



April 2019
Issue 14

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

www.claremontfancourtalumni.co.uk

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ANNE SEBBA

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KEEP IN TOUCH

We're always keen to keep in touch with the Claremont Fan Court Community. Whether it's memories of your school days, stories of your travels, career details or reunions.

Please email alumni@claremont.surrey.sch.uk with your updates.

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- Connect with old school friends
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- Receive school and alumni news

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A warm welcome to all our alumni

I am delighted to welcome you to the latest edition of your alumni newsletter. Since our last edition there have been some exciting developments within the Claremont Fan Court alumni community.

The community continues to thrive both on and offline. As you will read, we have a full calendar of events, which started in the new year with our Future of Claremont evening. This provided an update on the imminent completion of the Sir Sydney Camm Science and Technology Centre. In March, we hosted our first sector specific networking event at the prestigious Institute of Directors in London, giving alumni, parents and friends of the School the opportunity to come together (page 5). We are also delighted to announce that our annual London Reception on 6 June will take place at the fabulous Bankside Gallery on the Southbank. We also celebrated 40 years since the amalgamation of Fan Court and Claremont at the end of March, welcoming back alumni for a tour of the school and afternoon tea in the Great Room (page 11).

We look forward to connecting with as many of you as possible over the coming months and continue to appreciate your support.

Gordon Hunt

Chair of Governors and member of the alumni community



A word from the editor...

As your new Alumni Relations Coordinator I will be offering you insights into the school's past, present and future, and opportunities to connect with other alumni and friends of the School at a range of events. If you want to continue hearing from us, don't forget to update your profile on the alumni website. If you would like to make a contribution or feature in our next edition, please get in touch.

Isy Paton

Alumni Relations Coordinator



ALUMNI NEWS

ALMOST REUNITED - CLASS OF 1974



We recently came across this picture (above) taken in 1967 at Claremont, featuring **Alison Berry (nee Pollard)**, **Lynda Hughes**, **Gail Ivey**, **Susan Robinson**, **Jane Gaffney** and **Nicola Hirst**. A few of the ladies reunited last year, but were unable to trace Susan Robinson or Jane Gaffney. We would love to reunite them. If anyone is still in touch, please contact alumni@claremont.surrey.sch.uk

FORMER STAFF VISIT FROM KEN KIMBER

We were delighted to welcome back Mr Ken Kimber. Fondly remembered by alumni and staff, Ken was a member of the drama department at Claremont Fan Court School for more than 10 years, before retiring in 2016.

Ken popped in to say hello having just returned from Australia, but also to share his memories of *The Extravaganza of Claremont Fan Court Talent*. The event took place at Richmond Theatre in 2004, and was organised by alumni and friend of the school, **Airlie Scott (Class of 1991, Longcross)**. We recently came across the programme, which features more than 15 alumni including **Jamsheed Master (Class of 1997, Radnor)**, **Stuart Piper (Class of 2000, Norwood)** and **Francesca Belmonte (Class of 2003, Radnor)** as well as more than 30 pupils, including the school's current drama teacher and alumni, **Shereene Ashlee (Class of 2005, Esher)**.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY

Congratulations to **Sarah MacDonald (Class of 1979, Esher)** who has been awarded the prestigious title of Fellow of the British Horse Society. Sarah started riding as a child and joined the Sandown Chase branch of the Pony Club. After leaving school, Sarah trained under Olympic medal winner, Jennie Loriston-Clarke. It was during this time that she discovered her passion for educating and coaching. The British Horse Society Fellowship is the ultimate aspiration for any coach and there are currently only 52 active Fellows.



VOLUNTEERING IN EAST AFRICA

Good luck to alumni **Leah Culpin (Class of 2018, Esher)** who will spend her summer in Uganda as a volunteer for the charity East African Playgrounds. Leah will spend her days crafting with young children, and building a playground, leaving behind a legacy that will allow the children to embrace their childhoods and develop future skills through play.

You can support Leah and find out more about the charity via www.eastafricanplaygrounds.org

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Carrie Foreman, nee Andrews **(Class of 1991, Norwood)**

After leaving Claremont in 1991, Carrie worked for The Arcadia Group, before climbing the rungs to Retail Brand Manager for Topshop and Dorothy Perkins. She took a break from work to have her two children, but her love and passion for fashion was never far away. In 2014 she began her personal styling and fashion service, CARRIE.WARDROBE (www.carriewardrobe.com) which was born out of a desire to help women address and conquer insecurities about their bodies.

Recently Carrie caught up with some more Claremont Fan Court Alumni. (L-R) Justine Felton nee Alpe, Emy Halil-Kuccuk nee Halil, Charlotte Lomas nee Richardson, Faye Hardinges nee Moss, Caroline Wadey nee Anderson, Carrie Foreman nee Andrews, Zoe Wadey nee Smith and Zoe Hedges nee Evernden.



David Hogg **(Class of 2004, Longcross)**



David received a First Class Honours Degree in Electronic and Electrical Engineering from the University of Surrey, before going on to work for Anglo-French engineering firm Thales, and then Blue Bear Systems Research, a company specialising in drone technology. For the past five years David has been running his photography and filming business, Horizon Imaging, of which he can trace the roots back to Claremont, taking aerial photographs of the school from a model aircraft with an electric motor he built in the now restored workshop under the careful eye of Mr Fuller (since retired). The aerial photograph below was taken by David two years' post-graduation. You can view more of David's work at www.horizonimaging.co.uk.



Claremont Fan Court School, Esher

Drone photograph of the Grade I listed Mansion at the co-educational school in Esher, Surrey

Imaging

ALUMNI EVENTS

FUTURE OF CLAREMONT

Headmaster, Mr Brierly, welcomed over 50 parents for a talk in the Great Room about the school's master plan. We were delighted to announce the completion of the new workshops and science and technology building. The completion of the Sir Sydney Camm Science and Technology centre later this year will see phase one of the master plan complete. Phase two includes the expansion of the Joyce Grenfell Centre to include a new music room, class rooms, library and 300-seater refectory.



CITY & BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENT

On Wednesday 6 March the school hosted the first of its industry specific networking events at The Institute of Directors, London with guest speaker and current parent, Jo Paisley. We were delighted to welcome parents and alumni from a range of institutions. It was a fantastic evening and an excellent networking opportunity for all in attendance.



ALUMNI OF THE FUTURE

On 21 March the school held its annual Careers Evening. We welcomed back a number of alumni, including **Jamie Sellers (Class of 2016, Radnor)**, Academy Performance Analyst for Chelsea Football Club, **Moorad Choudhry (Class of 1985, Radnor)**, Head of Asset Liability Management at Cambridge and Counties Bank and **Alexander Rutter (Class of 2001, Radnor)**, Director at IBM. If you are willing to give some of your time to talk to students about career opportunities or university choices please contact careers@claremont.surrey.sch.uk



CELEBRATORY TEA AND TOUR

2018 marked 40 years since the amalgamation of Fan Court School and Claremont School creating the co-educational School we know today. To mark the occasion, we welcomed back alumni for a tour of the Mansion, followed by afternoon tea in the Great Room. We were especially delighted to welcome back **Diana Allen (Class of 1963, Radnor)**, who was the headmistress of the Pre-Prep School during the amalgamation in 1978.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 25 May | Queen Victoria's Birthday

Claremont Fan Court and the National Trust

Join us for House and Garden Tours. Tickets available via the alumni website and National Trust.

Thursday 6 June | London Arts and Media Networking Event (FREE)

Bankside Gallery, Southbank, London

Saturday 29 June | Summer Meeting and Alumni Sports Morning

Claremont Fan Court School

Calling all alumni! Are you ready to pull on a football shirt or dust off your lacrosse stick for Claremont? For the second year running, we will be hosting our alumni sports morning at Summer Meeting on 29 June 2019. We are looking for football and lacrosse teams. So whether it's been 2 months or 20 years since you last played, if you think you've still got it, rally the troops and sign up via alumni@claremont.surrey.sch.uk

ANNE SEBBA ALUMNI AND AUTHOR



Anne Sebba, neé Rubinstein (Class of 1969, Norwood)

When I manage to catch up with Anne Sebba she is sitting at her desk at her home in Richmond having recently returned from the sixth annual Rancho Mirage Writers Festival in California, where she was discussing her latest book, *Les Parisiennes*, which gives an in-depth look at the daily lives of Parisian women in 1940s occupied France. As an award-winning biographer and noted public speaker, Anne is used to travelling the world, happily and regularly giving talks for the Arts Society (formerly Nadfas), The British Library and the National Trust, to name just a few.

Born in London, Anne attended Claremont School from 1962-1969 along with her older sister, Jane Datnow (nee Rubinstein). Their father, Major Eric Rubinstein MBE served in the Royal Tank Regiment and crossed the channel on D Day plus one.

Anne recalls her time at Claremont with an infectious air of warm nostalgia. 'I remember it as a happy place, and I feel very lucky to have attended a school whose sole focus was not purely academic, but also about nurturing the individual - something Claremont did very well.'

Anne graduated from Claremont alongside her peers, aged 17, and went on to study history at King's College

London, graduating from there at just 20 years-old. Whilst at university Anne worked briefly for the BBC World Service at Bush House. 'I managed to talk myself into a job in the Arabic Services, quite an achievement as I spoke no Arabic.' Anne, who is a keen linguist, fondly remembers her French teacher, Mrs Rowlands, at Claremont. 'I may have forgotten some of the grammar, but thanks to her, at least people compliment me on my accent.' Anne was the first female graduate to be recruited by Reuters and despite speaking French, German and Russian, Reuters sent her to Rome as a Foreign Correspondent. But after six years Reuters suggested she leave when she became pregnant, unimaginable today. She subsequently moved to New York and, juggling life as a first-time mother, Anne wrote her first book there (Anne now has three children and six grandchildren). Her adventures with Reuters eventually found their way into book number five, *Battling for News: The Rise of the Woman Reporter*, an account of the struggle women had had over the years to be allowed to report the news.

Anne attributes her love of history to her teacher at Claremont, Mrs Blanks. 'And also I remember some of the older students were asked to volunteer as tour guides one Sunday a month, we would talk to the public about the history of the Mansion, and I would walk from



room to room, imagining the lives of the royals and so many others who had lived within those walls. I was in my element, and enjoyed showing-off as much as anything, but it began not only my love of history, but of storytelling, and that is essentially what I do now.'

Anne is now the author of 11 books, most notably, *That Woman: The Life of Wallis Simpson*, which Anne wrote after discovering a set of private letters belonging to Simpson and written to her ex-husband during her relationship with Edward VIII. The book quickly became a bestseller worldwide and the subject of a Channel 4 TV documentary. Her latest book, *Les Parisiennes: How the Women of Paris Lived, Loved, and Died Under Nazi Occupation* has attracted the attention of a screenwriter for a TV mini-series. Another book, about Jennie Churchill, Winston's mother, has also been bought as the basis of a film, but Anne doesn't like to get her hopes up. 'If my writing encourages just one person to fall in love with history as I did, then that would be enough for me.'

Right now Anne is working on her new book, a biography of Ethel Rosenberg, who was found guilty in 1953 of conspiracy to commit espionage in the US and electrocuted in spite of almost no evidence against her. We hope to welcome Anne back to Claremont Fan Court soon, with over 300 years of history, maybe there is a story to be told here too.

For further information go to www.annesebba.com which has a selection of Anne's journalism and dates of speaking engagements.



The photograph of Anne (third from right) at Claremont.
Left: Anne's first publicity photograph for her Bagnold Biography.

“
Claremont not only began my love of history, but of storytelling, and that is essentially what I do now.
”



Anne giving her thank you speech in acceptance of her Franco British Prize.

LOOKING AHEAD

New Mansion Lanterns



The new year saw new lanterns fitted at the back of the Mansion. Using existing drawings, the heritage and development team created exact replicas of the originals. It is likely they were fitted during the time the house was under royal occupation due to the crown embellishment. While they may look small from Portsmouth Road, the lights are over 4 feet tall.

New Homes for Design and Technology

Both the Generator House and the Design and Technology Workshop were completed at the end of the autumn term. As the Generator House is a listed building, every effort was made to preserve its heritage, whilst creating a light, modern and practical space for pupils to use for years to come.



New Pathway

Our new pathway from the top car park down to the Sports Hall was officially opened in November. Pupils, parents, visitors and staff are now able to enjoy the improved shallow stepped pathway which winds its way through the trees and into the heart of the school. New lighting lines the route and is especially welcome on dark mornings and late afternoons in the winter months. We look forward to new planting and landscaping alongside the path in due course.



SCHOOL NEWS

SENIOR SCHOOL DRAMA PRODUCTION: SISTER ACT



That's a wrap! The Senior School took to the stage in February for a dazzling performance of 'Sister Act: The Musical'. The fast paced, all singing and dancing show set in Philadelphia in the 1970's was performed to packed audiences. Fabulous costumes and make-up, complete with flares and flowing wigs, cassocks and nuns outfits added to the glamour and glitz of another rip roaring drama production enjoyed by all.

Mr William Brierly, Headmaster said: 'It was wonderful to see so many pupils performing, and more still supporting the school's musical extravaganza. Rehearsals started as early as September and it was certainly worth the effort. A fantastic production by a talented cast!'



WORLD BOOK DAY 2019

Plentiful World Book Day celebrations took place throughout the Prep and Pre-Prep and Nursery School on Thursday 7 March. The children (and staff) arrived at school dressed as their favourite literary characters and enjoyed a range of World Book Day activities including the final of the Prose Recitation competition.

According to international statistics from the OECD, reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success. More than 90% of the UK's libraries and schools take part in World Book Day and Claremont Fan Court is no exception. Whilst the dressing up is a lot of fun, we strive to maintain the impact of the day long after the costumes are put away.

"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And you are the one who'll decide where to go." Dr Suess, Oh the Places You'll Go!



EASTER BONNET PARADE 2019



The annual Easter Bonnet Parade is a highly anticipated event in the Pre-Preparatory and Nursery School calendar. Following a presentation of spring flowers which the children had planted in wellington boots, the children paraded up towards the Mansion wearing a colourful array of decorative Easter bonnets. Gathering together on the Mansion steps, the children sang spring time songs for parents in the sunshine before making their way back to the Pre-Preparatory and Nursery School to take part in lots of Easter themed activities!

DID YOU KNOW?



One of Fan Court's original supporters, Captain Cazalet, was a wealthy bachelor with an interest in fine art. He became a close friend of American art gallery owners Francis and Sara Taylor and godfather to their daughter Elizabeth (who would later become actress Elizabeth Taylor), whom he adored and was responsible for introducing to her first casting agent. Schooled at Eton and Oxford University, he was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry after serving on the frontline during World War I.



During World War II he was appointed liaising officer to the Polish General, Wladyslaw Sirkorski, partly due to his ability to speak multiple languages. In 1939 he was permitted by his friend the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, to inform those close to him that the War was imminent. He chose to inform the Taylors, who consequently left Europe and returned to America. An action which most likely saved their lives.

Having already lent his support to the creation of Fan Court School, he went on to lend the founders enough money to purchase an additional 27 acres at Longcross, the site where the school would spend the next 40 years. The School would eventually move to the Claremont Estate, a place his godmother, Queen Victoria, shared much history with. Sadly, Cazalet would not live to see the amalgamation of Fan Court and Claremont after the plane he was travelling on, along with the Polish General, Wladyslaw Sirkorski, crashed into the sea just off the coast of Gibraltar, when he was just 46 years old.



FAMILIAR FACES

CLASS OF 2003/2004 REUNION

Eight ladies from the Class of 2003/2004 joined us for afternoon tea on Saturday 30 March 2019. **Robyn Evans (Radnor)**; **Lisa Woodburn (Longcross)**; **Poppy Griggs, nee Bayne (Norwood)**; **Emma Halford, nee Kirley (Longcross)**; **Freya Patrick, nee Brown (Radnor)**; **Holly Shawyer, nee Seaton-Wood (Radnor)**; **Sam Spriegel nee Jupp (Norwood)** and **Lauren Swales, nee Banner (Radnor)**.

We were also pleased to welcome siblings, **Penny Mitchell (Class of 1991, Norwood)** and **Tim Mitchell (Class of 1990, Norwood)**.



Recognise anyone?



Can you help us identify the Fan Court boys in this photograph?

Perhaps you know the year the photograph was taken?

Email:
alumni@claremont.surrey.sch.uk

FROM OUR LAST EDITION:

Thank you to all those who responded regarding this photo which was published in our last newsletter.

There was much speculation as to the year the photograph was taken, however it was agreed that 1988/1989 was most likely, as the tree was felled following the storm of 1987.

Faces identified include: Kate Evans; Rohan Barton; Dan Porter; Charlotte Richards; Lara Watkins, Iona Scott, Zoe Evernden, Jeremy Oakley, Phillip Matthews, Neil Smith, Caroline Andrews, Emy Halil-Kuccuck, Zoe Smith, Ricard Fauset, Simon Farrar, Georgina Anslow, Anna Pearce, Katie Hamilton, Sasha Basserman and Amelia Morgan.





HOW ARE WE DOING?

If you enjoyed reading this latest edition of the alumni newsletter, please drop us a line and let us know what you liked most.

GET INVOLVED IN OUR NEXT EDITION

Contact us to share your story with the Claremont Fan Court alumni community or make suggestions as to what you'd like to see in future editions.

You can opt out of receiving future editions of the newsletter at any time. To do this, please contact us using the contact details below.

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