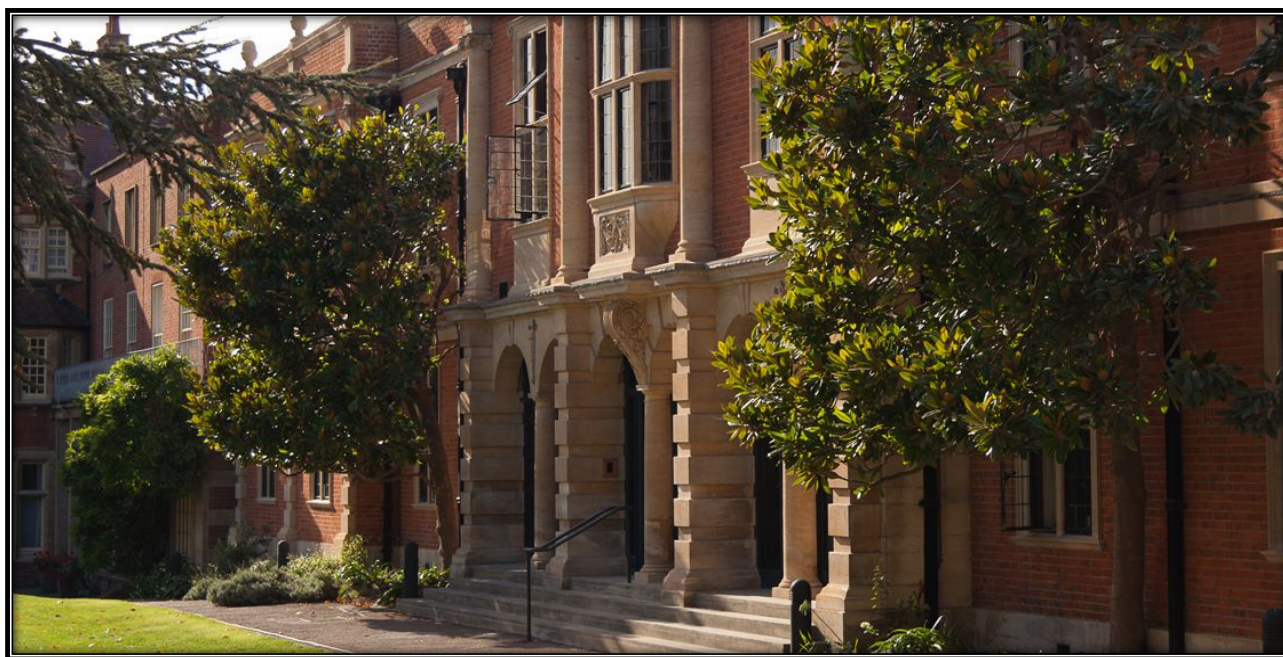


Our Lives So Far

A biography booklet celebrating the
50th Reunion of Somervillians of the
year 1970



Somerville College, Oxford



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May 2021

List of Contributors

Ann Barlow (née Jones)

Sarah Beaver (née Wilks)

Anne Bland

Alison Callaway

Gillian Greenwood

Wendy Holmes (née Beswick)

Ruth Jolly (née Foote)

Gill Lawrence

Sabina Lovibond

Janet Matcham (née Milligan)

Judith McClure

Hannah Mortimer (née Robinson)

Susan Nello (née Senior)

Nneka Okeke (née Osakwe)

Joanna Parker (née Martindale)

Christabel Shawcross

Kaye Stacey (née Vale)

Linette Whitehead (née Dell)

Dear fellow members of 1970,

Sincere thanks to all of you who have contributed to 'Our Lives so Far...'; it has been such a privilege to read your memoirs and reflect on what varied lives we have led. As remarkable as our range of experiences and interests has been this extraordinary year in which we reached our fiftieth anniversary since Somerville matriculation. In the throes of a global pandemic, we have faced isolation from family and friends, major health challenges and, for some of us, a veritable digital revolution as we graduated onto remote working and socialising. This meant that we could not meet at Somerville as planned in September 2020 and so we waited patiently for the world to be a different and safer place.

In the meantime, Somerville members past and present were displaying their usual resilience and practical optimism; some working on the front line, some creating gardens, most supporting neighbours, friends and family, many volunteering, others writing diaries and blogs, and all of us marvelling at what was turned out to be the most stunning spring and colourful autumn for many years. Our lives went on.

Looking back, we came up to Somerville at a time of extraordinary change for women. In 1970 the Women's Liberation Movement was founded at a conference in Oxford. More than 600 women attended the first national WLM conference in 1970, to debate a wide variety of issues affecting women: equal pay, equal educational and job opportunities, free contraception and abortion on demand and free 24-hour nurseries. Also in 1970, the Equal Pay Act was passed, which was supposed to outlaw discrimination against women in the workplace in terms of pay and conditions.

Some of us might have been aware of the 1970 Miss World Protest at which feminists threw flour-bombs, protesting against what they saw as the objectification of women. I remember some of us marching in St Giles to protest against the loss of free milk in schools. Staggeringly, it was only in 1971 that Switzerland became the last entire country to give women the right to vote. It was not until 1973 that women were admitted to the floor of the London Stock Exchange and in 1973, the first UK Rape Crisis was formed to raise awareness of the issues of sexual violence and support victims.

The 1975 Sex Discrimination Act was to follow soon after we had graduated: to 'render unlawful certain kinds of sex discrimination and discrimination on the ground of marriage, and establish a Commission with the function of working towards the elimination of such discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity between men and women generally'. Yet, whilst we were at Oxford, we would not have had a right to be taxed independently, to open a Hire Purchase agreement without a male guarantor, or apply for a mortgage on our own. Reading our stories so far, it seems that we simply 'got on with it' but it is intriguing just how current all these changes still were. This, then, was the backdrop for our time at Somerville.

For many of us, coming to Somerville was something of a "culture shock", especially those from very rural communities or sheltered family lives, with the distinct impression that others were cleverer and more confident than we were. Many of us had made application on the back of what others had wanted and expected from us and found ourselves somewhat daunted though also excited by our arrival there. We had our own money to spend, our own rooms to occupy and a door that could be knocked on by visitors. We had to face the frightening cycle of rapid-fire reading, essays and tutorials, yet usually coped with the routine once we had settled in. For some of us, this was the start of a life-long love of our subjects and the process of learning more.

Since then, our lives so far have taken us in many different directions. Many of us wrote of distinct 'stages' in our lives where we followed new pathways or developed our lives in a new direction – it seems that we were creative and flexible in making the most of our opportunities and remaining busy and 'of use'. We have been, or continue to be, teachers and trainers, academics and researchers, parents and carers, travellers and writers, doctors and medics, managers and administrators, lawyers and civil servants, lay readers and artists. Retirement for

some of us has brought new expansions into art and craft, creativity, freelance working, local history, charity involvement and volunteering. We live in the UK, Australia, Italy, the Caribbean, Nigeria... and our lives have taken some of us into every corner of the globe.

We each appear to be thankful for being selected by Somerville for the opportunity, the exciting experience we had there, and the enduring friendships that College provided. We wrote of the pure 'fun' of college activities such as the plays, the music and of prolonged discussions over cups of instant coffee (remember the lumpy 'whitener?'), and the well-cooked (in terms of duration of boiling rather than haute cuisine) meals in Hall. One of you wrote of the "extraordinary new start to life" that coming to Somerville afforded us. Many of us wrote of feeling "drawn back" to Oxford now that we are older and we long for the time when the Covid-19 pandemic allows us to do just that.

Hannah Mortimer (Robinson)

With thanks to Elizabeth Cooke, Lisa Gygax and Hannah Patrick at Somerville for putting this booklet together and to my sister, Jane Robinson (1978), for providing the social history of our time.

Ann Barlow (née Jones) (Mathematics)

One way or another, I've spent most of my life in education. I trained as a Maths teacher when I left Somerville and spent several years teaching Maths in 11 - 18 comprehensive schools, first in Oxfordshire and then in Cheshire. I taught across the age range and worked with all abilities. While it had challenges, this was in the days before the National Curriculum so there was considerable scope for creativity.

I married, had two children and took time out from full time work. We moved to a rural Cheshire village, where Roger and I still live, and I kept my hand in by offering private tuition for Maths O and A level. By the time I was ready to return to work, school teaching had changed so I thought I'd retrain for something different by doing a degree in Information Management. So much for leaving teaching. Within a year I found myself teaching IM to trainee librarians.

One thing led to another and I moved on to managing learning support and disability services in what was then the largest non-federal university in the UK, Manchester Metropolitan. It was an exciting time, working to widen access to higher education for students of all kinds of backgrounds and identifying accommodations to make sure that disability was not a barrier to learning.

Changes in funding and national focus saw me move on, first to manage the adult learning centre at Manchester University and then to develop transferable skills training for researchers. I eventually took early retirement, though I continue to facilitate workshops and deliver training on a freelance basis.

Along the way, I've been involved in political campaigning and I've also been quite heavily committed to church work as I've been a Reader in the Church of England for over twenty years. There have been times when everything I've been doing seems to overlap and I appear to have focus and direction but mostly I've been a bit of a butterfly flitting from role to role and subject to subject. I think the common factor has been my passion to make sure that people have the opportunity to learn and are given the support to achieve what they're capable of.

A lot of that comes from my experience at Somerville. I went up to Somerville from a small obscure mixed comprehensive in West Wales. It was a culture shock and academic work was a massive struggle but Somerville didn't let me go. The college supported me and I did get my degree, so I've just tried to make sure that others could feel supported in the same way.



Sarah Beaver (née Wilks) (Modern History)

In many respects I found Somerville a bleak and intimidating place, where others seemed to belong far more easily than I did. But as we came to terms with our first weekly essays, faced prelims at the end of our first term, and contended with the power cuts which required us to work by candle light for much of the time, I also began to establish friendships among our history cohort and with my immediate neighbours on the top floor of the back staircase of West Building. Those friendships, formed in what were sometimes challenging circumstances, have been one of the great benefits of Somerville.

After three years I was keen to leave Oxford but following a Cert. Ed. in Sheffield and two years school-teaching, I returned to Somerville before moving to Wolfson as a JRF to complete my D Phil. I also met my husband, Bill, who had served in the US Army, and, following Wolfson pursued a career in communications while also serving as an Anglican priest. After three years of research, I was desperate to do something myself and joined the Ministry of Defence in 1980.

MOD is a fascinating department, offering a wide variety of jobs and experience and, apart from 3.5 years spent as Finance Director for the NHS in Wales when the National Assembly for Wales was being set up, I spent the next 28 years there, living in London and then Bristol, weekend commuting between the two. We also had two children, Christopher and Timothy, who have also both joined the Civil Service, one after twelve years in the Army and the other after reserve duties in Afghanistan. The circumstances of their operational tours were rather different from my occasional visits as the senior civilian for operations from 2007-8 and, while I had spent some five years working with our European Union partners on the development of the European Security and Defence Policy, they have both served in the Department for Exiting the EU. We still have a lot to talk about although it already sounds very different from my time there.

But, despite my earlier enthusiasm for leaving it, Oxford has drawn me back. I became Domestic Bursar and Academic Administrator at All Souls in 2008, a very full-time, varied and interesting role that also allows me to enjoy the privileges of college life. I retire in September and, apart from looking after my aged father, tending my garden in Iffley, charity trustee work etc., I hope to have time to discover and enjoy more of what the University and Oxford have to offer but still escape the place from time to time.



Anne Bland (English)

When I came up in 1970 to study English it seemed like a natural thing to do: several of the teachers at my northern grammar school were Oxbridge alumni and my elder brother was already at Wadham. Difficulties such as “Impostor Syndrome” had not been invented then; had they been, I might have suffered from them.

I was born on a hill farm on the edge of the Cumbrian fells, looking towards the Irish sea. Electricity did not reach us until I was ten, there was no bathroom and oil lamps were used in the bedrooms... Mine was not a book-lined home, but we did have a book-lined attic, the legacy of my Greatgrandfather, a Dalesman of the old school, an auto-didact whose eclectic collection included miniature editions of the poems of Longfellow and Wordsworth, as well as Thomas Paine’s “The Age of Reason.” I never saw either of my parents reading a book, but they recognised the value of the education which they themselves had not experienced.

My father had served for seven years in the Royal Navy, leaving his trade as a farm servant to travel the world. He enjoyed nothing better than a heated discussion of the issues of the day with his children; my mother was not so keen. We certainly learned to form an opinion and be prepared to defend it at our supper table. My mother taught me how to sew, a skill which proved invaluable in costuming a number of productions when I was at Oxford: “Comus” and “Oh What a Lovely War” were performed in the Dining Hall at Somerville. When I look back at the two years I spent in college, I remember most the extended post-lunch coffee drinking sessions in the rooms of one friend or another, friendships formed then which would last a lifetime. After Oxford, I taught English for thirty-eight years in three different comprehensive schools, becoming Head of the English department. Even as I started training it was obvious that the methods used in the school I had left only three years before were not going to be much use to me. The dictated note had had its day. I’m sure that every career has its highs and lows. This is certainly true of teaching.

In retirement, my husband and I enjoy allotment gardening and walking, both in the Cumbrian fells and in the fields and woods near our home in Essex. We volunteer at our local National Trust property, serving in the coffee-shop to generate income, but also engaging in research, transcribing wills and documents relating to descendants of the Tudor cloth-merchant who built the property. We enjoy sharing their stories with the visitors.



Alison Callaway (Physiological Sciences)

I read Medicine at Somerville. My family had recently moved to England after ten years in West Africa. I was quite unsettled during my three years at Somerville, spending more time on interests outside medicine than focusing on academic work. I am sure this was valuable. I still managed to get my degree, and moved to London to do my clinical years and qualify as a doctor. After that I worked as a junior doctor in ENT, followed by a three-year GP training scheme.

Meanwhile I studied Chinese in evening classes, and met a number of “old China hands”. Among these were two ex-Somervillians, Innes Herdan and Liao Hongying. Their lives were full of adventure and challenges. I was looking for a chance to go to China, and it was Hongying who suggested I apply to Chongqing Medical College in Sichuan province. I was accepted, and arrived there in the sweltering heat of August 1983.

Life in China was very different from anything I experienced before – at that time China was still strongly communist and relatively poor. Chongqing was a heavily industrial city, enveloped summer and winter in a thick layer of smog from factory chimneys and domestic coal fires. It was known as one of the three “ovens” on the Yangtse river, being extremely hot and humid in the summer months. My job was to teach the doctors and postgraduate students medical English. My students were very friendly. I was able to see around the large Family Planning Department (implementing the one-child family policy), as well as the local deaf school and facilities employing disabled people, and wrote articles about these which were subsequently published.

After two years I returned to the UK. Several years went by absorbed in family life. I then started a PhD at Bristol University with ESRC funding. My research topic was deaf children in China. My research in Nanjing in China was partly funded by an Alice Horsman Travelling Fellowship awarded by Somerville, which was very helpful. I was able to access deaf schools and families with deaf children through a Chinese NGO, the Amity Foundation. I completed my PhD in 1998, and rewrote it as a book which was published in 2000.

At this point I returned to medicine. Retraining was difficult after so many years out, but finally I met the requirements and attained my MRCGP. I worked for sixteen years as a GP in a specialised practice for refugees and asylum seekers in Coventry, developing protocols for migrant health screening including mental health assessments for identifying PTSD. Our patients came from many countries, but included several dozen Chinese families, so I could use my Chinese again.....

A constant background to my working life has been of course my family – I have two sons and two grandsons, now 14 and 11.



Gillian Greenwood (English)

Arriving at Somerville was a daunting but exciting moment. The young women who surrounded me seemed so much more clever and sophisticated, a reaction I have no doubt was shared by all but the most self-confident. I arrived to read Law, but changed to English after two terms, and my time at Oxford was very active and mainly happy. I realise in retrospect that I spent far too much time acting in plays and having fun, but the friendships I made (and still have), and the wonderful experiences and opportunities I was given, made the experience very precious and undoubtedly changed the course of my life.

I came down to earth, as some of us do, with something of a bump on graduating, having no real idea of what I might be able to do next. I took a number of different jobs, from working as an 'English as Foreign Language' Teacher to assisting in the casting office of the Royal Court Theatre, and frankly feeling rather adrift. But after an extended trip to the U.S., I finally found the perfect niche as the grandly titled Deputy Editor of an eccentric literary magazine, Books and Bookmen. I say "grandly titled" as there were only the two of us, the Editor (a contemporary from St Anne's) and me, the Deputy, but it was a marvellous, if belated, beginning to a career which has taken in Publishing, then becoming Editor of The Literary Review, and then moving into Arts Television.

I worked for both ITV (Deputy Controller of Arts and Executive Producer of The South Bank Show) and for the BBC where I became Series Editor of their arts programme Omnibus. Although I've retired from executive work, I still enjoy making arts documentaries from time to time (I've just finished one on the writer Bernardine Evaristo). By the time I reached my fifties I was ready for a partial change and although I was still working in the media part time, I trained as a psychotherapist, work which has been immensely stimulating and rewarding. I still live in London and I continue to practise clinically and study academically. (I'm about to begin an M.Sc in Theoretical Psychoanalysis at UCL.) Over the last years I have also written and published two novels and I'm working on a third. But most importantly, late in life I met my husband Tony, a widower, and though I haven't had children of my own, marriage to him has brought me a wonderful family of stepchildren and grandchildren for all of whom I am very grateful.



Wendy Holmes (née Beswick) (Jurisprudence)

My first school was St Martin's C of E Primary School in Tipton, where my father was headteacher and my mother taught. I was moved up a year there, and so I was only just 17 when I came up to Somerville. I had attended Tipton Grammar School, where we had a careers talk from a solicitor. I was attracted to the idea of helping people manage their affairs, and so I decided to read Law. In choosing a college I relied on what I could glean from the prospectuses. Somerville seemed a homely place and I was impressed to read that it had a washing machine! My father was a colleague of Pauline Adams's father and she welcomed me when I came for interview. The college had no law tutors in my time. We were taught at Lincoln.

Helping people with their affairs was what my work involved initially, but as the world became more litigious, and the profession more regulated, it was difficult to keep this purpose in mind! I served my articles with Cole & Cole in Oxford. My first post was at the firm's Abingdon office. Throughout my career I concentrated on non-contentious work. I particularly enjoyed advising older people, research on technical points, and drafting. I did not aspire to be a partner because of the liabilities it would bring, but I did run my own firm when my children were small, and I was in charge of a branch office in Sonning Common for thirteen years.

My last job, before I retired in 2017, was at Franklins in Abingdon, so my career came full circle. I have always loved singing. When I saw an advertisement in my first term for sopranos to join Brasenose College chapel choir I went along, and there I met my husband, Stephen. We married in 1973 and have two children, Stephen and Susan. For most of my life I have belonged to a choral society, and also a church choir. My husband is the organist in Lambourn, where we live. Susan directs the choir and our son, Stephen, sang in it until he moved away. Wherever we have lived I have become involved in church life, serving on Parochial Church Councils and helping out with pastoral work and administration. Since I retired, I have been volunteering in the local library and been legal adviser for a local trust. I am also enjoying having singing lessons. My family and my friends, many made at Somerville and Brasenose, together with my faith, have always been the focus of my life. I would not be as happy as I am now if I had not been a student at Somerville.



Ruth Jolly (née Foote) (Modern Languages)

I left Somerville confident of a vocation to go as a missionary to Argentina. I worked in the public libraries for a year and then as order input clerk for a publisher, and saved up enough to go to Bible College. One term into the two-year course I developed glandular fever and staggered through the remainder of the course with post-viral fatigue, pausing only to get married in summer 1976 to Tim Jolly from St Catz. Although we were accepted by a missionary society to work in Argentina, appropriately in a small publishing company, my health did not recover in time to take up the post. I imagine these days I might well have been diagnosed with ME/CFS, but in the event I managed to bring up three children (two of whom followed me to Somerville) without ever being really well. If asked about my career during those years, I can claim to have done a (very) little freelance typing and translation work, and to have been a registered childminder and subsequently a playgroup supervisor!

Later on I worked as a telephone interviewer for a market research company and then as a computer programmer for the same company. During the resultant nervous breakdown I indulged my hobby of collecting favourite children's books from my childhood, which led to a more academically appropriate career as a commissioning editor for Girls Gone By Publishers. As this was freelance, I was able to work without overtaxing my strength. In 2003 I joined the admin office of my local Anglican church on a part-time basis, continuing with the editing for what should have been a perfect balance of structured office work with lots of people contact, and brain-stretching freelance work from home. Of course both jobs always went bananas at the same moment, but hey, that's life.

In 2014 I qualified as a Licensed Reader (lay minister) in the Church of England, and am now retired from the church office, semi-retired from publishing, still preaching and leading services albeit currently via YouTube, and grandmother to four lively small boys who mercifully live far enough away in different directions for me not to be clobbered for daily childcare. Tim is also semi-retired and we are trying to work out how you do retirement. I will always be grateful to Somerville, which has given me so much.



Gill Lawrence (Biochemistry)

After graduating from Somerville in 1974, I worked for 15 months at the National Radiological Protection Board at Harwell before moving to the Department of Pathology at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham where I completed a PhD in renal disease. I then spent 5 years as a postdoctoral research scientist in the Department of Biochemistry, Birmingham University examining the biochemical properties of different muscle fibres and the selective effects of hepatic toxins. In 1986, I joined the Department of Applied Biology and Biotechnology at De Montfort University, Leicester where, as a Senior Lecturer and the Course Leader for the BTEC HND Science (Applied Biology) course, I undertook a wide variety of teaching, administrative and managerial duties and continued my research on the liver.

In 1992 I moved back to Birmingham where, as the Director of the West Midlands Cancer Intelligence Unit (WMCIU), I oversaw the collection, collation, analysis and interpretation of cancer registration data for the West Midlands population and, as the West Midlands Cancer Screening Quality Assurance Director, I was responsible for monitoring and improving the quality of West Midlands breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening programmes. I also worked with the Royal College of Surgeons, the National Breast Cancer Screening Programme and various breast cancer charities, to set up a national breast cancer audit which examined and compared clinical outcomes for screen-detected and symptomatic breast cancer, and the Sloane Project which studies the outcomes for women diagnosed with non-invasive breast cancer. I retired from full-time work in the NHS in 2013 when the WMCIU became part of Public Health England (PHE). Shortly afterwards, I joined the 2016 Independent Review of Children's Cardiac Services in Bristol, giving advice on clinical governance.

On a personal level, I have always been interested in arts and crafts. 'Life after work' has therefore provided the ideal opportunity for me to pick up on the practical hobbies which I had always had to squeeze into the little spare time I had, and to learn new skills. This means that I now enjoy creating stained glass and enamelling projects as well as doing the beading, knitting, crochet and embroidery work that I have always undertaken. Joining The Arts Society and The Art Fund has given me the chance to learn more about the fine arts through attending lectures, workshops and seminars, and by going on guided tours to discover treasures such as Vivaldi and Venice and Art Nouveau in Nancy. I have also made the most of the additional time available to travel widely in Asia, North, Central and South America and Africa, and to set foot on the Falkland Isles, South Georgia and the Antarctic, and the Galapagos Islands.



Sabina Lovibond (Literae Humaniores)

Completing a four-year degree at the age of 21, I was ready for a break from academia, and indeed determined – however childish – never to take another exam in my life. I was also seriously intimidated by the reputation of the B.Phil. in Philosophy. So when, after a year and a half in employment, my thoughts nevertheless turned towards graduate work, I liked the idea of embarking on a Ph.D. at University College London. The UCL department didn't really approve of direct entry to Ph.D. status, but things were more flexible back then and no one was minded to waste time arguing the point.

The encounter with a bunch of well-informed single-honours philosophy graduates was exciting and character-building; but predictably, I was nowhere near finishing a doctoral thesis by 1979, the third and last year of my grant. (I realize this must be the kind of throwaway remark that makes our generation appear spoilt to current twenty-somethings.) What ensured my professional survival was moving back to Somerville in that year as Mary Somerville Research Fellow. 'I am so grateful to the College' – this sounds like automatic writing, but I appreciate my JRF period more and more in hindsight, even though subjectively I remember it as rather austere. Anyway, in 1982 I was appointed to a lectureship at Worcester College, then two years later to a tutorial fellowship, and that was my career until I took early retirement in 2011. I remain active in philosophy, enjoying the glorious new power to dispose of my own time.

It is hard to open a newspaper each morning and contemplate civilization teetering on the brink, having devoted so many decades to the study of it (or at least the 'Western' bit). Still, I have no regrets about the Mods and Greats experience. Well, I do occasionally regret not knowing more about the Presocratics – but if I had taken that paper in Mods I would not have done Plato's *Protagoras* with Lesley Brown, so it might have been some time before I came across J. L. Austin's 'Plea for Excuses' with its wonderful footnote about the pudding at high table (... 'We often succumb to temptation with calm and even with finesse'). Thank you Lesley! Though not just for putting Austin on our reading list.

I have spent nearly all my adult life in Oxford, but when I visit London these days I feel I am still fundamentally more of a Londoner than anything else. But on the whole I take pride in being one of those celebrated 'citizens of nowhere'. Meanwhile, I live in Jericho with my long-time colleague (also now retired) and partner, S. G. (Stephen) Williams.



Janet Matcham (née Milligan) (Mathematics)

It's hard to believe it's been 50 years since those wonderful undergraduate days at Somerville. Where do the years go? I'm so looking forward to reading about long lost friends and what they've been up to during this time. For my own part, I'll try and summarise what I have been doing.

I have had two careers since Somerville, although I am retired now, and living on the beautiful Caribbean island of Nevis, with my dear husband of 38 years, Keith. My first job after university was with the computer giant IBM. I joined IBM in 1973 as a computer programmer in Portsmouth and was with them for 18 years, moving into systems analysis, software development and management. The job took us all over the world, including an unforgettable two year assignment in Japan.

In 1991, I decided to take advantage of the generous severance package they were offering and left to pursue another career, this time in accountancy. After some time off, I joined a local firm of accountants and trained as a Chartered Accountant, which I achieved after 3 years there. I was involved in accounts, audit, business advice and tax, which I loved. I became a partner in that firm after a couple of years and stayed with them until 2008.

Then we decided to retire, and being great scuba diving enthusiasts, we moved to the Dutch island of St Eustatius in the Caribbean, fondly known as Statia to those who live there. We spent seven years there, diving, flying around the islands, and running an animal sanctuary. I am convinced that on every Caribbean island (and a lot of other places as well) there is a dotty old Englishwoman running an animal sanctuary. On Statia it was me. It was very rewarding and at times heart-breaking, but I believe we did a lot of good.

In 2015, we moved here to Nevis, with our own brood of 2 dogs and 9 cats, and we plan to stay here. At the moment, we are unable to travel anywhere, as our borders are closed. We have to wear masks outdoors but apart from that, things are fairly normal and it's not a bad place to be locked down! Once the world gets back to normal, I can thoroughly recommend Nevis as a tourist destination, and I would love to see anyone from Somerville.



Judith McClure (Modern History)

Somerville College and Oxford as a whole gave me an extraordinary new start in life: I had just spent six years as a Canoness of St Augustine, where blind obedience and self-flagellation had been part of this nun's experience before limited reform began. The life of the mind took over and I needed to prove I had one. I met my beloved Roger, historian and author, and I was transformed. I was fortunate to be able to continue to a doctorate, on the audience for the biblical writings of Gregory the Great, spurred on by the superb experience of books created by our Librarian, Pauline Adams, and by the thinking and group discussions of our tutorials and seminars. The eight years after my first degree were spent as a Research Fellow and College Lecturer at the University of Oxford, with two years in between as a Lecturer at the University of Liverpool. My thoughts on reforming aspects of the Fellowship system and indeed Universities generally were strong and remain so.

The next phase came in 1981, when I decided to enter the teaching profession as teacher and then Head of History at the School of S. Helen and S. Katharine, Abingdon. Leadership appealed strongly, so I moved on to become Deputy Head of Kingswood School in Bath in 1984 and then, amazingly, Head of the Royal School in the same city. My second Headship was St George's School, Edinburgh, where we moved in December 1993 and where we live now, after my retirement in 2009. How I loved the delights and challenges of that job and how Roger stood by me. We were described by the students as *Dr McClure and Roger*: at least I was not called *Jude the Dude* to my face! I was fortunate to work on many national committees and to speak at conferences on curriculum reform and school leadership, travelling throughout the UK and further afield: the US, Israel and China.

I became especially interested in promoting the learning of Mandarin and relations with education in China from the early 1990s onwards, thrilled in 1992 to speak in the Great Hall of Science in Beijing. In 2006 I founded the Scotland-China Education Network (SCEN) and engaged in the drive to introduce qualifications in Mandarin, training of the required teachers and appealing to students, teachers and parents throughout Scotland. I continue now as President of SCEN and member of the Confucius Institute Advisory Board at the University of Edinburgh. I wrote a short memoir recently, *Thinking about Snow*: but Roger does not appear as it covers only the first twenty four years of my life, until I left the convent and landed safely at Somerville.



Hannah Mortimer (née Robinson) (Experimental Psychology)

I had decided to become an educational psychologist when I was thirteen – I had been referred to one for assessment and found the whole experience rather interesting! So the obvious choice was PPP and I applied to read Psychology and Physiology. This was the first cohort whose students were given the option to switch onto the new Experimental Psychology course after Prelims – the greatest challenge being telling “Minnie” Bannister that we wanted to give up Physiology!

Oxford was – is – such a beautiful place and the time passed all too quickly. The romance of it all swept me away and I married a St Catz Botanist during my third year – having been required to ask the Principal’s permission first. Chris and I lived in a tiny thatched cottage in Northmoor for the remainder of that year.

We moved back to rural North Yorkshire where I have lived ever since. Then followed PGCE (Durham), Masters (Nottingham Child Development Research Unit) and Doctorate (Sheffield). My years as an educational psychologist began in Teesside where I specialised in Early Years and helped to set up diagnostic assessment services there.

In the early eighties, I married Garry, an architect in rural practice. When our son was born, I applied for a two day a week job covering Wensleydale and Swaledale and could not believe that this was actually ‘work’. Some of the families I supported were known to our Principal Barbara Craig, whose home was in Gayle, near Hawes; she was very supportive and we began to write to each other regularly. When she was taken into hospital in 2003, I was privileged to visit her regularly on behalf of the College.

For most of my professional life (and I am still working), I have combined educational psychology with training others (mostly in Early Years) and writing books for early years practitioners on child development and behaviour. The tutorial system at Oxford was the ideal training ground for this writing – having to assimilate information quickly, writing to a tight deadline, expressing ideas in a format can be grasped clearly by the receiver, then ‘parking’ those ideas safely and moving on.

My sister, Jane Robinson, followed me to Somerville eight years later. Our son James read Experimental Psychology at Brasenose and our daughter Beth read Zoology at New and continues to work as a Royal Society Research Fellow in the Zoology Department, specialising in spiders and elephants (!) Nowadays I continue to enjoy family life, (and, once the pandemic is over) choral singing, our local church, Pilates and playing piano accordion for the local sword dancers. The birth of our first grandchild last October brings us regularly back to Oxford and has opened up the next chapter in our lives.



Susan Nello (née Senior) (PPE)

After leaving Oxford I worked as an Economist for two years at the Directorate of Economic Intelligence in London before leaving for a year at the College of Europe in Bruges. From there I moved to Italy and obtained a Ph.D in Economics at the European University Institute near Florence. In those days they maintained that the EUI produced more marriages than doctorates, and though I achieved both my fate was sealed. I met my Pisan husband, Paolo Nello, there and it was clear we were never going to move far. He has since been teaching contemporary history at the University of Pisa and I was lucky enough to find a job at Siena University. We arrived at a typical Italian compromise of living just outside Florence in a small village called Pratolino, known for its Medici park.

I worked in Siena from 1983 until 2017 teaching courses on Economic Policy, the Economics of European Union and Agricultural Economics, and publishing various books and articles on the European Union. The Economics Faculty in Siena was a pleasant and privileged place to work. Various colleagues had studied in Britain and the US and the university had a well-deserved reputation for being international and open. Unfortunately, the difficulties of the bank Monte dei Paschi in 2007 left their mark on the city and university. For a couple of years even our salaries were in question and we risked being taken over directly by the Italian government then under Berlusconi. The university recovered and the town sprang back, but this year is suffering the first year without the Palio since the War.

In 2017 I retired (a little bit early) to spend more time painting and sculpting. I followed courses at the Charles H. Cecil atelier in Florence where one very hot July a friend from my Somerville year, Hilary Puxley, joined me for a month. Until Covid I was sculpting at the Accademia d'Arte in Florence using methods that have changed little since the Renaissance and I hope they will be able to reopen soon.

When we first moved to Pratolino (population 500), they warned us that all the young locals marry each other and this is precisely what happened to our children. Our son, Matteo, married Elisa who had been in the class below him at the elementary and middle schools. They live in the next village with their two girls, Adele (7) and Amelia (4), and we see them often. Our daughter, Caterina, married Federico who is also from the village and they have Victoria (2) and Penelope (born when we were there in February). Unfortunately, they live a bit farther away in California.



Nneka Veronica Okeke (née Osakwe) (Zoology)

My three years at Somerville will forever remain some of the happiest years in my life, despite the stress of preparing for weekly tutorials. Oxford was really amazing, and Somerville was like home away from home.

Before Sixth form I honestly hadn't given much thought to university choice, but my father was determined that I should go to Oxford having taken his own degree there. He never stopped reminding me the only reason I was sent to Cheltenham Ladies' was to prepare for Oxford. I remember vividly preparing for the Oxbridge exams, and still remember today the essay I wrote for the examinations, and the exhilaration I felt on being accepted at Somerville, even though many aspects of my time at college are now very sketchy.

Taking a degree in Zoology, I had no idea where this would lead but I knew I was getting the education available and that it was truly a privilege. I returned to Nigeria shortly after graduation and was employed thereafter by Unilever in the Market Research Division, in a very interesting job which I really loved and which offered an opportunity to travel at a very exciting period in the history of my country. A couple of years later I joined Nestle in Nigeria to set up their market research division. Nestle was a great place to work, with really good training programs and vast opportunities. I have been very lucky finding myself in jobs that appeared tailored for me, jobs that I totally enjoyed and thrived with. In 1985, soon after my son was born, I left paid employment, took a year out and then set up my own business, initially in Industrial Market Research but later went into full time Trading in Spices. I love what I do, and it offers me the flexibility to adjust to the family's needs.

This year Chris and I will celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary. I am happy I was able to take a three-year sabbatical and go with him to Brazil where he has been ambassador since 2017. Brazil is an absolutely amazing country that gets rather a lot of bad press, and we have been very happy there, even though I miss home. We will return at the end of August to Nigeria, Chris having completed his tour of duty, he to his Agricultural businesses and I will gradually wind down my business heading to retirement. This will allow me to spend more time with the charity projects I have been involved with – scholarships; mentoring young ladies; Micro Financing; and Start Ups.



Joanna Parker (née Martindale) (English)

Coming to Somerville was a wonderfully liberating experience for me after the rather repressive atmosphere of my girls' school. It was a joy to be allowed to get on with one's work, or not, as one chose and to get to know people interested in one's subject, in my case English Literature. I loved having my own room in Penrose and people having to knock on the door to gain admittance. I loved having my own money to spend and to be able to eat out at pubs like the Welsh Pony with my boyfriends. I enjoyed the work, particularly a term studying Shakespeare with Barbara Everett. Extra-curricular activities were singing and drama, including putting on a production of Milton's *Comus* during the miners' strike of 1972, when I set my hair alight in a corridor in Maitland carrying a candle.

We were a lucky generation with fees paid and maintenance grants. I was especially lucky to get a grant to do a doctorate. The undergraduate degree had been an enjoyable rush through all the centuries, but the doctorate taught me greater accuracy, as well as how to use the Oxford libraries to the full.

The University expansion of the sixties came to an end in the 70s, and I failed to get an academic job and instead decided to become a librarian. I became a library assistant in Somerville Library while doing a part-time library course in London. Somerville was generous to library staff and gave us all lunching rights and partial SCR membership, for which I am very grateful. (The former men's colleges are still often less generous.) I had some difficulty moving on to a better position; the fact I had a doctorate seemed in those days to be viewed as a sign of lack of commitment to doing a proper job. But eventually after seven years, I became Librarian of Manchester College (now Harris Manchester) and after another seven years, Librarian of Worcester College (where Sabina Lovibond was Philosophy Fellow). I retired after 23 years there. My job and my daughter were the twin focal points of my life for a long time, but in retirement I have taken up singing again.

Somerville seemed to me a very civilized place, and the education I received there (and I must admit from my school) allowed me to have a very rewarding career. I have felt, though, recently a sense of shame that an Oxford education doesn't seem to have been able to change the world view of Boris Johnson, Dominic Cummings or Jacob Rees-Mogg, and I regret that the educational opportunities I have had are not more widely accessible to all.



Christabel Shawcross (Modern History)

I left Somerville in 1973 to go to live in London not sure of what work to do, with a vague idea of wanting to develop social policy. I was taken on by Camden Council as an administrative worker and was very lucky to be taken on as a trainee social worker, working with deprived neighbourhoods to develop community solutions. I came back to Oxford to qualify as a Social Worker and to do an MSc in Applied Social Studies. I was very lucky as then my salary and fees were paid for as well as being guaranteed a job.

I returned to a busy exciting Social Work office dealing with everything from child abuse, to mental health and Family Therapy, being located next to the Tavistock Institute. I was not sure about a career path into management but left to go to Islington as Team Manager, in the days when Margaret Hodge ruled the Town Hall. These were exciting times with community social work being developed. I became a Neighbourhood Officer, then Assistant Director and met my partner Peter, now husband.

I wanted to work more in policy development and was lucky to get a job at the Department of Health in the Social Services Inspectorate policy division working with civil servants advising ministers. I was involved in developing community care policy and led on work to combat Elder Abuse and helped to publish the first national guidelines. I enjoyed being able to work with local authorities to help develop their own policies and raise awareness that adults were vulnerable to abuse.

After four years I got itchy feet wanting to return more to the front line, to make things directly happen, becoming assistant director for social care in Barnet, then Brent. After this I went to work out of London as Strategic Director of Community Services in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. I had a fantastic portfolio including health, arts, culture and parks. I led on the development of refurbishing the Windsor Guildhall incorporating a Museum which was opened by HM The Queen.

I was promoted as deputy managing director and held the fort as MD overseeing the extraordinary 2015 election with Theresa May as the local MP. Whilst I spent most of my career making many good developments, involving fantastic staff ensuring vulnerable people had their voice heard and their lives improved, I also had to make many budget savings and decided in 2016 it was time to move on. I set up a consultancy and am also the Independent Chair of Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adults Board, so still able to raise awareness of the need to prevent abuse of vulnerable people.

Kaye Stacey (née Vale) (MSc Mathematics)

I came to Oxford as a graduate student from Australia, having won a Commonwealth Scholarship after my first degree. My time in Oxford was in every respect a wonderful experience, starting by leaving Australia for the first time, and travelling in Thailand and across southern Europe before finally seeing the white cliffs of Dover at dawn from a channel ferry.

In Oxford, I lived in Margery Fry House for two years and the social life and friendships in the MCR were important for me. I especially remember bus trips to Stratford. As a graduate student, my academic and social life both revolved most strongly around the Mathematical Institute, where I made many life-long friendships. My last day in Margery Fry House was in June 1972 when I married Peter Stacey, a fellow mathematics graduate student. We had our wedding reception in the common room, catered by a group of student friends. Forty eight years later, Peter and I live in Melbourne near our three children, three children-in-law and seven young grandchildren (soon to be eight).

After completing our DPhils in 1973, we settled in Melbourne. I found it difficult to get an academic position in mathematics research; my choice of location was limited by Peter's work and there was discrimination against married women. One university vetoed my appointment under nepotism rules. Instead, I moved into teacher education with research into mathematics teaching and children's learning. I have found this a wonderfully interesting field, combining insights from mathematics, psychology and social science, as well as providing many practical opportunities to help improve the experience that children around the world have when learning mathematics. In 1992, I became the Foundation Professor of Mathematics Education at the University of Melbourne; the first woman Professor of Education and the 13th woman professor ever appointed at the University. Now 30% of the current professors of the university are women – a great change.

As well as my work and my family, I love the beach and the bushland and all aspects of the natural world, and our large unruly garden. We have been able to visit many fabulous places and trek through some beautiful and remote country.

Since my Oxford student days, the world has changed many good ways. In my three years in Oxford, I had just 2 or 3 phone calls to my Australian family – international phone calls were expensive and complicated, so we wrote letters. Now I am in daily contact with colleagues and friends around the world. Let us hope that the big change in the next 50 years will be for us all to live in better harmony with nature.



Linette Whitehead (née Dell) (Experimental Psychology)

I came up to Somerville at the age of 17, having applied to read PPE, but having subsequently decided to switch to psychology. I began by reading psychology and philosophy, but after prelims had the opportunity to switch again to Experimental Psychology, which was my first degree. I disliked the focus on animal behaviour at Oxford, but enjoyed studying developmental psychology and individual differences. I loved Somerville, which after my co-ed primary and secondary education at an international school in New York, seemed like a replica of an Enid Blyton's girls' boarding school. In hall, all the puddings came with custard, and all the vegetables were boiled to within an inch of their lives. I was introduced to Weetabix for the first time in my life. The then Principal, Barbara Craig, struck me as a very dignified lady of a bygone era.

I met my husband Laurence, then a very young Senior Tutor at Nuffield College, in the beginning of my second year, and we married a year after I graduated, by which time I had been accepted to do an MSc in Abnormal Psychology. Although continuing as a student at Somerville, I spent very little time in college in the subsequent three years, and had no experience of the middle common room.

After finishing my second degree, I went to London for two years to work as a basic grade clinical psychologist at the Tavistock Clinic. These were very stimulating and fulfilling years.

We then went abroad to the US and Mexico, as Laurence had a sabbatical year. Our daughter was born in Washington DC in 1981, and our son in Oxford in 1984. I returned to work at the Warneford Hospital, where I had trained, in 1986, and subsequently set up an eating disorders service there with a colleague in 1994. I was promoted to consultant clinical psychologist, and spent the remaining years of my career in this service, winning an award with my colleague for services to people with eating disorders.

I have now been retired for eight years, and have enjoyed a number of hobbies, including learning Italian, German and modern Hebrew, learning to draw and paint, and singing in several different choirs. I have also taken up Pilates and swimming in order to stay as mobile as possible. My son, his wife and our 4-year-old granddaughter have recently moved to Washington DC, and my daughter is currently doing a PhD at Cardiff and Exeter Universities. My hope is that the current research at Oxford will yield a coronavirus vaccine, so that I can see my children and grandchild again before too long.

