

ST MARY'S HALL
SCHOOL MAGAZINE
2003



'Bottle Still Life' by Tina Fong, Year 11



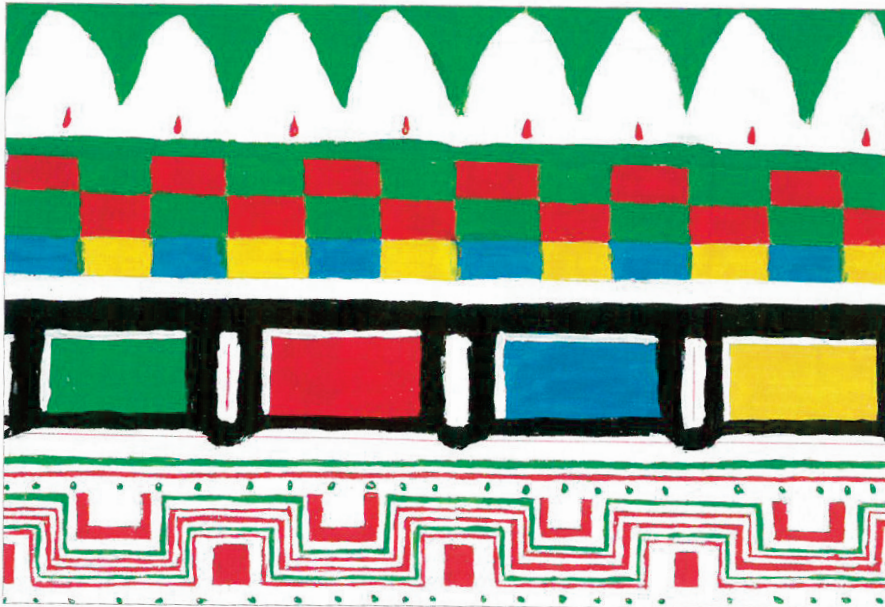
'Homelands' by Yifei Hong, Year 11



'A Still Life after the Boyle Family' by Lydia Colasurd, Year 11



'Brighton Beach' (after Constable) by Gina Ou, Year 10



'Multicultural pattern' by Michelle Smith, Year 10



'Organic Prints' by Tina Fong, Year 11

FOREWORD

"No man is an island entire unto itself..."
(John Donne)

It has been a troubled year, both in this country and worldwide. We have been at war; nations have been under constant threat of terrorist attack; every day, newspapers have reported cases of shocking violence, prejudice and injustice.

These events are reflected upon in some of the moving responses in this year's magazine. In both articles and creative writing we see a growing awareness and understanding of the responsibilities of being a world citizen and above all there is a determined hope for a better future. Such expressions, coming as they do from the younger generation, are encouraging to us all. You will notice too that there is an abundance of 'fish' images in this magazine – symbols of unity and determination to the persecuted early Christians – timely reminders perhaps that we all need symbols of hope in times of trouble.

Then there are pieces exploring the joys and pleasures of the changing seasons and the beauty of our natural environment. There are expressions of gratitude for how fortunate we are; appreciation of friends, homes and families, nourishing food and clean water, good health and opportunities of education. Through all of this shines a recognition of the 'two worlds' in

which we live in the 21st century and pleas to work together against injustice and inequality – to create 'one world'.

There are also lighter moments! I particularly enjoyed the varied accounts from Year 11's work experience – from the RAF to dog-grooming! I learnt something, too! Did you know air stewards wear clip-on ties to stop angry passengers from strangling them? I also appreciated the Airline's training slogan "Does your appearance say 'Responsible'?". I shall definitely remember that when I have my next purge on School uniform!

So this magazine reflects the lighter and darker moments of this year. I thank all the contributors for their sensitive articles and poems – and Mrs Fincham and Mr Peebles, who have co-edited this edition and Miss Jensen who has heroically collated the material and Mrs Jones who was the proof-reader.

In the Founder's Day Service, Canon Nicholas Frayling reminded us:

*"Hope is the bird that sings in the morning,
even when it is still dark..."*

There is Hope in abundance among these pages.

Susan Meek
Headmistress

Editors: Liz Fincham and Jock Peebles

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Front cover: 'Brighton Beach' by Charlotte Bishop, Year 13

Designed and typeset by Priory Publications, Horley. Printed by FotoDirect, Brighton

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS

GCSE

We were very pleased with the GCSE results. 41% of the students achieved A*-A in comparison with the national average of 16.7%. 96% obtained A*-C, the national average being 58.1% and there was 100% pass rate in 11 subjects. Julia Fortune gained five A* grades, three As and a B, Rebecca Marchant achieved four A*, four As and a B and Charlotte Ridge was awarded two A*, six As and a B.

We were also delighted by many results where students achieved personal bests. Among those to be commended are Lydia Colasurdo and Charlotte North at GCSE and Ada Cho, Charlotte Bishop and Cheryl Hughes at A level.

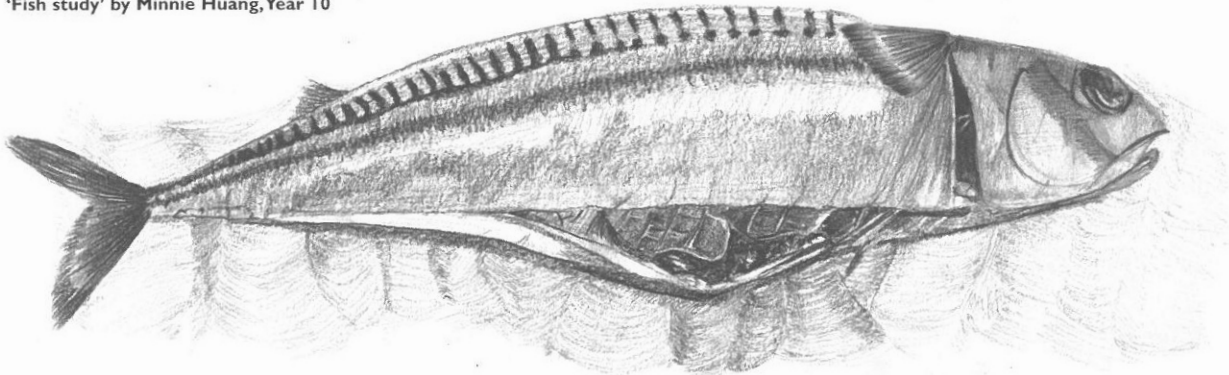
A Level: 100% success for St Mary's Hall

This Summer's exam results were once again excellent at St Mary's Hall. Celebrations were in order with a 100% pass rate at A Level. Two thirds of the grades achieved by Upper Sixth students were A, with nearly a fifth of the year group obtaining three grade As, almost double the national average. Mrs Meek is of the opinion that these results are much more meaningful than mere statistics considering that many of the students were in individual programmes of study. "By any standards, these results are outstanding and reflect the tremendous hard work and commitment of both students themselves and their excellent teachers," she said. She continued, "However, these examinations are about individual students, not league tables. Our aim at St Mary's Hall is to prepare each student to achieve the very best of which she is capable. It is particularly pleasing that most Sixth Form students will be taking up places to study at their first choice of university."

Other Achievements

Other students who deserve special mention are Kuukua Essel-Koomson who was an outstanding and a most elegant Head Girl, always reliable and showing real care and concern for the School community; Azlin Dato Alimin was an equally effective Deputy Head Girl and Head of Boarding; Sarah Johnson who participated with such enthusiasm in Music and Drama and was a most efficient and committed sacristan, and who has already involved herself in everything at Durham University where she is also finding time to read for a mathematics degree! My thanks too to Charlotte Bishop who was a most vivacious and enthusiastic ambassador for the School as co-ordinator of tour guides and who, also throughout her time at St Mary's Hall so wholeheartedly threw herself into musical and dramatic events – and in fact to everything she undertook! We shall never forget her as Dolly in *Hello Dolly*. And then I should like to thank commend and congratulate Maria Redman for the outstanding contribution she has made to the musical life of the School, in Chamber Choir, Orchestra and in particular as the brilliant pianist in the Jazz Band. I remember her thrilling performances of 2 Preludes by Rachmaninov in the Spring Concert, her accomplished A level recital and her wonderful piano accompaniment of Sonia Vincent-Gill's excellent performance of Poulenc's sonata for clarinet at the Garden Party Concert. We are thrilled that Maria has taken up a place to read for a Bachelor of Music in piano, violin and singing at Trinity College of Music in London and thank her for a truly outstanding contribution to the life of the school.

'Fish study' by Minnie Huang, Year 10





OPENING OF VENN HOUSE EXTENSION

Mrs Buckland's final official duty was when we invited the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mrs Phyllida Stewart-Roberts OBE to open the New Wing of Venn House – a project which was led from concept to completion by the Chairman of the Premises Committee, Mrs Linda Winn supported by Mr Robert Stiles, the

Bursar Chris Elkins and Deputy Mrs Olive Ridge. This was a splendid achievement and we extend thanks to all concerned. The new facilities provide not only ten additional study bedrooms, a quiet room and new shower facilities for our younger boarders, but also a shining new medical centre for both day pupils and boarders.

GARDEN PARTY

At the Garden Party Concert we also enjoyed an excellent performance of Haydn's Symphony No 92 the Oxford Symphony by the Chamber Orchestra and guests, conducted by Mr Jay. It was a wonderfully exhilarating way to conclude the year.



ST MARY'S HALL FAMILY FUN DAY

In the Summer Term, the Friends of St Mary's Hall Family Fun Day and Barbecue took place for the first time and we were pleased to welcome the St Mary's Hall Association (Old Girls of the School) for their annual reunion on the same day. An amazing £747 was raised to help with the production costs of Annie.

Past pupils

We are always pleased to see past pupils of the School and to hear news and we were delighted to hear that Charlotte Overton-Hart who left 3 years ago was awarded a First Class Honours degree in English from Durham University. I believe this must be a feather in the cap for Mrs Fincham and Dr Hopley for the wonderful foundation in Literature Charlotte received while she was here.

SPONSORED WALK

A highlight of the year was the Sponsored Walk in the second week of the Autumn Term. Families, friends and 57 varieties of dogs congregated at Stanmer Park on a glorious autumnal day to embark on a whole school 10km circular downland walk organised by Miss Whittaker, Head of the PE Department and marshalled by volunteers from the Brighton & Hove Rotary Club. At one point we were right on the top of the Downs in brilliant sunshine and from where we were, and as far as the eye could see, there stretched SMH walkers. It was quite a sight! Afterwards groups picnicked in the gardens of Stanmer House – weary but enjoying a real sense of achievement. An amazing £4,800 was raised – which was divided between the charity 'Send a Cow' to Africa – Livestock for Life – and sparkling new full-length lockers for Years 7-10. £1000 of this was generously donated by the Friends of St Mary's Hall.



Memories of SMH

Coming and going

First Day

I remember waking up quite late that morning, my sister's awful music waking me up – Chaka Khan, unbearable. I wasn't nervous about starting at St Mary's Hall, I had been dragged here on and off for my sister's school plays, concerts, parents' evenings and garden parties. My mother and grandmother were anxious however, my mum standing in blue pyjamas with a camera waiting for me to appear in my uniform for the first time. On seeing me my grandmother immediately fussed about my short hair which was sticking up, as usual.

It was my sister, Helen, that rescued me from my overenthusiastic mother and grandmother. I remember her singing along to the radio as she drove me to school, letting me stick my head out of the window to rescue my hair style – getting it back to its scruffy normality. My sister, and former pupil, walked me up to the front door. I remember her leaving very quickly as she didn't want to run into a teacher, who will remain nameless.

I found my way to my new form room, room G. Mr Scandian was sitting at the desk trying to look busy as his new class sat as far away from each other as possible. I remember thinking that the purple dragon clashed horribly with the orange walls. I picked a desk in the back row, in a corner, and sat down looking at the rest of my class. As everyone gradually arrived the room filled up, and suddenly the desk next to mine was taken by a tall blonde girl – Katrina.

Everyone had dutifully brought the small blue booklet with a decidedly unhelpful map of the school. During the morning we worked through forms for a while. I remember Mr Scandian having trouble pronouncing Vusa's full name, to this day he still says Vashikeh's wrong. We were given lockers in the cloakroom, the keys on long pieces of string which we wore around our necks proudly for the rest of the day.

Our first lesson that afternoon was Chemistry with Dr Parkes, who immediately called me Helen and assumed that I would be a genius at Chemistry – I proved him wrong by losing my first homework. The strange thing about that first Chemistry lesson was that Dr Parkes didn't shout at us once – that soon changed!

As we finished the first day, we sat back in Room G, tired but talking to each other a little. Loyal still hadn't arrived, still an empty desk right in front of Mr Scandian waiting for our absent classmate.

And then the day was truly over, gone as quickly as it had started, far less frightening than I had originally thought when I first found out I was going there. I had survived my very first day, and I had sister's genius reputation to work against, my Einstein of a sibling. But I knew one thing that the school seemed not to have realised yet. I was not my quiet, polite, hard-working sister. I was me, and I had arrived.

Fiona Barley, Year 11

Last Day

A sleepy grey skyline, a sleepy grey building, the chimneys of St Mary's Hall reach out for the sky. A mountain of stairs to climb up to our tired room, the top of the building prison for the noisiest year. Alone in the common room – there sat Nikki awaiting the arrival of one of her friends.

Five minutes in the common room was enough time to change the scenery for one final time.

Towers and pillars and staircases of books climb the walls in Mrs Fincham's English room. Images of mermaids and policemen and dragons reach and climb to the sky.

A final chapel service, naturally, in the golden, polished hall. Teachers sitting near bars ready to climb the walls in exasperation as half of the year turn their back on authority. Rebellion squashed by one word from Mrs Ridge, squashed under the soles of Mrs Ridge's flat shoes. Then one final English lesson, writing our memories down for all to see. Just like the first day, our spelling is being checked by an ever forgiving English teacher.

Fiona Barley, Year 11

Came to the School at 6

Scared going in, yet scared to come out. Schools give a security to children, no matter how much we whine and moan, when it comes to leaving and breaking through that warm security blanket which over the years has almost been entwined around us, so whenever we fall, we're always picked back up again.

When I first came to the School, I was foreign to the surroundings and would have given anything just to go home and cuddle up in bed, but to this day through best times and good, I wake up looking forward to go to School. What's changed I ask myself? Well I've learnt to love, forgive and to know right from wrong.

We all took for granted our friends and even our teachers, but when it comes to being separated from them, we realise how close we've all become and how we depend on them. I suppose it goes with the saying 'You don't know what you've got until it's gone'. Such a saying goes for life and shows me, that now half my friends are leaving and my uniform is redundant, friends and happiness, and all our memories are more important than what we've learnt, as they are what will stay with us forever. We come into this world alone and will go out in the same way.

My times here, with teachers, some that have come and gone, have been good and shown me how you must capture every moment and never let an opportunity pass you by, whether it be a wrong or right decision. Life is not measured by how many breaths we take, but by how many times our breath is taken away!

Life is like a book, it has a beginning, an end with good and bad chapters in between.

In the manner of *Under Milk Wood* by Dylan Thomas, colours and dismays and rainbows.

Haiku:

A kitten so fair
Yet cruel and ready to kill
Don't be prejudiced.

Selina Austin, Year 11

*Memories in the manner of
Under Milk Wood by Dylan Thomas.
Colours and displays and rainbows.*

Last Day, First Day!

My first day was scary. I was only three years old. I just remember walking in and not knowing anyone. As I walked in Mrs Riggs was standing there welcoming me. Nursery was a kind of blur to me but as I have moved through the school, the memories just keep coming. I have memories of all my teachers from Gloucester and Elliott. One person I remember well is Mrs Ford. She was a PE teacher, who was extremely nice. I always remember the day I found out that she had died, and I felt like crying. One thing I loved when I was in Gloucester, was going up to my teacher and saying what lunch I wanted. I don't know why this is one of my strongest memories, it just is. Also, I remember when we were in Reception, and we had play time and dressed up. Growing up with my friends has been good and, even though we have grown apart, we still stay good friends. As I have got older my junior and infant teachers are starting to leave, as well as me leaving.

My last day at St Mary's Hall seems extremely weird. I feel happy because it is a change, but also quite sad. I think I feel sad St Mary's Hall is my childhood, and although I can come back and visit, it will never be the same. Over the 13 years at this school, my group of friends has changed. Some have left, but some of them, we have just grown apart. From my first day and not knowing anyone, to my last day with loads of friends, is quite weird. I think it has helped that my sister was at the School, up to two years ago. If I go and visit Gloucester and Elliott it has all changed, and it feels like a completely different school. When we were in Year 6 it felt like ages until we would be in Year 11, but the past five years have gone so quickly. I don't think I will feel the same after my two years at Sussex Downs, Lewes as I do here, but I am sure I will fit in just right. It is weird saying that I am leaving because I have been here so long.

Even though I haven't had an easy time, I think St Mary's Hall, has put me on the road of a good lifetime ahead of me. Hopefully, I will keep in contact with the friends I have had since I was small, but also the friends I have made recently. It is strange going into a lesson and saying that it is my last lesson of that subject. It is weirder saying my last lesson in subjects I have done for my whole life, like English and Maths.

Stranger things could not happen, as I leave St Mary's Hall. My childhood is coming to an end and a new life out there is being brought towards me. Some people cannot believe I have been at my school for so many years, but after a while it just all feels different. It is probably different, because although Gloucester, Elliott and the Senior School are the same school, they all have their own little ways of doing things. I'll miss the school and people but it's time for a change.

Alex Conn, Year 11

First Day Lost

A long time ago in my life I came to this school as a small blonde, 5-year-old girl. I arrived in Mrs Jewsbury's class where I learnt the basics of reading and writing; the letters 'Kicking K' and 'Curly C' etched in my brain. Reception Class was very important to me as it was time to make friends, some of whom are still my friends now. (We call ourselves the Old Schoolers). We arrived together and progressed up the infant school to 'scary' Mrs White's class. I don't know why we thought she was scary because she really isn't. And then, no sooner had we started school, than it was time for us to leave to go to the big girls' junior school, now that was scary!

As soon as we entered Elliott House, we all realised that it wasn't the playful time we were used to in Gloucester; it was time to work. We got split up into two classes. I was in Miss Podd's class (now Mrs Stubbs) and then we started to learn about the things we really need in life. My other two teachers in LP2 were Mrs Hojka and Mrs Lyons, who both helped me to grow up. My fondest memory of LP2 was our play, 'Famous Fables', where I dressed up as a big fat frog who popped! I had to sing a solo and dance with my 'backing frogs', Yusa and Lottie North. Also, in Mrs White's class play, the 'Littlest Angel', I played the main part of the 'Littlest Angel'.

In Year 6/Transition I was taught by Mrs Bryant, who was my favourite teacher. I can't possibly thank her enough for helping me pass my entrance examination into the Senior School, and teaching me the importance of education.

The Senior School! What a time it's been from being baby of the School to being the top of the School.

Now it is the start of something new, where I leave the old school which was the place I played and learnt to be the person I am today; where I cried and laughed with some old and new faces, and begin the rest of my life.

I can never forget my School as I have been here so long, it is a part of who I am today.

I can never forget those teachers who have taught me everything I know and who have guided me through times when I couldn't see where I was going.

I can never forget the friends who have been with me every step of the way, and who will always have a place in my memories. We went on all those school trips together, went to swimming club together and went to all those school discos together where Father Christmas always managed to arrive at the end!

It's been fun and as I leave I will look back on the happy times at St Mary's Hall, and then my last day at St Mary's will be the first day of my life.

Georgina Tunbridge, Year 11

Last Day, First Day

Halleluia chorus
Playing Peter Pan in playground
Pouring milk at break.

I started at St Mary's Hall in the Nursery at the tender age of three. I can remember being driven to school by my mother who was desperate for me to be a child prodigy, and insisted on playing the Halleluia Chorus to me, hoping that somehow it would affect me in later life. Now that I look back it really hasn't.

I am now in Year 11, and it's my last day of lessons in uniform. Everyone is full of excitement, but I can't help but feel slightly depressed. I've known some of these girls for twelve years and we've had our petty arguments but, in my heart, I can honestly say that the people that I have met here are the most genuine and caring people I will ever meet.

It seems as though time has flown by. The days of taking naps in the middle of the day, listening to fairy tales at story time are through, making up dances to Celine Dion with Lucy in Gloucester, now the thought seems ridiculous. Then there was swimming! My pet hate from the age 5-6, always being forced to at least get in the water. But, thanks to the perseverance of Miss Ford, I finally learnt to swim, but thankfully my talents have not been called for in the swimming galas.

In this School I have made four transitions. Nursery to Gloucester, Gloucester to Elliott, Elliott to Senior School and

now from Senior School into Sixth Form. All of these transitions, as painful as they may have been, have helped me grow as a person. On my last day there is only one thing that plagues my mind. Not the prospect of exams, or the future, but the prospect of losing some really great friends. My year, especially, are notorious for all the deviant behaviour that we like to engage in from time to time, even though at the time we are literally shaking. Then someone tells us, "Mrs Ridge wants to see you" – your blood runs cold, you are stunned into shock, the only words you are able to murmur is a feeble "Why?" then your heart starts beating and your palms become sweaty. You can hear the clock tick monotonously like drummers at a funeral parade, you walk slowly to her office hoping that, if you walk slowly enough, a whole day might pass. Your friends loyally walk you just as close as they dare. Giving you a final pep talk, but what they say just bounces off you like balls on a tennis court.

You knock on the door, take a deep breath, and walk in. She offers you a seat, you accept then one last deep breath and she begins to speak, and you suddenly feel very ridiculous when you realise she is just confirming your A Level options!

My years at St Mary's Hall have truly been a great experience, and I wouldn't trade it for anything, so now, as I leave this binding uniform, I can truly say it has been a good time in my life.

Memories in the manner of Under Milk Wood by Dylan Thomas, colours and displays and rainbows.

Vusa Tebe, Year 11



'Gargoyle study' by Anna Growsns, Year 7