

Golden Reunion

SOMERVILLE

1973

September 2023



SOMERVILLE

COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Somerville 1973 - 50 years on

Thank you to everyone who sent a contribution to this booklet. It has been a privilege for us as the editors to read these as they arrived and to reflect on how varied our lives have been.

The more we read, the more convinced we became that no attempt at an editorial summary of how Somerville has affected our lives could do justice to their diversity.

We know that a typical Somervillian does not exist. One thing, however, that we as undergraduates had in common was that we were the last year group whose choice of Oxford colleges was limited to the then five women's colleges of the university. In that respect at least we were a distinguished group.

We hope that you will be interested to read about the lives of our contemporaries and the different paths they have taken.

Celia de Borchgrave d'Altena (Ogden)

Anne Morton (Phillips)

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Contributors

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Dena Attar
Barbara Bleiman
Celia de Borchgrave d'Altena (Ogden)
Pamela Charlton (Clarke)
Virginia Covell (Hardman Lea)
Jane Darcy
Helen Demuth
Jane Fisher (Anstey)
Caroline Friend (Brown)
Caroline Fryer (Hall)
Alison Furnham (Green)
Penelope Gardner Chloros
Elizabeth Grayson (Thomas)
Barbara Habberjam
Isabella Harding (Wallace)
Barbara Holloway (Moseley)
Francis Horgan (Clegg)
Marion Hundleby
Eva Hyde
Susan Jenkins (Clift)
Barbara Jones
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Hazel Thomas
Judith Unwin
Judith Wainwright (Paton)
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Jane Arkle

After leaving Somerville in June 1976 I spent the summer (as in the previous two years) in Marbella, Spain, being a mother's companion/help plus au pair to five youngsters for a couple of months, which essentially meant that for much of the time I was being paid to be a beach bum! It was therefore quite a shock to the system to join Price Waterhouse (a large accountancy firm), which later became PriceWaterhouseCoopers ("PwC"), in London as an articled clerk soon after I got back to the UK in October 1976.



In particular, trying to combine full-time work with studying for the various exams as well as enjoying London social life proved to be quite a challenge. Contrary to the expectation of most people both inside and outside the firm, I stayed with Price Waterhouse/PwC for all my professional career, other than a four year gap between 1986 and 1990 when I worked at Sun Alliance, an insurance company based in Horsham, West Sussex. By then I was specializing in tax, and in 1990 I returned to Price Waterhouse to help bolster a relatively new specialist life assurance tax department, within the Financial Services Group. Following the merger with Coopers to form PwC, this tax department became one of the prominent players in advising on various mergers, acquisitions and demutualisations within the insurance industry. During this time I became a Director, and in my last few years with the firm I was responsible for a global team managing outsourced compliance processes.

In 2009 I decided to give up work, and my husband (Jeremy Goford) and I left London to move to Exmoor where we had bought a house the previous year, despite not knowing anyone in the area. It was one of the best things we ever did! Jeremy had been a consulting actuary, and he continued to work as a non-executive director with numerous trips to London and elsewhere. Whilst I used to join him for various dinners, functions and meeting friends, I gradually found myself spending more and more time on Exmoor.



Sadly Jeremy died of a brain tumour in 2017 and since then my trips to London have reduced even more. Following our move in 2009 I seem to be becoming more and more ingrained into the Exmoor way of life, and it is now very strange to think that I spent nearly 33 years working in an office, when I was essentially an "inside person". Now I spend as much time outside as possible so that I can enjoy the freedom of the Exmoor countryside, where I live with two dogs and a horse, where I have fields and a garden to maintain, and where I am surrounded by an abundance of wildlife.

Dena Attar

As soon as I left Somerville I trained as a secondary English teacher and taught in schools in Yorkshire for a few years. I still feel some nostalgia for Yorkshire but I wanted to move back to London, and I had switched to research and writing so was spending a lot of time away visiting libraries. I even worked down in the Bodleian stacks for a time as a bibliographer and realised I'd never spent as much time there as a student. In those years I was concentrating on women's domestic labour and training, and relationships to food and cookery. My underlying motivation was always the link to feminism.



I studied domestic subjects teaching in schools as part of an MA in Women and Education at Sussex, and then taught an MA in Gender and Education at the Open University. I went back to the OU eventually to take a full-time post after a couple of years as a researcher on a gender and literacy project in primary schools, led by an old friend from Oxford, Gemma Moss. What I observed in schools about gendered IT usage inspired my doctoral research at Sussex on women learning to use the internet. All those experiences and interests were useful for various roles at the OU in the Faculty of Education and English Language Studies. I ended up doing a lot of academic management but also chairing the Children's Literature module, which was more enjoyable and took me right back to the critical study of literature. After I left the OU in 2017 I carried on writing for courses as a consultant until it felt time to stop. I returned to study for the last time (maybe) to complete a very different MA at UCL in 2019, in Hebrew and Jewish Studies. I wrote a dissertation on the Jews of Mosul and had to re-learn enough Hebrew to be able to translate a key text. I took three three-hour exams which was a shock – the first ones since Finals.

I had my three sons at a time when there wasn't much childcare around and I remember some frustrating years, when work felt piecemeal or impossible. But I seem to have done what I had the urge to do – research, writing and teaching with a focus on women's lives - and I've consistently kept up feminist connections. My most lasting memories from Oxford are of women's liberation groups and activities. We were so angry about women being excluded, and about that still being lawful.

Another consistent thread has been music. I didn't play my violin much in Oxford although I always had it with me but starting in York in the 1970s I've played in several bands performing street music, klezmer, Iraqi Jewish music and since the pandemic, any tunes that get my grandchildren listening or dancing. Playing and learning new music is one of the most life-enhancing things I do.

Barbara Bleiman

I applied to Somerville with strong support from my A Level teacher, a young woman who had herself studied there. No-one from my school had ever got into Oxford to read an Arts subject, so the Headteacher was deeply sceptical and only allowed me to apply if my teacher agreed to adjudicate all the exams herself. She did!

In my Somerville years, I made great friends, among them Barbara Habberjam and Dena Attar, with whom I shared a house in Walton Well Road. I was politically interested and within weeks of being in Oxford was engaging with the left-wing scene.



I met my husband towards the end of my first term at the infamous student occupation of Schools and we've been together ever since. We have two children and two grandsons. One interesting anecdote from the Oxford years— my boyfriend/husband, Adam, had a rock band who were in need of a new lead singer. They recruited a certain, charismatic young man from St John's, who went on to become famous for other things than 'Ugly Rumours'. None of us would have imagined then what Tony would do with his life.

I had some excellent teaching at Somerville. Standout for me were tutorials with Barbara Everett and Rosemary Woolf, who was terrifyingly fierce in my first year but quite transformed when I put my fears to one side and chose to do her medieval special paper for finals. I'll never forget a very young Bernard O'Donoghue, so kind to us undergraduates that he always took on our faults and flaws as his own! A visiting professor from the USA paid the price for a sabbatical in Oxford by having to tutor me on American writers. The look of boredom and disdain on his face grew with each tutorial but thankfully I emerged with a great love of American literature.

After university, I went straight into secondary English teaching, becoming a Head of Department in a Sixth Form College. After having my son, I worked part-time in a teachers' development centre, the English and Media Centre, (EMC). It was the old ILEA teachers' centre, which went on to become a not-for-profit organisation and, in time, I became its Co-Director. I'm still there, working part-time again and lucky enough to continue doing what interests me so much.



I've written a lot about education, including a book, *What Matters in English Teaching* and I advocate strongly for the subject. I'm very active on Twitter! I edit *emagazine*, a magazine for A Level students and this has led to lovely collaborations with academics, including several brilliant people in the Oxford English faculty.

Another very important thing in my life is the fact that I write fiction. I have published two novels, *Off the Voortrekker Road* and *Accidents of Love*, as well as a collection of short stories for adults, *Kremlinology of Kisses*, and most recently, a collection for young adults, *An Inspector Called and Other Stories*.

Celia de Borchgrave d'Altena (Ogden)

After three wonderful years at Somerville I went into publishing. I started at a small firm specialising in art books where the eponymous founder would treat us to cakes and ale in a good week. So Pergamon Press, where I moved afterwards, was rather a surprise: Robert Maxwell stalked the corridors of Headington Hill HQ seeking people to shout at and there was absolutely no question of cake. But the Journals department was a cheerful place and our Friday expeditions in search of CAMRA recommended ale were very educational.



All this was interesting but not terribly useful experience for life in Bagdad, aged 29, as wife of the new Belgian Ambassador and mother of a 10-month-old. The country had suffered the brutal, repressive government of Sadaam Hussain's Ba'ath party since '79 and was reeling from three years of war with Iran. As diplomats we were protected from the worst horrors, but getting to grips with ambassadorial life, running an official residence and bringing up baby were complicated by food shortages, an Iraqi butler who was a police spy when he wasn't breaking plates; an appalling chef shared with the Finnish ambassador; microphones scattered round the house and missile attacks aimed at the power station on the opposite bank of the Tigris which flowed past the end of our garden.

But we had basements which doubled as bomb shelters and storerooms for 6 freezers. And once we had the paperwork to hand over at military checkpoints we made expeditions to the shrines at Najaf and Karbala, to the Assyrian cities of Nineveh and Assur and to beautiful, haunting Babylon: all subsequently damaged by Sadaam or defaced, ransacked and blown up in the chaos following the US-led invasion or by extremist jihadists.

We had five horribly interesting years in Bagdad, followed by a spell in Brussels and then two South American postings. Santiago de Chile immediately post-Pinochet was wonderfully peaceful and we all enjoyed it hugely. Lima, where we landed a few years later, was still seething with guérilla activity, so it was back to Kalashnikov-toting guards on the gates and other precautions which might have seemed excessive if a recent attack on the nearby TV station hadn't blown out our windows and fractured the swimming pool.

There was an agreeable garden which we shared with some pleasantly retiring vampire bats but the residence itself, although old and beautiful, was beset by poisonous spiders, rats, overmighty kitchen cockroaches and such determined termites that until the dining room floor was replaced we could only invite our weightier colleagues to dinner during the summer, when we could have tables in the garden. When my husband retired I retrained and enjoyed teaching ESL to adults. I have spent the last few years in Brussels looking after my husband, who died last year, and I will probably stay here.

I rejoice in children, grandchildren, family and friends on both sides of the Channel and hopping back and forth on a Eurostar is ridiculously easy.



Pamela Charlton (Clarke)

After studying Human Sciences (an exciting new subject in 1973), I returned home to London, wondering what to do with my life. To begin with, I translated a children's book from Italian and volunteered at a Citizens' Advice Bureau.

I finally got a job as a financial journalist, off Fleet Street, and spent four happy years discovering a love for publishing and a dislike of finance, and sharing the pleasures of London life with the many friends I'd made at Oxford. I then moved to Copenhagen to join my boyfriend (now husband) for a couple of years (he said!) and have been here ever since.



After freelancing briefly for the Financial Times, I landed my dream job as an editor at the World Health Organization's European office, perfectly marrying my languages (A-levels) and Human Sciences interests. I eventually became head of publications and retired 9 years ago after 32 years at WHO.

With the help of the efficient Danish childcare system, I continued to work at WHO on a half-time basis after I had my two children. With both sons well settled in Denmark, plus two little grandsons, we have decided to stay put here after retirement. And with Brexit looming, I thought it was time to become a dual British/Danish citizen (a long three-year process!), while my husband took up his Irish nationality. As a Dane, I have now been able to vote again for the first time in nearly 25 years.

The last three years have been strange for us all, but we were lucky to come through unscathed. And while we felt cut off physically, Zoom and WhatsApp kept us in closer contact with overseas friends (and family) than ever before.



We've also enormously enjoyed being able to "attend" the online Somerville events, Oxford Alumni weekends and the Hay and Cheltenham literary festivals, as well as the daily interviews our local library livestreamed with prominent Danish authors.

Virginia Covell (Hardman Lea)

I live in Kent with my husband Charles, to whom I was introduced by a close Somervillian friend forty-six years ago! We enjoy the largely sunny and balmy climate here - such a contrast with the beautiful but damper and cooler North West, where we both grew up. We also spend quite a bit of time in London, where we are fortunate to be able to see our children - Charlie and wife Lucy, who to our delight are expecting a baby this summer, and Katy and her partner Becky.



I stopped work as a qualitative researcher some time ago and the opportunity arose to return to study at Greenwich University. I seized the chance to (legitimately!) spend time reading English literary texts and updating myself on Literary Theory. This combined well with family and domestic life and responsibilities. It also gave rise to some entertaining moments, e.g. the shedding of tears of frustration at my inability to speed my glacial pace when reading *Nostromo*, and the incongruity of triumphantly reaching the end of *Dombey and Son* on holiday on a beach in Sicily.

The pleasure of learning has continued with attendance on a series of short courses (blessedly free of exams or homework) across a range of topics. Most recently I have been following a course in Moral and Political Philosophy - a subject I first became interested in at Somerville. Sporadic attempts to recapture competence in French and Italian, plus studying modern Greek, complete my efforts.

Years ago I undertook a short course in Practical Gardening, but I must admit that despite this my gardening contribution is largely confined to aesthetic appreciation and learning Latin plant names, somewhat to my husband's disappointment!

As well as all this "self-improvement", as a friend teasingly calls it, there has been time and opportunity for voluntary work of different kinds, ranging from supporting students learning English as a second language to acting as a guide at Sissinghurst and, before that, working at local and national level with a children's healthcare charity. Serving on a number of Somerville alumni committees has always been interesting and rewarding.

This brings me to the importance of Somerville. The sense of being welcomed into a supportive but inspiringly challenging community began for me with the warmth of my tutors Mrs Roaf and Mrs Armstrong, when they interviewed me one dank and dismal autumn evening fifty years ago, and continues to this day.



In 1973 Somerville represented both a safe haven and a solid base for a young and unsophisticated undergraduate learning about the wider world and her place in it, while simultaneously trying to keep up with academic work and progress.

Additionally, strong friendships were forged and conversations with fellow Somervillians were always stimulating and often challenging. Several of these friendships have deepened and flourished over the years.

In this context it is poignant to realise that my reinvolverment with College followed the death of a dear Somervillian friend, Lisa Minoprio, who is sadly missed.

Jane Darcy



Straight after taking my English degree, I did a PGCE at Oxford and went into teaching. For 27 years I taught English in various schools – first at Oakham in Rutland and then in three London schools, with a year on exchange in a high school in Washington DC.

I loved teaching but as I was approaching 50, felt weary at the thought of plodding on till retirement. So I risked resigning and did an MA at King's College London. The English department there encouraged me to apply for a PhD and helped me get full funding.

I wrote a thesis about melancholy in the eighteenth century, looking at the medical understanding of it, and how this was reflected in a number of significant literary biographies of the period.

I was very fortunate after that to secure a British Academy postdoc, which gave me time to get my thesis published. I worked as a teaching fellow first at KCL and then at UCL. I was surprised to find how little difference there was in teaching undergraduates and teaching school kids as young as 8. There wasn't as much colouring in at university, but otherwise the issue was the same: a lack of confidence. Even the brightest students, faced with an assignment, would be blocked by the thought that they couldn't do it. When I ended up back at KCL, now as a teaching fellow in the department of Comparative Literature, I set up a studies skills course trying in some small way to address this. Behind all this, I think of the encouragement I received from Katherine Duncan-Jones when I was at Somerville and also from Bernard O'Donoghue, then at Magdalen.

Writing-wise, I review books for the TLS and they have also published a couple of my long essays, including one on Victorian nude male sea-bathing. Since retiring, I've have been a reviewer for an online site, The Reviews Hub, writing about theatre and film.

I used to think back with embarrassment to my naivety when I filled in my UCCA form in 1972. We didn't have to create a professional-sounding personal statement in those days, along the lines of 'My Saturday job at the Co-op has taught me important management skills'. Instead I cheerfully listed my interests as reading, cooking, knitting, playing the piano and painting. But in reality, some of those simple enjoyments are what I've returned to in retirement, especially drawing and painting.

At Oxford I made many friends who have remained dear to me. From Somerville, these include Pam Charlton, Rachel Miller (nee Sims) and Rachel Kent.

Helen Demuth



I didn't work hard at university—too much play and no real idea what hard work looked like—and got a mediocre degree in Zoology.

But obtaining an income was important, particularly since I'd spent all of a small inheritance from a great aunt on motorbikes and gin.

Selling knitwear at Harrods at least got me a staff discount and made me realise that sales wasn't my forte—I used to hide behind the pillars, so customers didn't ask me questions.

A fellow Somervillian suggested that training as an accountant wasn't that bad so that's what I did. I spent the first week in tears in Wales, completely unable to understand how double entry worked. But things improved as I discovered the delights of auditing—in particular, equine underwriters who plied us youngsters with drink, presumably hoping for favourable ticks.

I decided to specialise in tax after spending 6 weeks auditing a company with appalling record keeping. When I told the partner that the accounts must be qualified, he told me that was why the firm had professional indemnity insurance. I didn't stay long at that firm. So tax it was, for the next 40 years!

On the way, I became Hacker Young's first female partner, specialising in corporate tax, moved to Smith and Williamson as a private client partner, which involved a swift education in trusts, of which I had little knowledge. I spent a happy 25 years at S&W, enjoying the technical challenges and looking after some of the same families who had followed me, for almost 40 years.

I also picked up and dropped a husband. More importantly, I acquired a wonderful daughter who I put off accountancy for life after she did a work experience week at my firm. She now works in advertising, which I tell her is just like tax—the winning of the client and providing a service which might be one-off or recurring.

The motorbikes were replaced by planes for a while, but I now use Shanks' pony most often, living in Amberley near Stroud, surrounded by National Trust land.

I retired on 31st March 2020 so missed out on leaving parties. I am the Chair of our local Community Shop and Café, which opened in our local church in June, have a holiday let business and am trying to do my bit encouraging biodiversity on some land I own. It's all very satisfying.

Janey Fisher (Anstey)

Having left Oxford with an undistinguished degree, I did a year's PGCE followed by four years' teaching in a Hampshire comprehensive after marrying Martin Fisher (Balliol) in 1977. We are still together in 2023, which must be an achievement given the dire (and not altogether unreasonable) predictions by many that we were incompatible! When our first daughter (Christina) was born in 1982 I gave up teaching and spent three rather boring years trying to be a full-time mother. In 1985 I started working freelance from home for Macmillan Education as a copyeditor, proofreader, and writer, mainly on Social Studies books for the Caribbean and Africa. That, along with academic copyediting and indexing across the Humanities and Social Sciences, has formed the basis of my paid work throughout the rest of my career, and I'm still doing it – though taking on fewer projects now I'm in my 70th year!

One notable adventure that arose from this was that I was asked to edit the G8 communiqué in 2000. This involved being flown out to Tokyo business class and spending a fortnight working at the economic bureau with the Japanese staff. My abiding memory of the journey is flying across Russian airspace – the view from 36,000 feet was amazing and I saw no human habitation from the Finnish border to Siberia. In Tokyo, the pattern of the day was that I would wait around until about 5 p.m. when a call would come and I would take the subway to the economics bureau, where I would work with the team on the material that departments had contributed that day – until well after midnight. The director of the bureau was a fearsome individual who obviously didn't want me there. The one occasion I had a meeting with him I had to power-dress to give myself confidence to meet the challenge. My only regret was that I had planned to go sight-seeing when I finished the job but the day we completed it the rainy season began, so I came home.

Apart from copyediting, indexing and family commitments my other main intellectual project has been my fiction writing, under my maiden name Jane Anstey. My first novel was eventually published (after more than thirty years of rewriting) in 2007, and since then I have published another three with a small American publisher (two mystery romance novels set in the present, and a historical one set during the Black Death), plus a self-published children's novel. These are all available on Amazon if you are interested. Another mystery (this time with historical elements) is in final draft and with luck will be published in 2024. I am currently editing a volume of my father's (largely unpublished) poetry, hoping to complete this for the 50th anniversary of his death next year.

In my leisure I enjoy reading other people's novels, walking, gardening, singing and involving myself with a local church (an Anglican one currently, but over the years I have belonged to a Methodist church and a non-denominational charismatic house church, among others). Now we are in Shropshire I am involved with Churches Together in Oswestry District, which is a lively group and suits me well.

Caroline Friend (Brown)

Oxford was, for me, a golden time. After seven years in a single sex boarding school, it was inevitably, and despite Somerville being women-only, a time of meeting men: nine of them to every one of us. What I made of that needn't bother us here, but suffice it to say, my horizons were broadened. I lived in Park End Street overlooking the canal, with various men and women for two of my three years, and I have to confess that it is those times rather than my year in college that I recall most vividly.

Having my own front door and being in charge of my budget was a revelation. Shopping in the covered market, meeting for coffee in Brown's, inviting people to supper - it was so grown up.

Of course, it was a time of studying. Somerville didn't have a law tutor so I went to Lincoln College for my tutorials. As a law student I had a pass to the Codrington, a magical, lamp-lit secret where we worked at ancient single sloped desks and were encased by shelves of ancient leather-bound books which are probably now discarded in favour of computer terminals. It is tucked under the twin spires of All Souls and accessed through a heavily guarded gate right next to the magnificent Radcliffe Camera (whose name I recently overheard a tour guide explaining meant 'a place where the light was always changing' - good guess but no cigar). The romance of the place was overwhelming.

But chiefly it was a time of acting. I acted in my first term in a Somerville production about the Brontes directed by fellow Somervillian Gwyn Morgan, who later became godmother to my daughter. I then joined the Worcester Buskins. We did some extraordinary productions where I played fabulous parts and made wonderful friends.

Those friends have lasted all my life. We are still closely connected. They have seen me through my marriage and its collapse, careers in the law and family mediation, running a business of fine art study tours, teaching English to foreign business people, and all the myriad changes of fortune that make up our lives.

I have two brilliant children, Rupert and Kate, and a grandson Tommo, aged 5. I have lived in Stonesfield for 34 years and now see Oxford as the place where I buy socks. But whenever I walk down the Broad, I catch a glimpse of myself cycling to a lecture in St Cross in my duffle coat that had sherry corks for toggles, and I give thanks that my life holds memories of such richness and friendships of such lasting value.

Caroline Fryer (Hall)



Came up to Somerville at 17 from grammar school in York to read PPP, having completed 4th term entrance exam. First room in Penrose, next door to Ginny Hardman Lea. Great memories of college, cycling around Oxford in a long Laura Ashley dress which constantly got caught in bicycle chain (still have the dress but not the bike!)

Changed to Experimental Psychology in second year and sang a lot (Schola Cantorum, New Oxford Chamber choir and Pro Cantionibus Sacris). Moved to London after getting a poor degree (probably too young and too many extra-curricular activities!).

After a brief stint selling crystal and fine china at the Army & Navy, started in IT as a computer programmer/systems analyst, also singing semi-professionally with English Bach Festival and Academy of St Martins. Many recordings, broadcasts and concert tours, with performances at Royal Festival Hall, Edinburgh Festival, St Pauls, Proms at Royal Albert Hall, Snape Maltings, Covent Garden and Athens Festival.

After 5 years, moved into management consulting with Price Waterhouse. The only woman on professional staff of 80 consultants. Still singing semi-professionally, also started karate, becoming a 2 Kyu brown belt before having to give up due to injury in 1984.

Married first husband and moved to Norfolk in 1985, starting a career in IT management with Aviva. Many senior roles in IT, Claims and HR at Aviva. Set up designer yarn business but closed it four years later on marrying second (current) husband. Bought a Norfolk farmhouse, which we have been slowly renovating since, and our first house on the Greek island of Skopelos.

Sponsored on an MSc in Transformation Management by Aviva. Gained the highest distinction in the history of the programme. When Aviva restructured, took a package, enabling a new interim career in Children's Services and Adult Social Care.

From 2004 onwards, worked as an interim in many local authorities – Swindon, Lambeth, four years in Birmingham as Children's Services Transformation Director. Specialised in Early Intervention & Prevention, managing change programmes in Waltham Forest, Essex & Norfolk County Councils. Programmes included restructuring of Early Years Services to keep children's centres from closing in Lambeth & Waltham Forest, and delivery of Every Child Matters at Lambeth.

Integrated with Health and commissioned Health Visiting at Guys & St Thomas's. From 2018, at Norfolk County Council, implemented signs of safety system alignment for social work practice, and transformation of services for children with complex disabilities and/or high mental health needs.

After leaving Aviva, bought some land on Skopelos and later built a house in the Greek countryside overlooking the Mediterranean. Spent most of 2010 in Greece, then holidayed/rented the house out when not using it for many years, until selling it during Covid to a lovely couple who now live there.

Still working part time at Norfolk CC, developing partnership with health to improve provision for children and young people with high/complex needs. Hoping to retire soon to pursue other interests including music, gardening, knitting and yoga, living full time at our lovely farmhouse in the Norfolk countryside.



Alison Furnham (Green)



I arrived at Somerville aged seventeen, the only pupil from my school in Kent to go to Oxford. My chosen subject was Experimental Psychology, which required PPP Prelims, and Nancy Waugh, an American, was the College Tutor. She taught the compulsory statistics course to the five first years and we had to share a shiny new invention, the battery-powered calculator. This was a sturdy piece of kit, about the size of a paperback, with limited functionality. But Dr Waugh taught us well and I still use my appreciation of statistics frequently, if only to critique a quasi-scientific news item. 'More or Less' is one of my favourite radio programmes!

My social life outside the college quickly flourished. How could it not, when the male-female student ratio was 10-1? And Barbara Craig, then Principal, admonished, 'Well, don't work TOO hard!': her counsel was gladly, if ill-advisedly, accepted. The first long vacation saw me travelling to Norway and working in a hotel with Diane Parker (1973), who was reading maths (see photo). How did we organise the job, getting there and picking our way back across Europe in pre-internet times? Sadly, I cannot ask her since she died in 2007, aged fifty.

After three happy years at Somerville, I moved up the road to Wolfson College to do a D.Phil in cognitive psychology under the kind supervision of Donald Broadbent FRS. Somerville's generosity continued, however, and I was awarded an Alice Horsman Travelling Scholarship to visit research laboratories in my field in Canada and the USA. But by the end of the 1970's, the academic landscape was changing and I wanted to explore my interest in business and travel. After my D.Phil I joined the London office of Bain & Co, at that time a very small, but fast-growing outpost of the American management consultancy, where both ambitions were fulfilled. I loved working with such an international group of colleagues, who included Mitt Romney over in Boston. I left to join a start-up consultancy, then was appointed Strategic Planning Director for another large American company.

It was at Wolfson that I met my future husband, Adrian Furnham, who became a professor of psychology at UCL. Before our son was born, I was a head-hunter and NED on the board of a large hospital. We own a thriving psychology consultancy and I manage the business and investment side. Retirement remains a distant prospect. Through our company we travel extensively and enjoy meeting our foreign clients. In June I was back in Norway, not far from where the hotel was for that adventure at the end of my first year at Somerville.



Penelope Gardner Chloros

Having become an Art Historian late in life, I can now see that I tended this way straight after Oxford: I did the Sotheby's newly formed 'Works of Art' course. Unfortunately, I could not see at the time how this would lead to a career that I wanted.

I fell back on the more familiar: my knowledge of languages. I went off to Brussels to train as a conference interpreter, and then worked at the (then so-called) European Communities. It was amazing fun to learn this new skill.



I found out that it really is possible to listen and speak at the same time, and worked each day in meetings on different subjects, from the top level political to the technical. Only one drawback for an assertive young woman: I had to repeat the words of others and keep my own opinions to myself.

In 1978 I returned to England and married Piers, a BNC lawyer who was my boyfriend at Oxford. There was, unfortunately, not much work for interpreters in London. I went back to University and did an MA in Linguistics. I became fascinated by issues raised in my courses on Bilingualism and Sociolinguistics. Why is there such a diversity of languages, dialects and accents in the world? And how do bilinguals manage to navigate efficiently between their languages, as I had done as an interpreter?

I was delighted when Piers got a prestigious appointment in Strasbourg, at the Commission of Human Rights. A bilingual area for me to explore! I signed up for a Doctorate at Strasbourg University and plunged enthusiastically into my field-work: recording speakers – as naturally as possible – who used the local Germanic dialect, Alsatian, and alternating it with French. I loved this place with its great regional character. Another emotional tie was forged by having three children there, Alexander, Nicholas and Zoe.

In 1988 we returned to the UK. I was lucky enough to get a British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellowship for 3 years, this time to investigate a different group of inveterate 'code-switchers': Greek Cypriots in North London. Another baby was born, Philip. We sent them all to the French School to make sure they would be good little bilinguals.

After the Fellowship, I got a post at Birkbeck and worked there until my retirement in 2019. My research throughout was on Bilingualism, but gradually I returned to my earlier interest and acquired qualifications in Art History.

Since retiring I have pursued this with a passion. I am writing a book of essays on El Greco, the ultimate bilingual/bicultural artist, who transitioned from Byzantine iconography to Renaissance Italy and then to a unique and individualistic style in Spain.

It has been a great European journey - from Chaucer and Shakespeare at Oxford to research in Crete, Venice and Toledo, via Strasbourg. Et Brexit delenda est!

Elizabeth Grayson (Thomas)

I stayed on in Oxford to do a D Phil in organic chemistry with my wonderful Part II supervisor Dr Gordon Whitham. This was followed by a year's post-doc at Geneva University. Chemistry-wise this was a disaster as I got very few results, my supervisor was a bully and I was terrified of him. However, that research group was where I met my husband to be, Ian. The next year's post-doc at the ETH in Zürich with a really helpful supervisor, Prof Dieter Seebach was much better.



Meanwhile, having been unable to find a job in England, Ian was taken on by Lonza, a Swiss chemical company in the middle of the Alps. I applied for a job there but was unsuccessful. We got married in January 1982. I spent the next six months as a paid cleaning lady and cook for a widower with two boys (voluntary work was an alien concept for the Swiss). Then I worked part-time as a German teacher in a school in the French-speaking area.

It was there that I discovered that I'm not cut out to be a classroom teacher, being completely unable to control my pupils! I got out of that job by getting pregnant with my first baby.

During the next two years I did some copy editing work for a Swiss chemical journal (organised by Prof Seebach), taught English to private pupils, an adult evening class and a small group of motivated teenagers in a private school. We didn't fit into Swiss society, in spite of active participation in the folk dancing and ski mountaineering clubs and one for adults with learning difficulties. It was an immense relief when Ian got a job on Teesside in 1985 and we moved to Durham.

During the next 15 years I worked as a chemistry translator, a contributor to a chemical encyclopaedia, did some teaching lab demonstrating in the Durham University Chemistry Department and had two more children. In 2000 I got a (half-time) Daphne Jackson woman scientist returner's Fellowship working with a new lecturer, Ben Davis. In the other half of my time I was given a temporary teaching role. After six months Ben moved to Oxford but left me with everything I needed. With Ben's help I managed to get a two-year Leverhulme research grant (for chemicals, no salary) after the Fellowship.

At the end of that I got my first and only permanent contract as a 0.5 teaching fellow just before my 51st birthday. Ben acquired a lot of research funding so he was able to pay the Durham Department £1000 a year to enable me to continue my research in my unpaid time.



I was far more suited to this than a job in industry and continued happily until my retirement in 2020. I'm now doing more Scottish dancing, yoga, Pilates, cycling and hillwalking as well as volunteering at an allotment project for people with mental health problems in a very deprived ex-colliery village.

Barbara Habberjam

I arrived at Somerville with a mixture of excitement and trepidation: excitement at the prospect of being a student at last after several months working as a hospital cleaner and trepidation at being a member of a women's only College. After my Leeds grammar school (nominally single sex but involving plenty of interaction with the adjacent boys' school) the idea of being part of women-only community was quite alien. Autumn 1973 was a heady and disorienting time for a fresher, opening with the occupation of the University Schools.



Over the next three years balancing new friendships, political interests, and the demands of my course was at times challenging. But the experience of student life was easily positive enough for me to want to pursue it after I graduated by moving up the road to St Antony's to do a B.Phil. in Russian and East European Studies.

A decision soon loomed: whether to convert to a D.Phil. or get a job. After much agonising, I applied for the Civil Service graduate entry scheme with no compelling motivation other than a vague idea of public service. Starting work in Millbank Tower (home of the then Department of Prices and Consumer Protection) was a real shock to the system and brought home just how lucky I 'd been to spend five years in Oxford, surrounded by beauty and being funded to spend my time studying.

However, despite these initial doubts I ended up spending 37 years of my life in the Civil Service in several departments, including Trade and Industry and the Foreign Office. It was a career that offered immense variety, intellectual stimulation, and many civilised and sympathetic colleagues. It also introduced me to my future husband, whom I met (rather unromantically) on a course at the old civil service college in Sunningdale. The Civil Service has a justified reputation as an enlightened employer, offering flexible working and impressive development opportunities. Being able to work part-time for a few years relieved some of the pressure of raising our two children alongside demanding jobs. Highlights of my career were my two Foreign Office postings in its last decade, at our Embassies in Paris and Moscow, covering trade, investment, and economic affairs. It was a huge privilege to have direct access to politicians and business leaders and an inside view on the society and culture of the countries.

At Oxford I saw myself as a historian first and a linguist second, but that balance has changed over time. I have had continuing pleasure from being able to use and trying to improve my languages.



I began doing some translation in my spare time in the 1980s. The arrival of our two children put an end to this, but living abroad encouraged me to return to translation after my retirement.

Life now combines looking after our little granddaughter, spending time in France, translating, and doing tours of the displays at the London Tate as a volunteer guide for the galleries.

Isabella Harding (Wallace)

I have spent the last quarter century of my life teaching philosophy A level at a sixth form college, thank you Somerville, and supporting refugees and protesting creatively about the climate crisis, getting my demonstration boots out again from the 60s. However a curious story concerns just after my finals, when I had just broken up with my boyfriend and surrogate family while my own family had packed up and left the country. That is how I can explain that I completely forgot to graduate.

I have to say I left Oxford and could not go back for 15 years, living a much more simple life in Bristol. But when I first came to enrol on a teaching course, I was told I would have to do a full education degree (to do primary) as a PGCE needs double honours in subjects taught at primary, and PPE did not qualify. I left it for a few years, then applied again successfully for secondary, only to discover, horror, I could not find my O level Maths and English certificates. I wrote to my school who said 'don't be silly we only keep records for ten years'. By this time it was 20. So I wrote a begging letter to Somerville saying surely I must have passed English and Maths to go to Somerville. To my amazement I got a very apologetic letter back, saying 'somehow we have still got these of yours' enclosing my O and A level certificates, 'and by the way would you like to graduate?' So I did and subsequently I believe the university brought in a rule that if you have not graduated after 25 years you lose your degree. Thank you Somerville for saving my certificates!!

Barbara Holloway (Moseley)

Looking back at the past 50 years, the main threads have been my family, my Christian faith and a varied spectrum of work and study. Post Oxford, I worked for IBM for several years in marketing and training, and then for a few years I taught in Adult Education. The Careers Service was my next job, providing workshops for the long-term unemployed. I completed an MBA, and began a career in HR, working in the public sector, including the Prison Service. My last employer was Tearfund, a Christian charity working in relief and sustainable development. It was an inspiring place to work.



On the family front, I married Chris (a Cambridge graduate, who worked for IBM) in 1979. We have 2 daughters, who are now married with 3 children each. One daughter works in investment banking, the other is a modern languages teacher. One son-in-law is Malaysian, and by coincidence, the other son-in-law is half-Malaysian. We enjoy some excellent curries at family gatherings! The ages of our grandchildren range between 6 years and 12 months and we are involved in childcare 2 days a week.



We live near the Surrey hills in a village, where we are involved in our local church. Chris is a licensed lay minister, and I work with families and young children. My overriding memory of my time at Somerville was the energy and enthusiasm of my contemporaries, and the beauty and inspiration of the city.

Frances Horgan (Clegg)

I left Oxford in the summer of 1976 without a backward glance. There was far too much to do. Ron (JRF at BNC) and I were married at the beginning of August – I have no idea how the wedding was planned – and we departed for Stanford in September. Physicists do manage to find themselves beautiful places to work. We lived in Palo Alto, in the tiniest house imaginable, and spent weekends and holidays walking and camping and occasionally skiing in the mountains. There were not as many holidays as there might have been. It wasn't easy for a British person with only a BA to find work, so I did a lot of temping, and finally found myself a permanent job with a Japanese bank. They needed someone to write their letters in 'American business English' and were not impressed with the shortness of my sentences.

Ron's next postdoc was at CERN in Geneva. I didn't complain. This time I found a job quite quickly, teaching EFL and French in a language school. There was more walking, and quite a lot more skiing. Encouraged by a fellow singer in the choir of the English church, who assured me that 'anyone can improve', I took singing lessons at the Geneva Conservatoire.

In 1980, Ron was awarded a 5-year SERC advanced fellowship in Cambridge. This was an opportunity for me. I started a Ph.D. at Girton, where my supervisor was Ruth Morgan, herself an old Somervillian, and whose sister-in-law Gwyn Morgan I had known slightly at Oxford – she came up to Somerville in 1972. After 3 years as a graduate student, I was awarded a junior research fellowship at Fitzwilliam College, which I held for 4 years.

April 1987 saw the birth of our daughter Jane, followed in 1989 and 1992 by Robin and Paul. I stayed at home with the children until I could no longer avoid the conclusion that livings don't earn themselves and completed a PGCE in 1995. Being fairly sure that, at my advanced age, I was unlikely to be anyone's first choice, I took the first job that came my way and began work as a teacher of French and German at The Bishop's Stortford High School, an all-boys' comprehensive. Those who remember me will also remember that I didn't actually know any German, so the first few years were quite challenging.

Rather surprisingly, I found that I loved teaching. It was extremely hard work, but never dull. I enjoyed learning German, and I was allowed to introduce Latin as an extra-curricular option. There were exchange visits to Germany and France, and a regular trip to Rome and Sorrento, in the course of which I even learned a little Italian.

I retired from teaching in 2015, because I wanted to live. They say that teachers who work beyond 60 don't survive for long. In recent years I have taken a more active part in parish life, as treasurer (until last year) and choir mistress of our village church.

I also sing with the New Cambridge Singers. Our children are well and happy, and our first grandchild (baby Joe) arrived last Christmas.

It occurred to me as I sat down to write this that in the symphony orchestra of life, I have been given a long-term contract in the second violins. I wouldn't change it.

Marion Hundleby

I studied for a M.Sc in Applied Social Studies and a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work at Barnett House following undergraduate studies at LSE. Once qualified I specialised in services for children and adults, mainly in the field of Adoption and Fostering. Over the years I worked in the Statutory, Voluntary and Independent sectors. I have been involved in two national research studies, project management, design and delivery of training, and feedback to Government at a local and national level. From 2003 until 2022 I worked as an Independent Consultant. I am a published author.



Alongside my career in Social Work I have also pursued a lifelong interest in design history with particular reference to textiles, fashion, interiors and the built environment. From 1982-4 I studied for a MA awarded by the Royal College of Art and taught jointly by the Victoria and Albert Museum. This led to opportunities for me to teach, and over the years I had contracts at two universities, with the Workers' Educational Association in the East Midlands, and the Arts Society for whom I lectured in the UK countries and in Spain. A Millennium Award in 2000 enabled me to research 20th Century domestic design.

After all these years I have in some ways come full circle as I am once again enjoying developing my knowledge but in a much more relaxed manner and usually on line. No exams or deadlines thank goodness!

For the last 40 years our home has been in Nottingham overlooking the river Trent. I have recently concluded my contractual employment, partly because I was more than ready to do so, but also due to family commitments.

Although my links with Somerville are more tenuous than for many, I am proud to have been part of the college and to be attending this event.

Eva Hyde

I was born in Budapest, Hungary, in March 1955. My parents emigrated when I was two years old, and we were settled in Croydon, Surrey. Despite having little money, my parents sent me to a small private primary school with 60 pupils and three teachers. Due to their good teaching, in the 11 plus exam, I gained a funded place in a direct grant grammar school which had just relocated to a newly built site and was the only girls' secondary school with science laboratories. I chose to do science 'A' levels and then a degree in Chemistry and was accepted at Somerville.



Going from an all-girls' school into my first lecture with the theatre full of boys was quite a shock! Being at a girls' college provided a safe, supportive, haven and my tutorial partner soon became, and remains, a good friend. In addition to Chemistry, I chose to do Biochemistry as an optional course in the second year and my tutor suggested a supervisor in the Biochemistry department for my fourth-year research project. Probably as I had a degree from Somerville, Oxford, I was offered a PhD studentship at the National Institute for Medical Research in North London. This was a research institute, with no teaching and so not many students. A few first year PhD students were placed in a small house on site, which is where I got to know my husband. My project was on protein NMR spectroscopy - extremely early days for that area.

After my PhD, in 1981, I obtained a post-doctoral position at the University of Washington in Seattle, after a few months in a laboratory in Cambridge. My then boyfriend got a position in a different laboratory in Seattle and we were married. We stayed five years in Seattle, where I went camping for the first time, took up Iyengar Yoga, and learnt to cross-country ski; activities I still enjoy.

In 1986, my husband was offered a lectureship at the University of Birmingham. My former PhD supervisor was just then moving to the University of Leicester as a professor, and I obtained a grant, followed by a fellowship, to work with him. Shortly afterwards, in 1989, I got a lectureship in the School of Biochemistry at the University of Birmingham. I did research and taught, mainly protein structure and enzymology, gradually doing more and more teaching and administration. I enjoyed interacting with the students and finding out about new advances in Biochemistry, but some of the administration seemed pointless.



Eventually, in January 2018, my husband and I both retired, going on a 3-month tour of New Zealand. Since returning, I have had more time for hobbies, mainly music, swimming and rambling, and am volunteering in various ways; including tutoring primary pupils.

I still find science fascinating and its progress amazing. Many of the facts and scientific techniques I was taught during my degree have been superseded; the important skill was learning how to evaluate evidence.

Susan Jenkins (Clift)

I've had quite a varied and interesting 'career' since my chemistry degree and a short time in biophysics research.

My husband John's science work took us from Oxford to Basel, Switzerland for six years, then to Orsay near Paris for four more years, and since then we have lived in Reading and Norwich, finally moving back to his family home in Gloucestershire in 2006.



In this time I have raised our three children, cared for my father for five years, and worked at various times as a computer programmer, English tutor and accounting technician, and also gained an Open University maths degree.

I've also been fortunate to have the time and resources to enjoy different hobbies and interests over the years - including learning fluent German and French, singing in choirs wherever I've lived, and learning to ride a horse, draw and paint, and play the classical guitar.

My most satisfying (unpaid!) work has been volunteering with the Scouts since 2000, working in a variety of roles - I am currently a Cub Scout leader and administrator at our local Group.

Reflecting on my time at Somerville, I am grateful for the training in scientific and rigorous/critical thinking that my degree gave me. I gained social skills, and a love of learning, and choral singing, that have helped me in my subsequent life. I also made some enduring friendships, particularly with my tutorial partner Eva.

Barbara Jones



As a physics undergraduate at Somerville I never dreamt that I would have such vivid and interesting work opportunities. I stayed at Somerville for my DPhil, sponsored by Thorn EMI and adding to my meagre allowance by tutoring 6th formers, and Open University undergraduates.

My first 'job' was working on the Hubble Space Telescope giving me the awe-inspiring experience of working with ESA and NASA. After this project I changed companies to develop compact imaging devices and flat panel displays.

On this company's management trainee programme I was lucky enough to get involved with large multinational projects including the Docklands Light Railway, the China Power Station and the refit of the QEII. As a result of this work I was seconded to Cambridge University to set up a thin film laboratory and help set up the Production Engineering Management Programme. From there I was unexpectedly given the chance to join De Beers to see whether gem quality diamonds could be made from hydrocarbon gases. Yes they can! And as Research Director I enjoyed the additional duties of making several lecture tours in Japan, USA, and Europe. The work experience was exciting and challenging, splitting my time between Ascot and Johannesburg. It was a great panacea to throw myself into my work as my fiancé had died unexpectedly at this time, but alas I became a workaholic.

I finally left the company as I was finding the apartheid situation increasingly upsetting. I moved in a completely different technical direction to set up a 'skunk works' research department in Norfolk, UK for an American automotive test equipment organisation. We developed a whole host of different test equipment, one of which gained the Queen's Award for Industry. A major highlight was working with Government delegations in Athens, Cairo and Delhi on ways to reduce environmental pollution from vehicles. Faced with the need to transfer to the USA permanently, I chose to leave that organisation to stay in the UK, due to family illness, and entered the F1 industry working near Cambridge on automotive control software. Immersed in software I also set up my own company on VOIP software apps and sold out within a year. In 2006 I finally left industry due to family illness and increased my Open University teaching commitment in engineering, environment, design and innovation. This led to exciting consultancy work behind the scenes for BBC programmes such as Horizon and Coast. I then took my OU MEd in 2007 to support me as a freelance time 'educator' doing lecturing and course design at several universities.

I participated in a number of sports at Somerville and kept this up during my early years of working, rowing and clay pigeon shooting for GB until the result of sport, extreme holiday adventures and too many long hours spent on airlines left me with chronic arthritis. Now I am finally retired in Berkhamsted, not far from my parent's home during my Oxford days, enjoying the luxury of cruising and choir touring in Europe as much as possible!



Christine Jones (Fuggle)

Having left Oxford in 1976 with my BA in Physics, I moved to Chelmsford in September and started work at the GEC Marconi Electronics Company as a Research Engineer with my contracted hours being from 8.30am until 5.01pm precisely – yes, I did have to clock in and out! I stayed with them for two years and even made it into their cricket team, but I wanted more autonomy in my work so decided to try teaching.

I completed my postgraduate teacher training at Goldsmiths College, London.

There followed 40 years of teaching in state secondary schools in South London reaching the position of Senior Teacher. I have taught in comprehensives and grammars, in girls', in boys' and in mixed schools. I have enjoyed my time in the classroom, if not completing all that paperwork. I have helped students across the entire spectrum from preparing for Oxbridge examinations and interviews to helping prospective hairdressers and podiatrists tackle the science components of their courses after career breaks. On the way I became an examiner for Edexcel, contributed to a research project concerning teacher assessment for King's College, worked as an Exam Scrutineer for the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, learnt to ski and had two stars named after me by grateful students.

I married Bill in 1992 and despite being referred to by my obstetrician as a 'geriatric mother', gave birth to two girls at 40 and 42 years old. They have both followed me into the world of science, with Helen completing her PhD in Chemistry last year and Rachel in her final year of her PhD in Physics in the Netherlands – genetics in action! My family have given me the 'work-life balance' that has kept me sane all these years. Both girls wanted to play football so I have gone from supporter to first aider and, finally, to manager of their football teams.

Since retiring I have been ticking off some of my bucket list with a trip to Hobbiton in New Zealand, climbing Snowdon, scuba diving and getting to Glastonbury for the 50th anniversary.

Volunteering has filled the void of not working full time. I am the secretary of the local WI and I am the editor of my Residents' Association monthly magazine. I have joined the London Volunteer Team, helping at the EUROS in 2021 and the Queen's funeral last year.



Looking back at my time at Somerville, I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to study and live there for three years. Academically, it was a tough transition for me but the experience gave me the resilience I needed to be successful in later life.



Elaine Kemp (Mooney)



It was a wonderful privilege to be able to come to Somerville to read Chemistry, and I remember my time there with a mixture of gratitude and nostalgia. Even now I have occasional nightmares that Finals are just around the corner and that I haven't done enough revision.

I expect most of us remember our first day in Oxford in October 1973. My mother brought me and helped me bring the huge amount of stuff up to my room on the first floor of Vaughan. It was possible to park in Little Clarendon Street which seems incredible now. We met other first years with their parents and chatted for the first time.

My parents were so proud of my coming up to Somerville. My father had left school at 13 and my mother at 14, but they had always encouraged education.

Obviously like everyone else I had been before for interview in the previous December, but one of the first things that struck me was the beauty of the grounds in late summer. I think the grounds have looked even better on every occasion since. I must admit that I was extremely homesick to begin with, and I think this was true of quite a few of us.

I mainly made friends with the people on the same corridor and doing Chemistry, Physics or Mathematics. In consequence I met students from other colleges also doing Physics, which was how early on I met the Physics students from Keble. I was introduced to Ian; we started going out together and we have been together ever since. I expect quite a few of the 1973 cohort will remember us together walking round the College grounds or dining in hall.

Ian and I got married in August 1977, shortly after he finished teacher training and I finished my Part II. We moved back to Birmingham where we both came from and have been there ever since. For several years I struggled with an undiagnosed underactive thyroid gland, now under control. We have two sons, Timothy who is a doctor in infectious diseases and Graham who is a mathematics teacher at an independent school. They have both blessed us with grandchildren.

I initially taught for two years, but after returning to work after having the children I became a laboratory technician at a sixth form college.

I was and still am involved in my local Church. We have always both been interested in sustainability and trying to be "green". Ian especially enjoys mending things. I enjoy crafts like knitting, gardening, making preserves and in particular cake decorating.

I would like to thank all those who I knew at Somerville for their friendship and encouragement and wish you all the best.



Julia Le Blan (Farrer)



CAREER

After Oxford, I trained as an accountant with Spicer and Pegler. I enjoyed two secondments; the first a year at Natwest and later 18 months with the firm's New York office. I lived in Manhattan, which I adored, despite the cockroaches. Multiple trips to D'Agastinos were needed to buy the roach motel: marketing puff "They check in but they don't check out". Soon after returning to London the firm merged with Deloitte. I became a tax partner in 1990 specialising in international financial institutions. On the whole I found this to be a demanding, interesting and rewarding career. I retired from Deloitte at age 55 and embarked on a second career as a non-executive director of listed investment funds.

This too was challenging and fascinating work. This is now winding down and it looks as though my third career will be Grandmother duties!

INTERESTS

Travel

I had always travelled as part of work but now find I can plan more interesting journeys. Recent trips have included India and Georgia (Tbilisi) and a trip to Vietnam is in the planning stages.

Walking

A love for walking has been a lifelong theme. I have kept my mother's house in Somerset, which is well placed for both Exmoor and the Quantocks. However, work has meant that I spend most of my time in London, and now grandchildren are having the same effect.

Reading, Music, Theatre

Being a member of a lively and argumentative book club is an excellent way to read a variety of new and interesting literature! Opera is a great love also.

PERSONAL

Now based partly in London and partly in Somerset, I was born in Tanganyika (now Tanzania) in 1954. The family returned to the UK in 1963. I married Eric Le Blan (in Pembroke College, Oxford in the pouring rain) in 1986. We have two children, Thomas and Paul. We later divorced, and very sadly Eric has since died. Tom and Paul both live in London not far from my house in Fulham and they have a child each; Flora and Mithran (meaning sun). They are both very young at the moment but I hope for increasing grandmother duties.

Kathryn Mead



There is an old Hungarian saying: ‘God walks a straight path by a crooked way’. Well, the intentions of the Almighty remain inscrutable, but it is certainly true that if you told me I would be living within a mile of Somerville as I near 70, my life enriched by grandchildren, I would have been *bouleversed*, as the Actress said to the Bishop.

So, the crooked way. Although nominally reading History and Russian (may my tutors forgive me) my great love was the theatre and it was not long after graduation that I found myself working as an assistant to John Barton, RSC director and Shakespearean scholar. The terms were outrageous, the pay even more so, but it enabled me to sit quietly in rehearsal rooms watching some of the greats of the time wrestle with

some of the even greater roles. This emboldened me to do two years at drama school, which in turn led to writing book and theatre reviews for *The Independent*. There is no terror greater than emerging from a play at 11pm and knowing you have to throw down 1000 – 2000 pithy but entertaining words by dawn.

Then something of a reversal. I found myself in therapy whilst raising two young children and rapidly discovered a new entrancement. Training followed; it was arresting when my training therapist said ‘*I know very well what you think, but not what you feel.*’ Quite an eye opener and an invitation to re-build some of the foundational assumptions of my life. Once I was launched in private practice, a friend commented ‘*But don’t you find it boring, sitting there all day listening to people talk about themselves?*’ Well, never say never, but for the most part I realised it followed directly from the world of the theatre – and it was my immense privilege still to be listening to all the dappled shading of the human heart. The straight line of the crooked path.

I became the CEO of a counselling charity and then, drawn by the desire to be near to family, moved to Oxford shortly before Covid appeared on the scene. I remain in private practice.

Current joys? ‘*and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck*’ (Corin, *As You Like It*) by which I mean, of course, having my grandchildren swirl around me in all their merry chaos, and watching my own dear girls in their careful mothering. A second joy: resuscitating my Russian so I can read commentary on the endless Russian ballet videos I watch in the evenings; this particular distraction has decimated my reading time.

Gifts from Somerville? Well, of course, training me to think. And friendship.

Hopes for the future? We live in an age of anxiety. ‘*Lord, we know what we are, but not what we may be...*’ (Ophelia)

I know only that despair solves nothing; I will hold on to courage, kindness, and (nod to Keats) the *holiness of the Heart’s affections*.

Anne Morton (Phillips)



I arrived at Somerville with the gown and the cap belonging to my mother, who had matriculated at Somerville forty years earlier. I felt excited and proud to be following her example. In reading Jurisprudence (Law) I was also continuing a family tradition, as my father and grandfather were both lawyers.

Although I was not sure that I wanted to become a lawyer I knew that my degree would account for the first part of the qualifying exams.

Having to read two hundred cases a week in some subjects was a challenge but it taught me how to absorb, retain, and later of necessity forget, important facts.

After I qualified as a solicitor I worked in London for a few years then changed career, settling for less stressful employment. Becoming a solicitor had actually been a good decision since I met my husband when we were doing our articles in the same firm.

We moved to Cambridgeshire, a relatively convenient commute for my husband to his law firm in London. We renovated a house, where we still live, and raised our son and our two daughters. I have been involved with various local activities and in the last few years have become a volunteer at our community-owned village shop.

I am not sure that I made the most of what Oxford had to offer, or probably what I was capable of, but I developed some confidence and, most importantly, made some lifelong friends.

Krystyna Nowak

I studied physics at Somerville, but will be the first to admit that rowing took up more time than physics. I enjoyed rowing in the blue boat in both 1975 and 1976.

Post Oxford I joined Citibank in London in the shipping department and then North Sea oil and gas project finance. I was the first woman in Citibank to return to work part time post maternity leave. In total I worked 19 years for Citibank, in London, Hong Kong and Singapore. We then returned to the UK via a couple of years in the Netherlands.

During these years I married StJohn Brown and we have three children - Alexander, Felicity and Eleanor. A few years after returning to the UK I did a post graduate law degree and returned to work in a different sphere. I started in board search, head hunting for Chairs and Non Executive Directors, which I continue to do now.

I have just retired after nine years as a Trustee of London Youth Rowing - a charity which brings rowing into state schools in underprivileged areas.

Eleanor Pearce (Hartwell)



I was the first person in my family to go to university and it was something of a culture shock. I struggled with the course but I hung on grimly and left with a third in Mathematics. I enjoyed plenty of other things about Oxford and made some good friends.

I always thought I would be a Maths teacher but after the first half term on the PGCE I realised it was not for me. I did not know what I really wanted to do. I got a temporary post in Foyles bookshop in Charing Cross Road, mostly in a cash booth taking payments.

I left after three months to get married and had the rare distinction of not being fired. Probably I made the money add up – maths has to be an advantage somewhere.

I met David while at Oxford; he also did Maths, at Univ, a year ahead of me. By the time we got married in 1977 he was well into his chartered accountancy studies. We moved to Walthamstow and are still here. I became the practice manager for a doctors' practice in Bethnal Green but left after six months to have my first child.

We have three daughters – all are mathematical, it's in the genes. Bekki did Physics at Corpus, Debs did Maths and Education at Homerton in Cambridge (but never became a teacher) and Hannah did a masters in Maths at Exeter where she met her husband on the same course; he is now a maths teacher. She balances three part time jobs with looking after three children aged 2, 7 and 9. Bekki has an 8-year-old girl. She was tragically widowed two years ago and combines motherhood with a part time job at Exeter University. She and Hannah live near each other and I spend a lot of time there. Debs works in a preschool; she and her husband live in Harlow with our two oldest grandchildren (aged 13 and 11).

I was a stay-at-home mum for eighteen years but started working part time when Hannah was about ten or eleven years old. I was administrator for the local toy library and studied for Accounting Technician (MAAT) at night school. I then trained as a dyslexia specialist and from 2001 to 2022 I worked at a dyslexia centre in Woodford Green, first one-to-one teaching and a little assessing before admin gradually pushed out the teaching. I joined Waltham Forest Dyslexia Association and have been a trustee since 2000, mostly as Treasurer. I have for many years screened children for dyslexia and continue to do this despite being otherwise retired.

My life now revolves round visiting the family and screening children, as well as church which has always been an important part of my life; first in the local Church of England then in various newer community-type churches, most recently as part of a church plant in Walthamstow. I took up Nordic walking as a good exercise and walk a lot with my husband as well, and I am trying to learn Spanish.



Sue Pheasey (Nash)

When I was invited to write a brief autobiography for the Golden Reunion my first thought was that I had nothing to contribute – I hadn't saved the world, found a cure for cancer, written eloquent speeches or become rich. Naturally our three children are the most brilliant ever and one at least is saving the planet, one sea turtle at a time; but whose children are not the most brilliant etc.?

In my early 50s I completed a CELTA course, and spent a senior gap year in China teaching English as a foreign language.



The course had involved teaching English to small groups of different nationalities through role play. On my arrival at Henan University I was told, 'Ah Su-san, you have degree from Oxford so you will be teaching English and American Literature and business English.' Average class size 90. There is a whole world of anecdotes to be mined from that experience, but I will keep it for our Diamond Reunion.

It was suggested that I could mention my career as a prolific and published writer of letters to The Times. These are my 15 minutes of fame spread over 35 years in 27 letters from 1988, when I wrote to the Sunday Times requesting that book reviewers actually review and not just tell readers the plot, to March this year. Then I commented on a 'think piece' which objected to Oxfam's decision to refer to women as 'people who breastfeed' or 'people who menstruate'. I asked if I was a non-person, as it was a very long time since I did either. This really annoyed a member (MA, Cantab) of my book group who wrote in a group email that he hoped they recovered from the shock of seeing 'Sue Pheasey's gynaecological history splashed all over the Times'. I wish I had asked if he meant 'obstetric and gynaecological history'.

In the past one would be telephoned to discuss amendments. Once, apropos correspondence about 'slaving in the kitchen', I was asked if my husband would object to a letter stating that after a day spent cleaning the house and cooking dinner for guests, he asked 'if I had had a nice little potter'. On another occasion, did I really want to publicise my elder daughter's name after she had appeared on the BBC news running in front of an aircraft transporting veal calves.

A letter from 2006 mystifies me. I wrote, 'Such behaviour would cause people to be thrown out of my birth county of Yorkshire rather than be admitted'. I suspect it had to do with being outgoing and friendly but will probably never know. In recent years I have occasionally achieved the coveted bottom right hand corner slot.

Today addresses are not given in full, which is a pity as I miss the green ink rants and invitations to join religious groups. My further ambition is to start a correspondence which might run for a few days and to raise my hit rate to a letter a year: keep watching the bottom right hand corner.



Elizabeth Potter

At my Somerville interview the comment was made that no one had ever come to Somerville from Grantham. My reply was that only one person had previously done so: Margaret Thatcher.

Arriving at Somerville I was the shy, gauche country girl, lacking social confidence after a school career in seven different establishments, following my father's peripatetic career around the country. Looking back, I did not take advantage of so much that Oxford had to offer but I gained many things. Friendships forged during those years of self-discovery have a unique lasting quality.

Three years at Somerville provided a quiet confidence for entry into a legal profession at that stage very biased against women. The researching and writing of weekly essays was an excellent preparation for a subsequent judicial career.

The chance of being a solicitor in the National Coal Board when the Miners' Strike broke turned me into an employment lawyer. I was recruited from there to Farrer & Co, not realising that this was in readiness for the Wapping Dispute. After an eighties of industrial strife the nineties seemed tame professionally so I decided to seek new challenges as an Employment Judge. I thoroughly enjoyed over twenty years as a judge and then the Regional Employment Judge in Central London. Legal developments in areas like discrimination law and the gig economy were intellectually stimulating and the practical challenges of trying to deliver timely justice in a cash-starved system were enormous.

I had a child and married, gaining five stepchildren, at the beginning of my forties. The notion of giving up my career and the identity that it gave me did not arise but the juggling and compromises were significant. I worked in London, my husband was a medic in Oxford: a life split between the two locations has now operated for over thirty years. The juggling and the compromises got greater when my husband developed motor neurone disease. The next fourteen years added superintending a 24 hour care team to balancing family and professional life



Now, as I look back at the last fifty years, I am grateful for the foundations Somerville laid for the fulfilling life I have enjoyed to date – and hope to enjoy for more years to come. In retrospect perhaps the most valuable lessons learned were adaptability and resilience, necessary to deal with the difficulties along the path of life, not foreseen with the optimism of youth.

Karen Prince

I chose to leave Somerville after Physiology finals and complete my medical degree in Edinburgh, ready for a new adventure and expecting to stay a few years before moving on. Some 47 years later I'm still here. Life seldom turns out as planned!

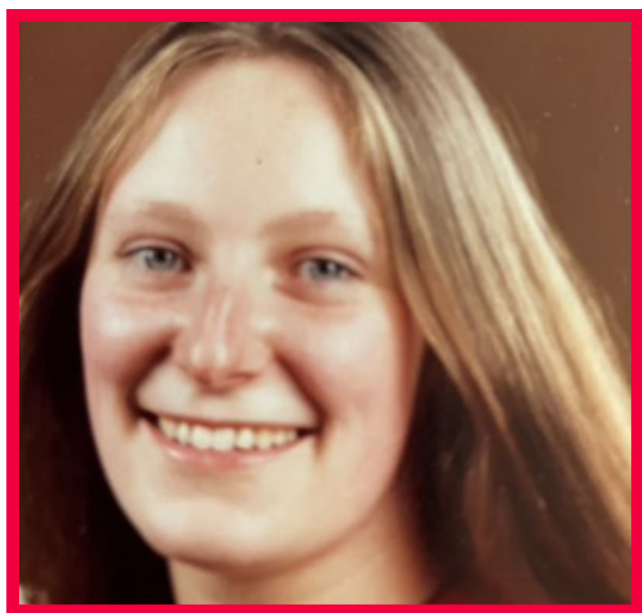
I graduated from Edinburgh University in 1979 and was for seven years a junior doctor in Edinburgh and London, including ERI, Middlesex Hospital and Queen Square. Eventually, realising hospital medicine wasn't for me, I retrained for general practice. In 1985 I returned to Edinburgh, married my long-term partner, became an Edinburgh GP and our first son was born.



Everything changed in 1986 when I contracted a serious viral illness from which I never really recovered. Although I improved somewhat over several years, by then I had had to leave my job and thereafter never became able to sustain even a once-weekly GP session due to health problems. I decided then to devote what energy I had to my family, not to work, something I've never regretted. I had two more children over twelve years and spent as much time as possible with them thanks to part-time childcare. My oldest son is now an Emergency Medicine Consultant, the youngest studied Chemical Engineering at Heriot-Watt and my daughter is at Edinburgh University.

Two of my children have serious chronic health conditions which have significantly affected their lives since primary school and also required a lot of time, energy and support from me. I have also volunteered as an adult literacy and numeracy tutor for Edinburgh Council and in a foodbank. I manage a small letting business from home. Since the pandemic I've run an online Spanish conversation group. Recently I completed an OU MSc in Science and was surprised to get distinctions in all three modules, given my levels of brain-fog. I began it out of interest and to update my qualifications towards getting part-time employment but my volunteering experiences made me realise that would be unrealistic.

Although since 1986 my life has been very restricted by many people's standards, I'm thankful to be here and to have my family around me. And although there are many things I'd planned but haven't been able to do, such as career, travel and working abroad, I'm content knowing I've always done as much as I could often by doing things differently and learned to accept what I can't do.



Looking back, my main regret is that I didn't get to know as many of my contemporaries as I could have done, instead regarding Somerville as a base to escape from. I was also intimidated by impostor syndrome so sadly didn't develop confidence in problem-solving. My OU studies gave me that and illness taught me gratitude.

However, I have many happy memories from Somerville – my friends, my Vaughan room, the peace and calm of the library and the quad.

Somerville's legacies to me are curiosity and the need to evaluate the evidence behind statements and practice. Both served me well in medicine and still do now.

Anne Redston

What I remember...

I remember the graffiti scrawled on Keble: *this is a college, not a Fair Isle jersey*. I remember the winter when strikes cut off the water supply except in Somerville's West building, previously part of the Radcliffe Infirmary. The JCR passed the motion: *members of Somerville College shall be allowed to share baths with members of Worcester College*. When sent to the SCR for approval, they replied: *The SCR is confident that those members of Somerville who wish to share baths with members of Worcester College are already doing so*.

What else do I recall? Of medieval history, not so much. Tales of the Black Death would have enlivened Covid dinner party conversations, had parties been allowed (or had I worked in Whitehall). Of skills, much more. Somerville taught me how to research, organise, plan and present arguments, and how to defend them, despite time pressures and serial essay crises.

Those skills are invaluable in my current role as a judge of the First-tier Tribunal, where I decide appeals on tax, smuggling, child support and social security benefits, and in my parallel new job as a judge of the Upper Tribunal (tax and financial services). The same skills were fundamental to my earlier work as a barrister: I obtained a law degree and passed my Bar exams in my early fifties. That followed a partnership with Ernst & Young; I had qualified as a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Adviser in the 1980s, after three years as a Catholic nun.

It was my moral tutor, Barbara Harvey, who prevented me entering the convent at the end of my first year: she told my Reverend Mother that if I left the Order, I would never be permitted to resume my studies. Much later, she said that 'of course' I would have been allowed back, and confessed to telling a white lie, a *mentira piadosa*, to prevent my premature departure. Being a pious nun, the Reverend Mother believed her, and allowed me to complete my degree. My life might have been very different had Barbara not intervened. So thank you Barbara, and thank you Somerville.

Lindsey Richardson

After completing my M.Litt at Somerville, I switched careers and moved down to London, where I worked in banking for many years. Eager to put as much distance from my ex-husband as possible, I relocated (recklessly!) to the US in 1991 - accompanied by my then 4 year old daughter and our nanny - to work in NYC and later in Boston. Having retired from the investment world in 2013, I currently divide my time, as they say, between Boston and the sunnier climes of Naples, Florida, with my partner of 20 years, Flick.



That's the potted version. Today, my 4 year old is now, astonishingly, 36 years old and expecting her third child this summer. We go up often to visit them outside Boston - the grandkids are a delight, if exhausting. Otherwise, I swim obsessively every day outside, enjoy the beach, travel to watch tennis tournaments whenever possible, and catch up on all the Great Literature I lacked the time to read (or more accurately, that I did read but have since forgotten!).

Somerville seems a long time and distance away these days, although I realize now that I must be writing this immediately after Katherine Duncan-Jones's memorial service. Setting their scholarship aside, both she and the late Rosemary Woolf were unforgettable in different ways: KDJ with her Laura Ashley dresses and mystifying Camp coffee, Ms Woolf with her maniacal laugh, laddered stockings and warm kindness. I also vividly recollect my trip. Quite the pair.

I'm looking forward to attending our 50th after so long away, accompanied by an entourage of Americans from my extended family curious to understand the difference between the College and the University, how there can possibly be no campus, and perplexed by the whole machinery of the place. What could possibly go wrong?

Janet Rogers (Ersts)

What do I remember?

Of Somerville...

Early morning cycling down to Christchurch Meadow to row inexpertly in the first Somerville eight (borrowed) for some years.

Reading the Sunday papers at the round (oval?) table in the JCR window, and then stepping out through that sash window into the quad to start the day.

Stirring the most enormous pan of scrambled eggs in the West kitchen after dancing up the High on May morning.

Of Chemistry...

The maths lectures – the goldfish swimming round and round in the large water flask used with great ostentation by Dr Abrahams for his mid-lecture refreshment. And the streaker (male), his details protected only by a briefcase, running down and along and up and out, through the lecture theatre. Both a very welcome antidote to the maths.

Days of organic practicals in the Dyson Perrins with Muriel, with only a hot chocolate, sitting on the cold stone steps outside the lab, for lunch. And the very helpful demonstrator who supplied some of the necessary chemical when my whole day's careful efforts produced zero end product.

A hard-working but fun Part II year in Mike Pilling's lab in the Physical Chemistry Lab – cycling in at midnight to the computer centre to see if my tape and card inputs(!) had finally reached the head of the cafe queue to give me some results. And cycling back from the PCL past the Jubilee street parties to write my Part II thesis. And meeting my 'partner for life' (so far!).

And beyond Somerville?...

I went to London (as we did) and started training as a Patent Agent – a good choice for a literate scientist, and it went well. The offices were Dickensian – either side of Chancery Lane, one and a half rooms on each of 4 floors, oil lamps on the filing cabinets, 'just in case', a pint of milk for each employee every day, and a weekly hand towel each. It was a great experience, but it was rather sedentary and I had itchy feet.

So I found myself working in Research and Development at Kodak, focussing on graphic materials for the printing industry – technologies now totally superseded, of course.

We 'escaped to the country' (North Somerset) in the late 80's, and after more R&D work, I decided to change direction and did an MSc in Parallel Programming (the principles underpinning most of Artificial Intelligence), during which, on the 'best laid plans...' principle, our daughter arrived, unexpected but hugely welcomed.

That led eventually to teaching – secondary science, after a PGCE, and a range of modules with the Open University, from STEM access courses to Level 3 'AI for Technology' and similar. So by day I was teaching/mentoring in schools, but also with non school attenders. And in the evening/weekends it was the basics of maths and science etc. to foothill learners of all ages, interspersed with high-falutin' AI topics to nearly-graduated learners, again of all ages.

And two years ago we retired (sort of) to South Somerset, and are settling into our new life with enthusiasm.

So, what did Somerville and Oxford do for me? Well, as a scientist I can't really tell, as of course I have no control experimental results for comparison. But I think it gave me the confidence to 'be myself', and sent me off into a career, more 'rag bag' than 'portfolio', which has nevertheless sustained me. And I met many interesting people and made lifelong friends – a success in itself!

Susan Scholefield

The highlights of my life before Somerville were mainly holiday trips, often abroad with various penfriends in France, Germany and Italy, and most years in the summer to Lyme Regis with my parents. I was into music, drama, films and books and submitted a play script inspired by “2001: A Space Odyssey” and David Bowie’s “Is there life on Mars?” to the Citizens Theatre in Glasgow. It didn’t win the competition, but I learned a lot from the challenge of writing it. My father was keen on me becoming a geologist or scientist, so I did pure maths (including a bit of computing) and geography A levels, with French and Latin on which my mother (who taught French) had given me such a good start.



School threw a spanner in the works by suggesting I do a crash course in ancient Greek and apply to Somerville to read Classics - or Greats as it was then called. The rest, as they say, is history. In the middle of all this, I got married to my first boyfriend (his secretary had typed up my play script), was awarded a Sather Assistantship in the Classics Department at the University of California at Berkeley and started my working life in the USA. I learned to type. Our son was born in Seattle in 1979. The marriage was so unhappy that I returned to the UK with the little one, got divorced and in 1981 joined the Civil Service, at the time the only organisation of the many to which I applied prepared to interview, let alone appoint, a single mum.

My wonderful parents and grandfather all welcomed my son and me back with open arms. Stability and security had returned to our lives. In return, I was able to care for my parents so that, when the time sadly came for each of them and with NHS support organised by our family GP, they died in their own home - their dearest wish. I now live next to my son and his family, with two little grandsons (7 and 9 years old). We formed a bubble during Covid - and I started writing a novel.

I worked for some 30 years in the Civil Service, in the Cabinet Office, Northern Ireland Office, Communities Department and the Ministry of Defence, including on two peace processes - Bosnia and then taking forward the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. After the Civil Service, I returned to academia for a couple of years at the LSE. I now have a portfolio of roles, on the Advisory Board of LSE IDEAS (a think tank specialising in international diplomacy, defence and security matters) and above all at a wonderful NHS mental health Trust. It is such a privilege to help support the great work they do as we all struggle to recover from the pandemic.

Gill Sharpe (Parkes)

From Warwickshire to Cumbria....and all the 'places in between'.

I was so fortunate to attend an excellent Girls' Grammar, Rugby High School. Somerville took me as a putative chemist and I left a materials scientist - intrigued by the latter, somewhat hybrid, discipline after several vacation placements.

A career in industry followed, beginning with purely technical positions and then in techno/commercial senior roles at several UK manufacturing enterprises.



This move provided the opportunity for extensive overseas travel throughout Europe, the US and the Far East - principally in the performance chemicals and materials sectors. I have to say that I found the experience of working in close developmental partnership with other scientists and engineers from such a diversity of cultures extremely rewarding both personally and intellectually. During this period I also presented papers at international industry conferences and latterly served on the board of a local rural enterprise agency.

In my private life I developed a love of the outdoors - hill walking, cycling and cross country skiing in particular. These pursuits have transitioned well into retirement, though they compete with other, perhaps more mentally challenging, occupations: I recently took a masters in Philosophy with the OU and continue to serve as a Trustee Director of a large pension fund of a former employer in yet another interdisciplinary move!

Somerville, almost by definition, gave me a fantastic education: it broadened my horizons and made me look beyond the laboratory and text books (fascinating though they were...).



Somehow it instilled a confidence in my abilities and the transferable nature of my skills. It was here, too, I developed those wonderful, lasting friendships which continue to enrich my life.

So thank you, Somerville!

Celia Stuart-Lee (Hogarth)

After my time at Somerville, I lectured in scientific English at Middlesex Polytechnic (a far cry from literary medieval German!). I married Nick, a 17/21 Lancer, and we enjoyed living in Germany. He then became a vicar and we had four children – the first in Dorset, the second in Oxford, the third in Yorkshire and the fourth in Portsmouth. At 39 I did a PGCE and worked for many years teaching French and German in a prep school in Hampshire.



In 2009 I returned to Gerrards Cross where I had grown up, moved into my late parents' house and taught French at St Mary's School for 10 years. Now retired from school teaching, I tutor privately from home.

I have become involved in politics again (it was not possible as a clergy wife) and enjoy the highs and lows of being a Councillor. Suffering with M.E., my husband is limited in his activities. Our son William is the curate at St. Aldates, Oxford. Victoria is a maths teacher, Alexandra has a doctorate in theology but is a full-time mother in the USA and Alice, our youngest, has a doctorate in climatology and lives and works in Utrecht. Thank goodness for Whatsapp!

Hazel Thomas

After graduating I went on to research for a D.Phil. with a thesis on The Perugian nobility c.1200-1430. I spent the first year in Oxford, where I was fortunate enough to have a room in the Margery Fry House among fellow postgraduates from around the world a little senior to me, a truly mind-broadening experience. After that I spent one full year in the archive in Perugia and two years as a Rome Scholar at The British School in Rome with its community of fellow young researchers, visiting academics and resident artists and its links to the international academic life of Rome.

I emerged with a doctorate but little desire to continue in the academic world, and so I trained as a Chartered Accountant in the City before returning to Rome with Price Waterhouse, where I worked mainly in audit and investigations for five years until 1989.

At that point I transferred to London and in the jargon of the time “re-sprayed” into corporate tax, with a specialism in transfer pricing. Press articles which mention transfer pricing usually follow it up with a phrase like “the mechanism whereby multinationals avoid tax”, but in fact it is simply a necessary precondition of international trade within multinational groups which inevitably has tax consequences. Before the late 1980s there had been little activity outside the USA in this area, but the situation began to change. In London I worked a great deal with Japanese companies targeted by the Inland Revenue and helped in developing the Firm’s practice in the Far East during the 1990s, especially Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong. Over time transfer pricing became a key tax area in more and more countries. Except Italy. All that changed radically in 2010, one year after the Firm’s global network proposed me to Milan to provide expertise in the field; so the years before my retirement in 2014 were a blizzard of activity.

In the 1990s and 2000s, when not working, I travelled extensively for interest from Turkey east to Central Asia and in the Levant and North Africa.

In retirement, I lived between London and Pontremoli, the most northerly town in Tuscany, where I had restored the top floor of a late medieval palazzo. I had time to extend my pro bono work – with the chaplaincy in Milan and the Board of Finance of the Diocese of Europe, within my local London neighbourhood and for London archaeology; and I continued with some consultancy to PricewaterhouseCoopers mainly in Italy, with a strong commitment to developing the next generation.

This life would have been changed by Brexit; but in fact it was completely upended by my late diagnosis in 2021 with motor neurone disease, which is now at an advanced stage. This final time I am spending in the Cambridgeshire countryside, midway between my family and London friends, where Frances Horgan (Clegg), whom I met almost as I walked through the doors on my first day at Somerville, is a lively source of practical and moral support.

Judith Unwin

I was interviewed for a place to read PPE at Somerville by Lady Hall. The exuberance, the platform heels, and Laura Ashley frock in combination with the razor-sharp intellect were unexpected. At the end of my first year I made the ill-judged decision to continue with Economics beyond Prelims. Reading Lady Hall's obituary I was particularly struck by the sentence 'Inevitably not all Somerville undergraduates proved to have a marked aptitude for economics'.

I was involved in a diverse range of activities during my time at Oxford: the Oxford University Labour Club and the Union, albeit on the fringes of the latter. I fenced for the University which transpired to qualify me for the role of Fights Choreographer for a production of Macbeth. I was privileged to have had Steven Lukes (Balliol) and Archie Brown (St Antony's) as tutors for my specialist Politics papers. Although I enjoyed and was stimulated by my degree I did not work hard enough and my final year was shadowed by the looming prospect of Finals.

After Somerville I joined the merchant bank Lazard Brothers and spent 35+ years in international banking in the City. There were no Ladies cloakrooms on the Partners' floor and women were an exotic rarity - and I suspected not altogether welcome. After an unpromising start working as the assistant to the Chief Cashier - who clearly wondered why I'd been recruited - I was transferred to the Bank's International Division, arranging financing for exports and infrastructure projects in a range of overseas markets. I took to it immediately. I had the opportunity to travel extensively and I met an extraordinary range of people. I liked negotiating transactions and the concomitant need to find consensus between parties who wanted different outcomes as well as the sociability and networking.

I first visited India in 1984 when at Lazards - I was intrigued by it, loved it and have been a frequent visitor ever since. I took a sabbatical in 2006 to research micro finance in rural India. I'm delighted to now be on the Advisory Board of Somerville's Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development (OICSD).

After 10 years at Lazard I joined ANZ Grindlays Bank in London specialising in South Asia. I was appointed to various UK Government advisory roles including the South Asia Advisory Group under the auspices of the then Department of Trade & Industry and participated in many UK Trade Missions.

From 2000 I held a number of roles at BNP Paribas London, the last heading a team working with the international Development Finance Institutions and Multilateral Agencies. During this time I was a Director of the UK India Business Council.

In parallel with my professional career I've held a number of Non-Executive Director and pro bono trustee roles, the latter mainly in the arts including theatre and contemporary dance. Most recently I was Chair of Contemporary Applied Arts in London - I've had a long-standing interest in ceramics.

My partner Georgina Paul is the German Fellow at St Hilda's College so I live in Oxford part-time and continue to be involved with Somerville in various ways, including the OICSD.

Judith Wainwright (Paton)

Judith Wainwright is now retired and living on her smallholding in North Pembrokeshire, 5 miles inland from the Irish Sea. After a 35-year career in the aircraft manufacture, technology and management consultancy industries, Judith now keeps horses, maintains a large garden, enjoys the Welsh countryside and cultural life and engages in voluntary activities in Wales. Her working life included roles as Business Planner, Systems Engineer, Management Consultant, Company Director, Trustee and Chair of the Institute of Management Consultancy.



Having married an archaeologist, now sadly deceased, she pursues her interest in archaeology and heritage management as Chair of the Dyfed Archaeological Trust. She has three stepchildren, three step-grandchildren and three step-great-grandchildren all living in various parts of the UK. Any Somervillians who might like to visit on the way to or from the Irish ferry at Fishguard, just 20 minutes drive away, will be made most welcome

Hilary Walters

Marriages: two

Children: none

Degrees: just the one – MA Oxon Lit Hum

Other qualifications: not a lot, not even a PGCE. GCSE and A level in Modern Greek

Jobs: really only one – teacher of Classics (Latin, Greek and Classical Civilisation at Loughborough Grammar School) 1984-2015

Live: in 3 bedroom detached house in West Bridgford, Nottingham

Replacement joints: left ankle; right ankle is going the same way

Implants: (teeth, of course – not anything else) three

Countries visited a lot: Greece and Italy (of course), France, USA, Japan, Spain (especially Canaries for walking), (Germany, Turkey – but not recently)

Countries visited once or twice: Syria (alas alas), Jordan, Tunisia, Egypt, Canada, Albania, India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Austria, Sweden

Countries/ cities I'd still like to visit: Edinburgh, Madrid, Vienna, Croatia, Balkans generally, Morocco

Countries I guess I'll never be able to visit now: Libya, Lebanon, Russia, Ethiopia

Languages I can get by in: Greek, Italian, French, German

Languages I've tried to get on top of: Turkish (I finished Duolingo Turkish in lockdown), Arabic (I can nearly read the alphabet)

Sports I can't play any more: tennis, squash, badminton, skiing (was never any good)

Sports I can still do: swimming, hill walking, gardening (is that a sport?) – but our Notts slugs are something else

Sports that I go to watch: cricket (Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge)

Organisations: Association for Latin Teaching (I am a Vice President and – with help – set up the new website), East Midlands Association of Classics Teachers, Roman Society (must get round to cancelling), Parochial Church Council of St Giles West Bridgford (I am the Secretary)

Choirs: Ruddington and District Choral Society (last concert – Handel Coronation Anthems; I am on the committee and write the programme), Rushcliffe Phoenix Voices (forthcoming concert – medley from Les Miserables, medley from Oklahoma, etc; not really my preferred music but it's a laugh), choir of St Giles, West Bridgford (anthem today – Praise the Lord ye servants, John Blow)

Musical stuff I attend as audience: orchestral music at Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham; Opera North when it tours to Nottingham; Buxton festival; Dartington International Summer School; Southwell festival; occasional visits to other venues

Books I have on the go: Kate Atkinson Shrines of Gaiety (I normally like her stuff but can't get into this one), Le Carre Legacy of Spies, Roderick Beaton The Greeks (I have to write a review – nearly 12 months overdue now). Haven't got the patience to read second rate fiction any more.

Creative things: knitting, crochet (keep re-teaching myself), cooking, taking photos and Pritt-sticking into a scrap book (in this day and age!)

What I am good at: I'm a good teacher, I'm a pretty good administrator, can take minutes (how few people can nowadays!), can write exactly 500 words.

Time at Oxford: marvellous – loved every minute of it. Astounded at how much I learnt (classics-wise and in so many other areas). Have always felt completely confident in most situations knowing I have the degree behind me.

Motto: Semper ubi sub ubi



Julia Yeomans

After Somerville I stayed in Oxford to do a D.Phil. in Theoretical Physics and then on to a post-doc at Cornell University in the USA. The plan was to end up teaching at secondary level but I applied for a few academic jobs and was offered a lectureship at the University of Southampton.



After two years I moved back to Oxford to a Fellowship in Physics at St Hilda's, ending up as Professor of Physics and Head of the Rudolf Peierls Centre for Theoretical Physics.

Research-wise I started in statistical physics and magnetism and have taken a random path through soft matter physics and designing algorithms to theoretical biophysics. Highlights have been election as Fellow of the Royal Society and, last year, as an Honorary Fellow of Somerville.

I am married to Peter Hore who is a Professor of Chemistry and Fellow of Corpus. We have four wonderful daughters, the youngest has just finished at Somerville with a degree in Computer Science (and rowing).

I am reaching the age when the University insists on us retiring and the aim is to have more time for the fun bits – hiking and family, research and teaching – and fewer responsibilities.

I am sorry to miss the reunion but, all being well, I will be on a long-planned trip to India, postponed due to the pandemic. Have a wonderful weekend and hope to see many of you in Oxford in the future.

Victoria Younghusband

I'm not sure that I would have envisaged myself sitting at my (open plan) desk in a City office 50 years on.

I did not complete my Lit Hum degree. After Mods, I had started the Literature and Philosophy modules but discovered I was pregnant towards the end of Trinity term 1975. Although it would have been possible, but logistically difficult, to have stayed on (and Lesley Brown and Nan Dunbar were very supportive), I left, married my long term boyfriend and had my daughter followed 20 months later by my son.



The marriage did not last and I did a law degree at Queen Mary University of London, graduating in 1981 and then the Legal Practice Course. I started my Articles (now training contract) in the City in September 1982, having been grilled at my interview on childcare arrangements, something that couldn't happen today, and been rejected by a magic circle law firm largely, I think, because when they suggested my husband could help with childcare, I said we were divorcing.

I've enjoyed my legal career, working as a corporate lawyer in private practice mostly in London, with 4 years in Hong Kong in the early 1990s and feel blessed still to be working.

Nan Dunbar was very good at keeping me in touch with Somerville. I went to the Centenary Gaudy and others over the years. When I came back to London from Hong Kong in 1995 (a bigger culture shock coming back than going to Hong Kong), the Somerville City Group had just been formed. I got involved and was Joint Chair with Nicola Ralston for a while. I have several friends from Somerville and other colleges from my time there and look back with fondness.

When I came back from Hong Kong, I met photographer Nicolas Tucker at a party. We married the following year. Contacts with Somerville were strengthened when Nic was asked to take photographs at various fund-raising dinners with Baroness Thatcher. Nic died suddenly in November 2019 but it was a lovely marriage and strengthened my interest in art and classical music and opera. He also encouraged me to get a horse.

I now live in South Kensington and North Dorset. I have five grandsons, aged between 17 and 8.



In Memoriam

Dr Geraldine Ashworth - *Physiological Sciences*

Frances Cousins - *Modern Languages (French and Spanish)*

Lorraine Hurwitz - *Modern History*

Eugenia Jackson (née Delamotte) - *English Language and Literature*

Dr Sylvia Meek - *Zoology*

Frances Mallary (née Neville-Rolfe) - *Modern History*

Lisa Minoprio - *Jurisprudence*

Diane Parker - *Mathematics*

Angela Quinn - *English Language and Literature*

Jean Taylor (née Jeffrey) - *Chemistry*

Hazel Woodcock - *Modern Languages (French and Russian)*

Katrina Hayward (née Mickey) - *Dip. Comparative Philology*

Lynn Teskey (née Naranjit) - *Dip. Social Anthropology*

Dr Jean Thomas - *MSc Clinical Medicine*

Dr Geraldine Ashworth

I had the pleasure of working with Geraldine Ashworth for a number of years in the Oxford Craniofacial Unit, which is one of the national services within the NHS treating children from all parts of the UK.

She was instrumental in setting up the service in the 1980's and continued as a valued team member until the late 90's when she moved to a permanent role in the Breast Surgery Service.

Throughout her time in the CF service she played a huge role, not only supporting the families and children with significant and lifelong conditions, ensuring the smooth management of both the clinical pathways here in Oxford, but also successfully liaising with local services across the UK to arrange and coordinate investigations and specialist care in many aspects of the patients' care.

She was a well-respected and loved colleague who will be missed by all who knew her, both socially and professionally.

Steve Wall (Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon)

Frances Mallary (Neville-Rolfe)

Frances Mary Gabriel Neville-Rolfe, Fanny, followed her mother, Margaret Evans, and her sister Lucy (Baroness) Neville Rolfe to Somerville to read history. I was a historian too and thanks to alphabetical room assignment in Vaughan she was my neighbour and in that first term we helped each other with the Venerable Bede and Gibbon and Fanny introduced me to the making of infallible soufflés and the works of E.F Benson.

After coming down in '76 we needed to job-hunt, so we both stayed with my family in London and went to interviews and on Fridays we would bundle into Fanny's green Morris Minor and she would drive us at top speed to her family home, near Wardour, for the weekend.



After six months of this cheerful regime we had both found congenial work – I with a publishing company and Fanny with the Books and Manuscripts department at Christie's, London. From there she went to Sothebys New York & later married a colleague, Peter Mallary.

They soon moved to his native Vermont, where she had Rebecca. Peter entered State politics as a Democrat, with Fanny's enthusiastic support, and Fanny worked for the Baker Library at Dartmouth College, where her legacy includes the cataloguing of a large collection of sheet music. She then moved into what became a family publishing business as editor of a local monthly paper and a weekly advertiser and her *It's Classified* was successfully migrated online.

In her 50s Fanny and Peter amicably divorced and Fanny blossomed as the author of historical novels and novellas combining sexy scenes with the minutiae of Regency life which she had carefully researched. Writing as Miranda Neville she produced titles such as *Confessions of an Arranged Marriage* and became an increasingly popular author: in touch with the readers who followed her Blog; attending conferences all over the country and collaborating with writers in the same genre who became friends and provided marvellous support when she was struck down by cancer.

Fanny died in 2017 and we all miss her enormously. She is survived by her daughter, Rebecca, her sisters and her brother - and whenever I make a soufflé I think of her.

Celia de Borchgrave d'Altena

Lisa Minoprio

After her law degree at Somerville – during which time she rowed in the Women's Blue Boat in 1975 – Lisa continued her legal studies. She completed the Solicitors' Qualifying Exams in 1977 then entered articles with Frere Cholmeley & Co, qualifying as a solicitor in 1979.

She joined the litigation department of the London firm of Richards Butler and later became that firm's first female partner – an achievement which required her to draft her own partnership deed.

In 1981 Lisa married Tony Higgins, an Oxford contemporary and fellow law student from Lincoln College. They lived in London and later also owned a house in France with a vineyard.

Lisa died of cancer in 1994, a fortnight after her fortieth birthday.

Anne Morton



*From left, Judith Unwin, Lisa Minoprio, Pam Charlton, Sue Pheasey,
Anne Morton, Ginny Covell – Gaudy 1992*

Jean Taylor (Jeffrey)

Once, driving through Honolulu, Jean shouted “Stop!” and jumped out leaving me to find a way to park the car or circle back round. What was so crucial? – a Philip B store so she could buy their shampoo. Jean was always interested in new and different hair and beauty products, even progressing to using her chemistry knowledge to make her own. Another time a sudden request to stop was made; on this occasion it was to buy a broad-brimmed hat in New England. We had many adventures in the States, visiting different areas in both summer and winter; it was the sense of space and the beauty of the countryside which Jean so loved that kept taking us back. The Grand Canyon was a special favourite; we went there five times, if we were in the area Jean just had to go and visit it.

Martin Taylor

Jean and I found we had so much in common when we first met, rooms opposite each other and both studying chemistry. We liked the same music (Ralph McTell), sewing, cooking and even ancient Greek. We shared digestive biscuits and coffee after lectures, discussed the chemistry and the maths, and became firm friends.

She was quite serious in some ways, but with a great sense of fun in others. She was my bridesmaid and godmother to my first son. Her own wedding was a joyous occasion and we would meet at gaudies and exchange Christmas letters. I can still see her wobbling while learning to ride a bike, peering out from her digs over a shop on the Woodstock Road in our 4th year, and turning up unexpectedly after we had all left, but no one had telephones. A private person in many ways, I still miss her.

Elaine Kemp (Mooney)

Memories of Jean... as novice orienteers, taking our first compass reading in the event car park which we later discovered was built over a used car dump. A private person who was nevertheless sociable and liked to tease, with a cheeky grin and a glint in her eye. A sympathetic friend in life's more serious moments. And in later years, just meeting up at the gaudies, and exchanging a few words on Christmas cards, yet still feeling the friendship, and very much missing her when she was gone. I often think of her.

Janet Rogers (Ersts)



Hazel Woodcock

Hazel was a Northerner from Leeds and coming to Somerville to study Modern Languages (French and Russian) was a bit of a culture shock. She soon decided on a different career path and left Somerville without taking a degree. Friends from her time as a student remember her as someone who was warm and funny, as well as an enormously talented linguist.

On leaving Somerville, Hazel had her first taste of NHS work as a lowly nursing auxiliary.

Not put off by bed pans, she started nursing training in earnest and, through the late seventies and early eighties, qualified as a nurse and then as a midwife living in and around Oxford and working at the then new John Radcliffe Hospital.

She managed to fit in a year in a small hospital in Dharamsala, India, home of the Dalai Lama in exile where she helped to train local nurses and attended classes in Buddhism.

The early eighties were also when Hazel became a peace activist, starting with Greenham Common and, in subsequent decades, becoming active in local groups and “actions” at Faslane and elsewhere. She had firmly caught the travel bug and, in 1985, worked as a nurse in outback Australia before travelling home via New Zealand, China and the Trans-Siberian Express, stopping briefly in the UK to get married before heading off back to Australia for, as it turned out, the next five years. Hazel’s mission was women’s health and, in Australia, she worked as a homebirth midwife before having two children of her own (at home) and then working at the University of Western Australia on the relative safety of home and hospital births, contributing to the literature and attempting to influence state and federal policy (akin to pushing a large boulder uphill).

Back in the UK in 1991 she lived in the Peak District villages of Hathersage and then Grindleford juggling parenthood and midwifery but also managing to find plenty of time for family and friends and ticking off a few more “Wainwrights” in the Lake District.



In her midwifery career she always leaned towards natural births and the avoidance of unnecessary intervention. She strongly believed in women’s “right to choose”, which in practice meant a rearguard action to stop the closure of local midwife-led birth centres. Through her final years she focused on infant feeding and worked as Infant Feeding Coordinator at Rotherham General Hospital. From 1999 on she had several brushes with breast cancer and associated secondaries although these didn’t stop her from continuing her active life. The disease did finally catch up with her and she died in 2013.

Hazel is remembered gratefully as someone who, at a time when she and many of her contemporaries were involved in 1970’s feminism, also showed a deeply serious and intensely practical commitment to supporting women.



