed out during the day. We had an inclusive maintenance payment which covered 3 meals in hall a day and a cupboard shop where you could get instant coffee and chocolate digestive biscuits. We entertained with sherry. As we all ate in hall, and gathered for coffee afterwards, it was very sociable.

Male guests were allowed but if they came in after 7, they had to sign in and if they weren't out by 11, you got a call on the internal phone. We had to be in by 11. If you stayed out longer you came in illegally which meant climbing the wall on the Banbury Road and usually snagging your stockings. By 1969 we all had mini skirts and tights.

In the university itself there were far more men than women, but nurses and tutorial colleges and the teacher training college made for a bit more equality. It was a status symbol to have tea with a college girl and I had a bunch of platonic male friends. The PPE faculty was 200 men and 40 women and I only coped because I spent my seventh term, for entrance exams after A levels, at our brother school, Cranleigh, I and one other girl.



# Barbara Edwards

1968 was the year of flower power and rebellion. This took the form for me of commem balls and my first ball gown and every afternoon there was a 'demo' in the High Street. When I met US students on my holidays who faced the draft, it made sense, but I felt that ours were mainly playing games. I attended the Enoch Powell meeting at the Town Hall, there was a huge police presence and he seemed nervous until he got speaking.

The penultimate term brought reality. Men cut their hair, put on suits and visited headhunters at the Randolph. The Appointments Board said for a woman, it was teaching or the civil service, and hide your engagement ring. Thanks to Peter Ady I did vacation work at the Overseas Development Administration. I was there when I got my degree result which made me an Economic Assistant.

In October 30 years later, we drove my son up to start his degree in history.





née Cullingford

(1970-1976)

matriculated

# Christine Shepherd

1970

I was at St Anne's as an undergraduate 1970-73, and then supposedly doing graduate studies 1974-76, though nothing much came of that. As I only feel about 30-something now, it's hard to realise how long ago this was.

I came from a single-sex school to a single-sex college as this was before mixed colleges. Drat. My brother's girlfriend was at St Anne's and it seemed more modern than the others, and more fun. I really intended to go to Cambridge but St Anne's was cosier at interview (I sank into several deep armchairs), and besides, they wanted me when Cambridge didn't.

I changed from Modern Languages to English after Prelims: not sure I'd get away with that now. It paid off as I got a good degree.

They say Oxford is 'the time of your life' and I have never again had so many opportunities: or indeed the chance to meet so many young men. I was terrified at first: many boarding-school girls locked themselves in their rooms, if they didn't go completely mad and sleep around. I thought I'd come to work, rather than to meet a suitable husband, as some appeared to be doing, but gave that idea of constant study up later and joined far too many groups and societies, spreading myself thinly. I joined choirs, music societies, opera groups and churches, flirting with Catholicism and with monks.

St Anne's at the time? Well, my second year was interesting (in the sense used by the Chinese curse).



# Christine Shepherd

There were strikes, when Melanie Phillips who was very left-wing at the time organised all kinds of demonstrations I little understood (she's gone equally crazily right-wing since). There were also times when electricity was cut off and we huddled round a Rayburn solid fuel stove in No. 35. At first we had to be in to the Porters' Lodge by midnight, but by the end of my time you could get in all through the night as long as it was on the hour. I rather missed having to leap over walls; something was lost there, when subterfuge was no longer needed.

I remember good breakfasts, and the smell of the polish in the Hartland House library. After final exams, I remember steady rainfall, persistent and gentle, falling as we played croquet on the lawn in a cidery haze.

I made 3 or 4 lasting friendships. I didn't make the most of the opportunities though as I was too young really to understand them. People say the 70s were a bad time for St Anne's, but I was not aware of that : it was simply the time I was there.

Interestingly I don't remember any harassment. I felt safe walking back along the low walls through the centre of Oxford, or on my bike late at night hearing an unknown person shouting, 'Hi Chris! Drunk again?' as I wobbled a bit turning right up Cornmarket.

What do I wish now? That I'd been a bit naughtier, maybe, and spent more time both at parties and at the Bodleian. I came away with an undeservedly good degree and always felt I'd somehow cheated; they call it Imposter Syndrome apparently...



# Mary Martin

née Pearce  
matriculated

1971

I came up to Oxford in 1971 to St Anne's College to read Engineering Science. I found myself the only student in college taking this subject for the whole of my three years. There were no books in the library related to my modules and all my tutors were based in various men's' colleges. I got to know Oxford very well, very quickly.

At school I loved maths and physics and choose these as my A and S level subjects. My physics teacher suggested taking the Oxbridge exams, but the Head of Maths was not so sure as soon as I said I would not be able to stay for a third year in the sixth form as my parents could not afford to keep me for an extra year. Luckily, Oxford had started setting special questions for those taking the exam in second year sixth. After being called to interview during the power strikes of late autumn 1970 I was awarded an Exhibition to read Engineering Science (then a three-year degree).

It was a real shock when I arrived at college and started the maths course for physicists and engineers. I was used to getting top marks but suddenly I found I was really struggling. My maths tutor for that first term, Mary Kersley, was the only St Anne's tutor I worked with in the whole three years. She encouraged me to believe I could get to grips with the new concepts and her patience and glasses of sherry at the end of each tutorial paid off!



# Mary Martin

The timetable for engineering students was demanding of our time so it was a real benefit that St Anne's was just across the road from the main engineering building. Morning lectures starting at 9, a quick lunch back in collage, workshop practical sessions in the afternoon with technical drawing twice a week, tutorials squeezed in gaps between all these in many different men's colleges meant I would often get back to college just in time for late tea with friends in the Bevington Houses or dinner in the Dining Hall. I looked at the timetables for my friends and they had so much free time to spend as they wished, maybe hours in the library or out on the river. However, all this activity has stood me in good stead. I developed an attitude of "lets get organised" and somehow made sure I enjoyed lots of the social and sporting opportunities as well, playing tennis for the college. I remember I was always short on sleep by the end of term.





# Dominique Ruhlmann

matriculated

1972

My first impression of St Anne's was when I came for my interviews in the autumn of 1971. I walked through the Gatehouse, past the porter on duty and into an oasis of calm: a green lawn surrounded by some impressive modern buildings (Wolfson, Rayne and the Dining Hall) and Hartland House. The candidates waited anxiously to be called for interview in the welcoming surroundings of the common room and there was knitting (of squares for blankets) on hand to calm any nerves! I had chosen my interview outfit carefully: a black jersey Biba dress, with a high waist and gathered sleeves, worn with skin-tight, knee-high, black suede platform boots. All very 1970s! I was interviewed by Jill Lewis, Jennifer Hart, the Principal Nancy Trenaman and the Vice-Principal Marjorie Reeves. The interview with Jennifer Hart did not go well and I was convinced that I hadn't got in. However, to my delight I received an offer to read Modern History and came up in 1972, along with two other girls from my year at Godolphin & Latymer School, Sarah Beeson and Vastiana Belfon.

There was not enough accommodation in College for all the first-years and I was allocated a room in a St Anne's house, 9 Park Town. This was a large Victorian house, with a separate basement flat and private garden for the wardens: a married couple and their young children. It was a friendly house of mainly first-years, with a handful of second-year students too.



# Dominique Ruhlmann

Boyfriends were not allowed to stay overnight, but of course they sometimes did, and they could make their way out undetected using the fire escape from the second floor, into the back garden and out over the garden wall! The scout, Mrs Lally, was a good-natured and extremely chatty woman. However, you could put your wastepaper basket outside your door if you wanted peace and quiet during an essay crisis and then she wouldn't come in. I stayed on at Park Town for my second year, and then lived out for my third year – so I never lived in the central site of St Anne's.

However, I often went into college for meals in the dining hall and I also used the college library, which was on the first floor of Hartland House and was a nice quiet place when revising for exams. The lady librarian was very friendly and the library was a welcoming and cosy space for work. I also went into St Anne's for many of my tutorials, although we were "farmed out" to the men's colleges for some papers. Jill Lewis was an approachable and inspiring teacher who opened my eyes to the importance of economic conditions in shaping the course of history. A tutorial with Jennifer Hart was always a daunting experience because of her razor-sharp mind!

In those days the history students studied two papers per term and had to write twelve essays in eight weeks (i.e. eight essays for one paper and four essays for the other).





# Dominique Ruhlmann

This was a punishing schedule and I discovered that you could occasionally come to the tutorial having done the reading and being prepared to talk about the subject, without having written the essay! So I usually ended up writing ten essays per term instead of twelve. Although I read Modern History, my study of English history stopped at Gladstone and Disraeli! There were rumblings about reform of the History syllabus during my time but this did not come until later.

I did not have much to do with the St Anne's JCR although I do remember a JCR campaign about washing machines! There were none in St Anne's at that time and we had to use the launderette just across the Woodstock Road. However, I did participate in the occupation of the Examination Schools in November 1973 for the campaign for a Central Students Union building. The sit-in lasted for seven days and I even spent one night sleeping on the floor there in my sleeping bag.

Although I didn't belong to any university societies, I went to plenty of plays, concerts and poetry readings. I also joined a women's Morris Dancing group organised by a friend at St Anne's, Sheila Spencer. We gave performances in a number of places in Oxford and also participated in the May Morning celebrations by performing outside a circuit of pubs, finishing up at the Royal Oak on the Woodstock Road.

This was the era of long hair, the women's movement and rather a lot of parties.





# Dominique Ruhlmann

I don't know how I fitted everything in but I still managed to study hard! I graduated from St Anne's in 1975 with an upper second in Modern History and some wonderful memories. The quiet times in the college library must have left a lasting impression because I eventually became a librarian. St Anne's was a welcoming college which gave opportunities to women from a wide range of backgrounds. I'm delighted that it still continues to be outward facing and inclusive today!

Dominique in the Easter vacation of her first year



**Picnic in South Parks**  
Pictured: Dominique Ruhlmann (seated far right), Dawn Stoker - English (standing far right), Shar Reichenstein (laying in purple skirt, left) and Stella King - Modern History (seated far right of left circle, in white)



# Karen Hulme

née Brown  
matriculated

1973

On Thursday 11th October 1973, the taxi from the station dropped me and my suitcase outside Gatehouse. As requested in the copious set of instructions and information sent to me, I had made it before lunch. As I had managed an Exhibition in the entrance exams, I got a slightly better room than some others, in Wolfson not Gatehouse. First years got the rooms at the back facing Banbury Road where they got little sun and were usually chilly and the beds were hard but they did have their own washbasins. I found my trunk, which had been sent in advance, and got it upstairs (I think my "sponsor" helped when I managed to find her).

I had come up on the train on my own, the first person from my large working class family to go to university at all, let alone to read Classics at Oxford but I remember only excitement that day. There were lonely times later, certainly- we had no phone or car at home so letters passed between me and my mother several times a week. In 1973 the rules that seem chafed so much for others who have written about this period, were quite comforting for me after my sheltered academic Grammar School. The only one I didn't appreciate was the need to get a leave form signed by the Dean and a tutor if you wanted a weekend at home.

We were soon busy with academic work, starting with Homer. Lectures were never compulsory but certain ones were great social events.



# Karen Hulme

Jasper Griffin lectured on Homer in Balliol Hall where the smell of breakfast toast and coffee lingered and our notes got sticky with marmalade. In Schools, Sir Roger Mynors performed with wonderful enthusiasm on Virgil, whipping out his white handkerchief at intervals and denouncing weak theories as "Eyewash!"

Mods Tutorials in that first term, concentrating on unseen translation, were with the great Margaret Hubbard, who had offered me the Exhibition and changed my life. I had thought I was well prepared for interview and I was- but not for the extraordinary first meeting with Miss Hubbard, gravel voiced, chain smoking, dressed in checked shirt, trousers and open toed sandals in December. We had classes with her too, which were great if you had done the set reading. If not, you might wonder what was going on.

As time went on, we spent more time at classes with Margaret Howartson. We were slightly less in awe of her, which is not to downplay her mighty intellect and considerable teaching skills. We had to take one philosophy option for Mods and Gwynneth Matthews was very sweet and understanding about our efforts to untangle the knots of the Protagoras. In fact, all the tutors were kind.

We went out, saw plays (the open air ones were the best), joined the Kodaly Choir, went punting a bit- easier with male friends along to do the hard work while we drank Mateus Rose.





# Karen Hulme

The Daily Information sheet and the weekly Dinner Menus were avidly scanned in the Hartland House corridor. No Night clubs were advertised - I don't think there were any in Oxford. Parties were advertised by word of mouth, often in Univ, I recall. Later, people (not me) criticised the food served in Hall and the cool types longed to live out. If I eventually became aware of class differences between some of us it didn't seem to matter at the time.



# Stella Charman

née Rees  
matriculated

1975

I arrived at St Anne's to read PPE in the Autumn of 1975 after a nine-month break from academic study. I had used this time to break free of my Yorkshire roots and travel to such far-flung places as Cambridge and Merthyr Tydfil for waitressing and voluntary jobs. In those days, and with my background, overseas gap year travel was unimaginable. By the time I arrived at St Anne's I was not as naïve as some fellow-freshers, but as going to Oxford had been my dream since the age of 14, I was acutely aware I was on the brink of something life-changing. I was overawed by the place and the curious types who inhabited it. For example, public schoolboys were a new species to me. They behaved in exotic ways such as playing backgammon, beagling (??) at weekends, and unlike Yorkshiremen, paid me compliments - which I took far too literally. I seemed to enter a whole new intellectual world of people who could drink and party all night and still write brilliant essays. Lectures were overwhelming. I soon learned that hitherto I had been a fish in a very small academic pond, and that if I was to hold my own at all, then I would have to spend a considerable amount of time in the College library. Fortunately, my efforts paid off and I discovered that I could cope in tutorials, so long as the tutor concerned was not requiring originality or first class potential. The St Anne's PPE 'team' in those days included the notorious Peter Ady, eccentric Jenifer Hart and compassionate Gabriele Taylor.





# Stella Charman

Each in their unique ways opened my mind to much more than the subjects they were teaching! They shifted my mind-set from accepting and conventional, to enquiring and independent. This was Oxford in the days before mobile phones and social media. I tried out a variety of new activities, but rowing was a step too far, and I eventually settled for the safety of the University's second eleven hockey team and enjoyment of the University Parks opposite St Anne's. I cycled around the streets in the evenings listening for the sounds of interesting parties that I could gate-crash, glimpsing at a distance some 'celebrity' international students such as Benazir Bhutto and Ferdinand Marcos, and meeting others who subsequently made names for themselves in political or journalistic circles. In those days unheralded visits to friends were common, and you left little notes on doors in lieu of a 'calling card' if someone was out. I remember the feeling of pleasure combined with embarrassment when I returned to my room in the Rayne Building to find messages on my notepad from three different male students, each progressively more cryptic than the last. My memories of my final year are not blighted by the fear of finals, but feature wisteria, Pimms and coffee with friends in Hartland House in breaks from studying. I always preferred the camaraderie of the library to the isolation of my room.





# Stella Charman

That final Trinity term was also infused with the sadness of leaving so soon, just as I had found my feet, but thankfully moving to London afterwards enabled me to retain something of the magic as I entered the world of work. Apart from a solid if undistinguished degree, one lasting legacy of my St Anne's days in the mid-70s is my friendships. By my third year I had finally worked out who I was and where I fitted, and made some friends who remain firm to the present day and provide the emotional infrastructure of my life. I still wonder if I'd have had more fun if I'd been a student in the 60s and am a bit sorry to have missed that exciting period, but then I perhaps would not have settled to any studying at all? St Anne's certainly provided the support and structure I needed at the most formative time of my life and for which I remain grateful.

Stella Rees and  
Rosaleen Hughes  
beside the  
Cherwell in 1976





# Elizabeth Gent

matriculated

1976

I matriculated in 1976 and arrived to read Modern History from a comprehensive school and a sixth form college in Dorset, one of only three or four to go to Oxbridge from the college. I lived in all three years, first in Wolfson then Rayne. My fellow historians lived in Bevington Road, Banbury, Woodstock and the Gatehouse. I was struck by the huge variety of rooms in the old houses. 60 Woodstock had enormous and beautiful rooms while those in Bevington were small and quirky, and the Gatehouse was very noisy.

I remember the food being very good and filling. Breakfasts were dominated by a rush to grab freshly made toast when it emerged rather than the cold rubbery pieces generally on offer. Lunch was paid for with a book of variously priced tickets, £5.00 for the term, with soup being the cheapest at 5p and main dishes at maybe 20 or 30p. A particular favourite was braised faggots in celery.

Dinners were always good – chicken in various sauces appeared frequently (chasseur, forestiere). Cold buffet on a Saturday night was baked potatoes with veal and ham pie. Formal hall meant that the person sitting at the end of each table had to serve everybody – dividing crème caramel into 16 was a challenge. The buttery in Hartland House served free (strong and stewed) cups of tea at 4pm on weekdays from huge teapots, while the sole vending machine there sold tiny cartons of milk and bars of Caramac.



# Elizabeth Gent

Both the tea and the chocolate were highlights of a long afternoon in the library.

My tutors were Jean Dunbabin – nervous but very kind; Gillian Lewis – motherly and very supportive; Jennifer Hart – eccentric, intriguing, slightly scary. The principal, Nancy Trenamen, was a remote and terrifying figure, though I do remember meeting her after I'd just finished finals and was very drunk! The librarian, Kathy Swift, was a friend of my godfather's who lived in Summertown. For prelims in the first term we were taught De Tocqueville by Robert Gildea, then a very young DPhil student, now a leading expert on French history. Hugh Trevor Roper lectured us on Gibbon and Macaulay, and read his lectures while clearly thinking of something else entirely.

Overall I enjoyed my time at St Anne's, grew up a lot, made some lovely friends, and though I felt under pressure to make the most of it, looking back it did give me some wonderful experiences.





# Julie Benson

née Graham

(1976-1979)

matriculated

1976

When I first saw the call to St. Annes's alumnae to provide their personal history, I dismissed it as "not for me";- no high-flying career, no publications or celebrity to my name.

But after some consideration I changed my mind as I was part of the fabric of St. Annes for 3 years 1976-1979.

I arrived from a convent education in Blackpool as a 7-term entrant. I studied English Language and Literature beneath the infamous triumvirate of Mrs. Bednarowska, Mrs Jack and Mrs Ingham. I worked very hard, (probably too hard, to the exclusion of extra-curricular activities) and grew to be terrified of Mrs Bed who on at least one occasion reduced me to tears in a tutorial on D.H. Lawrence whose writing I had disastrously misinterpreted! However, along the way I produced high-standard essays on the mediaeval poem "The Pearl", Jane Eyre and Keats' letters . I was homesick throughout my 3 years at college, missing my family and boyfriend in the days of snail-mail and unreliable pay phones. I lived for all my 3 years in 7 Bevington Road in a room above the Dean with her bird-loving ginger cat and next door to the caretaker and his wife who brought a homely normality to college life. I looked out on to Hartland House and some beautiful gardens filled with Keats' "globed peonies".

After my three years, and with a decent second class degree, I returned home and married my long-term boyfriend. I pursued a career in Personnel and Training in the Nuclear Industry, gaining a professional qualification.



# Julie Benson

When my daughter came along (she subsequently went to Cambridge, became a criminal barrister and has a young family of her own) I worked with the local college part-time in adult literacy and numeracy and then spent 22 years as my dentist husband's Practice Manager, helping him to build and grow a busy, successful NHS Practice, looking after up to 12 staff and associates. I was also a magistrate for 10 years.

Now retired, I still keep busy with family commitments, craft work and admin work on a voluntary basis for my local Church. So what did I gain from my years at St. Anne's? Good organisational skills, confidence in communication (the ability to put this together for a start); lifelong problem solving skills (I think I would have made a better student if I had gone back to Oxford as a mature student at , say 35!); some long-term friends and acquaintances and an enthusiasm and energy for whatever I have done and hopefully for lots more to come.





# Ann Kenrick

matriculated

1977

St Anne's was a different world in the late seventies for two main reasons.

The first was that it was single sex until our last year. On the whole we liked it being women only as it meant we could retreat to the sanctuary of a single sex environment after serious socialising with the other colleges. From memory the rules were pretty relaxed about comings and goings late at night unlike colleges such as St John's which fined my then boyfriend (now husband) several times when fire alarms meant that I was discovered to be staying overnight. Women only meant that we made a lot of effort to join clubs and participate in joint theatrical productions. The Cuppers competition in our first term was a wonderful opportunity to make friends which have lasted for decades and in some cases resulted in long term relationships. I still tease my husband that my production (with Worcester) won the cuppers competition as it was much more innovative than the St Anne's 'The Importance of Being Earnest' produced by Catherine Chanter who I met on my first day in the queue for lunch and am still in touch with every couple of weeks.

Interesting memories of playing with a Ouija board in her room on Woodstock Road after a long boozy evening getting in touch with the spirit of a woman who had been a nurse in that room and was waiting for her soldier boyfriend to come back from the war.



# Ann Kenrick

Another memory is of a fabulous breakfast party in Bevington Road where things got a little out of hand and a grapefruit was thrown and went through the window and landed at the feet of the Dean who happened to be passing. Fines ensued.

We did slightly resent the arrival of men in our third year primarily because (so rumour had it) there were not many men who wished to apply to St Anne's and therefore the college had to offer scholarships to them to entice them in. However, once they arrived, we were quite welcoming in a patronising kind of way.

The other key difference from now was that we had no mobile phones and therefore limited opportunity for communicating with other colleges quickly. We used to swarm to the pigeonholes regularly in the hope of notes and letters from outside. The alternative which I still have in my archive was a little notebook left on your door on which messages were left by disappointed visitors or if someone had telephoned. A fascinating record of comings and goings.

I wish I could say I have stronger memories of the academic side of life. Rhiannon Goldthorpe was a kind and supportive tutor and Dr Harvey who taught German had an astonishing collection of owl related memorabilia in her study!





# Ann Kerrick

To celebrate getting through finals I changed from subfusc into my gym kit on the way out only to be stopped by one of the Beadles who threatened that my papers would be annulled until I persuaded him that I had honestly taken my exams in the correct outfit! I was caught by a photographer from the Oxford Mail as I left and was showered by my now husband with champagne.





# Gillian Flinton

née Scholfield  
matriculated

1978

I matriculated in 1978 from a northern school (the first from my comp to go to oxford) to read mathematics. I was persuaded to apply for Oxford by my teacher and although my cousin went to Cambridge it was not a place I'd really considered myself. I chose Oxford as it sounded less posh than Cambridge.

I visited St Anne's as my teacher thought it was a good match for a Northern comprehensive lass and decided to go for a conditional offer; on interview Dr Kearsley was very keen to point out however that I would not be getting off lightly and gave me a number of demanding problems to solve. I received an A B B offer (I already had an A in mathematics) and was told in no uncertain terms that the Bs has to be in Physics and Further Mathematics and not in Fashion And Fabrics which was my fourth A Level.

I was playing in a jazz orchestra abroad when I got my A Level results; the school contacted me by phone and that was it I was in!

I loved my three years there, starting at St Anne's the year before men were admitted. At the time the bar was at the bottom of Wolfson and had no optics so that was where we spent many an evening watching tv. I am still in touch with one of my fellow mathematicians Evelyn Cramb and we've revisited our old haunts on a number of occasions.





# Gillian Flinton

Mathematicians:

Sandra Terry

Gail Edison

Gillian Scholfield

Evelyn Cramb

Ruth

Christine Brookes

Jennifer Dixon

Tessa McFersson





# Gillian Flinton





# Gillian Flinton



Bow S. Clark  
2 R. Turner  
3 J. French  
4 C. Daley  
5 R. Julett  
6 M. Simpson  
7 C. Pearson  
Stroke S. Stockill  
Cox R. Hicks  
Coach R. Thomas



# Elizabeth Wager

née Cooper

(1980-1983)

matriculated

1980

I came up to St Anne's in 1980 to read Zoology. So I was in the second mixed year. I'd been to a Direct Grant school, part of the Girls Public Day School Trust (GPDST, now GDST) in South London which usually got one or two people into Oxford and Cambridge each year. I chose St Anne's because, having been to an all-girls school since the age of 5, I didn't fancy an all-women's college, but I thought an ex-women's college would be less daunting than some of the ex-men's colleges in which women were still something of a rarity (they were said to be 'One per rigger team' at Christ Church).

I found St Anne's welcoming, an easy place to make friends, but perhaps less quaintly Oxonian than I had expected. Compared to other colleges there were fewer odd traditions or ancient rituals. At formal hall dinners in other colleges I experienced Greek and Latin graces, sconcing and the richness of Oxford's history. In some ways I missed this at St Anne's, but in other ways it made college feel homely and not so strange and I certainly felt that I fitted in.

Accommodation in the Gatehouse was a bit basic – we shared bathrooms on each floor although I realised that Medieval architecture meant that friends in other colleges had to cross the quad to reach a bathroom.





# Elizabeth Wager

The food wasn't much better than that at school (it has since improved enormously, judging by recent visits) and we escaped to Pepper's burgers on Walton Street if we spotted something particularly unappetising on the weekly menu – I recall reconstituted lamb burgers disguised by a variety of names and very greasy spaghetti Bolognese. No breakfast or dinner were provided on Sundays which led to some enjoyable breakfast parties. I overcame the lack of dinner by singing in the chapel choir at St Edmund (Teddy) Hall for which we were rewarded with very dry sherry then an excellent dinner at high table with wine!

I lived out in my second year (just across the road in St Bernard's Road) as about 1/3 of 2nd years did in those days, being 'ballotted out'. But back in college, in a nicer room on Banbury Road (but still with shared bathroom), in my final year. One thing I did appreciate were the kitchens in St Anne's houses. Other colleges had nothing like this, and when I told friends about the college sewing machine, they found this very amusing, but I thought it was highly practical.

Friendships made at St Anne's have lasted a lifetime (we are now approaching our 60s) and my time at Oxford was an extremely happy one.

# Helen King

matriculated

1983

In 1986 I rowed in Summer Eights, sat PPE finals, moved to Cheshire and was sworn in as a police constable, the start of a career I pursued for 30 years becoming an Assistant Commissioner in the Metropolitan Police. It's now my honour to be Principal of the College that gave me so many opportunities and prepared me for the career path I chose.

During my time at St Anne's, my PPE contemporaries and tutors (Gabriele Taylor, Tony Judt and Colin Mayer) were unfailingly supportive and attentive to my inputs and ideas, however poorly informed or simplistic they no doubt were. I learned from them the benefits of careful and gracious listening, precision and clarity of expression, valuing different approaches and opinions and objective assessment. Tutorials also taught me, in particular, the ability to work to deadlines, with sometimes limited information, and think on my feet.

I was introduced to rowing by the College Boat Club and it was the first sport I'd ever committed to, having been hopelessly uncoordinated at school. Without rowing, I would never have had the physical confidence to consider joining the police. Bumps races, ergometer tests and exams gave me experience of working under pressure. Early morning outings, following late-night essay crises, were great preparation for shift work and being called out on little sleep a decade or more later for murder enquiries, major incidents and firearms operations.

Oxford also developed my resilience and determination.





# Helen King

content warning: loss

In my first year at Oxford the St Anne's 1st Women's VIII had a humiliating Torpids. I also failed the Politics Prelim, after our tutor, Tony Judt, had announced this was only possible if you'd had a frontal lobotomy at birth. I came back from both these disappointments and from other student trials and tribulations. These were my initiation to learning from mistakes, not giving up when there are setbacks and not losing sight of the overall goal. The JCR (where I was the Welfare and OUSU Rep) and Boat Club Committees were my introductions to minuted meetings, taking responsibility and negotiating with and influencing the opinions of peers. JCR meetings and Union debates showed me different chairing styles and how a crowd can be incited or calmed. I cared about political policies and participated in student demonstrations, an experience I later shared with 300 Merseyside officers (to their bemusement) when briefing them for the operation to police Liverpool's student protests in 2010. During my time at St Anne's we lost a friend. Sue Mell, a vibrant and talented linguist from our year who was tragically killed in an earthquake in Mexico at the start of her year abroad. So, in that loss, I learned that life is short and time is precious. I was determined to work in roles that made a difference to individuals and to the society we all live in.

Everything I have described here, all the experiences that equipped me for my career and for life, cause me to feel deeply grateful to the institution and the people who gave me those opportunities.



# Helen King

Our generation may not have had a boathouse or have been able to avoid second-year exorbitant and damp-riddled rented accommodation off Cowley Road. However, we were overwhelmingly fortunate with fewer of the financial, social and career pressures experienced by the current generation of students.



Helen became the Principal of St  
Anne's in 2017



# Alishba Khalig

matriculated

2010

It is funny how writing even a few hundred words can be daunting when one is no longer in the habit of churning out a two thousand-word essay every week. However, here goes. I have to confess I was a little disappointed when I set eyes on St Anne's for the first time. It was not the quintessential Oxford college I'd imagined I would be studying at. Basically, it didn't remind me of Hogwarts. Yes, I know, comparisons with the Harry Potter world may be a little clichéd for Oxford by now, but when you belong to the generation who were growing up as the series was being published and read each book at roughly the same age as the characters, the magical world does kind of become a big deal. So something with vague similarities to Hogwarts was what I had looked forward to when applying to Oxford, and St Anne's at first glance didn't quite fit the bill.

As an English student though, I should have been better at reading between the lines. The college didn't have the Christ Church dining hall, but it was special in so many other ways. We had a beautiful quad (one of the few in Oxford you could actually sit, walk and even enjoy a meal on), one of the biggest college libraries (a lifesaver when, apart from the likes of LMH and St Hugh's, you were situated as far away from the English Faculty as is possible in the Oxford universe), and of course we had STACS (another lifesaver when you'd missed lunch and didn't even have enough groceries in your kitchen to muster up a sandwich).



# Alishba Khalig

Our chef's cuisine was renowned across the university, and for an even more classic late-night meal, Ali's kebab van was conveniently situated just across the road. (P.S. Is that still there?)

St Anne's was also a more open college. Every Stanner is well acquainted with the relaxed and friendly atmosphere of the college – as are some non-Stanners. I vividly remember an impressed Christ Churcher recounting to me how she “even saw people wearing flip flops to brunch” when she visited one weekend. The college was, and still is, also open in a more important way. It opens itself to a diverse student intake through the great outreach work it does. I mean diversity not just in that it has a large international student population, but a population that is more representative of the diversity of Britain.

During the centenary marking degrees for women last year we celebrated St Anne's as the first Oxford college for female students. It was an important step towards making the university more representative of the UK's population. Decades later, St Anne's continued to do so by opening itself to me, a young woman who ticked the box for almost every diversity indicator in the UK – ethnic minority, religious minority, from a lower socio-economic background and not from the South East of England. Enrolling diverse students is one thing, but making them feel like they belong here, is quite another. If there is one thing St Anne's does not lack, it is acceptance of, and respect for, each individual it enrolls.





# Alishba Khalig

I was the only person of colour in my English tutorials and one of only two hijabis in the college matriculation photo of 2010 (the other I believe was a graduate student whom I don't recall ever seeing again after fresher's week). Yet, I was never made to feel like an outsider in any way by my fellow students. My tutors accommodated my daily prayer timing when, on a few occasions, it clashed with tutorials, and one tutor in first year even proactively offered to make alternative arrangements for me because she understood our next tute coincided with the Eid al-Adha festival.

The college did not make my inner-city, comprehensive school education an impediment to pursuing my love for literature. Don't get me wrong, I absolutely loved my school, but it did send me to Oxford pronouncing 'amiable' as if it rhymed with 'viable'; a product, not of my migrant background, as some people rashly assume, but of callilope syndrome. This, I recently learnt, is a fancy way of describing the state of people who, mostly from reading widely as children, know what a word means, and how to use and spell it, but are unaware of its correct pronunciation because they have never heard the word said aloud.

Unfortunately, there were a great many words that even the teachers at my school did not use, let alone the pupils.

So in 2013 I left St. Anne's with better pronunciation, a more enlightened mind and the realisation that if I could belong at Oxford, I could belong in any organisation or place where I wished to pursue a career.



# Alishba Khalig

This was an incredible experience to confer on a young woman from a minority background. As useful today, as the degrees conferred on women in the 1920s were in validating that they could take up their position in society on an equal footing. While there is still a long way to go in making the university wholly representative of our society, I am incredibly grateful to St Anne's for what it offered to me.

Of course, for the Potter fantasist in me my three years at the college were also not fruitless. Sub fusc felt very much like the Hogwarts uniform, and if receiving the congratulatory letter offering me a place at St Anne's was not the nearest thing the muggle world can offer to receiving a Hogwarts letter and the Sorting Hat's verdict at the same time, then I don't know what is.





# Samantha Brehm

(2017-2018)  
matriculated

2017

Many life events, some incredible and some completely earth shattering, sculpted me into the woman I was standing at the back gate of St Anne's. As I was gazing past the gate into College, I wondered if I was worthy of being an Oxford scholar. Standing there I was blissfully naive to how my time at St Anne's would shape my life. The moment I walked through the gate and into College I felt a sense of peace and belonging.

Since that day St Anne's has provided me with love, joy, friendship, and a Stanner family. A salient piece of advice I cherish is the reminder to stay true to yourself. Keeping those words close to my chest, I pushed myself academically and personally.

The St Anne's Middle Common Room (MCR) facilitated a community, Michaelmas term, where I felt immediately connected. Befriending people, in my department and different departments, opened my mind to a new way of thinking. I soon realized I was surrounded by passionate and compassionate future world leaders. Leaving me inspired and excited to engage them in lively discourse. Staying engaged was easy in Michaelmas. From the department dinner in the Upper Common Room organized by Professor Victoria Murphy, the murder mystery, a haunted tour of Oxford, or a wine and cheese night there was always a way to stay connected.





# Samantha Brehm

When the opportunity presented itself to give back to the MCR community, I volunteered to become one of four social secretaries. As a social secretary I was able to create events alongside my friends where we were able to unwind and find joy. It provided the perfect balance between academics and personal pursuits. You could often find me in College working away on assignments, readings for my next class, or planning our next social event.

At St Anne's I found a renewed sense of strength, independence, and purpose that I carry with me to this day. Three years ago standing at that back gate I knew my life would change. I just did not realize by how much. St Anne's provided me not just an experience of a lifetime, but also a lifelong experience that continues past graduation. I am proud to be a Stanner.





# Sanaa Mughal

matriculated

2019

Sanaa is a current student and the St Anne's JCR President, who has been asked to describe her experience at St Anne's during the coronavirus pandemic, when some terms were conducted from home and others held in Oxford were restricted by nation-wide lockdowns

When I matriculated at St Anne's in 2019, over a year ago now, little did I know how well I would be integrated into the Stanner community, let alone be the JCR President. This year hasn't been without its challenges; something I couldn't even have foreseen back in Hilary 2020, where I was first elected into the role, raring to go and very excited to fill in the big shoes Joseph (JCR President 2019-20) had left me. My role started a little earlier than most, with much of my summer being spent working very closely with college to plan how we were going to get students back safely in Michaelmas, having had a largely successful remote, but unexpected, Trinity Term. How would households work? How would we safely fit people in the dining hall? What was Fresher's Week going to look like without clubs...?

When the time finally arrived to settle back in college in late September, it felt strange, but still homely like always.

Being JCR President is very rewarding, especially when your own ideas come into fruition. Bilal, my Vice President, and I, had been anxious about how we were going to make sure Freshers were settled into Oxford given the very limited social interaction that was legal at the time.



# Sanaa Mughal

The role has certainly brought out our creative side, with socially distanced speed dating, to crew dates on the quad, to household G&D's trips. One huge success this year has been being one of the only colleges to host a majority in-person Fresher's experience.

Throughout the year we have had to move from in-person events in Michaelmas, to an entirely remote Hilary, and now a mix in Trinity. As we watch the lifting of more restrictions, we hope, by the time you are reading this, that we get our chance as a Committee to bring Stanners together, for the brighter and sunnier days ahead.

The day-to-day life of a JCR President can be quite busy. This year I have sat on over six College Committees, including Estates, Council, Academic and Governing Body, not to mention my own JCR Committee of 24 down-to-earth people. It has been so insightful knowing how each member of Staff, Fellows and also students help influence the dynamic inner workings of the College. Being president doesn't just stop at the College level, as often we must represent the JCR at the University wide level too, via the JCR Presidents Committee (the famous PresCom) and the Oxford SU!





# Sanaa Mughal

As an Earth Science student, my day often goes from morning lectures, to a College meeting at lunchtime, to a return to lectures or labs in the afternoon, and then even a late night PresCom or JCR General Meeting to end the night (with some room for dinner and socialising in between). Whilst it can sometimes get overwhelming with around 400 students relying on you, I'm always determined to get a job done, and I've had so much support from my household, Committee, and the JCR, which at the end of the day makes it worth the time!

Something that has stood out to me this year, is that many of the people I have worked with, I have never even met in person! It has been almost entirely a mix of quick email exchanges, Teams and Zoom calls, and luckily more recently, a coffee on the quad in small groups. It really goes to show, that when you have an idea, and want to bring it to life, and have a good team by your side, nothing can stand in your way.

I've been incredibly grateful for the opportunities being JCR President for St Anne's College has given me, and I trust that my successor will carry on the spirit of St Anne's that has been passed onto me from my predecessors.

Sanaa was JCR President 2020-2021

# Vivian Abrokwah

matriculated

2020

Being a first year student has definitely not been the experience I imagined. I imagine a plethora of all first years share the same sentiment. It was inevitable that social distancing rules, the lockdowns and other restriction put in place due to Covid would affect my uni experience, however the extent to which normal uni life was affected by Covid was unforeseen. The biggest hit for first years was probably having to spend the entirety of Hilary at home. Having to navigate a virtual learning system and not getting the typical Oxford experience undoubtedly had an adverse impact on not just the social lives of students but also our mental well-being.

Even with the struggles faced by the freshers, my time at Anne's has still been an extremely unique and special one. Living with other freshers in my course (law) has meant that even with the adverse impact of Covid on our social lives, I have managed to form a close knit relationship with my household.

We've learnt to adapt to the new way of living, we've learnt to have zoom(online) socials, in place of meeting in person. We've learnt the importance of checking up on others who may feel isolated due to social distancing rules. We've learnt how to be a community even when we're apart. We've learnt how to enjoy the little things such as walking past the Bev gardens in the hopes of seeing anybody.





# Vivian Abrokwa

Being a student at Anne's has given me the opportunity to learn so many new things and meet people from different walks of life. It has given me the opportunity to express my passions and this has helped me grow both academically and mentally. The sense of inclusivity that is fostered at st Anne's means that I have felt comfortable since my first day in Michealmas and I throughly feel like a member of the Anne's community.

It might sound cliché because it is but for many freshers, Anne's has become a home way from home.



Vivian is currently the JCR  
President-elect for 2021-2022

# Thanks for reading!

I hope you enjoyed the compilation and learned about the student experience at St Anne's over time.

If you want to hear about any future projects such as this and keep up to date with the St Anne's community, email [development@st-annes.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development@st-annes.ox.ac.uk) and ask for information about getting involved with the St Anne's Society, our alumni network.

Collating this project was bittersweet at points with the coronavirus pandemic keeping students at home for two terms, but every submission was an amazing read and I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to chat with everyone who sent in a submission. I am so grateful for all of your time.

- *Amy Langer*

(JCR Women's Rep 2020-2021)

Thank you to....

**Stella Charman, SAS**  
President at time of writing,  
for promoting this project  
within an inch of its life! **Jay  
Gilbert and Helen  
Nicholson**, our  
Communications Officer and  
Alumnae Relations Officer  
for proofreading the project.  
**Sanaa Mughal, JCR**  
President 2020-2021 and  
**Bilal Aly, JCR Vice President**  
2020-2021 for their support  
and encouragement.



*On behalf of St Anne's JCR...*

**THANK YOU  
FOR READING**

