

Exchange Programme

The student exchange programme between St Mary's Hall Brighton and St Mary's Hall Burlington, New Jersey ran from 1960-1972. The two schools alternated their exchanges: One year an English student went to Burlington; the next year an American girl spent the year in Brighton.

List of SMH Exchange Students, Brighton and Burlington

(UK) 60-61 Patricia Knowles (Dahl)

(US) 61-62 Jeanette Cureton (Smith)

62-63 Sheelagh Dodd

63-64 Andrea Bigelow (Pierce)

64-65 Rosemary Gillies (Boorne)

65-66 Louise Tucker (Yard)

66-67 Ann Howard

67-68 Christine Claunts (Davis)

68-69 ?

69-70 Bonnie Irwin (Barton)

70-71 Claire London (Amerena)

71-72 Susan Greene

SMHA News Letter & School Magazine, December 1959

This seems a suitable point at which to tell you that one of our present Upper Fifth, who would have joined the Sixth Form in September, will be spending a year in the United States of America. About eighteen months ago I had a visit from the Principal of St. Mary's Hall, Burlington, New Jersey. She had learned that there was a School of the same name in Brighton and decided to pay it a visit when she came to England. We discovered that the two Schools had much in common. The other St. Mary's Hall was found in 1837, a year later than ours. Like ours it has a very definite Church foundation and, although obviously strongly flavoured with American ways and ideas, yet it has much of the tradition of discipline and service we associate with our English public Schools. Early this year, following a good deal of correspondence, the Principal offered a Scholarship to a Brighton girl which would provide free tuition for a year and hospitality in the home of one or two of the girls in Burlington. After considerable negotiations the Scholarship has been offered to **Patricia Dahl**. The Staff and I have complete confidence that she will not only make good use of the opportunities this Scholarship offers, but also that she will be a good ambassador for St. Mary's Hall, Brighton, and more important, for her country. Patricia will be returning to her own school in September, 1960, and we shall look forward to hearing about her experiences and impressions.

Doris Conrady, Headmistress

SMHA News Letter & School Magazine

A Year at St. Mary's Hall, Burlington, America

On September 2nd, 1959, the liner "Nieuw Amsterdam" cruised slowly up the Hudson River and into New York Harbour. What an awe-inspiring and breath-taking sight it was—the Manhattan skyline against a slowly lightening dawn sky! "This is New York!" I said to myself over and over again, "and I am really here!" Even at that point, I found it hard to realize where I was!

After standing in long queues for three tedious hours (and the terrible New York humidity did not ease matters!), I eventually passed through the Immigration and Customs enclosures and met the Headmistress, Mrs. Slater, Mrs. Collins and Alice, with whom I was first staying, and Hedl Decker, my second host. After lunch we drove to my new "home" along the New Jersey turnpike—one of the many wonderful fast and straight American roads.

There was just over a week before school started, and I settled down quickly, finding the Collins charming people, as were Colonel and Mrs. Decker and Hedl, with whom I lived for the last four months of the year. On the first day at School, I found the Burlington St. Mary's Hall very similar to our St. Mary's Hall. Burlington was founded one year after ours, in 1837, with the style of the buildings very alike.

Let me describe to you a typical school day. Unlike most English schools, American schools have school buses (for those who do not drive to school as a good many do), and one of the three St. Mary's buses picked up Alice and me at 7:45. The school has its own Episcopal Chapel—the Episcopal Church being the daughter church of the Church of England, and every morning we would have a shortened service of Morning Prayer, conducted by the school Chaplain, Father Conklin, or by Mrs. Slater, or by Miss Taylor, the Dean of Girls, or, as on Fridays, by one of the Senior girls, and I myself conducted the service on one occasion.

Three lessons were held in the morning, each being fifty minutes long. My first was English, which included American Literature, the second, U.S. History, then Games, Scripture or Health, according to which day of the week it was. Lunch was much less formal than it is here. Americans eat their main meal in the evening, so have just a snack at midday. One could either have school lunches or bring them from home, and lunch was usually a sandwich—and not a dainty tea-sandwich by any means—or a famous American hamburger with ice cream to follow.

Afternoon school for me began with Study Hall (a free period). Then I had French and History of Art, and school finished at 3:30 and, on Fridays, at 2:45. This time-table was the same every day, and that is a big difference between English and American schools. American children take four or five subjects and have them every day for the whole year. No wonder they were so shocked when I told them English children sometimes take as many as nine subjects!

The entire system in American schools is much more informal than in English schools. There appears to be a different and more intimate relationship between girls and staff, which, of course, has its advantages and disadvantages. St. Mary's Hall is a Private School (they are in the minority in America) with the majority of girls intending to go to College. Therefore, there is a considerable amount of homework, as all American students with this aim have to work very hard.

The Form system was, at first, a little confusing to me. The Classes run from 1st Grade (5-year-old) to 12th Grade, at which students graduate from High School. The four top Forms are: Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades respectively. I was a Junior for the first 'semester' (half year) living with Alice Collins, who was a Junior; and from January, a Senior, living with Hedl Decker who was Student Council President, or head girl.

As in all American schools, there were many activities apart from the academic side. There were Basketball, Hockey, Volley-ball, Archery, Tennis and Softball—the girls' version of baseball, to play; there was the Choir, known as the Glee Club which gave popular Concerts with boys' schools, followed by Dances; the Drama Club which produced the play, "Letters to Lucerne," in which I was chosen—very appropriately—to act the part of an English girl; there were numerous dances or 'Proms' organized by the various Forms of the Upper School, the biggest dance of all

being the 'Senior Prom' which is a carefully planned and splendid occasion with evening dress and orchestra. There were also Form outings, such as a day trip to Philadelphia, and a Junior/Senior New York trip one week-end, in which we visited the New York Stock Exchange, the United Nations Building, the Metropolitan Museum and a Broadway musical. Colour Day (or I should I say 'Color' Day) was another occasion on which the Blue and White teams compete in races as at our Sports Day. Then there was the never-to-be-forgotten 'Christmas Mystery.' There the Nativity Story is acted in the Chapel, followed by a splendid Christmas dinner in the beautifully decorated, English-style, dining room.

The major differences between the English and American St. Mary's Halls are, I should say: the wearing of make-up in American; the time-table difference; the driving of cars to school; the social life and activities; the absence of Christmas and Easter holidays as we have them: (American schools have a week or so at both, but break up for the Summer Vacation at the beginning of June); and an altogether less strict and disciplined atmosphere.

I consider myself very fortunate to have experienced such an unforgettable year, with its overwhelming friendliness, hospitality and kindness which has given me a deep affection for, and understanding of, Americans and their country. I was conscious of my responsibility and the honour of representing our School and, in a small way, our country, and hope that I have left the same warm feeling for England as I now feel for America.

Patricia (Tisha) Dahl, General VI

SMHA Newsletter & School Magazine, December 1961

Headmistress's Report:

One of the General Sixth Form girls this year is **Patricia Dahl** who spent last year in our namesake School in Burlington, New Jersey. In spite of the very exciting time she had in the United States, with a way of life in so many respects different from life in an English School, Patricia has settled down to life here with good sense and with the zest and happiness which endeared her to the American people. She has given several talks and shown pictures of her year in America. I am pleased that our Governors have offered a girl from St. Mary's Hall, Burlington, a year's tuition Scholarship next September. She is **Jeanette Smith**, a girl whose parents have strong links with this country, and, like Patricia, she will enjoy hospitality in the houses of several School parents to whom I am very grateful indeed for their valuable share in this experiment which is of some international significance.

Doris Conrady, Headmistress

Essay by Sherry Coe

Our American Scholar

Two years ago Patricia Dahl spent a year at our namesake School in Burlington, New Jersey. This year an American student is paying a visit to our St. Mary's Hall, and on September 12th Miss Conrady drove Patricia and me to Southampton to meet Jeanette Smith. I was not allowed on board the Queen Elizabeth, but after they had been delayed a long time by Customs Officers, I met Jeanette and her mother. Mrs. Smith was to spend a few weeks in our country and left us at Southampton to stay with friends nearby. Jeanette told us that they had had a pretty rough crossing as they had evidently been on the edge of the recent hurricane. As we talked I realized that, apart from her accent, she was not as unlike an English girl as I thought she might be, and we were pleased to find that we had many of the same interests.

We drove to Chichester where we all had lunch with Mr. and Mrs. Dahl, Mrs. Riley and Jenefer, and my own parents. Jeanette will be spending the Spring Term with the Dahls and the Summer Term with the Rileys. After lunch she came home in our car as she is spending this term with us.

Before term started we took Jeanette to London and Windsor. She was very interested in the historical buildings, especially Windsor Castle, as there are no such old buildings in America, and her camera kept her very busy.

Jeanette has settled into the English way of life very quickly. She enjoys School and says she is relieved to find the work is no harder than at St. Mary's Hall, Burlington! She is particularly interested in English History, but apart from her academic interests she plays the organ, sings in her church choir, and enjoys archery and ice-skating.

We all hope that Jeanette will enjoy her year with us, and feel that it is a very worthwhile experience, which will further strengthen the bond between our two Schools which was created when Patricia crossed to New York in 1959.

Sherry Coe, Lower VI

SMHA Newsletter 2015

Transatlantic Ties (a recollection of my exchange)

Turning back the clock of personal experience is sometimes hard to do. The hands may resist, reminding us that we risk wading into emotional waters where we'd best not go. Or they can trigger memories of behaviors that, with the perspective of age and distance, we'd like to do over. On the other hand, they can bring to light old friends with whom we've lost contact, personal joys, and pivotal life chapters that announce: "These deserve to be remembered and celebrated anew."

The year 1961-62, when I was privileged to be an exchange student from St. Mary's Hall Burlington (in the US) to St. Mary's Hall Brighton, was one such chapter for me. The exchange program between our two sister schools, which flourished between 1960 and 1972, sent English and American girls on an every-other-year basis to study across the Atlantic. Patricia Dahl was the first from the UK, I the first from the US.

As I have looked back over that immersion in English life, I have smiled in recalling teachers like Miss Farmer and Mrs. Lawrence, who taught us more far more than geography or history, and the headmistress Miss Conrady, who, together with my American headmistress (and presumably the schools' governors), made that year the experience of a lifetime. I have fondly remembered fellow students and my three English families—those of Sherry Coe, Tisha Dahl, and Jenny Riley—who not only warmly welcomed me into their homes and overlooked my teenage foibles but also went out of their way to take me to a variety of historic, cultural, and geographically beautiful sites during the time I lived with them. As the months went by, I learned new traditions, enjoyed new social customs and rituals, came to understand a different educational and political system, and more clearly appreciated the shared foundation of our religious heritage and system of justice. They all left an indelible mark, and I am beyond grateful for that formative year in my intellectual, cultural, and personal development.

Sadly, the St. Mary's Hall in Brighton that I so fondly remember is no longer the bricks-and-mortar entity it once was. We all mourn its loss. However, thanks to modern technology and the efforts and determination of several key Old Girls, the Revd. Henry Vann Elliott's dream is being kept alive in virtual space. In addition to the web site of the St. Mary's Hall Association, an even livelier location is the SMHA Virtual Common Room, where Old Girls reminisce, compare notes, post old SMH

photos, and simply natter. One of the special joys of these conversations is that they span a range of ages; in so doing, new friendships are taking shape, just as long-time ones are being nurtured. Once again, warm hospitality has extended across the Pond as my new friends have invited me to join this group, thereby giving me real and symbolic Old Girl status and enabling us to revive the spirit of the student exchange program that thrived in the sixties and seventies.

In early May I tripped back to my own St. Mary's Hall for the annual Founder's Day activities and class reunions. Change has affected us as well. In 2008, for a variety of reasons including the fact that boys are now fully integrated within this once all-girls environment, SMH changed its name to Doane Academy, honoring its 1837 founder Bishop George Washington Doane. A Friday night cocktail party kicked off the reunion weekend of May 1-2. On Saturday a service of Morning Prayer in the chapel was marked by a procession of the graduates, the singing of familiar hymns, a short homily by the chaplain, and the shedding of an occasional tear.

At the meeting of the Society of Graduates that followed, I was delighted to bring greetings from my dear friends active in the English St. Mary's Hall Association, as I had been charged to do. The response was surprise and delight, and a vow to revive and continue the international friendships embedded in the successful exchange program of a generation ago. More conversations about the historic relationship between our two schools ensued over lunch and, no doubt, will continue into the future.

An evening gala under a tent climaxed the day, this to celebrate the accomplishments of, and say a formal farewell to, Headmaster John McGee and his wife Alice, who have served the school with vision, dedication, tireless energy, and utter faithfulness for the past 15 years. They are retiring and will be succeeded July 1 by a new leader and his wife, George and Carolyn Sanderson.

A school and its people have a way of getting under our skin. No matter where we live, what our circumstances, who we have become, we all hearken back to our roots. Both of our two St. Mary's—in Brighton and in Burlington—grew out of a commitment to a similar mission: preparing young people for a life of value and service. They are institutions with a soul. I feel immensely privileged to be a member of both communities.

Jeanette Smith Cureton

*Excerpt from 2018 email exchange between Jeanette and Rosemary Gillies (Boorne):
(Jeanette writes)*

I stayed with Sherry Coe (now Carter) and her parents during autumn term, with Tisha Dahl and her parents during the winter, and with Jenny Riley and her family during the spring. Sadly but not unexpectedly, given their age, Mr. and Mrs. Coe have passed away, but I've been delighted to get to know Sherry's son and daughter, who visited us when we were living in the Chicago area, so the friendship has continued with the younger generation, as well as with Sherry and her husband John. Tragically, Jenny Riley herself passed away just two years ago—in January of 2016—and I miss her greatly. Over the years we saw each other in person on numerous occasions, especially since she traveled fairly frequently to the US, and until she died she would pick up the phone quite often, greeting us with a cheerful "Jenny here." I spoke with her just a fortnight before her death. And Miss Conrady, couldn't have been more caring, affectionate, or determined to make my year one of opportunity and delight. After I returned home, she corresponded with me faithfully—quite regularly at first and then once or twice a year until her mind began to fail. Although I wasn't able to return to England until 1996, on that trip my husband Bryant and I made a special trip to her nursing home in Eastbourne, where we enjoyed a lovely visit. She was 92 at the time and, although a little fuzzy in recalling the details, she remembered the exchange program and Mrs. Slater with great fondness.

News Letter & School Magazine, December 1962

The [Sixth] Form has benefited much this year by the addition of the American Scholar **Jeanette Smith**, from St. Mary's Hall, Burlington, New Jersey. Her warm friendliness, her sincerity, and her intellectual yet humble attitude to life have made her a most acceptable member of this her namesake School. Her contribution to social studies classes has been specially valuable. I am very grateful, as also I know Jeanette is, and her mother and father, to the Governors for making this possible, and to those parents who have been hosts and hostesses during the year—Dr. and Mrs. Coe, Mr. and Mrs. Dahl (whose daughter Patricia spent a year in the Burlington St. Mary's Hall) and Mr. and Mrs. Riley.

Doris Conrady, Headmistress

News Letter, December 1963

This year we have welcomed **Andy Pierce**, our second American Scholar from St. Mary's Hall, New Jersey, and **Sheelagh Dodd** who spent 1962-63 in the New Jersey St. Mary's Hall has returned to us for a year in the Sixth Form. This exchange of scholars between the two Schools is becoming an established tradition now, and I am sure that in a small way it can help foster more understanding between two great English speaking nations.

Doris Conrady, Headmistress

News Letter & School Magazine, December 1964

We have our second American exchange girl and it is proving a very happy year both for her and for us. **Andy Pierce** spent several weeks as a boarder in Babington when for unforeseen circumstances our hostess plans broke down. This was an experience she enjoyed so much that she has asked if she may have a short time again in Babington before she leaves. She says she got much "closer" to the girls by sharing living quarters and out-of-school time. Next year one of our girls, **Rosemary Boorne**, is to spend a year at St. Mary's Hall, Burlington. Rosemary will be our third girl to go to America.

Doris Conrady, Headmistress

News Letter & School Magazine, March 1966

The Sixth Form will be joined in September by a girl from St. Mary's Hall, Burlington, for a year's Scholarship. The relationship between our two Schools was further strengthened this year by the visit of my counterpart, Mrs. Slater, to the Hall last Summer. During her visit she had the opportunity of seeing the School in working hours, of talking with many of the Staff and girls, and also of discussing the future of our exchange policy with some of our own Governors. At present **Rosemary Boorne** is at our namesake school and reports indicate that she has been a most welcome scholar and an excellent ambassador for her country to the United States. She will be returning late in July and the American scholar, **Louise Yard**, will be coming over in August, traveling with Rosemary Elphick and her parents who are visiting the United States after term ends. Louise will be staying with Mr. and Mrs. Boorne on arrival, and will come in as a boarder for the first term. Mr. and Mrs. Elphick have kindly offered hospitality for the Spring Term, but, as yet, I have no firm plans for the Summer Term though I hope to have plans complete for Miss Davies, my successor, before I leave.

Doris Conrady, Headmistress

Essay on her time at SMH Burlington by Rosemary Boorne

My Year in America

I had the privilege of being the 1964-65 exchange student to St. Mary's Hall, Burlington, New Jersey. I left home in early August aboard the S.S. *United States* accompanying Andrea, our previous exchange student on her way home. I was beginning a series of wonderful experiences, all of which I was to enjoy.

The first sight of New York with the lights of Manhattan, the famous skyline and Statue of Liberty, was a tremendous thrill. I was very excited at the prospect of seeing America and meeting its people. I lived with two different families during my stay, families of St. Mary's Hall girls. Both gave me a very warm welcome and made me feel at home and one of the family.

School began in September with an orientation assembly to allow the new girls to meet some of their contemporaries, and look around the buildings. I was again welcomed and made an honorary member of the senior class. It took me at least two weeks to adapt to the new classes, for in the American private schools, there is not so much actual "teaching" by the staff at the senior level but the emphasis is on a more informal relationship where teacher and student converse together. It is really equivalent to the college system in England. Homework is far more demanding. Although the standard is not meant to be as high, the student certainly contributes far more to the class at a high school level.

The school is run on a completely different system. There are no prefects but a student council, consisting of representatives from the IVth form upwards, who deal with any problems and discuss them with the Principal and Staff representatives. The system is again another example of the closer relationship between teacher and student. There is also an honour system which puts each student automatically on her honour to abide by the rules. It works too! If anyone knows she has not conformed with the system, she should report herself. In fact, although the student council are appointed as the school officials, there is really no necessity for student leadership. This avoids many problems and also provides a more natural atmosphere in the school.

Apart from traveling during my vacations to Washington, Virginia, and north to the New England States, with added day trips to New York, the World's Fair, Philadelphia and parts of Pennsylvania, I went with school parties to a play in New

York, to the concerts given by the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy, and as a delegate to a Christian conference in the mountains. I joined the Glee Club, attended the school dances, took part in the competitions and participated in a talent show, performing in "A Bicycle Built for Two." I really enjoyed all these activities. I was extremely happy and have many kind American families to thank for giving me such a wonderful time, including Mrs. Slater, my principal and guardian.

I would recommend this exchange to anyone who is prepared to work hard, who has a genuine interest in people and the country, to anyone who is willing to learn and who is prepared to face the inevitable difficulties. I am sure anyone who has such an experience will benefit in many ways, and probably, like most of us, always long to return.

Rosemary Boorne, General VI

Excerpt from 2018 email exchange between Jeanette Cureton (Smith) and Rosemary Gillies (Boorne): (Rosemary writes)

I, too, have treasured memories of my year as an exchange student. It was the most wonderful experience ever. I had boarded at SMH Brighton since the age of 11 (having entered the school in September 1959) and to then find myself across the Atlantic for a year at the age of 16 was a great adventure. My children and grandchildren cannot believe in this age of constant communication that I only spoke to my parents once the whole year I was away and that my father had had to book the telephone call on Christmas day!

We have Gillies family in Toronto and on one of my visits around 1978 I took my daughter aged 4 to visit Mrs Slater and her husband and saw some of my old friends and also Mrs Mulford who taught Maths. We flew to Philadelphia I think and had a wonderful reunion. Over the years I have also had visitors from the families I lived with but sadly have now lost touch.

News Letter & School Magazine 1968

Excerpts from a letter from Miss Conrady Nov. 8, 1967, after her retirement [in 1965], telling of her trip to the US and to SMH Burlington

Perhaps the most outstanding news of my year concerns the two-month visit I paid to Canada and the United States which was made possible by the generous present which Old Girls, Parents and Staff gave me on my retirement and by the fact that I have a generous married sister in Rochester, New York....I must say just a little about the last week of my holiday, which I spent in the home, near Philadelphia, of **Mrs. Slater**, Principal of St. Mary's Hall, Burlington, NJ. This was a most wonderful experience, not only because of the warmth of the hospitality given me by Mrs. Slater and her husband, but also because I had the opportunity of seeing the school which has been linked with SMH. for about eight years. I had heard so much about the school and the faculty members, and even seen photographs, but it all came alive for me when I became, for a few days, a part of that happy community. I have always said that I felt a most extraordinary sense of spiritual fellowship when I first entered SMH. That same spirit emanates from our namesake school. I had the privilege of attending the faculty meetings before the term began, an Old Students' party, a chapel service, several classes, a party given by a member of the faculty and many other functions. Everywhere I met with the same generous, warm friendship and that hospitality for which American people are noted. I was very pleased to see our first American exchange student, **Jeanette Smith**, now Mrs. Cureton.

I was quite sad when the time came to say good-bye. Mr. and Mrs. Slater drove me to Philadelphia Airport, gave me an excellent dinner and saw me off on a Pan American airliner for Heathrow.

I hope some day I shall be able to repay some of the wonderful hospitality I received. Those Old Girls who have been to Burlington will be amused to hear me say that I lived in their reflected glory! But they certainly have, each in her own special way, made a great impression.

Doris Conrady, Former Headmistress

News Letter & School Magazine, March 1968

Ann Howard's Year 1966-67

I was fortunate enough to be chosen as the 1966-67 exchange student to visit St. Mary's Hall, Burlington, New Jersey. I left Southampton with Louise Yard and her family on 18th August 1967, and docked in New York after a very pleasant voyage on HMS Queen Mary.

It was a hot, uncomfortable day, with the temperature in the 90s, accompanied by a continuous fine drizzle. It was so hazy that the Statue of Liberty was hardly perceptible as we entered New York Harbour. This first rather disappointing encounter with the country was soon remedied by the warm reception that greeted us as we left the docks. Two members of staff had come to welcome us, as well as numerous friends and relations of the Yards.

I remained with the Yards for several weeks, and in order to escape the unpleasant heat and humidity of the New Jersey summer, we spent two weeks in Ogunquit, a lovely little fishing village in Maine, New England.

School began a few days after our return, and I moved to the McMillan family and later to the Urken family, where I stayed very happily until March. The first day of school was spent as an orientation assembly, to enable new girls to meet those already there and to look around the school. It was all rather strange at first, but the wonderful reception I received from both girls and staff made it much less bewildering than I had feared.

The school is very similar in history and background to St. Mary's Hall in Brighton. However, it is run on a completely different system. There are no prefects or head girl, but a more democratic student council headed by a president. There is a representative from each of the top four classes and officers are voted in by the girls and staff. The council meets once a week to discuss any problems or possible improvements concerning the school. The honour system also helps keep the school running smoothly and avoids many of the problems experienced in most English schools, and at the same time contributes to the friendly atmosphere.

The educational system is also very different from that found in England, and this took a couple of weeks to adjust to. The teaching methods are much less rigid, the students being encouraged to derive knowledge for themselves by reading and discussion in class. The pace was quite fast, and homework rather demanding, so that much had been accomplished by the end of the year. Although it was fairly hard, I found the work extremely interesting since it was approached from such a different angle.

I was invited to take part in as many school activities and traditions as possible. I joined the Glee Club, which produced several concerts throughout the year with various neighbouring boys' schools. I attended some of the student concerts given by the renowned Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. I went with the Drama Club to three Broadway shows and attended the six school dances held through the year. I also attended debates and conferences as a school representative and played on the hockey and basketball teams. All these activities were both stimulating and enjoyable.

With the little spare time I had I took every opportunity I could to travel. I spent weekends in Washington, Virginia, Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania, as well as the more northern areas of New York and New England. I was lucky enough to receive an invitation to stay with friends in San Francisco, and flew out there in June after school had finished and the graduation ceremonies were over. It was a marvelous climax to the year and San Francisco is undoubtedly the most beautiful and cultured city I've visited. My parents joined me out there after three weeks, when we started a five-week trip together to see more of the country. We travelled south through the national parks to Los Angeles, and from there north again to Vancouver. We then enjoyed a pleasant journey on the Canadian Pacific Express across southern Canada to Toronto. Finally we returned to New Jersey for the last week and were happy to have the company of Christine Davis when we returned to England.

I had stayed with four wonderful families during the year, and it was very sad having to say goodbye to them, and all the friends I had made as well as Mrs. Slater, my principal and guardian. They had all done so much to help me feel at home and to enjoy myself.

It was an experience I shall never forget. I thoroughly recommend the exchange to anyone who likes travelling and meeting people, anyone who does not mind a little hard work or joining in the many opportunities offered, and who is willing to fit in with other people and cope with the few problems that are bound to arise. The most valuable things that I learned from my year in America could never be learnt at school, and it is not an opportunity to be passed by lightly.

Ann Howard, Lower VI

Miss N Olwen Davies (Noddy) wrote, regarding the cessation of the programme; "The problem if my memory is right was a shortage of applicants (our end) and that was because our exchange had to return to SMH for a year after she returned, i.e. it was a "year out" at a very difficult time for the girl academically, and understandably after a year in an American school, it was very difficult for her to slot back smoothly into the British/SMH system. Indeed it expected rather a lot as her previous contemporaries had moved on or left, and she had to work with a younger age. Not only that, but she herself had become more grown up and sophisticated by the experience. Who stipulated this condition I really don't know and it did not apply to the American girl when she returned home. Whoever or why it was imposed meant that girls were reluctant to apply; and at that time they were becoming much more ambitious academically - the advent of the new Universities widened their choices."

We are deeply indebted to Jeanette Cureton (Smith) for her research into the archives to find and in many instances painstakingly type out these extracts which give a full and fascinating insight into an exchange scheme which seems to have ended prematurely as those who experienced it all seem to have had a life-enhancing year!

SMHA Team, 2018