

John and grandfather then split up and whistled every now and again to ensure that they were O.K.

John went up a flight of stairs that was near a bathroom in which someone was once murdered. He was apprehensive at doing this, but continued.

In his article he here states that no one could have come in without passing my grandfather or him. If they had been able to come in, the floor with all the rubble on it would have made a considerable noise. He sat on the stairs and looked at the door of the bathroom and felt evil coming from it. He put his hands on his head and thought of the people who had lived there in the past. He pulled himself together and gave a whistle to my grandfather, who whistled back and he felt reassured. He turned his attention to the bathroom. But suddenly a hostile air came and he felt that he was not wanted. The force came from the room. He felt a keen wind coming out towards him — a black apparition, black from head to toe, came rushing past him, but it could not have been a human because it had no visible face and it made no noise on the ground. He said that he was quite a strong man and it would take something very strong to push him over. But he was pushed and as he fell he felt that a force of evil was against him; indeed, it was as though all the forces of hell were conspiring against him. Then all at once, after the blackness, he found himself fighting with someone or something. He went with the "ghost" down the steep stairs. He could not totally explain this, but he was very frightened.

Now my Grandfather's Experience

There was no wind and the trees in the garden were still. Suddenly a movement rushed over his head. It was not a wind, but he could hear a rushing noise. Then following that there was a loud cry as if someone had just had a knife put into his back. It was John's voice and was followed by a loud crash.

My Grandfather tried to reach him, but the basement entrance was blocked and he would need a candle as it was so dark. He rushed to the neighbouring house to get a light. Once he had obtained one he went back to the house to find John coming out, covered in plaster and rubble.

This in my view is an extraordinary story and maybe it will be my turn to see *or* feel a ghost!

I have been to the house and it is now a riding school. We met the owners and they took us down into the basement. It didn't seem odd, but I felt unsafe as I went down the stairs.

This story is true and my father has the newspaper cutting at home.

Julia Greenslade, IIE

THE GHOST

It was a bright and lively day,
Then the sun closed in,
And then morbid clouds appeared
And an eerie wind whistled around me.

Then suddenly, silently almost graciously
It came, its image swept like mist
Then it disappeared,
As quickly as a life.

Fleur Hardman, IV V

REFLECTIONS

THE NEW PUPIL: 1840

In a few days, I shall be on my way to school in Brighton. My papa thought that it would be good for me to go to a school in Sussex for young ladies. The school is fairly new, having been opened only four years ago in 1836. I am ten years old and mama has always taught me at home before. This will be the first time that I have been away from my parents for such a long time. I must admit, I am rather worried. Some of the tales I have heard about schools much like St. Mary's are rather unpleasant. Mama is not altogether happy about my being sent to school; I believe that she would rather teach me at home. Papa, however, is insistent that I go.

Today I went shopping with mama to buy a new umbrella, for they do say that the weather in Brighton can be quite deplorable. Thick lambs-wool stockings and brown pinafores were also bought. According to papa, frocks, tippets, cloaks, shawls and bonnets are supplied and the only other things to take are petticoats, cotton stockings, dressing gowns, sewing implements, a bible and prayer

book and a silver dessert spoon, tea spoon and fork. While we were in the town, mama took me to a doctor and I had some vaccinations. The doctor also wrote a letter saying that I was free of diseases and ringworm, and also that I had had the measles and whooping cough.

Next day, mama helped me to pack my big trunk and before I knew what had happened I was on the coach to Brighton. The journey was long and uncomfortable. I tried to sleep and mama, who had brought a travelling rug, covered me with it, for in the coach it was cramped, cold and uncomfortable. Mama and papa had insisted that they came to Brighton with me, although I had assured them that it wasn't necessary and that I would be fine on my own. The coach had set off in the early morning and at around mid-day we reached Brighton. The coach stopped at an inn in the centre of the town, the Castle Inn, I think it was called, and we all got out. My father took my trunk and went to find out where we would be able to hire a small carriage to take us to the school. He soon found a gentleman who would take us there. He put my trunk on the back of the vehicle and mama, papa and I got in and drove off towards the school.

It was the first time I had seen the sea, as we lived inland, and it was a strange sight. I had always thought that the sea was calm and blue, but no, the sea here was grey and rough with big waves crashing on the pebbly beach. I suddenly became frightened of going to school as the carriage trundled along the road to St. Mary's. There were very few houses along the road. The carriage pulled up outside the school gates and all three of us disembarked. The driver helped my father with the big trunk, and then the horse and carriage trotted away into the distance.

My father strode up to the big front door and rang the bell. A loud clanging sounded from inside the large building. I suddenly felt overawed by the whole thing and clung tightly to mama's hand. The large front door opened and a prim-looking governess with her grey hair done in a tight bun peered at me over the rim of her spectacles. She spoke to mama and papa courteously and asked us to follow her into the building. I had arrived at St. Mary's Hall.

My father requested that we be shown round the school and we were led into a large classroom where girls of my age and younger were being taught arithmetic. The governess was standing at the head of the class and the girls were reciting multiplication tables. We moved on to another large room where girls were being taught the globes by a governess. We walked into a smaller room, so that I should be fitted with a uniform. There was a heavy grey frock, over which I was told I must wear a pinafore, for ease of washing I suspected. I was given other articles of clothing and the prim lady told me to bid farewell to my parents and said that then she would take me upstairs to my dormitory. I said my farewells to mama and papa, and told them I would write as often as possible. The governess showed me upstairs and then went to attend to the finances with papa. I was left alone in the cold silence of the room.

The room was long and contained about ten beds. In the middle of the room stood three washstands. I saw my trunk by a bed in the far corner and I walked over to it and sat on the bed. I looked around and noticed that a cupboard stood between every two beds and there were two drawers next to every bed. I opened the drawer next to my bed and it was empty. I opened the cupboard and found some clothes hanging there. There were footsteps outside and the lady with the prim face strode into the room. "Come on, my dear," she said briskly. "Put your clothes away in that cupboard and those drawers," she requested, pointing her long, thin finger. "Neatly, mind". She looked up at the wall and I noticed a big clock for the first time. "Be ready in ten minutes, please; I'll take you to the dining hall".

I unpacked quickly and then I heard the sound of a loud bell being rung and the sound of many footsteps. The governess came back and led me to the dining hall, where many long tables were set out. All the girls were already there, standing behind their chairs; a teacher stood at the head of each table. The governess led me to a table with no teacher at the head and a spare place. I stood behind the chair as the others were doing. The grace was said, and everyone sat. Not a word was spoken throughout the meal. After all the plates had been cleared by one girl appointed from each table, the governess told me to stand and she introduced me. I could feel every eye in the dining room upon me and I felt very nervous.

There was a short break after lunch when we had to go outside to walk around the grounds. Some girls of about my age told me to fetch my hat and cloak, as the weather was bitterly cold. The girls told me that after lunch I would be seeing the most important governess in the school and I would be examined by a doctor. The girls thought I was lucky as I would miss the first lesson which was, apparently, French. I was told that the French mistress was very strict and did not allow any of the girls to speak in English. I was then worried; I had never learnt the language before.

I do not remember the afternoon very well. I went to the doctor, who proclaimed me fit and well. I went to the governess and she asked me about the subjects I had done before. After this I was sent to a lesson in needlework, which lasted for the rest of the afternoon. There was free-time from the end of the afternoon to supper time. At supper we were not allowed to talk, in the same way as at lunch. Bed time was very early; almost immediately after supper we were sent to the dormitory and half an hour after this, our lights were switched out. I was tired and fell asleep straight away, and so came the end of my first day at St. Mary's Hall.

Jennifer Child, III H

THE FIRST TIME

The day before I went to my new school I felt really miserable as if I was leaving home. I went into the front door and I felt I was going into a maze. I thought that I would never find my way around the big school. It was filled with loads of corridors. It reminded me of a hospital. I thought I was really small compared with everyone else.

When they showed me into the hall I thought it was enormous! There were people everywhere round me. Outside, there was grass everywhere. I thought we would have fun playing on it. Then I went to the classroom; everybody stared at me.

Now that I have been here for a year it doesn't seem nearly as big or as frightening as I thought on that first day.

Serena Bayley, The Junior School

REMINISCENCES OF SEVEN YEARS AT ST. MARY'S HALL

The gym became hot and stuffy, and pieces of food were being dropped upon the floor. The headmistress had just made a speech welcoming everybody and was now walking around the room talking to new girls and their parents.

"Allow me to introduce you to Mr. and Mrs. Wooderson", said someone eventually. My parents began a lengthy conversation with them, and way down below the waist lines of the adults, stood a girl of roughly my height.

"Hi, I'm Philippa", she said.

"I'm Shani".

I swallowed with nervous apprehension. The whole place seemed so strange, and I was the stranger who did not belong. "I'm a full boarder", she stressed. Somehow next to that, saying that I was a weekly boarder did not sound nearly so impressive. She looked somewhat older than I, but on closer investigation I discovered that it was I who was older by a whole eight months. Later, as we got to know each other, I used to joke; "Yes, I'm older than Philippa by eight months. Another month and it would have been a pregnancy".

When my parents finally left me that afternoon in Elliot House it was to be my first time away from home. I was all alone sitting on a pink counterpane bed that clashed dreadfully with the green coloured walls in an old dormitory. Little did I know that in the car home my mother was crying silently to herself, wondering if she had done the right thing.

I was just ten years old and having read many Enid Blyton stories about girls' boarding schools, I was fascinated by the life they led. Thinking that all girls' boarding schools would be like those in her stories, I had endlessly pleaded with my mother to let me go to one. In the end she gave in, and I was sent to St. Mary's Hall. It seems so long ago now from that first day when I arrived and life here has had many changes.

I began my first year in what was then just Prep form. In the whole of Prep and Trans there were just five boarders, Karen Duxbury, Hilary Parkin, Jenny Sheppard (for a short time) and myself. Everyone clung to Karen when we first arrived because she had been here a whole term before us. Matrons would come and go as the years progressed, each one having a different personality. Life was difficult for us in the early years as we were always getting into trouble owing to petty rules. No one was allowed to wash her hair on week days, and for Prep and Trans this had to be done by a matron. Consequently, many people had to manage with greasy hair for several days, or else sneak into the pool block and wash it there without anyone knowing. Occasionally, Mrs Leslie (the headmistress at that time) would invite us to her house for tea. We would sit on her lap and tell her all about our home lives. To live abroad was something of great honour, and I always felt a twinge of jealousy towards those who did, as they would receive a great deal more attention.

Life for us was governed by bells. There would be a bell to wake us up at seven o'clock in the morning. We had to strip our beds completely back to give them an airing. Then a second bell would

go, which would be to make our beds. A third bell would ring to signify that it was time to go up to school for breakfast. Everyone up to the third year was put in Elliot House and the Upper Sixth had the privilege of the basement dorms fitted with carpets and work desks.

Meal times were a strange affair. Fifth and Sixth formers were appointed to sit at the head of tables and dish out the food, whilst the smaller girls were mixed up, so that you would quite frequently find yourselves sitting at a table with girls two or three years above you. Everyone would argue over the best looking fish finger or for seconds of chips. Grace was said at the beginning and end of each meal, and before most people had said "Amen", others were seated awaiting their food. All this has changed now, with the "modern" cafeteria system.

Still, my early years at St. Mary's Hall had their moments of fun too, and life was filled with endless punishments. I can remember one night being sent down to the cold, damp basement of Elliot House, which we believed was haunted, with Saffron McCarthy. We had to remain there till about half past twelve and we were so cold that we dressed ourselves up in some dressing-up clothes found in a basement. Other punishments included endless lines given to us by Fifth and Sixth formers, losing an exeat for being found in someone else's dorm and washing up duties — all of which now are non-existent.

The year in Trans brought several new boarders into my life: Jenny Buck, Catherine Philo, Amanda Tucker and Charlotte McCarthy. Karen and Hilary (who were in Trans when I was in Prep) moved up to First year and Philippa and I thought that they were very superior. Philippa and I were considered the best of friends. Everywhere I went, she followed and vice-versa. We were appointed Form and Vice Captains, which to us was a great honour. The whole of our year had a craze on French skipping, which we used to play all break. We did a puppet show in the summer and were the first people to show it to the parents. We did a play about boarding life and had to make two puppets of Mrs. Leslie and Mrs. Drew. It brought tremendous laughter from everyone.

First year was a great leap for most people, as we were now out of the Junior Department and into the Senior School. We thought ourselves very superior, being higher than Prep and Trans. Really, however, as I look at first years today, I can see how young we really were. Sometimes watching the games they play brings back memories of the games we used to play, such as "peep behind the curtain" and "grandmother's footsteps".

Mrs. Leslie left and Miss Harvey came, bringing many changes to the school. Mrs. Drew left Elliot House and went to Hilary. In her place, Miss Williams took over. All of the weekly boarders went over to Hilary and Elliot House was designated for the use of full boarders only. This meant that we had Fourth and Fifth formers in with us as well. The boarding life took over new dimensions. No longer were the Fourth and Fifth formers only allowed out on Sunday afternoons in uniform, but they were entitled to a few hours out whenever they wanted. Jeans were at last allowed to be worn on week days instead of only at weekends, and having one's hair washed by a matron became a thing of the past.

Life at school was now rapidly changing too. The prep given to us increased in amount as we moved up the school, becoming more and more difficult, with the constant thought that the "O" levels were creeping nearer and nearer. It seemed that as every year went by, time got faster and faster. Pupils of our year no longer ran to the front desks of a form room, but ran to the back. Being near the teachers was rapidly becoming unpopular, and everyone wanted to be as far away as possible.

More privileges were becoming available to us, such as later bedtimes and eventually, in the fifth form, we moved into the old sixth form dorms that we had wanted for so long. The number of school outings I have been on has been considerable, and all of them have usually ended with a large sing-song in the coach on the way back. Girls from St. Mary's Hall have been skiing in Italy, singing at the Royal Albert Hall, watching the tennis at Eastbourne, and improving their French in France. Other outings include trips to the Houses of Parliament, St. Paul's Cathedral, Hurstmonceaux, Greenwich Observatory, boat trips up the River Thames, the London Zoo and perhaps everyone's favourite — the field trips to the Seven Sisters. On the boarding side, clubs have been set up such as riding, sailing, windsurfing, modern dance and aerobics. Some of my best memories will be of camping expeditions with the sailing club and with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. We also used to moan about being taken up Devil's Dyke, or to the Jack and Jill Windmills at Clayton — but then that was all part of the fun.

Of course, boarding life would not be complete without mentioning some of the midnight feasts we used to have at the end of each term. We always had to be very careful about not getting caught, and disposing of the rubbish was a great problem. One mystery remains to this very day, as to how a certain jar of pickled onions

amongst other rubbish happened to find its way into the piano in the common room. However, even these traditional social gatherings have changed, as I believe that the staff are now personally invited as well.

Moving on to the Fourth and Fifth years brought a great change to the people of my year. It became apparent to me how everyone's attitudes were becoming more mature. We still had the odd misfits, but on the whole people were forced to think more seriously about their future lives. Of course, the crunch had finally come and we were into the final "O" level years. Work hit us as we had never known before. We had two choices — either to work hard in order to get a job, or not bother and find ourselves expelled.

Generally, I myself was amazed to find myself finally in the fifth form, which I had so long admired way back in Prep form. Such duties as taking tables have now gone, but "chucking" people outside at breaktimes was still in force. Could I really take part in doing this duty when for six years I had abhorred the idea? Well, it was really a case of having to do it and to be perfectly frank, everyone has to do something in life he or she does not agree with.

People came and left our year group, as time went on, and eventually I ended up being the oldest boarder out of the whole year. It is interesting to see how history repeats itself as I sometimes see people going through the same situations that others have been through previously. As my year became older, topics of

conversation changed radically too. From the days of when we used to play on the old swings talking about such things as "When I'm in Sixth form", conversations have changed to discussions on politics while drinking coffee in the Fifth form common room.

The bell that woke us up in the mornings has now ceased, and the friendly matrons know that we appreciate being woken up "gently" in the mornings. True we do not get cups of tea included, but as Miss Williams would say — "This is a school you know". They decided to improve the colour scheme a few years back and as the counterpanes are now non-existent, there is not such a clash as there used to be.

I could go on and on telling you about life here at St. Mary's Hall, but as I have already exceeded the "O" level limit, I must draw to a close. The final question is, what has St. Mary's Hall done for me? Well, and here certainly most people will agree with me, you learn to stand on your own two feet from the very first day. Unlike day girls, boarders have never been able to escape home when things have been bad. The most important thing to my mind is that you make a large and varied collection of friends for life. The boarders in my year have always considered ourselves to be one large family and I, for one, will never forget them.

When I finally leave St. Mary's Hall, taking all the memories with me, it will be in the same way as I first came. Only this time it will not be my mother crying in the car, but it will be me.

Shani Waller, VD



SCUOLA ITALIANA SCI MARILLEVA - '85/86

School trip to Marilleva, Italy January 1986
(Shani is at the top of the line. Ed.)

MEMORY HOUSE

Happy memories dwelt dreamily there
The homely crackle of the glowing fire
The constant purr from the washed bundle of fur,
The fresh aroma of cut grass
And the close family atmosphere

But soon most of these memories
Will be stored in their heads,
Yet some will stay there
And linger with the new inhabitants.
And they will continue
Until the memory house is demolished.

Fleur Hardman, IV V

PLAYGROUND GAMES 1986

The Junior School

HOPSCOTCH

A game I like playing is hopscotch. You have twelve squares. You throw a stone or twig and hope it will land on a square. You hopscotch up, miss the square where the stone is, and go to the top. On the way back you pick up your stone and hopscotch back.

To see which person will be it, I say a rhyme. It goes, one potato, two potato, three potato four, five potato, six potato, seven potato, more. One bad spud is out.

Unity Wroe

RED LETTER

A game I like is called Red Letter. You can have as many people as you like to play. You choose any letter you want and the others have to see if they can get to the person who calls the letters out. If they have the letter in their names, they take one step forwards for each letter. You have to know how to spell your whole name and nicknames. When she calls the red letter, you go back to the beginning (if it is your name and you have moved). And when you get to her, you start again and the person who wins, is it.

Victoria Lowe

STUCK IN THE MUD

First you choose someone to be "it". Then you run around until the person who is "it" catches you. Then you stand still and wait till someone goes under your arm or through your legs, then you are free. When you have been caught twice you are out. When everyone is out, someone else is "it". This would be the first one who was out.

When the game has been played three times, the last one out is the winner.

Sally Webb

FRENCH SKIPPING

I used to play a game called French Skipping. You got some elastic and tied it together. You need three people to put their feet in the elastic. Then the person who hadn't got her feet in the elastic chanted England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, inside outside, inside, on. If she jumped on the elastic when she did not say on, she was out.

Joanna Sharpe

44 SAVE ALL

My two best games that I play are either 44 save all or horses. In 44 save all, you all gather round and see who is going to be it, then that person who is it has to count to 44 while the other people hide. I enjoy saying who is it, but I can only tell that person if she is going to be it by saying, IBL, OBL, black, bobble, IBL, OBL, out, and the person who does not get told to be out, is it. When the person who is it has counted to 44 and the rest of them have hidden, the person who is it has to try to find the others.

Nicole O'Connell

DONKEY

I like "Donkey" because it is an energetic game and it keeps you fit. All you have to have is a ball and a plain brick wall. First, you throw a ball on to the brick wall and when the ball gets back to you, you jump over it, and if you miss jumping over it, you are the donkey.

Michelle Corfield

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I US

How could I ever speak?
Just open your mouth.

How do you cut up memories?
By having something more important on your mind.

How do you walk through air?
As the wind takes you.

When does a clock go backwards?
At tea-time, when it unwinds.

Why does hair go grey?
Because it retires.

II OUT THERE

Where does the world end?
Where it starts.

Where do the stars begin?
Where the sky starts.

How many stars are in the sky?
Enough to make a lantern.

Where do the blue sky and the blackness of space meet?
In the darkness of light over the mountains.

How did the sun start?
A glow-worm flew into outer space.

How high is the sky?
As high as birds can fly.

Where does the sea end?
Just below the sky.

How much water is in the sea?
As much as the earth can drink.

How much water is in the oceans?
Enough to cover the mermaids.

What was the first insect that came to earth?
The earth buggy.

Why does the wind howl in the night?
It is scared of the dark.

How deep is the earth?
As deep as sleep.

When will the sun end?
When night falls.

When does the world end?
When it starts.

I Y