

WESLEY WOMEN

# WESLEY WOMEN

1911-2011

*Compiled by*  
Yvonne Corcoran, Esther Glenfield,  
Nathan Walsh and Thomas Wyse Jackson

*Edited by*  
Annetta Kavanagh

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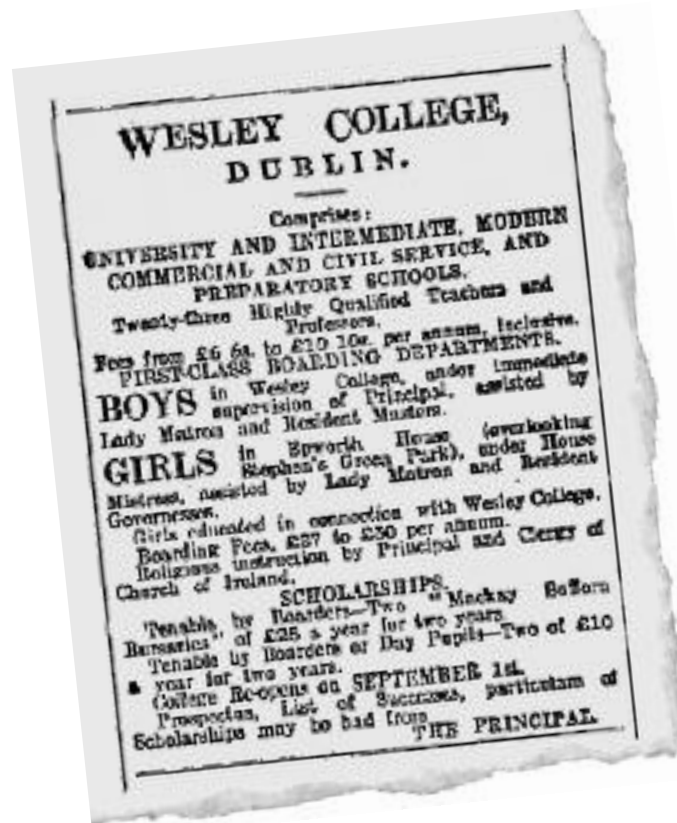
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Wesley College  
2011

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Advertisement from *The Irish Times*, 19 July 1911

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## Introduction

Dear Reader,

IN OCTOBER OF LAST YEAR, we embarked on a project to find and record the memoirs of Wesley's female alumni. Our aim was to publish a book preserving the memories and stories of one hundred years of co education in Wesley. We started out with high expectations; by November we had four replies. It was beginning to look more like a pamphlet than a book. In late November there came heavy snowfall and a sudden avalanche of replies. After sending out a few rounds of letters, designing a page for the school website, setting up a Facebook page and a letter published in *The Irish Times* more responses followed. Finally, we were on our way.

In today's world of GHDs and hair dryers, we have come a long way from the 1930s, when the girls would fan their hair out in front of the fire in an effort to dry it. Today, our mealtimes are our own, rather than in the early days, when students were given topics to discuss, so as to avoid "idle chat". In 1966, a heel of bread constituted a culinary delight, whereas today we have the salad bar, light options, fresh fruit, chocolate biscuit cake, and the ever-popular banoffi. In a year where we entered the hockey season defending both major titles, and hosted the All-Ireland Senior Boys' finals, it's strange to look back on the full length hockey skirts and blouses of 1911 and wonder how they ever competed. Moreover, in an age of interactive whiteboards, data projectors, computers in every room, two dedicated computer suites and even a cyber-library, it's difficult to imagine that just twenty five years ago, *the* computer was wheeled into class to study binary numbers.

As we read over the memoirs it is fascinating to see how not only have the facilities, uniforms and location changed, but also the societal attitudes to women in the past 100 years; from the early letters, where the girls were "tolerated" to the most recent, where there is no discernable difference or discrimination.

Our research has been interesting, enjoyable, and always good fun. It was not without incident, not least losing our entire email accounts half way through the process, and a large proportion of our contacts disappearing from the mail merge. Wednesday afternoons were never dull.

We would like to thank all our contributors who have given so generously of their time, and without whom we would not have this publication.

We hope you enjoy the book.  
Sincerely,

Yvonne Corcoran  
Nathan Walsh.

Esther Glenfield  
Thomas Wyse Jackson.

Junior Grade A					W
Boarder or Day Pupil	Admission Date	Birth Date	Name	Left	Week ending
				Sept. 1911	Sept. 1911
				Week ending	Week ending
				Sept. 1911	Sept. 1911
				M. T. W. T. F. S.	M. T. W. T. F. S.
B	22.1.94		White T. V.		
D	3.3.97		Costello J. W.		
D	11.8.96		Dock W. B.		
B			Gillespie.		
D	11.1.97		Blairville E. C.		
D	15.7.98		Saidlaw W. A.		
D	26.8.98		Luke J. B.		
D	29.5.97		Panley W. O.		
D	2.2.96		Baunders J. L. L.		
D	11.2.97		Stoney E. A.		
D	28.7.97		Hendon D. L.		
D	4.8.97		Darker E. K.		
B	12.5.97		Condie E.		
D			Bolton P. J.		
D	25.5.96		Day L.		
D	11.8.96		Budlow H. J.		
D	27.2.97		Robinson D. C.		
D	11.3.97		Stoney L. H.		
D	6.7.96		Nickery M. R.		
D	25.4.96		Keeney D. L.		
D					
D	25.10.97		Leach R. A.		
B	11.12.97		McGullagh E. R.		

Page from the Roll Book for 1911

## FOREWORD

# Wesley College and Co-education 1911-2011

*'There is no doubt co-education cultivates a greater mutual knowledge and respect ...'.*

DR. T. J. IRWIN, principal, Wesley College, 1910-45.

WESLEY COLLEGE, Dublin, is one of the foremost co-educational secondary schools in Ireland. Founded in 1845 as a Methodist boys' school, girls were first admitted to Wesley one hundred years ago in 1911. Co-education was unusual at the time as the girls' academic high schools founded in the nineteenth century were single sex. It was considered that girls' education should be separate and distinct from that of boys and that for both educational and social reasons the two sexes would not benefit from being taught in the same school.

By 1911 educational opportunities for girls were increasing. The public examinations of the Intermediate Education Board had been open to girls since their inception in 1878 and in 1910 3,933 girls out of a total of 11,900 candidates had entered for the examinations. University education for women also had become more accessible with the opening of Trinity College, Dublin to women in 1904 and of the new National University of Ireland, founded in 1908, which offered equal access to both men and women.

The decision by the principal, Dr T.J. Irwin, in 1911 to admit girls to Wesley, both as boarders and day pupils, was a pioneering and foresighted one. The first girls at Wesley, though a minority, took advantage of the broad education offered and aspired to careers in teaching, nursing, and commerce. In 1912 one girl won a special prize in the Intermediate examinations and further prizes followed this in 1914 and 1919. In 1926 the first Wesley girl was elected a Scholar in Trinity College and gained a first class degree. Though initially co-education was confined to the



classroom, the girls having their own residence house and dining facilities, as the years progressed more mixed social and sporting activities took place. The girls played hockey and tennis from the outset and these sports flourished in the liberal atmosphere of a co-educational school. The development of a co-educational staff added much to the quality of life of the school and many of the past students in their memoirs emphasise how much they gained from being educated in a co-educational school.

This volume of memoirs shows how gradually through the years young women gained a sense of identity and self-confidence and their educational aspirations reached into all areas of school life. Oral history, such as these memoirs, offers an immediacy and personal appeal, which brings educational experience to life. The four editors, Yvonne, Nathan, Esther and Thomas should be justly proud of their centenary project and of its contribution to educational history.

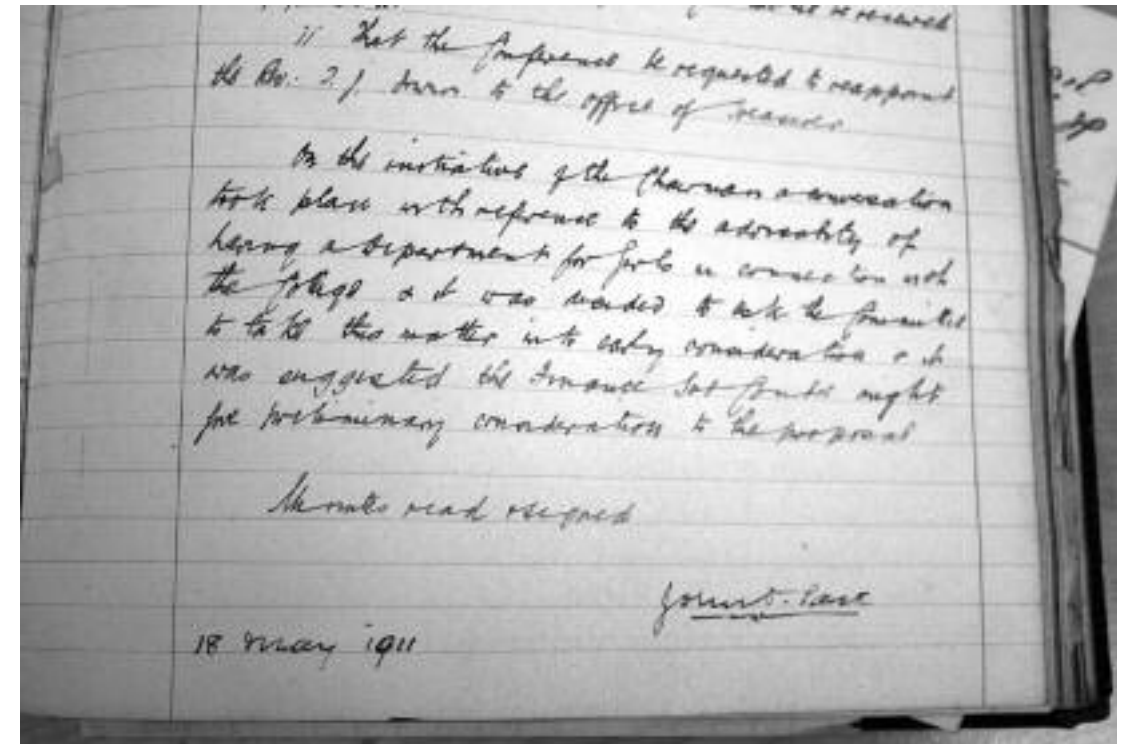
SUSAN M. PARKES

Fellow and former senior lecturer in education,  
Trinity College, Dublin. May 2011.



Old school crest

Extract from Wesley College, Management Committee Book in which the introduction of girls was considered:



On the initiative of the Chairman a conversation took place with reference to the advisability of having a department for girls in connection with the college & it was decided to ask the committee to take this matter into early consideration and it was suggested the finance committee might give preliminary consideration to the proposal.

Minutes read and signed

John Oliver Park.

18 May 1911.

## *Florence Boles* – 1912

Hi Thomas, Yvonne, Esther and Nathan,



WCD Girls First XI 1913

*S*OUNDS LIKE you have undertaken a great project.  
My mother, Florence Boles, died 30 December 1997 aged 95.

When she was 90 we had a party for her with all the family. One of the bits of excitement was a phone call (which I had prearranged) from a lady, surname Hempenstall, who was also 90. She had sat beside my mother in school, but because she moved to England they hadn't spoken since shortly after leaving school. The recollections and chat were marvellous. Sorry I didn't record it.

My mother's grandfather, Dr. Hollingsworth, had been Principal of Wesley, so there was always a close family link with the school. You can see his portrait in your 'rogues gallery' of former Principals. Looking at it when visiting the school a couple of years ago I was amazed that my son Peter looks so like the venerable Doctor. Somehow my mother got it into her head that when Wesley decided to go co-ed she was the first girl enrolled; but I'm not sure of the accuracy of that claim! About 50 years ago she was honoured by an invitation to officially open an extension in Epworth Hall. I was there but am a little hazy about the actual building.

I produced a 'This is your life' for her 90th. It's like a large photo album. One of the early entries is of the Wesley roll book which may interest you. Why don't I lend it to you to aid your research. It would give you details of her life after school, especially her singing career. If you let me know what times might suit I'll call over with the book and try and answer any questions you may like to ask.

My mother's younger brother, Harry Forsyth, was also at Wesley and retained his links with the school for most of his life. I believe he was the instigator/motivator of the move out to Dundrum from Stephen's Green. I can remember him talking about negotiating the purchase of the land from a farmer, and then he went off to USA to raise funds. For some years he was Chairman of the Board of Governors. He died aged 100 about 10 years ago; no, it must have been 1994, because he was born in December, 1993. It was very interesting to hear them both recount their recollections of the 1916 rising in Dublin.

How about that for a start!

Kind regards  
ROBIN BOLES

## *Eileen Trapnell*

(NEE MCKEW) CLASS OF 1926

*First Woman Registrar, Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital.*



Hockey Team 1921-22

**M**Y MOTHER Eileen Trapnell was a pupil at Wesley College from 1923 to 1926. Her name was Elizabeth Eileen McKew, she was born in Dromore Co. Tyrone on the 24th. June 1908 the second eldest of six children. Her father was a Clergyman, salaries were very poor and so Protestant Schools offered education to the children of the Clergy at special rates. Alexandra College had a Boarding section called Clergy Daughters where one of my mother's sisters attended. Eileen was sent to Wesley as a boarder where there must have been a similar arrangement.

Due to their financial situation my mother had been sent at the age of 8 or 9 years to live with her paternal grandparents on Valentia Island Co. Kerry. She lived with them for 3 years before returning home to the North of Ireland and then on to Wesley. Unfortunately she did not tell us a great deal about her time at Wesley except that she got into trouble for leaving lights on as she was used to oil lamps not electricity from her time on Valentia and also that she was often terribly cold at night and that a kind, young teacher used to lend her a hot water bottle (probably a stone or ceramic one) I know that she played on a hockey team that won a tournament or competition and that she got a hockey medal.

The school in those days was on Stephen's Green and the Boarders lived in a house called Tullamaine where the Burlington Hotel now stands. My mother stayed on at Wesley as a student teacher helping with the young boarders in Tullamaine for at least a year when she finished school. She went on to Trinity College around this time and graduated with a B.A. Money was always short and at times she had to return home and do part of her degree through correspondence. She also did a Higher Diploma in Education (H Dip. Ed.), and a secretarial course along the way.

Her first job was as a teacher at Nightingale Hall, Ballsbridge (it later became St. Andrew's College). Her pay was so poor that she was unable to keep herself so with her degree and secretarial skills she applied for a job at Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital as a secretarial assistant to the Almoner (Social Worker). When the Administrator of the hospital became ill she took over his work and in time was appointed to his post. Her picture appeared in the Irish Times as the first woman Registrar of Sir Patrick



Dun's Hospital, quite an achievement. She had to resign from her job in 1945 when she married my father Dick Trapnell (that was the law in those days).

She did return to work as a teacher at Rathgar Junior School in 1960 for about 12 years.

She died in September 2007 aged 99.

SUZANNE HAYES



Tullamaine Kindergarten and Prep Class 1921-1922

*Læ Brown*

(NEE HAMMOND) – CLASS OF 1932

*'The boarders seemed to be at the heart of the school, and it was to their beat that we all marched. As day pupils we felt quite inconsequential.'*

THE EBULLIENT MONKEYS that adorn the façade of what was the then Kildare Street Club were a great source of amusement to a young girl. I was fascinated by the monkeys playing pool and engaged in the various sports associated with gentlemen at that time. It was 1926 and I was ten years of age. Every day I took the train from my home in Sandymount to Westland Row and then walked down Kildare Street, through the Green and to school. It would seem unconscionable for a child to make this journey alone nowadays; but there were fewer risks and a great deal less traffic in those days.

My school days are very much in the dim and distant past. I think that at that time there was a very clear distinction between day pupils and boarders. The boarders seemed to be at the heart of the school, and it was to their beat that we all marched. As day pupils we felt quite inconsequential. That said, I had many wonderful friends who were both day pupils and boarders.

The day began with Assembly and prayers taken by Dr Irwin. I joined the choir which I enjoyed immensely. I was taught violin by Miss Alton. The Choir Master was Willy Watson and the organist was Turner Huggard. At that time there were a number of Jewish students in the school and I remember a particularly talented musician named Louis Jacobson. I joined the school orchestra and we would be called upon to play at Prize Distribution and various official events throughout the year. The highlight of the year was the Annual Sports at Tullamaine. It was a very festive occasion and the orchestra played while the races ensued. Sergeant Major Hawkins was a formidable figure and his gymnastic and drill displays were very impressive.

I enjoyed Domestic Science. We made under garments with lace panels which were meticulously sewn by hand. In cookery class we made scones, bread, and good wholesome dishes. These were the classes I enjoyed most. Women were far less ambitious in those days. It was expected that one would marry and have a family, thus being schooled in Domestic Science was very important. School was much less stressful than it is today; there was no real emphasis on points, particularly for the girls. We enjoyed



Girls Domestic Science-1926

ourselves. The teachers wore gowns and were quite remote and authoritarian.

I took the commercial course and studied Shorthand, Typing and Book-Keeping. After school I secured a job with Hamilton and Hamilton Estate Agents on Dawson Street. I was aged seventeen and I was employed as secretary to Willoughby Hamilton. I lived in Terenure and some days would cycle to work then cycle home for lunch, cycle back to town and then home again in the evening! I continued to play club hockey which was fun.

I was a founder member of the Dublin Orchestral Players. I later joined the Dublin County Choir and sang with them for twenty one years. I married and had a family. My husband worked in the bank which necessitated moving to many different towns in Ireland. I have had a long and very happy life.

ZOË BROWN

## Joyce Burnell

CLASS OF 1938

*'Spring arrived, and with it Scarlet Fever, three girls were sent off to Baggot Street Hospital for six weeks. No quick cure in those days.'*

Dear Thomas,

✂ TODAY I have received your request for memories of my days attending Wesley College. I could fill a book but here is my first installment.

Born December 30, 1920 in Kilquade House, Kilquade and named Olive Joyce Hudson. My sister Doreen was five years older and had attended Wesley, she married Ronald Mc Donnell, both became highly respected antique dealers leaving a legacy of scholarships and a world renowned 'Doll's House' named Tara's Palace at Malahide Castle.

At 12 years of age I graduated from Greystones National School to becoming a boarder at Tullamaine September 1933. I idolised Miss Beaumont, a resident teacher, and made up my mind that I wanted to be like her. A young man wooed her and took her to Australia and I never saw her again. A seed was planted then that never wavered; I wanted to be a teacher.

Miss Stevens was the head teacher and one day we girls threw a blanket over her head and then bumped her down a flight of stairs on her derriere. I wonder today how we ever got away with such behaviour!

Another memory is of a beautiful little three year old named Barbara in a play, we are still friends as she lives in Picton, Ontario married to Bill Fairbairn. She visits her sisters in Dublin regularly. Being athletic I loved hockey, tennis and drill with the sergeant.

My next move was to Epworth with the big girls. Dormitory living was fun. I enjoyed playing practical jokes but Miss Smith (Smithy) soon had my number and I was always being punished for something. We planned a midnight feast, calculated a roast chicken, walnut chocolate bee-hive cakes, a marzipan cauliflower cake and other goodies carefully hidden in our laundry bags or under the floor boards. Miss Smith discovered our plan and, smiling, made us hand over everything the next day to an orphanage; that hurt.

By 1936 I was an Epworth Boarder in dormitory Six; the youngest Prefect was given responsibility for me because I was so mischievous. For our night time entertainment we practiced Morse code using flash lights to another building where boys resided.

Saturday was the day for hair washing and mending clothes. There were

Wesley College  
Memorial Chapel



no hair dryers in those days so we lay on the floor in front of the fire with our heads to the flame. On one occasion a student knelt down and shrieked; something had gone into her knee. After X-rays at the emergency it was revealed she had a needle under her knee cap. No wonder she screamed.

Spring arrived and with it Scarlet Fever; three girls were sent off to Baggot Street, Hospital for six weeks. There were no quick cures in those days. Exactly three weeks later I was one of three girls to get it so we were taken to the hospital. Roberta, Dorie and me. Apart from feeling itchy none of us felt sick, so how do you deal with active girls for six weeks. My sister Doreen brought me navy blue wool and knitting needles and I knit myself a sweater for school the first week. I knit five more in the next five weeks. At least this kept me from jumping up and down on my bed like a Jack in the box, and hoping the nurses wouldn't catch me.

Seventy five years later I knocked on Dorie's door in Birr (Now Mrs. Haslam). Did she recognise me? No. I said "We had scarlet fever together," A surprised Dorie said, "Now I remember you Joyce jumping up and down on your bed and making us laugh."

Another memory stands out in my mind. A student walked around the study looking for someone to be a 'pen pal' to a Canadian girl called Marion Nickleson, just a year older than me. I responded to the challenge and wrote my first letter to her in Stratford, Ontario. We both chose teaching as our profession and became friends for life. She passed on at eighty while her children call me 'Aunt Joyce.' We had a lasting friendship.

All the very best with your project,  
JOYCE

*Doris Colter*

CLASS OF 1941

*'You must remember it was 1935, girls were kept in the background more. The boys were looked upon as being the future.'*

— In conversation with  
Yvonne Corcoran, Thomas Wyse Jackson, Nathan Walsh and Esther Glenfield.

*Ne* P THE STAIRS, there was a gym hall for the boys. They were different times, we didn't mix at all. These days, you would mix and wouldn't even think about it!

*Were there subjects offered for girls that were different to boys?*

Let me tell you, before I went to Wesley, my father died when I was four and my mother moved up to Dublin; a widow with three girls and a boy. My brother was two years younger than me. We went to a private school in Clontarf from about four to twelve, and it was a lovely small school. I loved that. I went to Wesley, and it was a complete change. The eldest went to Alexandra College but I wanted to go to Wesley with my brother.

We were brought up, not strictly now, but with rules. After school, we came straight home. The only time I got out was when my brother was playing rugby. He was on the Wesley rugby team. The whole class went out to see them in Bloomfield. Tullamaine was where the hockey and sports were, and Epworth Hall was where the senior boarders stayed.

There was one girl I was very friendly with, she was a boarder. Her name was Kathleen Morris. The boarders tended to stay on the premises so we didn't see that much of them. They weren't allowed out unless they had a letter to go out on a Saturday; they were stricter times.

*Was Chapel very important? Did you have to attend Chapel?*

Yes, we had morning Assembly in the big hall, but if there was any occasion, we would go into the chapel. It was lovely actually, I didn't mind at all. I got very involved in the choir and I loved that end of it all, the choral music.



*Principal?*

The Rev. Dr Irwin was the Principal. He was a lovely man. My Maths teacher was Mr McDowell; he too was a great man, but he was rugby crazy! If there was a rugby match on, he would give us the afternoon off, on the condition that we would cheer them on. Of course, we all went because it was a half day, if you didn't go, the next day he would ask!

I hadn't studied Irish in the private school that I had attended been previously, so they decided to give me an exemption as there wasn't any point in my doing it. I did Domestic Economy and Hygiene instead. I loved that actually. Baking and hygiene and so forth; it was downstairs, in the kitchens. It was a bit of a laugh. We got to make rice puddings and bread, basic things. I can't remember any boy taking it as a subject though!

There was a Latin teacher whom I adored. The minute she came into the class, she was a big woman, she'd tell us to write out the date in Latin. She had a lovely personality. It was the only subject I ever got 98% in, though I don't remember a word of it now. I loved it because of her. She was funny. A teacher has a lot to do, I think, with how much you learn. They said I had a tidy mathematical mind, whatever that meant. Not as much so now that I'm older.

*Were boys treated differently from girls?*

Yes, I'd say they were. We were tolerated. That was the impression we got! They got all the attention. We were well treated but the real emphasis was on the boys. I think we were one of the first Co-ed schools. The men tended to be concentrated on because they were going to have the careers. Women couldn't work when they married in those days. In 1950 I had to leave my job to get married. I had to leave on the exact day that they told me, not a day more! Now, of course, women can work and it's wonderful! Life has changed. Wesley was a very good school; I have nothing at all against it. I enjoyed it.

*Did you play sport?*

No, I wasn't really a hockey person. If I played hockey, I would have had to go straight from school and go to Tullamaine, and then back to Clontarf on my own. So my mother said no, and I don't really blame her. I never really liked hockey, but I loved tennis and badminton. They were my favourite games. But we only had hockey in school. But I had to get home. In the evening time, it was about five o'clock when I'd get home, after leaving the house at eight in the morning, it was a long day.



Tennis – from *Wesley College Quarterly*, June 1935

*Different uniforms for summer and winter?*

No, not really. We had a blouse and jumper in the winter...along with the tie, and panama hat and a blazer and a gabardine and long stockings and shoes! We were all the same so it didn't matter. All having the same uniform is much smarter.

*What do you make of students today?*

I'm amazed at the students today; I see them on the television being interviewed. With all their technology, and the laptops...it's all double-Dutch to me! The world has changed so much.

*Were there trips to the theatre?*

No, no...well none that I remember! No, nothing like that.

*Christmas carols? Carol singing?*



We had a Carol Service. I think it was to do with where we were situated, in the middle of the city. Everyone used to come from all round into the city, times were different. But now, you've got everything around you. You've got your theatre here, your plays here; but we couldn't do it. It was just school. There wasn't really much transport only buses. My brother-in law used to bring me to school in the morning, he worked in the bank. There would be about five minutes to spare so I'd walk up Grafton Street, up Stephen's Green, actually panting! I'd get there just as the bell was ringing for assembly. I would get the bus home in the evening. I think the bus fare was a penny. I had to walk to Eden Quay. Once there I would sit down and do a little homework. It wasn't a great life for many people.

#### *Founder's Day?*

There was a service. That Chapel was lovely. We all went in and the choir sang. It was nice. I liked that end of it, I must say. But looking back on it, I would say it was all very clinical. There was no love or togetherness, no affection. That was just the times. The teachers weren't overly concerned if you weren't doing well, or if you were in trouble or that. Nowadays the relationship between teacher and pupil would be much closer than it was then. Back then, you daren't challenge a teacher or talk back. You'd put up your hand and say 'Excuse me', and it had to be something worth saying as well! But this was in all schools, not just Wesley. I know that from my friends. I suppose when you think back eighty seven years ago it's a different country.

#### *Girls and boys different punishments?*

We were kept in and that meant that you were to do homework, or you were sent home with extra homework. It depended on the day or time of year; now we weren't caned or anything like that! I do remember an Irish teacher who used to hit the boys with a book on the back of the shoulder if they got something wrong. You wouldn't do that today! Mr McDowell was one of my favourite teachers. I think he was a hard task-master. You had to be good at Maths and you had to do what he wanted. But that's how it should be. He was a very good teacher. There's a memorial trophy or something awarded in his name these days. He was the sort of man that had a real presence; everyone was in awe of him. You weren't afraid of him, but you just respected him.

#### *Holidays*

We had three months in the summer. We had two weeks, I think, at Christmas and at Easter but we didn't have as many bank holidays or half-

terms. I don't remember anything like that, except for Halloween when we had a long weekend.

#### *Deportment Classes?*

We had a gym and we had to do exercises, and we had to walk. I still got arthritis, it didn't make any difference! It was once a week for half an hour. Another thing that they didn't have that I would have like was elocution lessons. They didn't have elocution lessons. I think elocution is very important. Now I'm old, but I like to listen to the programmes and be able to hear the voices on the BBC or something like that. It's very important as you go through life. If you speak well more people will want to listen to you.

I never got the deportment medal, as I wasn't tall! I was only five feet one; it was always the tall, slim-legged girl that got it. But it was still very good for you.

Drama wasn't important. I don't remember ever putting anything on. It was very basic, it was the times. You must remember, in 1935, girls were kept in the background more. The boys were looked upon far more as being the future.

#### *Were there more male staff?*

I would say maybe 60/40 in favour of men. But there were a lot of women and they were nice. I preferred to be taught by a man, funnily enough. They weren't quite as sarcastic. They were nicer to the girls anyway. They were probably being more gentlemanly. Mr MacDowell was always very nice. He'd always shout at the boys, but never at the girls, but he'd tell you if you were wrong.

#### *Girls and science?*

I can't remember quite honestly, I didn't do it. I don't think so. I don't know of any of the girls that did science. The curriculum was languages, English, geometry, Holy Scripture, history, geography...algebra, I didn't mind so much.

I joined in 1935 and I was there during the war. I was there until I was 17. The war didn't have any impact on us at that age at that time. I don't really remember it much at all. We had the same routine all the time, it didn't really affect us. You knew it was there, but you didn't have television so you didn't see it. And you wouldn't get much from the papers. Rationing impacted on us a bit. Particularly on tights! I remember my elder sister and I always arguing as I used to always steal her tights. We had ration

books. Only certain things were rationed, you could buy other things if you had the money. We never really noticed it as a matter of fact, not really food wise anyway. It was a very different way of life it's hard to get your head around it now.

*Did girls aspire to university?*

It wasn't a thing that they aspired to, to be honest. Well none of my group aspired to do anything like that. I think there was one who became a nurse, but then she got married. Nobody went into teaching. I worked in an office doing accounts. It was the only job I ever had, I was terribly happy there. We used to have great fun, we went on outings, and I kept all my friendships. We used to go swimming on the way home from work. We'd cycle down, it was very enjoyable. I think that I was happier in a small environment, with a bit of tender loving care, which I didn't get in school at the time. We weren't deprived of anything, but still it was an austere environment.

I learned the piano outside of school, from my older sister. There was a choir in Wesley. When you went into the chapel, you heard the choir, but it wasn't a big thing. It was a mixed choir. It wasn't a big deal, not like today, with all of these choir competitions! The participation is really lovely.

As I get older, I wish I had done more. I wish I had done nursing, or some sort of care work.

I feel that I missed out, that I didn't do more. That was the time; women were homemakers and not really anything more.

*Jean Pappin*  
(NEE PRATT) CLASS OF 1942

*'Sergeant Major Hastings took drill with passion and enthusiasm. Boys and girls were segregated; in fact we seldom even spoke to the boys. There were no socials or anything which remotely resembled co- education'.*

I ARRIVED IN WESLEY as a boarder in 1937 and took up residence in Tullamaine. I moved to Epworth Hall the following year, where the headmistress was Miss Alexandra; at that time Dr Irwin was the Principal of the school. He was a Methodist Minister and he was always very kind to the girls.

My time in Wesley was framed by two tragedies. The first of which was the outbreak of the Second World War; and the second, more personal tragedy, was the death of my father in 1940 closely followed by the death of my brother in 1941. Children have the capacity to take sorrow in their stride, but I was grateful to Miss Alexandra for her understanding of my loss.

Before the war Jewish refugees from Germany joined us in Wesley. I have a special memory of twins George and Ava Pick. They were smuggled out of Germany by a charitable organisation. Eva was so traumatised by the entire experience that she did not speak. Her brother, George, fared rather better. He left Wesley and went on to work in *The Irish Times*.

In the summer of 1940 I developed pleurisy and was put in a small dormitory where I befriended another German refugee called Dorli Brun. She had very little English. After some weeks she just seemed to disappear. It was rumoured that she had fled to America.

The war years brought its own peculiarities. Everything was in short supply. As a girl I studied Domestic Science and we scrambled to find remnants of fabric to make garments. One would not be given a new copybook until the old one was well and truly used up. They were frugal, but not unhappy times. The basement in Epworth Hall was the designated air raid shelter. One particular evening the emergency bell rang and we immediately put the emergency drill into action. We arrived in the basement and some classmates suggested that we sing hymns to alleviate the fear. I, for one, was certainly not in favour of singing dirges to create a distraction! It was not unusual for German fighter planes to miss their targets and on this particular night a bomb was indeed dropped quite close to the school.

I shared a dorm with a lovely girl from Athy named Grace Jackson. The sheets had worn thin and Grace accidentally put her foot through the



Senior First XI – 1944-1945

sheet. She decided to cut and keep a piece of the sheet as a souvenir. The sheets were duly sent to the laundry. The following week all the girls were summoned to line up outside the Library in Epworth. Individual interviews were conducted. Grace was further down the line and when she discovered that the source of the interrogation was the bed sheet she owned up immediately. They were innocent times and we revered authority.

We all studied Irish, English, Mathematics, French and Scripture. I liked English. I still have my poetry anthology and to this day can quote from , among others, *Oxymandias* and *The Listeners*: 'as the silence surged softly backwards' isn't that fabulous.

The routine of school was broken by sport; tennis in the summer and hockey throughout the rest of the year. I was never much enthused by

sport. I played left wing which allowed for a certain degree of latitude! In Tullaimaine there was a gym, and Sergeant Major Hastings took drill with passion and enthusiasm. Boys and girls were segregated; in fact we seldom even spoke to the boys. There were no socials or anything which remotely resembled co- education.

Classes were strictly streamed the A class would take the Leaving Certificate; the B and C streams would be considered less academic. Most of the girls at that time took a secretarial course.

I was held back a year due to my illness and longed to leave school. After the Intermediate Certificate I no longer boarded. I stayed in the GFS and took the secretarial course. On leaving Wesley I managed to get a job in Jacobs, and after that I moved to Guinness where the work was more interesting and I was given greater responsibility. I married in 1949. Without the Leaving Certificate career choices were restricted but that was the time; the boys were seen as the bread-winners.

It is hard to imagine now how simple our lives were. People were more reserved and teachers, though not uncaring, were far more formal and distant then.

## Florence Campbell

(NEE JACOB) – CLASS OF 1944

I ENTERED EPWORTH HALL on Appian Way aged eleven. I was from New Ross in County Wexford and both boarding and Dublin seemed very alien to me. I have happy memories of school, even though I was a boarder during the war years and times were hard. Each day would begin with Assembly and prayers; and we went to church twice on a Sunday. Certainly Sunday leave would not be granted until one had attended services. The girls had very little to do with the boys in those days, outside of the classroom we were very much segregated. The girls sang in the choir in the College Chapel, regrettably I was not a singer but I did enjoy the musical performances. I loved sport, particularly tennis and I have Wesley to thank for nurturing this. Drill with the Sergeant was a very physical, almost military workout. Boarding in those days was from the beginning of term to the end, there was no leave in between and there was no such thing as long weekends. My parents would come up to visit when they could, of course petrol was rationed.

I have a very clear memory of the maths teacher, Mr McDowell; maths was not my strength and he had little patience with those who were not mathematically minded. I loved the practical subjects and Domestic Science in particular. Food was strictly rationed so there was little variety; we made soups and wholesome broths. In sewing classes we were taught how to make garments and embroider. My father was in the grocery business and he sent fifty pounds of butter and a sack of potatoes up to Epworth. The uniform lisle stockings were a constant source of irritation; they were certainly the most disagreeable part of the uniform.

On reflection boarding in the 1940s was probably very severe. I have a memory of the dormitory being very cold always; the study Hall had two large open fires around which we would huddle to keep warm. Every Saturday we would file into line and have our hair inspected for nits. It was a tedious process in which the matron would meticulously fine comb every girl's head. We had a bath once a week and one had to ensure that one's name was down early in the week. Miss Abernethy would patrol the dorms and lights would be turned off at 8.30 pm. I think we had cocoa and biscuits before bed. In fact, we had very little free time; we were walking to or from school, engaged in sport, taking meals or study. We hardly had an idle moment, one afternoon a week we were allowed in to

town. Miss Smyth succeeded Miss Alexander as Lady Warden and I thought her very fair-minded.

Birthdays were not really celebrated; a food parcel would usually arrive from home and the goodies would be shared among friends. I was lucky enough to have a very good friend whose parents would send parcels of eggs, jams, marmalade and other provisions through the post. It seems incredulous now that eggs would be sent though the post.

I completed the Commercial course in Wesley with Miss Taylor. I managed to secure a job with The Methodist Trustees and worked for the Rev. M. Alley as assistant to the secretary. I married in 1947; I remember collecting coupons for the dress. It was Post-war Ireland and there were still shortages. On leaving school I was actively involved in the Old Girls' Union. It was separate from the Old Boys' Union at the time. We had reunions in Dublin and also regional reunions. It was very sociable and a great way of keeping in touch with school friends.

I always loved cooking and baking and settled in to married life. In those days it was impossible to source unusual or exotic ingredients, nevertheless I enjoyed entertaining. I was approached by *The Farmers Journal* to write a cookery column while Myrtle Allen was away on summer vacation. Myrtle never returned, and for thirty four years I wrote for the journal. It was a most exciting and happy time. The copy had to be filed by Wednesday; I enjoyed experimenting with recipes and doing the occasional review of consumer products. Recently, while visiting Bloom in the Phoenix Park, many former readers came up to me to say hello, many still using my recipes all these years later.

During this time my husband and I were very involved with community life in Sutton. We dug and rolled the tennis courts and became life long members. I was lady Captain in 1947.

I have always enjoyed art an interest which began in Wesley. I enrolled in a course in the School of Irish landscape Painting and have enjoyed painting all my life. More recently I have been experimenting with decoupage; it is intricate and time-consuming but most rewarding.

Flower arranging and gardening have been my other two great passions. I am a founder member of the Sutton Floral Art Society and also a member of AOIFA – Association of Irish Floral Artists. Both hobbies have involved some amount of foreign travel which has been interesting and inspiring. I love visiting gardens at home and abroad, collecting plants and experimenting. The computer has opened up a whole new world. I enjoy surfing the net and in keeping in touch with family and friends by e mail. It has been a very full and busy life. That work ethic instilled in the early days of Epworth Hall has no doubt stood to me. I thank Wesley for that, and for the many lasting friendships.



*Joy Duffy*

— CLASS OF 1945

*‘Then there was ‘Slater’ who, when annoyed, fired with great accuracy a piece of chalk at the offending pupil, it was invariably a boy!’*

I WENT TO WESLEY at the age of nine in 1936 starting in Prep C with Miss James. I was put outside the door, for what I know not, but I’m sure it was legitimate. In the door there was a little hole and I pushed my handkerchief through it to the delight of the inmates – but not Miss James.

In later years another girl and I found ourselves being threatened with the cane, again I’m not entirely sure why, by Dr. Irwin. He was a lovely man. Dr. Irwin used to start the morning up on stage selling mundane things like pencils rulers and notebooks, quite below his status, and then he’d clap his hands for prayers. I was appalled to see that some of the students didn’t close their eyes – and how did I know this?

At lunchtime the boys were in the yard and the girls were in the gym and ne’er the lines would meet.

‘Smithy’ taught Latin “Get down today’s date” she would say; and we would desperately try to decipher roman numerals and letters.

Then there was ‘Slater’ who, when annoyed, fired with great accuracy a piece of chalk at the offending pupil, it was invariably a boy! I remember Miss Emerson, Mr Carry, Miss Cooke ‘Mac’, Miss Galbraith who guarded the stairs in the gym. And then there was Mr Navan’s class where we sat in two seater desks.

Sport was my saviour – particularly winning the Junior Cup. I left Wesley when I was 15 having been told I would fail the Intermediate Certificate and that shorthand and typing would be my ‘thing’. I was sent to Villiers in Limerick, a boarding school which I loved – and did the Intermediate Certificate and, as predicted, failed.

I married and have five children who are all now happily married and providing me with 13 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. What more could I want from life at 83?

I am sorry to say that I did not meet any of my classmates at the Annual Wesley Dinner in the Radisson last Friday, it would have been nice to talk about the ‘auld’ days and may I say congratulations to the organizers – it was a wonderful night.

JOY DUFFY

*Pat Maybury*

— CLASS OF 1945

*‘From the very start boys were addressed by their surname, while girls were afforded the courtesy of Miss...’*

Dear Esther,

I ENTERED WESLEY COLLEGE I think in 1940 or 1941. Starting in Prep C. beside the Tuck shop. The classroom was opposite a row of Typewriters for Secretarial students and my memory is that they created a deafening racket! Then I moved to Prep A. which was in a corner of the Assembly Hall, where our teacher was Austin Carry, whom at that time was a well known Inter-Provincial Rugby player. In first year I felt quite important as I had to go to school for a half-day on Saturday! At Break time the boys played outdoors, but the girls were in the Gymnasium, I spent many happy moments swinging on the parallel bar.

We had a lovely Chapel and pipe organ which we walked through to get to the vestry where those who wished to could learn the Bamboo Pipes. We were encouraged to make our own; there was also the Choir, which was very good but for girls only! For those of us learning Piano we had to go to the Music boxes and that is what they literally were boxes! There was room for a piano, one chair for the teacher, and one chair for the pupil and no ventilation. I will never know how those teachers survived.

Senior girl boarders lived in Epworth Hall and juniors in Tullamaine where we had our Sports Day; it is now the Burlington Hotel. Boys and girls sat together in classrooms, but at all other times were segregated. We had two plays on the same day. One all girls and one all boys who looked comically dressed as Women and sometimes with wigs. From the very start boys were addressed by their surname only and girls were afforded the courtesy of Miss. I cannot end without mentioning a fabulous English teacher Miss Cooke, and to this day if ever we meet a school chum we say “Never end a sentence with a preposition”

I hope some of this is of use to you.

Good Luck,

PAT MAYBURY

## Joyce Sweeney

(NEE MALCOLM) – CLASS OF 1945

*'The boys sat at the back of the class and the girls at the front. They did not mingle in class and certainly not during recess.'*

Dear Thomas,

IT IS A VERY LONG TIME since I attended Wesley College. It was during the Second World War and this affected certain activities. Uniform for example was not required at all, though the girl boarders were required to wear navy coloured clothes. Day girls were not restricted; clothes rationing was in force and one needed coupons to purchase all types of clothing. The boys did not have a uniform.

Apart from sport there was little extra-curricular activity. Petrol was strictly rationed and petrol coupons were only issued to persons as a work requirement, so there were no cars available for transport, and public transport finished early. I used to cycle the six miles to school. The cyclists rode about five or six abreast across the city with only a very occasional car on the street – and the driver would be scared stiff of hitting a cyclist!

There was no choice of subjects at all – the whole form studied Latin, French, Irish, English, Geography, History, and Maths. The pupils stayed in the same classroom and the teachers moved from room to room. The only time we left the classroom during lessons was when the boys went to Science and the girls went to Domestic Science. Forms were graded A, B, C, in each year.

Teachers addressed the boys by their surnames and addressed the girls as Miss; so I was Miss Malcolm all through school. Girls at all girls' schools at this time were always called by their Christian names.

The boys sat at the back of the class and the girls at the front. They did not mingle in class and certainly not during recess.

Morning prayers were held in the Large Schoolroom where oddly enough the boys lined up in the front and the girls at the back. The girls marched off first and were seated in the classroom by the time the boys arrived.

When I studied medicine the ratio in our year was ten males to one female. There did not appear to be any discrimination relating to gender. After qualifying I went to England for hospital training – as was the practice by many Irish doctors at that time; then as now, Ireland produced more doctors than could be absorbed into Irish hospitals.

Again there was no discrimination. This was 1952 and women in England had, of necessity, been successfully filling what were previously traditional male occupations during the war years – and for several years afterwards. It is true that there were few women holding Consultant positions in the hospitals but this was to be expected owing to numbers, and women taking time off to raise families, and thereby losing their places in the seniority list.

These days women have their families much later in life if they aim for high hospital positions. The days of discrimination were well and truly over by the time I qualified.

Good luck with your project.

Best wishes,

JOYCE

1945 Wesley College First XI



*Irene Morrow*

— CLASS OF 1945

Dear Esther, Yvonne, Nathan and Thomas,

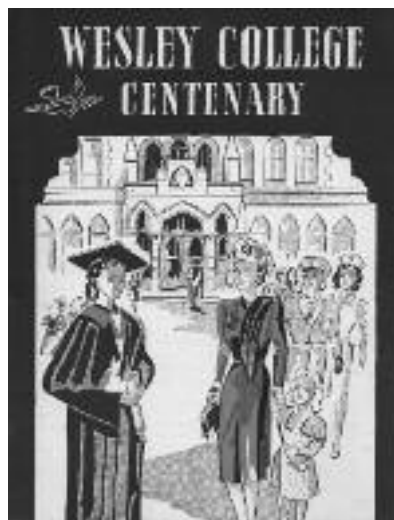
*I* THANK YOU for your letter. You set me a difficult task: it would be easier to answer questions!

However, I do have one memory which is as clear as if it were yesterday. I was the goalkeeper on the junior hockey team that won the Schools Cup in 1944. For years I treasured that cutting from the Evening Herald that referred to Olive Downer, who scored the goals, and to me for “many fine saves”. Regrettably, my sporting career was all downhill after that!

All best wishes for your project  
Sincerely

IRENE MORROW

P.S. Did you know that Mr. Ian Boles of Burgess and Co. Athlone is the son of Florence Forsythe who was the first girl enrolled at Wesley College? At the distribution of Prizes day in 1945 (I think) she was the guest soloist.



Wesley College Centenary, 1945

*Maud Fitzgerald*

(NEE SUTTON) — CLASS OF 1946

*I*N 1945 THERE WAS a mixed hockey match to mark 100 years of Wesley College. It was played on the 19th November 1945 in Tullamaine, which was the then Junior Girls' Boarding House, and also Junior School. It is now the site of the Burlington hotel. The teams were mainly derived from players in fifth and sixth form and were dressed as ancient and modern. Only girls played hockey at that time and boys only started to play hockey in Wesley in the 1970s with the arrival of Mr and Mrs Blackmore. This meant one took one's life in one's hands going up to play mixed hockey with those long sticks and no shin pads or mouth shields!

CO EDUCATION 1940S STYLE:

Although Co-ed contact between boys and girls was not encouraged except to support teams at rugby or hockey cup matches, the sexes were even segregated into boys and girls Dining Halls for lunch. Chat in the corridors wasn't allowed so as you can imagine in this context the highlight of the year was the Christmas Party when boys were allowed to invite girls (although all the boarders went anyway).

One year, mid-party conduct between boys and girls was deemed inappropriate for the standards of the day (maybe some hand-holding and noisy chatter) so Sandy, Miss Alexander, the Lady Warden, lined up the girls and marched them back down Leeson Street to Epworth House where they got a lecture on conduct appropriate for young ladies.



The ancient team dressed in 1845 style

Brian Weir (became head of St Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School), Alexandra Smith (Her mother was in the first intake of girls to Wesley in 1911 and her aunt was the infamous "Smithie", teacher of Latin ("Write the Date"!)) Lady Warden and in charge of Epworth for many years), Olive Downer (captain of the school's Leinster interpro team while still on the jnr cup team), M Carter, D Coulton, Chris Hill, W Carter, Francis Holman. Jean Allen, Irene Morrow, Beatrice Houghman, Nora Abernathey (the hockey teacher who went on to become head of Mercers school, now part of KH) The result of injuries sustained were not recorded

## Muriel Hughes

(NEE WEBSTER) – CLASS OF 1947

Dear Esther, Yvonne, Nathan and Thomas,

IT WAS WARTIME when I attended Wesley College, then at St Stephen's Green and, although Ireland was officially neutral, shortages occurred; things were scarce in general. I started as a Day Pupil in September 1941, in what was then Prep A, and continued through 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A and Fifth Year until, in December 1946, I contracted polio, an isolated case in school, and my studies came to an abrupt end. Dr Irwin was Principal of the school for most of my time there.

With the war ensuing it was difficult to source school uniforms, so a rule was made that it was acceptable for either day girls, like me, or boarders not to wear uniform, naturally to the delight of many. However, we were supposed to wear navy outfits of some description, so that we would conform to the conservative norms of the day. Girls wore gymslips, and the regulation ones, if attainable, had only two pleats back and front- we hated them with a passion. Unless one was lucky enough to have an older sister who could hand down the three pleated version, one was compelled to wear the unbecoming two pleated alternative. There were no hand-me downs for me!

I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Wesley; although the curriculum was not anything like as varied as the present generation enjoy. We learned Maths, English, Irish, French and Latin. There were music practices, choir practices, drama groups, art classes and, of course, Religious Education; mostly I remember religion on a Saturday when the Jewish pupils were not in attendance. We had quite a number of Jewish pupils in the school at the time. The girls had classes in Domestic Science- learning how to cook, but ingredients for all recipes were in short supply and even basic commodities rationed. The gas cookers could only be used when the gas was switched on and at certain times during the day; our culinary endeavours were far from spectacular- we produced very basic meals.

Sport was high on my agenda. I played hockey in the winter and tennis in the summer. The playing fields were at Tullamaine, Leeson Street, now long demolished to make way for the Burlington Hotel. In those days Tullamaine held the Preparatory School, and was also home to junior boarders. Most of our hockey matches were played locally; it was simply not feasible to travel the country to play. How limited life must have been when one considers the opportunities for travel nowadays! My main mode



of travel was the bicycle, and this was the case for most girls. With wartime restrictions nobody could travel far anyway.

In 1945 the school's Centenary took place. I don't recall much in the way of celebrations, but I'm sure there were celebrations. On the hockey scene we played a match with teams made up of boys and girls; one team dressed up in the costumes of 1845 and the other in the style of 1945;

During the 1943-1945 season the Junior Hockey Cup team won the cup; it was a very proud moment for all of us. The following year I was captain; we did reasonably well but failed to retain the cup.

With best wishes,

MURIEL

Wesley Junior Girls Hockey Team, 1947-1948



*Phyllis Spence*

(NEE CORRELL) - CLASS OF 1948

*'By the age of thirteen I played cricket and tennis for the local village, competing against other small towns. This all paid off; I became Wesley's number one tennis player for several years.'*

Dear Esther, Yvonne, Nathan and Thomas,

I CAME TO WESLEY in September 1942 and enrolled as a boarder. I was aged twelve and felt very lost. My brother was an ex-pupil and drove the sixty miles from the village of Carnew in County Wicklow. My three sisters had also been to Wesley as boarders. Indeed the Corrells had been boarders since the school's inception.

The family are well known County Wicklow, Methodists and at one time they had their own church in Carnew. The family graves are in the tiny village of Shillelagh, about eight km from Carnew; North Americans find it hard to believe that there really is such a place.

The daily walks to school to and from Tullamaine or Epworth were made regardless of weather. Looking back it's surprising that there were very few complaints; maybe we just realised that that we had to accept the proverbial 'hail, rain or snow'. Of which there was plenty, particularly rain.

My most memorable walk to school was the morning after the end of World War Two. We had made little Union Jacks and we waved them enthusiastically as we marched our way to school. Much to the amusement of the passerby.

The biggest source of discontent that the boarders had was the quality of the food. We assumed that the school authorities were not aware of this but, in hindsight, they probably were. The food itself was undoubtedly fresh but it never tasted like the fare we were used to in Carnew. Our favourite meal was baked beans on toast, sometimes on fried bread. It was served every Thursday.

Shortly after my arrival I was asked to turn out for the Junior Hockey team. I had never played hockey before so I was surprised when I was selected for the team. Later I would play for Leinster.

Our garden in Carnew doubled as a grass tennis court. I was the youngest in the family and spent many hours on my own at home. To while away the time I spent hours hitting tennis balls against the barn wall that lined one side of the court. By the age of thirteen I played cricket and tennis for the local village, competing against other small towns. This all paid off;



Epworth Hall, 1947. Phyllis Correll 3rd row from top 4th from left side

I became Wesley's number one tennis player for several years.

I left school in 1948 and joined the Ulster Bank on College Green. One night at a Banker's Dance in the Crystal ballroom I met Tom Spence, who would become my partner for life. He was ex high School and very gracious. On the balcony he bought me an ice-cream; very romantic! When I asked why he wouldn't have one himself he said that he didn't like

the stuff. I believed him, of course. Many years later I learned that he had spent the last of his money on the ice-cream and, having escorted me to my digs, had to walk home penniless. Tom and I married in the Methodist Centenary Church in 1952. This beautiful church was on St Stephen's Green, in front of Wesley College. It was later destroyed by arson; the stone steps and pillars are all that remain of that once magnificent building.

Immediately after the wedding reception we left for London. Tom worked at Thomas Cook in the Foreign Exchange Department; I worked there too in the Traveller's Cheques Department. There were at least fifty people in the department all sorting, examining, filing and goodness knows what else to hundreds of thousands of traveller's cheques. It was the boast of the manager that any cheque could be traced within ten minutes. I enjoyed my years in the bank; it was a friendly place. We lived in Muswell Hill in North London. It was a long journey by bus and tube to Piccadilly but we became used to it. Our eldest boy was born while we were there.

In 1954 we decided to move to Canada. Tom left in May of that year and I followed with my son in July 1955. With the exception of four years in Cornwall, Ontario, we have lived in Toronto. We have five children and five grandchildren, with a sixth due to arrive in July.

Life in Canada has been wonderful. Tom's first job was in a mailing house and he subsequently made his career in that line of work. We purchased a run-down mailing business about thirty years ago and have made a success of it. Our two sons now run it.

We played tennis until a few years ago when our knees let us down. I have had one replaced and Tom both. We play golf now. We are very active and work out in the gym almost every day.

I wish you success with you project.

PHYLLIS SPENCE

*Alma Parryton*

(NEE MANSFIELD) M.B.E.

— CLASS OF 1950

*'During one song the benches collapsed and the choir landed on the floor; to our amusement they kept on singing.'*

**I**N 1942, AT THE AGE OF TEN, I became a boarder in Tullamaine. The list of clothes we had to have was quite long; the following are some of them – navy gym slip, red blouses, ties, a navy cardigan, a heavy coat and a rain coat. These were for school and for the weekends we had to have a costume (skirt and jacket) also in navy. In those days there were no trousers or tights for girls. We had black lisle stockings for winter, held up by a suspender belt, and socks in the summer. We wore warm navy knickers that had elastic in the legs as well as the waist. We would pull the legs over the top of our stockings; if they happened to ride up people would call gaps, especially the boys!

Form V 1949-1950



When I went to Wesley the war was still on, of course Ireland was neutral, but still precautions were taken, there was a slight fear of air raids and air raid practices were held. For the first year or two when we went to bed we had to put our dressing gowns at the bottom of the bed with knickers and a jumper on top. If the alarm went off, we had to quickly get up, put our knickers and jumper over our pyjamas and go down to the basement.

One year, a few others girls and I contracted measles. There were no facilities for infectious diseases at Tullamaine. We were sent to the infectious disease ward at Baggot Street Hospital. As I recall, no one was very sick and a great time was had by all. Curiously, I do remember that they were very short of cutlery and we had to share knives!

Another memory was of a Prize Giving in the main hall in Wesley. The teachers, Governors and important guests were on the stage at one end of the hall and at the other end, on tiered benches, was the choir. During one song there was a big crack and the benches collapsed and the choir landed on the floor; to our amusement they kept on singing. The pupils thought it was very funny but the staff and governors were not so amused. I hasten to add nobody was hurt.

After leaving school I trained as a nurse in the Adelaide Hospital. I held a few posts in England and back at the Adelaide. In 1960 I joined the British army as a nurse and in 1961 was posted to Tripoli in Libya where I met my husband, Pat, who was in the oil business. We stayed in Libya until 1987 when he retired. For the last few years I worked in the British Embassy as a Consular assistant and was awarded an MBE for my services.

UNA PAYTON

*Gillian Galwey*

— CLASS OF 1953

Dear Thomas, Yvonne, Esther and Nathan,

**I** WAS A BOARDER from just after the war in 1947 to 1953. We lived in Epworth and my memory is that it was always cold and in winter, extremely cold. When lights were put out at night we would pop out of bed and put our bedside rugs, made from coconut matting, over us for warmth. We also put sheets of paper between the blankets for insulation.

We marched to school every day in crocodile lines. If we were caught with a hole in our long, black stockings we were given a 'Punishment Mark'. To avoid this we applied shoe polish or black ink to our legs to disguise the hole.

Best wishes,

GILLIAN

Preparing the tennis courts, Epworth Hall, 1948





## Susannah Marshall

(NEE YOUNG) – CLASS OF 1954

HERE WAS ALWAYS the assumption that the boys would continue their education to Leaving Certificate, whilst many girls would leave after the Intermediate Certificate. School was a more austere place in my day.

We had chapel every day. It was essential to have the school hymnal with you, if you were found without that little blue book there was a punishment. We improvised, of course, and would remove the front cover of a friend's so that it looked like we each had a book when in fact one was an empty shell!

Mealtimes were exercises in formal manners. A teacher sat at every table and encouraged polite conversation: sometimes it would be the Principal. The meals themselves were quite good: stewed mince was served very regularly.

There was a Dramatic Society and I was in the school choir with Mr. Willy Watson. I also took piano lessons. The girls studied Domestic Science but this was not an option for the boys. The girls tended to pursue secretarial courses or nursing or P.E. teaching. University was not really an option.

Sport was compulsory. We played hockey in the winter and tennis in the summer. There were no school tours in those days. For all the severity it was not an unhappy place and looking back I have no very bad memories.

After school I went to Miss Galwey's Secretarial College in Dawson Street. This led to a career as a secretary in the manager's office in a bank headquarters in Dublin City Centre.

I met my husband Maxwell Marshall at a dance. He, as it turned out, was a past pupil (boarder) of Wesley College, but we didn't know each other during our school years. We were married in 1962.

Singing has always been a large part of my life. I started by singing in the school choir. On entering the Feis Ceoil I was a 'Soprano Solo' winner. Throughout the years I have been a member of many choirs, from the Trostan Singers, to Dun Laoghaire Choral and currently the Culwick Choral Society.

I have three married daughters and nine grandchildren.

The third generation of my family are now pupils and past pupils of Wesley College and I think this shows what a wonderful school it is, and what a privilege it is to be part of this larger 'family'.

## Jean Ritchie

(NEE KINGSTON) – CLASS OF 1954

*'We walked each week-day hail, rain or snow. We thought it unfair that the boarder boys didn't have to walk as they were housed in the College building on Stephen's Green.'*

Dear Yvonne and colleagues

I WAS 12 YEARS OLD when I went as a boarder to Wesley in 1949 so I spent my first year in Tullamaine. I was then Jean Kingston from a small village Drimoleague in West Cork. Miss Mable Cooke was the teacher who was House Mistress in charge of the boarders in Tullamaine. I remember her as a very kind person, and she certainly made sure that our table manners were up to standard. Every school day we walked in a line of twos down Leeson Street to Wesley in Stephen's Green to join all the other pupils for classes. And we walked each week-day hail, rain or snow. We thought it unfair that the boarder boys didn't have to walk as they were housed in the College building on Stephen's Green!

In that first year I saw my future husband Edgar Ritchie who was head boy and Captain of the rugby team. Little did I think then that one day he would ask me to marry him.

At the beginning of the next year I moved to board in Epworth Hall. Miss Smyth was in charge. She kept us all in order. I wasn't athletic so did not play on any teams. For exercise some afternoons we walked around the neighborhood – which was boring – and again we walked two-by-two in a crocodile. Midnight feasts in the dormitory were a great treat. By keeping quiet we escaped detection. From Epworth we still had to walk about the same distance to Wesley in Stephen's Green.

Rev Gerry Myles was Principal. He conducted a very memorable class in preparation for full membership in the Methodist Church. On Sundays we Methodist girls walked to morning service in Centenary Church in Stephen's Green and returned for college chapel service in the afternoon. Church of Ireland girls went to Leeson Street church and Presbyterians to Adelaide Road church. I enjoyed singing in the college chapel choir. Willie Watson was the pleasant choir master and organist.

I appreciated my time in Wesley and the friendliness of the staff and other pupils. It was a good all round preparation for later life.

Opportunities for women were limited at that time. A friend had



decided to train as a nurse and that influenced my decision to become a nurse.

I went on to train as a nurse in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast and then had midwifery training in Scotland.

In 1962 I went to India as a missionary nurse for two and a half years, in a rural hospital. After that I was sent by the Missionary Society to Nigeria, to a large new hospital. This was the same hospital where Edgar Ritchie was in charge of a busy 50 bed maternity department. In due course we became engaged. We came home to get married and then returned to Nigeria. Our first child Joy was born in Nigeria. As the civil war started I had to leave after some months of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war, taking our first daughter who was then three months old.

Co-education was what I experienced at primary school and at Wesley. It laid a good foundation for later life.

Our two sons followed our paths by boarding and enjoying Wesley and our daughter Joy taught for some years in the school before she married.

Good success with your project.

JEAN RITCHIE

*Razia Rehana Rehmanji*  
(NEÉ MUSTAFA) – CLASS OF 1955

*The teacher who sat at the head of the table would give us a topic to discuss at lunch and supper; idle chat was discouraged.'*

Dear Esther, Yvonne, Thomas and Nathan,

I ATTENDED WESLEY for two years as a boarder in the junior girls' residence known as Tullamaine. I came from Arusha Tanganyika (now Tanzania) East Africa to join my cousin Billy Butt who was already a boarder at Burlington House. Life in Ireland was very different from life in Africa, but I soon adjusted. For a Muslim girl, going to Sunday school and attending the Methodist Church was quite an enlightening and interesting experience. It started my love for studying different religions, something which I enjoy to this day. I also learned never to get into discussions about religion. My lifelong love for horses and riding started at Wesley and remains one of my interests today. I have passed this on to my daughter and grand-son

I particularly remember the formalities at mealtimes, even though I didn't really enjoy the meals very much. In fact I became a vegetarian throughout my years at boarding school. The teacher who sat at the head of the table would give us a topic to discuss at lunch and supper; idle chat was discouraged. I have two very vivid memories of Wesley; one is how I learned just how stubborn I could be when pushed really hard. My dislike of the lumpy porridge we were served every morning resulted in the teacher's deciding one day that I would be taught to eat up my porridge.

After having refused to eat it for breakfast, it was served to me again at lunchtime. Again I refused! Then when teatime came it was once again served to me. Following my three refusals to eat the horrible porridge, the teachers and staff capitulated and I was never forced to eat it again! The second thing I will always remember about Wesley was that no matter how hard I tried or the teachers tried I could not learn the Irish language, but despite this, and of course the aforementioned lumpy porridge, I did enjoy my short time at Wesley College and my sincere wishes go to all the girls who will attend this great school for the next hundred years.

With all good wishes,

RAZIA

## Elaine Bradshaw

— CLASS OF 1956

*'In Domestic Science class one day I remember an errant mouse making an entry. Miss Moran, the teacher, leapt on a chair and screamed. I took up the sweeping brush and with a single blow plastered the mouse to the wall. The teacher advised me to keep up the golf; I was no seamstress!'*

**I** REMEMBER WESLEY as a genteel place; boys would doff their caps to passing staff and they would always open doors for girls and female staff. Even though we were a Co-Ed school effectively it was in name only. The playgrounds were strictly segregated, as were the dining rooms, indeed the only real opportunity for integration came in the form of a mixed Assembly or a picture show on a Friday night.

I have fond memories of Latin and other subjects but my first love was the sports field. I played hockey for the JCT and the SCT in school winning five Leinster medals. At age of thirteen I won the Girls' Eastern Golf Championship and I remember being interviewed by Harry Thuiller; it was to be the first of many such interviews. I was fortunate to have benefited from the expertise of so many inspiring coaches: George Eager, Joan Hudson and Gladys Ruddock.

In Domestic Science class one day I remember an errant mouse making an entry. Miss Moran, the teacher, leapt on a chair and screamed. I took up the sweeping brush and with a single blow plastered the mouse to the wall. The teacher advised me to keep up the golf; I was no seamstress!

After school I attended Ling College, on Mount Street where I qualified as a Physical Education teacher. Ling instilled discipline and high standards; qualities which prepared me for life. When playing golf I would be on the course at 6.30 am. Retire for lunch and back to the course. I won my first junior golf championship with a five iron, a seven iron and a putter! I taught at the Diocesan Girls' School, Adelaide Road for five years. Out of the blue I was head -hunted and joined the JJ Fitzgibbon Team representing Slazenger, Fred Perry et cetera for the twenty six counties. I loved every minute of it.

In 1963 I toured America with the Ireland hockey team. Along with twenty other nations we made our way to Washington D.C. where we were taken on a tour of the White House. Towards the end of the guided tour a very serious official arrived and asked that the Ireland team stay behind.

The coach, fearing a problem with a visa or passport, went into a tailspin. We were ushered along corridors and taken into a large and elegant room. Most unexpectedly we were received by a tanned and handsome president J.F. Kennedy. His charisma and charm were unforgettable. None of us imagined that in a matter of months he would no longer be with us.

I have an abiding memory of playing cricket for Ireland. We were playing England in Clontarf. A young and highly skilful player on the England team batted a ball which discharged like a cannon. Against all the odds I caught the ball and England was out. That young batswoman, with the unforgettable name of Heyhoe Flint, now commentates for the BBC and was awarded the O.B.E. Whenever I hear her I am reminded of that gloriously sunny day on the Northside!

There were more sporting successes: I have the honour of being one of only two women to have received a Texaco Award and I was runner up in the French Open Championship losing to the favourite, Catherine Lacoste,

S.C.T. Hockey, 1956 Captain Elaine Bradshaw



of the clothing dynasty. Later, in 1981 Ireland won the Triple Crown beating England, Scotland and Wales under my captaincy. I won three ladies Irish Golf Championships and played for Great Britain and Ireland. In addition to this I won three Leinster Ladies Golf Championships and was a selector for eight years. I have captained all levels from girls, ladies and over 50s teams. I cannot imagine a life without sport!

I founded the Kilkenny branch of the Alzheimer's Association, and have been actively involved in fundraising for this worthy project; from tractor runs to flag days we have secured the funds to build a centre. I have also been heavily involved with the Tidy Towns competition. We have had successes here too winning Gold medals from 2001-2010. More recently, I have been involved in a project to reclaim a fen which has been transformed into a wildlife sanctuary. I was awarded an honorary degree from N.U.I Maynooth for my services to the Tidy Towns and for various other community projects within Kilkenny including the Alzheimer Clinic which to date has helped over three thousand families and the campaigns to Keep Kilkenny Beautiful. Life is never dull and I have little spare time on my hands. Perhaps I have tried to prove all things in the best Wesley tradition!

Wishing you every success with your project,  
ELAINE



Drill display, 1950

*Jackie Horan*

(NEE RICHARDSON) CLASS OF 1957

*'The Jewish students did not attend Saturday morning classes so instead of continuing with the syllabus, Miss Cooke would read Dickens to us.'*

Dear Wesleyites.



HANKS YOU FOR YOUR LETTER, I'm very pleased that the old scrap book has found a good home.

Your letter has prompted many memories, right back to starting school in Tullamaine, with my little brother. We had to take two buses so the first few mornings our granny came with us to make sure that we knew where we were going. Each classroom had a timetable on the wall, written by hand A3 size; there were no printers in those days. For homework we had to design and paint a border for it. One year my design was chosen and I was given the A3 sheet to take home and paint. It was a tree with the trunk up the side and branches across the top!

Sports' Day was a big occasion everyone wore white blouses, ankle socks and runners. I was hopelessly non-athletic and never won anything.

Moving to St Stephen's Green caused a few anticipatory, anxious thoughts during the summer holidays. I need not have worried; Miss Mary Smith was on the front steps and was very kind to the new pupils that first day. This frosty morning reminds me of many winter mornings arriving with frozen feet and fingers after a bus ride and walk through St Stephen's Green. It would be into the third period before my fingers thawed enough to write easily. Yes, there was heating but it was a big, old building. Don't get me wrong. I loved every inch of it. There was an atmosphere that no new building could ever have: the 'gym' with its dusty smell and rows of coat hooks around the walls which gave the appearance of one big cloakroom. A single parallel bar justified its name. There was a passage off it which led to the Boot Room used by the boarder boys, and out of bounds to us girls. And I'm sure Health and Safety would have something to say about the narrow staircase leading up to the Main Hall.

Each class had its own room and seldom moved; the new Geography Room announced itself with a state of the art slide projector! The blinds would be pulled down and invariably for homework we would have to write notes on what we had seen during the slide show. Thus students were furiously writing notes in the dark. Sometimes they made sense!

Snippets of memories: The Jewish students did not attend Saturday morning classes so instead of continuing with the syllabus Miss Cooke would read Dickens to us. The warmest room in the building, the Domestic Science kitchen, had electric storage heaters. We girls were often very grateful of them at certain times of the month when we were allowed sit on them! As aforesaid, I was not athletic and games, especially hockey were no fun. I decided in sixth year that I would not appear. Nothing was ever said and I presume the games Mistress just didn't know I existed.

I loved Wesley and everything about my time there managed to pass without any great effort. I was rather lacking in ambition so I have no great lifetime achievements to speak of. As good as it was I was greatly impressed by the facilities you now have in Ballinteer. On a recent visit I envied the girls busily working away in Woodwork; I would have enjoyed the opportunity which you all have of learning practical skills. Make the most of them!

I still like wearing navy and red!  
Yours sincerely,

JACKIE HORAN

P.S. We were never allowed say Wesley, it always had to be Wessley. From recent experience I think this has changed.



Barbara Townsend & Jackie Horan (nee Richardson)

## Ruth Waters-Fuller

– CLASS OF 1958

*'School meals were, as I remember, not very appetising; we had stewed mince very often.'*

I STARTED IN Prep C with Miss James. We finished at 2pm and had to creep down the stairs. "Shush! shush!" Miss James would urge, pulling her gown around her. We wore black pinafore dresses with red blouses and girdles, a blazer and a beret with the school badge were compulsory. The rule was to always wear the beret outside; invariably it would come off halfway up Harcourt Street as I rushed to catch a train.

I think we had exams each term, in the Large Schoolroom. The state exams were taken at Tullamaine. When I was in 3A, Harvey, who was an invisible rabbit in a film, would come to sit in the Maths class with Mr Agnew who went along with the hilarity.

School meals were, as I remember, not very appetising; we had stewed mince very often. The Principal or another member of staff would sit with us and endeavour to teach us table manners.

My best year was 6th Form; there were only fourteen of us and I had the distinction of being a Prefect. I don't remember any career advice. We filed into chapel each day and I was in the chapel choir in my last year. One excellent achievement, and a very happy memory, was winning the Senior Hockey Cup.

My worst class was drawing – I was simply no good at it and there was no Art Appreciation at that time. Only girls did Domestic Science, but some girls did science with the boys.

Overall I have very happy memories of WCD.  
Best wishes,

RUTH



## Heather Evans

— CLASS OF 1958

**I** DON'T REMEMBER many details of my time in school; I'm told that's because I was happy there. I do remember the Irish teacher punishing me by putting his finger under my chin when I failed to grasp a key grammatical point. I had no interest in learning Irish my thoughts were on much further a field!

I trained as a nurse in the Adelaide and then completed my midwifery training in The National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street. Later I moved to Tanzania where I learned Swahili, and continued my nursing career.

There were five of us in our family; three boys and two girls and we all went to Wesley. Our father, Victor, supplied the Christmas trees to the school when we were pupils. On free Sundays many boarder friends would pile into the back of our 'farm van'; seatbelts were unheard of, and we would head to our home in Delgany.

I have a vivid memory of listening to a record of the 'Laughing Policeman'; we secretly kept a record player under the bed!

Good luck with your project,

HEATHER



Epworth Garden Party  
June 1957

## Marian Egan

— CLASS OF 1960

Dear Students,

Thank you for your letter; your project sounds very interesting!

**I** ATTENDED WESLEY COLLEGE when it was situated in St Stephen's Green, from 1951 to 1960. As I was a Day Pupil I have little knowledge about the Boarding Houses; I do remember however the 'crocodiles' (pupils walking in pairs) as they walked from one or other of the boarding houses to the main school building every morning.

In the main school building I remember that one year the heating was non-existent; I think due to shortage of funds to keep it working! Some teachers made us exercise for a few minutes to warm up! The Science teacher devised a scheme called 'the mile of pennies' whereby pennies were saved up to contribute to a new heating system.

My mother was a keen hockey player and taught all her children to play; we enjoyed playing in our own back garden, and two of us were on School teams. I always enjoyed the important matches not least because we were allowed to leave lessons early! Wesley only had a small pitch at the time which was not suitable for matches and there was always a short journey to make to any full sized pitch, either home or away. Both my sister and I were on teams that won the Leinster Cups, Senior and Junior, and when this happened the Captains asked for (and obtained) an extra day's holiday for the School!

As to choice of subjects; there was a little freedom to choose. When I was eleven I chose to do Experimental Science (Chemistry and Physics) instead of Domestic Science (Cooking and Sewing etc). This proved to be vital for my career choice as I went on to become a Biomedical Scientist. I have always slightly regretted my lack of domestic skills but I survive!

When I left Wesley, I joined a Pathology laboratory in Paddington, London, and worked there for 5 years. During this time I attended Evening Classes to qualify as a Medical Laboratory Technician. Nowadays only Graduates in a suitable science can enter the profession, and the job title has been changed to Biomedical Scientist. In this field there are equal opportunities and equal pay for men and women; I have never seen any discrimination in any of the places where I worked, and enjoyed both the work and good relations with my colleagues.



Classroom 1957

I left Paddington to work at King's College Hospital, then joined the Imperial Cancer Research Fund (now Cancer Research UK) in their laboratory at Guy's Hospital, and was there until I retired in 2001.

I feel that the most important contribution that education at Wesley gave me was its Christian ethos and values. The daily prayers in the Chapel were a great start to the day, even though we just went along and took it for granted! To this day I pray and read the Bible every morning and I know it is a most precious and valuable time.

I hope this is helpful. I am sorry there are not many stories as such!

Yours sincerely,

MARIAN

*Diana Holmes*

— CLASS OF 1960

*'My real joy was escaping school once a week for a couple of hours when I climbed a ladder over the wall to Iris Kellet's Riding School.'*

*M*Y MEMORIES OF WESLEY and Tullamaine are not of the great knowledge I absorbed from my teachers, in fact the only words I can remember coming from a teacher were those uttered when I was told in front of my class, "Why can't you be more like your older sister, Rosemary, who was a joy to teach!" My memories are more about the way life was at school, and on looking back now it seemed so harsh. But that was the way it was in boarding schools at that time.

The food was bland; lumpy porridge, semolina, tapioca, boiled onions, and the inedible bits of gristle in the stews. You were punished either by having your hand smacked with the back of a hairbrush (Tullamaine) or the flat side or edge of a ruler. Baths were a once a week affair with barely any water, the room was cold and the water tepid. You dried your hair in front of the fire. The beds were incredibly uncomfortable, they had huge hollows in the middle and every time you moved they rattled and squeaked.

The teachers were strict, and if you were sad they did not understand, and there were many nights when I and other girls cried ourselves to sleep.

I still vividly remember the terror of exams in the Large Schoolroom at Wesley, looking at those questions and realizing I did not know the answers.

We went to church twice on Sunday, once in the morning to your regular church, and once in the afternoon at the Chapel at Wesley before our parents picked us up for a few hours of freedom! Sundays were agony for me because we had to wear our Sunday formal uniform which was a dress made of wool to which I was allergic. We walked two by two from Tullamaine to Wesley and back every day, come rain snow ice or shine. One of the few joys in school was my tuck box – I still recall the smell when I opened the tin. One of the other joys was lunch time when they occasionally served squares of sponge cake with jam as a dessert. I remember the fun of sitting on the floor of my dorm in the middle of the night trying not to giggle and thus escape detection, while we divided a chocolate cake (using my toothbrush handle as an improvised knife) that I had managed to sneak into school after my Sunday visit home.

My real joy was escaping school once a week for a couple of hours when I climbed a ladder over the wall to Iris Kellet's riding school which was next door to Tullamaine. For others who were in school with me, I wonder if they remember our little shell lined gardens, sheep droppings all over the hockey field, the walnut tree at the goal post, the monkey puzzle tree, the bird graves with little crosses by the tennis courts, and from our dorm window trying to see into the windows of Burlington (the boys in the bathroom!); the peeping Tom they found living in the stables, making soda bread and knickers in Domestic Science.

Surviving that environment taught me to be strong, and for that I am thankful. I made some good friends, including one with whom I have kept in contact all these years. I'm sorry the buildings have gone, I would like to have seen them again, and I am glad I still have photos of them. Even though I turn sixty six this week, I can still walk the halls and see the rooms in my mind's eye, Wesley and Tullamaine remain a big part of me.

DIANA HOLMES,  
Petaluma, California, USA

*Barbara Fagan*

(NEE BARDON) – CLASS OF 1960

*'The Latin teacher gave out to girls for rolling up their sleeves in hot weather, saying they were not washer women!'*

Dear Thomas,



THANK YOU for your email.

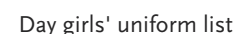
I attended Wesley College in St. Stephen's Green as a day pupil from 1954-1960.

The uniform for girls in 1954 – red shirt, navy gym tunic, jumper, gabardine coat et cetera – could be bought in Gorevan's in Dublin. To reduce the expense, my mother made the gym tunic and shirt on her manual sewing machine and knitted the jumper. The bought tie, beret with the school crest and the red girdle to tie around the tunic, finished it off nicely, but I felt self-conscious in the home-made uniform. However I wasn't the only one! The whole regalia included beige coloured lisle stockings (held up by suspenders!), navy bloomers, black laced shoes, and black stockings for hockey. Going to hockey in the gym tunic and black stockings made me feel like one of the 'belles of St Trinian's'! Later, stockings were phased out in favour of more practical grey knee socks and a couple of years later the gym tunic gave way to a simple navy skirt. The Latin teacher gave out to girls for rolling up their sleeves in hot weather, saying they were not washerwomen!

I have a sense that the Principal, the Rev Mr Myles didn't like girls. I only spoke to him twice in my six years. When I was fifteen, I was picked to represent Leinster in an Interprovincial swimming competition. I gave Mr Myles a note from my father requesting a day off school to travel to the event. He signed it and handed it back to me without a word, not even a 'well done!' He was known to be against extra curricular activities; however there was no swimming club in Wesley at that time so I had had to go it alone. On our last day at school, we were individually called into his office. He asked me if I was going to go to Trinity; I said no, and he said I suppose you will be doing secretarial and I said yes – that was the extent of the interview! At that time, if you weren't lucky enough to go to university, girls mostly did secretarial courses or nursing training. There was no career guidance in Wesley. What you did after leaving school was a matter for you and your parents, of course depending on their means.

The playground was for the boys only, out of bounds to girls. Girls gathered in a basement beneath the Assembly Hall called the gymnasium where we hung our coats and hung around until time for assembly. But over all I felt privileged to attend a co-educational school which was unusual for the time. I believe my school education whetted my appetite to further my education later in my life and that co-education was the natural way of things.

### Boarder girls' uniform list



(NEE MCNEIL) - CLASS OF 1960

In those days one's uniform had to be perfect and berets worn at all times while in uniform. We had great fun and worked very hard. Our Past Pupils union is very strong and keeps all the friendships alive and supports each other.

Overall the best thing about Wesley were the friendships made for life and my worst memory was having to have lunch in the gym which was in the basement of the school on St Stephen's Green; there was no fresh air. Unlike the boys who could run with impunity in the yard! The other downside was that we had to travel for sport.

**Day Girls' Uniform**

- \*College Navy Blazer.
- \*College Blouse.
- \*College Tie.
- \*College Belt Blouse.
- \*College Girdle.
- Navy Belt Tunic.
- White Stockings.
- Black Shoes.
- Navy Mackintosh or Groom Suit.

Girls under 11. Grey Knee Lengths.

Girls under 14. May wear ~~Red~~ **Black** Socks without Stockings from April to September inclusive.

Black Article must be clearly marked with Owner's name.

\*These items are made to standard patterns held by Messrs. Gossain Bros. Ltd., 1-4 Lower Camden Street, and Messrs. J. J. Nichol Ltd., 21 Eschquer Street, Dublin.



## Carol Cairns

– CLASS OF 1960

*Looking back I realize that the friends made in the six years at Wesley (1954-1960) were the most important prize of all. To my surprise I also realise that the scripture, hymns and poetry we learned off by heart are very precious to me; and of course the grounding I got from Miss Callear.*

Dear Students,

**M**Y FATHER, Rev. J. Lynham Cairns told me so many tales about his time in Wesley (c. 1921-25) that when the time came for me to go there I felt that I was entering familiar territory. After all Mr. Myles (the then Principal) was 'Uncle Gerry' to me, my dad's best friend since their days in Wesley! That quickly changed to 'the Boss' as my respect for his authority grew.

So in September 1953 clad in my new gym-slip, red blouse, navy knickers, lisle stockings, black laced shoes, girdle and tie (newly learned tying skill) and of course the blazer and beret, we set off in great anticipation. Stockings had, of course, to be held up so suspenders were required. My mother helped me to buy a 'roll-on' in Cleary's of O'Connell Street.

Picture my shock when, although tall for my age, I was one of the *little* ones lost in a haze of red blouses and chattering girls separated from the boys who were elsewhere. The gym was a huge, dark cavern under the big hall and had hidden passages and no windows. How was I to survive in this mass?

I did more than survive. I loved Wesley and looked forward to nearly every day. That I was a B student and never a Prefect hints at the sort of pupil I was. My father may have had to beg Mr. Myles, on more than one occasion, not to send me to the C class. My heart lay in subjects like English, art and music. Ducking out to piano lessons with Miss Daly and Willy Watson, and thus annoying the maths teacher, was sport to me.

Talking of sport I hated it! Having damaged my back falling through a deck-chair I, happily, had an excuse not to attend. I remember, my one and only time at hockey practice, standing in goal eating beechnuts from the beautiful big tree above. I remember too admiring the outline of the girls as they ran bent over the ball, hockey-sticks at the ready. This was clearly a hint of my future.

Miss Callear (Clear-gums) played an important role in my life although

I was unaware of it at the time. She taught us 'art'. She, dear love her, thoroughly squashed any creative thoughts we might have but she instilled in me the art of measuring, proportions and observation. This may be partly why I have made many bronze portraits applying her rules!

I only had a sister so boys in the class were an added joy to look forward to every day. (Sorry Cookie, I *do* know I shouldn't start a sentence with I.) There were many secret crushes and snatched kisses near the furnace. Having quickly made friends with a group of girls, still amongst my dearest friends, there were whispered, behind the hand conversations and darting glances in the direction of the latest idol. I'll spare the, now elderly, gentlemen by not naming them!

As I recall there were not very many girls in W.C.D when my father attended. Miss Smith and Mr. McDowell were already on the staff and both of them later tried to teach me.

By the time we reached Fifth Form we were allowed navy skirts and stockings which somewhat revealed our blossoming womanliness! The wearing of the beret was obligatory when in uniform on the street. The art of perching it on the back of the head was much practised. We were also required to offer our seats in the bus to the elderly, infirm and pregnant! A lost art these days....

To everyone's amazement I passed the Leaving Certificate. The two subjects in which I got honours were no surprise: music and art. Most of my friends went to Trinity but I continued to study piano, organ and harmony. When almost ready for my diploma exam the girl I had been studying with died suddenly and I was so shocked and saddened that I stopped practising and in no time lost all interest in achieving a Diploma.

In the meantime I had been taking evening classes in the studio of Yann Renard Goulet in Bray, which later became Bray school of art: painting, drawing from life and clay modeling. Yann was delightfully eccentric and his classes were great fun. He chewed raw garlic and smoked constantly, Gauloises if he had money and otherwise roll-ups. He had escaped to Ireland from Brittany in a rowing boat during the war. His accent, the roll-ups and garlic made understanding him guesswork but we soon learned to read his expressive hands!

Yann, who is best known for the large bronze at the front of the Custom house in Dublin, somehow succeeded in passing on some of his great knowledge and technique to me. In spite of harbouring very little ambition I managed to get an Art Teachers Certificate.

Actually the certificate itself has never arrived! I did receive a letter stating that the diploma had been awarded to me but that the official certificate was temporarily out of print and would be sent to me very soon. That was in December 1969 and I'm still waiting...

It wasn't long before I realised that I was actually more at home being

artistically creative than under the pressure of piano practice; after all I had continually sketched and doodled all my life, making little drawings of Wesley teachers, modelling with fresh bread or river clay on holiday. It seemed too natural, too easy.

Nora Roberts introduced me to work with children with a mental handicap.

I worked in several specialist schools around Dublin for some years.

In the meantime I married a Dutch man and had two children. In 1970 we moved to The Netherlands where I took lessons in an evening class, mainly to get to know other artists. The teaching method was very different to that of Renard-Goulet and I found myself being freed from the straight-jacket of my very classical schooling.

One of the others in the group saw a portrait I had made and I had my first commission! This led to others and in 1977 I won a generous money prize for my 'oeuvre'. Also, as result of the prize a well-known gallery asked me to exhibit if I had enough bronzes! I spent all the prize money casting my work. I was able to exhibit 20 smallish pieces. It was an all night opening and in that night I sold 17 bronzes! I was on my way! There were newspaper interviews, more exhibitions, more commissions and I was still without ambition.

By then we had three children and in 1978 number four and five arrived: our son from Columbia, aged 7 and 8 weeks later our baby daughter; what a chess game life was! Now I have five grandchildren. In the meantime Liam Tavio has arrived safely on 11<sup>th</sup> of December.

Well, life has been good to me. I am now, at nearly 69, and busier than ever!

There are close to 1000 of my bronzes all over the world. I've met and made bronze busts of interesting people, nearly 100, and have sculptures in quite a few churches; and still no trace of ambition! I didn't even enter my work myself for the prize that I won; my former husband did that without my knowing.

Looking back I realize that the friends made in the six years at Wesley (1954-1960) were the most important prize of all. To my surprise I also realise that the scripture, hymns and poetry we learned off by heart are very precious to me; and of course the grounding I got from Miss Callear.

Just recently our year, together with Eda Byrne, 'Miss Moran', and 'Ernie' Mr Armitage, celebrated the fact that it was 50 years since we had left school in 1960 and it was just as if we had all never parted!

Very best wishes with your project,

CAROL CAIRNS

*Elspeth Henderson*

— CLASS OF 1961

*'A well-managed, encouraging co-educational school provides many more opportunities for students to recognise and understand the complimentary strengths and talents of both genders.'*

WHEN I ACCEPTED the invitation to contribute to the Wesley Women project I had no idea that it would present me with such a challenge. I had questions in my head but I discovered that my answers were not very profound:

*Did I know that Wesley was one of the first schools to pioneer co-education 100 years ago? (No)*

*Was I aware when I was in Wesley that co-education was something different or special? (No)*

*Can I think of an inspiring personal story? (Not really)*

*Can I back out of this? (pause ... No)*

Then I reflected on my answer to that last question and realised that I had found my starting point. First, I couldn't back out because I had given a commitment to write something. But secondly, I realised that I had taken co-education in Wesley for granted and not appreciated how much I had gained from the experience.

I acknowledge that single-sex schools have a place in our education system because some students feel more comfortable in such schools. Sometimes (but definitely not always) when achievement is measured only in terms of examination results, some students in a single-sex environment can perform better than students in a co-educational one. However, in my experience, a co-educational school provides many more opportunities for students to recognise and understand the complementary strengths and talents of both genders. A well-managed, encouraging co-educational environment enables students to learn easily, respectfully and naturally from each other.

In school, I did not consider myself as a "Wesley Woman". I was just a "day dog"! However, I learned recently at a class reunion that I was acceptable to the boarders (almost an "honorary" boarder?) because I participated in hockey. Certainly, when our team won the Intermediate cup, there was no distinction between boarders and day dogs and the entire school celebrated our success.

I took part enthusiastically in the Debating Society but was probably more a spoofer than an orator. However, as it was much harder to speak in front of one's peers, I gained a confidence that enabled me to present a convincing argument, no matter what. This skill (otherwise known as bluffing one's way out of situations) was to stand me in good stead in later life.

With hindsight, I realise that my Wesley experiences shaped my views and prepared me for a career that was spent almost entirely in the post-primary co-educational sector. In this context, perhaps it is appropriate to highlight one benefit that I gained from my time in Wesley. As principal of a large co-educational school, I usually managed to be one step ahead of the posse because successive generations of students didn't seem to be able to think up creative ways of beating the system that I hadn't already discovered and used myself when in school. Obviously, it is entirely inappropriate to divulge any details in this article for the sake of reputations!

It sounds more historical to declare that I was in Wesley half a century ago. However, the good news is that it doesn't seem like 50 years ago. Times have changed, almost beyond recognition, but the principles of equal opportunity, social justice, tolerance and integrity promoted in Wesley are as important now as they were a century ago when co-education was introduced.

Finally, as there are many more Wesley Women who haven't contributed to this book, I'd like to take the liberty of acknowledging the contributions that these "unsung" heroines have made to their families, communities and professions at local, national and global levels.

ELSPETH HENDERSON



Mr. McDowell  
with Form VIB  
in 1961

*Marjorie R McCorduck*  
(NEE WALLACE) – CLASS OF 1964

*'Dublin was a fabulous place in the 1960s if you were aged between 12 and 18.'*

**E**VEN IN THE MID-1960's there weren't many boarding schools in the middle of a vibrant and changing city. We were surrounded by beautiful Georgian buildings, Stephens Green on our door step and our residence was only a short 15 minutes walk from what is now the Burlington Hotel to Stephens Green. Dublin was a fabulous place in the 1960s if you were aged between 12 and 18. It held the mystique of a large city and I believe transition to third level education was easier because we were used to living away from home and city life was so familiar.

I was the last of three sisters to attend Wesley, my older sister Gwen had been Head Girl in 1957-58, the year previous to my entering the College, and I suspect it would have been expected that my other sister, Hazel, and I would possess some of her attributes and good moral standards. However this was not the case. In the main I was a conformist at school but I did blemish my character early in my second year. Instead of going to Lansdowne Road to the Wales v Ireland rugby match, my then boyfriend and I, accompanied by my sister Hazel and her partner went to "Pillow Talk" in the Savoy cinema. I was easily found guilty, when my House Mistress asked me about my day out and from which stand I had viewed the match, Ouch! My answers did not convince her I was telling the truth! Our leave was barred for the rest of term; however, to this day Doris Day remains my favourite film star.

My sporting pursuits and a strong love of music and drama may have impinged on my academic achievements, but added greatly to the overall enjoyment of Boarding School. Unlike our male counterparts, few girls progressed to University, for gender and financial reasons. This was in the days before laptops, computers, interactive whiteboards, and glossy textbooks, but I suspect learning was less complicated than today where there is such an emphasis on the points race for college.

In September 1964, I commenced my training as a Student Nurse at The Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast. I became a State Registered Nurse in 1967, specializing in Abdominal Surgery, for one year, before marrying my long term boyfriend, David and returning to live in Roscrea, my native Co. Tipperary.



That strong love of sports and music has stayed with me all my life. Looking back the move from playing hockey to golf was a natural progression and my first golf experience in 1968 was in Portstewart when it took me about 3 hours to play 5 holes. I was well able to hit the ball, all be it in any direction with my well honed hockey swing but it took me some time to learn the finer skills of the game. Never would I have imagined back then that the game would present me with wonderful opportunities and remarkable enjoyment for so many years.

I am now embarking on my two years as President of the Irish Ladies Golf Union and I look back on my time in Wesley College with great fondness. I am extremely fortunate to have attended such a progressive school, learnt some life skills along the way, made life long friendships and I now look forward to the challenge of leading a very vibrant and modern sporting organisation over the next two years.

MARJORIE R McCORDUCK.

*Marjorie Mc Corduck is Pesident of the Irish ladies Golf Union.*



*Gillian Donald*

(NEE GARRATT) CLASS OF 1965.

*'The real liberation was being able to take Chemistry and Physics at Leaving Certificate.'*

I ENTERED WESLEY from a small primary school. I was in 1A and the one thing I was good at was Mathematics. Miss Maple Cooke was our Form Mistress. I have many fond memories of her including her ability to bring novels to life with her passion for the subject; her abhorrence of smoking and, most memorably, her insistence on etiquette. We were taught exquisite table manners including the correct way to eat soup.

Another of Miss Cook's passions was foreign travel. In an age when foreign travel was far less popular she would regale us with accounts of her cruises to foreign shores conjuring exotic locations. She would frequently remind us that we too could do this from our saved 'cigarette money'. Our

Science lab in 1961





form room was on the ground floor of the old school in St Stephen's Green. I remember being sent out of class for some minor misdemeanour and hoping that the Rev Myles would not come down the corridor. Mr Devers was in charge of 1B and he and Miss Cook ruled their forms like fiefdoms!

I remember Miss Moran; she was a really lovely, thoughtful teacher, and she had to put up with me for two years. I don't think I was naughty just perhaps obstructive in a number of ways. During a particular Christmas Exam the question posed was how do you make custard? I wrote just buy a packet of custard mix and add milk. My teacher was not amused.

My main problem in school was that I was not studying science. My pleas were not taken seriously- after all I was a girl! In those days schools were far less cooperative. My mother, who was better educated than my father, took the matter in hand. It is believed that an unholy row erupted between herself and the Rev Myles. It was decided that I could study science at a later stage if my grades in Mathematics were good enough. I was persuaded to be patient. Eventually, it came to pass that a number of girls were allowed to take up science in Form 3. The real liberation was being able to take Chemistry and Physics at Leaving Certificate. The new labs were terrific and we were given excellent instruction under the tutelage of Mr Milner. In 1965 three of the girls in the class entered the School of Natural Science in Trinity; two of us became teachers and the third a Zoologist of International standing. I was at Wesley at a crossroads; it was just the right time to pursue science. Not that my father was that enamoured, the fees were a *great* deal more than Arts and all that money to be spent on a daughter! However, he was proud when I graduated.

GILLIAN DONALD

## Marion Goodgame

(NEE STONE) – CLASS OF 1965

*'I remember a secret, furtive lunchtime visit to Davy Byrnes on Duke Street. The sandwich menu there seemed preferable to the shepherd's pie and turnip which was standard fare at the Salvation Army Hostel.'*

Dear Esther, Thomas, Yvonne and Nathan,

ONE OF THE MANY advantages of having a co-educational Music Department is the opportunity to form four part choirs for morning assemblies, carol services and concerts. We had great fun preparing for these services, especially for the less formal music evenings.

I also have vivid memories of playing the organ in the College Chapel. Willie Watson used to give us a chance to play the organ for chapel services on Wednesdays. On one occasion I pulled out a stop and, to my dismay, it flew straight over the heads of my friends in the choir, much to their amusement I might add. Another time the trigger that held the swell pedal fell apart while I was playing the quiet section of a Mendelssohn Sonata, with the resulting clatter, causing many heads to turn and a ripple of laughter to escape.

With best wishes,

MARION GOODGAME

*Margaret McMillan*

(NEE MCMILLAN) – CLASS OF 1965

*'We had film show nights on Saturdays which were always great.'*

Dear Esther, Yvonne, Nathan and Thomas,

**I** WAS A PUPIL AT WESLEY from 1954 to 1965. I started in Tullamaine with Miss Barrett, I think that was her name, and progressed all the way to Leaving Certificate. I was a Prefect in 6th year.

My memories of Wesley are all good, it was great to grow up with boys as friends and not as boyfriends, though I do remember sitting with a prospective boyfriend on the Cork train when we went on an educational tour to Cork. The tunnel just outside Cork was very exciting! I think the Co Ed. system made it much easier for me at college, as I was in a class of 15 men and one other girl, doing Hotel Management, in DIT Cathal Brugha Street.

I remember being involved in drama productions in the wardrobe department, I never went on stage, except once to present a bouquet of flowers to someone. Home Economics, or Domestic Science as it was called then, was my favourite subject, it was only for girls. Nowadays boys are able to study it also.

We had film show nights on Saturdays which were always great; afterwards we would all walk back down town to get the bus home together, boys and girls. I also remember the couples who used to stand together in the main hall at break/lunch time. None of the staff seemed to mind about this, and I know some of those couples later married.

We sent our three children to our local community school, Pobalscoil Neasain in Baldoyle, because we wanted them to be in a Co Ed school, and I am sure this was because my memories were so happy.

The only bad memory is the awful condition of the girls' toilets, they were always filthy. There were three toilets in the gym for I don't remember how many girls. We used to sneak up the back stairs to some other toilets, near the staff room, which were somewhat cleaner.

The teachers always addressed the girls as Miss McMillan, whereas the boys would just have been called McMillan, so as girls we were given respect by the staff.

So it was all a very positive experience. Wesley was a great school of which to be a part.

I would love to read your research.

Best of luck to you all.

MARGARET MCKENNA

*Jean Kenny*

(NEE CLARKE) – CLASS OF 1966

*'Back then a major treat was to be in line for the thick heel of Johnston, Mooney and O'Brien's bread.'*

Dear Yvonne, Esther, Thomas and Nathan,

**I** ROTESTANT FAMILIES, living in the west of Ireland, had little option, but to send their children away to boarding school, usually in Dublin. Wesley College Dublin was chosen for me, and so on September 3, 1960 at 11 years of age, my life was to change for good.

Dublin today is easily accessed from most parts of the country, however, back then it was like moving to another world, involving a three-hour drive on twisting roads. More daunting, for an innocent eleven year old, was the fact that there would be no reprieve from school life until the Halloween break, eight weeks ahead. It was no wonder that the weeks preceding the departure date were full of anxieties, sleepless nights and stress rashes!

Tullamaine, the present site of the Burlington Hotel, was a beautiful, solid, well proportioned Georgian mansion, two storeys over basement, sited on several acres of ground. A reduced size hockey pitch formed the front lawn, two tennis courts looked out on Burlington Road, and there was a large vegetable garden at the back. Iris Kellett's Riding School was located behind the garden, the separating wall between the two had a step-ladder leading from one premise to another, facilitating the girls who wished to pursue their equestrian interests. The premises were near the city centre, but still had a touch of the rustic life.

Burlington, the Junior Boy's residence was next door, but 'nere the twain would meet' except for the Christmas party, which was alternatively held in one or other house. Mr. Devers, RIP, was House Master there, a nice man but fearsome in the class-room, as the boys will remember! Embury, the Principal's residence, which was another fine building of similar period, was located beside Burlington House. Epworth, the senior girls residence, was located across the road and accommodated 45 students.

On arrival at Tullamaine, parents and pupils were given light refreshments and belongings were brought to our allocated place, too soon followed by 'good byes'. My memory of that time was hugging my teddy and crying bitterly. That seemed strange to some others, as I was a big girl for my age and big girls do not cry or hang on to Teddy! There were six dorms in the house, each sleeping between six and eight persons, and one

washroom up stairs! Knowing no one, strange faces everywhere, each girl feeling as miserable as the next, we began on this new adventure feeling a little like lambs thrown to the wolves!

Rise and shine bell went off at 7am each morning, everyone falling out of the wire sprung bed with a horse hair mattress, which inevitably gave way to a hollow in the middle depending on the occupiers shape! Believe it or not, they proved to be very comfortable after a time. The stampede began for the bathroom, each trying to be first for the toilet; beds were tidied, then off down to the basement dining room for cornflakes, bread and a cup of tea. Porridge was an occasional luxury.

Ask a teenager today what they would like as a treat and the shoulders may shrug, because they are so spoilt for choice. However, back then a major treat was to be first in line for the thick heel of a Johnston Mooney and O'Brien's loaf of bread. The taste was delicious, especially when accompanied by some homemade jam. It was like eating caviar. On arrival home from school each afternoon tea and bread were available for all to eat, but bread spread with sugar on top was again a feast to enjoy. Simple pleasures!

We had to walk a mile and a half to the college each morning, out the side gate, by the flats next door, then down Leeson Street to Stephen's Green, come hail or high water. Walking in pairs, a different partner was listed for each day, our 'crock' wandered, toggled out with Gabardine coats, navy with hood and belt, black strong shoes a beret on head and a teacher to supervise at the rear, we trudged this path twice daily to and fro. How many pairs of shoes were worn out on this trek? Senior girls and junior boys had to do the same. The young Gardai on traffic control duty on Leeson St Bridge became our Star Boys, as our melodious voices rang out the tune of 'I want to be Bobbies girl', a big hit of the 60's, causing them to cringe in their boots.

Each Sunday pupils went to their respective churches in the morning and then to College Chapel in the afternoon. No one was allowed out until after chapel at 4pm. Lunch on Sun was in Epworth located across the road, in the area now occupied by Fitzwilliam Tennis Club. That was the only day when the all boarder girls were together and that was only for a short while. The senior girls did not really appreciate their space being invaded by a crowd of brats! After lunch all were marched back to Tullamaine, we had to sit and write our letters home before heading off to chapel. If they were posted en route to chapel service our parents would receive them by 9am next day. Talk about an efficient postal service! Free Sundays came once a month, when we could go home after breakfast for the day, if we lived near enough. How important these days were, the thought of freedom kept us sane. If one had to remain in for the day nothing was laid on for you to do. After church we had a good lunch, but then the rest of the day was spent

sitting round reading or doing nothing. We had a radio, but no TV, no tennis or football or any outdoor activity was allowed. We had to observe the Sabbath!

Nights were often cold; a hot water bottle was a useful addition for bedtime, as the dorms were not exactly warm. However, not everyone remembered to bring such a luxury, so a little imagination was required. One of the girls, I am not mentioning her name, was rather good at devising solutions to problems. Her friend was in need of a hot bottle, so her ingenious idea was to use a balloon. It was duly filled with hot water and put into the bed. All was well and we were having our usual bedtime chat when all hell broke loose. The balloon had burst and its contents had spewed out over the bed. Towels and every means of soaking up the water were on demand. What was our friend going to do with her now saturated bed? The rumpus had come to the attention of the teacher on duty and she soon appeared demanding a reason for the noise. The mess confronted her and she was not too happy with the explanation. What a hideous thing to do, had the culprit no sense but to put a balloon full of hot water in her bed etc. Meanwhile the rest of us sat watching in stitches of laughter. A dry mattress was excavated from some storeroom and the matter was resolved. It may have been a silly incident but one cannot deny a certain hilarity and innocence about the solution to the initial problem.

Dorm feasts and pillow fights were also memorable, not to mention the Tullamaine Revolution. Would you believe it but we actually had a rebellion. Tired of being ordered round and treated as morons, just because the teachers did not like pillow fights, we decided to let our feelings flow. We all refused to do anything we were told and gave cheek to teachers on duty. After a few days our rebellion ran out of steam, one of the pleasant young student teachers listened to our grumbles and promised us reform. Talk about a push over! Mind you when the senior teacher came on duty she let us have a bit of her mind, I was called a 'fish mongers daughter', my friends were given similar uncomplimentary titles. Imagine a teacher ridiculing a pupil in a similar manner today; their job would definitely be on the line!

Apart from free Sundays, the only free time out of school time that **GIRLS**, up to sixth year, were given was one Thursday in the month. We were let down town after school for two hours. Imagine two hours of being able to do whatever you wished. Maybe visiting the Del Rio café behind Grafton Street for chips and beans, what a treat! Or if one felt affluent one could go to the Grafton Cinema and watch Cartoons. There were no DVDs or TV in those days at home or else where.

What really got on our goat was that girls of any age were only allowed down town once a month, but boys of any age were let down once a week. Little girls might get molested or lost! To make matters worse girls of all

ages including sixth years had to be accompanied to hockey and tennis matches at all times, all boys could find their own way! One can understand the utter frustration, on the part of girls, at the total inequality of treatment between boys and girls. As seniors, occasional daring girls ventured down the fire escapes into the night and returned by the same route hoping to avoid any attention. Trinity Ball time was a particular date of note. So all were not like sheep to be herded by the system.

Money was not plentiful, as we had to hand in spending money to the housemistress, Miss Smith jnr in Tullamaine and Miss Smyth snr in Epworth. A small sum was given out to us each Sunday to cover church collection, bus fares to hockey matches, occasional sweets, sold at Mr Morrison's sweet shop in the college itself during the week. We were certainly not worth robbing. Mind you we did sneak the occasional few shillings by storing them in our socks; the trick was never to get caught as that resulted in real trouble.

Beyond the classroom the only salvation was a hockey stick or tennis racquet in summer. I often wonder how girls who had no interest in games ever survived. Every afternoon the hockey stick appeared and an hour or so was spent banging a ball between one another. Matches were played on Wednesdays and Saturdays weather permitting. Some of the pitches were like meadows; more skill was required to flick the ball out of the holes than to dribble it along the ground. Others just hung around doing nothing other than chat, no mobile phones or iPods to break the monotony. Saturday evening however, an effort was made to provide entertainment during the winter months. Films were shown in the Large Schoolroom in the college, for which we had to pay a small entrance fee. My favourite was 'Carve Her Name with Pride'. Boys and girls were not allowed to sit together although rules were relaxed for seniors, but no 'hanky panky'.

The greatest thrill and honour was to be included in the squad of hockey players who went to Belfast or Waterford to play in interschool friendly games. The modern day equivalent for students would be a school trip to France. We loved the excitement of getting out of Dublin, the train journey, seeing another city and most of all being able to experience the luxuries enjoyed by students in the North in relation to what we had. The modern classrooms, fully equipped gyms, all weather hockey pitches, free lunches for all students, although the food was stodgy. On a trip to Orangefield not one of the most salubrious Belfast schools, we were so enamoured by the facilities that we requested a gym class while we waited for our match time. We climbed frames, vaulted across horses, twisted ourselves inside out for an hour. By the time our game had to be played we were exhausted, indeed by the next morning we were so stiff and sore that we made a show of ourselves while playing Methody. All regretting our enthusiasm for gymnastics the previous day!

That brings to mind the famous CIE educational trips, which we went on in the mid sixties. We travelled to Belfast, Galway, Cork and I think Limerick for a day on the Music Train. Once arriving at our destination we were bussed from one location to the other and given information on various sites of interest within the city. Altogether they were fairly boring; spending hours hanging around Salthill in the cold and rain trying to entertain ourselves was not a pleasure. My only fun memory of that day was learning the words of the Beatles song 'Do You Love Me, These outings were our only real opportunity to freely mix with the lads although strictly supervised, consequently new romantic relationships usually ensued. So at least they had some educational impact!

Six years in Wesley was generally a good experience. It gave one as good a grounding and education as was available at the time. However, when sixth year came I was more than ready to move on. Even as Head Girl I found the restrictions and regulations trying, and out of school I thought I would never get. Indeed being a Prefect combined with learning the organ, provided me with ample opportunity to avoid much of the rigors of walking in creaks and limited outings down town. I would just take myself off, no one would miss me, and I even spent the occasional Saturday afternoon at the cinema; on my own might I add!

Career guidance was non-existent; however, I had the resolve to go to university but choosing a suitable course was the question. Mr Kirkpatrick did give some guidance, but girls were not really meant to go to third level. I opted for a General Studies degree in TCD because I had no idea what else I could do. Would you believe it, I was one of the only two girls from my year going to university that year. My friends did nursing, secretarial courses or went into the bank. Eventually I got my degree and HDip Ed and taught at secondary level for many years. I often regret the lack of guidance as my career course could have been very different.

I shall end my rambling here, although it has been a pleasure recalling so many memories. If you require any further information please contact me and I shall assist where possible. Good luck with your project.

Yours,

JEAN KENNY



*Helen Ruffell*

(NEE MCMILLAN) – CLASS OF 1966

*‘The boys were encouraged to treat us with respect and let us go through doors first et cetera; I enjoyed it at the time, although my ideas have changed since then’*

**I** WAS AT WESLEY from the age of about five or six until I left in 1966 when I was just coming up to my eighteenth birthday. I was very happy at school and loved the fact that it was Co-Ed. I felt it was special; very few other schools in Dublin were co-ed. at that time. The boys were encouraged to treat us with respect and to let us go through doors first et cetera; I enjoyed that at the time although my ideas have changed since then. We girls were not encouraged to do Science and it was assumed that we would do Domestic Science. Some girls, but only two or three, did Science but only after their parents had made a big fuss. At the time I could not see why they would want to do Science and to be different from the rest of us. As I said, my ideas have changed since then!

I had a couple of very good friends in my class who were boys, and we always sat near one another. I liked having male friends who were not boyfriends. I think I grew up with a very sensible attitude to boys.

The whole school used to go on ‘educational trips’ to places like Limerick and Cork. These involved a long train ride. The journeys were notorious because boys and girls would get together and kiss and cuddle; this was fine if you were one of the girls involved in the kissing and cuddling but not so good if you were not chosen and you had to watch from a distance!

When I have attended reunions I have been very glad to see both my male and female class mates again. We had shared jokes and anecdotes which would not have made sense to anyone else and we could still laugh together twenty five and then forty years later.

So, my memories are happy ones and I think attending Wesley and a Co-Ed. school gave me a good start in life from all sorts of points of view. With every good wish,

HELEN RUFFELL

*Jane Arson*

(NEE WATSON) – CLASS OF 1967

*‘I was allowed to take Applied Maths for Sixth Form – the first girl to do that.’*



**W**HEN I ENTERED WESLEY in 1962 girls had to choose between Experimental Science and Domestic Science and my father decreed that I would do Domestic Science. My mum was a good cook and an expert needlewoman and had taught me plenty, so I could already cook and sew very well. Consequently I was quite bored doing things in class that I had already done at home (although the small amount of human physiology was interesting) and I spent the first four years at school being very jealous of the girls who had more enlightened parents. Maths classes with Mac were the best part of my week. Particular dislikes were History, the weekly crocodile-march to Tullamaine for hockey (the only sport in those days and I hated it, so I managed so many excuses to get out of it) and wearing a beret.

Then came the problem of choosing what subjects to do for Leaving Cert. Not much appealed except the subjects that were apparently impossible for me. Careers advice was minimal in those days and my father wanted me to leave school and do a secretarial course or go into children’s nursing – both ideas in my view “a nightmare”. Thankfully a wise teacher listened and to this day I am grateful that Guy Milner agreed that I could take both Chemistry and Physics. My last two years at school were much happier, as I was then doing some subjects which I really enjoyed (I still had to do French, which I didn’t enjoy, despite having a great teacher). Guy Milner was an inspiring teacher in Fifth Form and constantly challenged us. He was succeeded by two very different teachers, Dick O’Connor for Chemistry and Ross Hinds for Physics, both inspiring in different ways. On top of that I still had Mac for Maths and was allowed to take on Applied Maths in Sixth Form (the first girl to do that). A special privilege was introduced for seniors – a new ‘trendy’ scarf instead of a beret!

After school I studied Natural Sciences in Trinity, with the intention of taking an Honours Degree in Chemistry. However Biology inspired me even more and so I ended up doing Botany for my final year. At that stage I still had no real career plan so I stayed in the Botany Department to do a research-based M.Sc. During that time I also had to do some practical

class demonstrating (teaching), which I really enjoyed.

During my time in Trinity I had become involved with the Corrymeela Community and spent many weekends at the Ballycastle centre, working with young people from Catholic & Protestant backgrounds in Northern Ireland. An opportunity to work in research at Queen's University meant that the journey to Ballycastle was shorter and also allowed me to be involved with Corrymeela work in Belfast. Corrymeela also introduced me to my husband! The Queen's job was not what I expected and I missed the teaching element that I had so enjoyed in Trinity, so after a year there I moved into science teaching at secondary school level.

For the past 17 years I have been teaching both Biology and Chemistry at Rathmore Grammar School in Dunmurry (between Belfast & Lisburn), a job which I thoroughly enjoy. While Rathmore is much bigger than Wesley was in my day, its Christian ethos reminds me a little of my Wesley experiences. I am also involved in setting and marking A-level Biology examinations. In my work I am still inspired by many of the teachers I had in Wesley, in particular by Mac, who was a brilliant Maths teacher and who also found time to show interest in us and in our extra-curricular achievements.

JANE HERRON

*Rosalie Myers*  
(NEE GARRATT) – CLASS OF 1967

*‘Two girls in my form wanted references from Mr Myles to apply for Air-Hostess positions- he refused saying that no Wesley girl is going to be a glorified barmaid!’*

**I**N 1961 I was in 1B and Miss Cooke (Senior) was our form mistress. I was given six detentions in the first term for small handwriting. My mother was not happy with this, I think she thought I was telling lies, she met Miss Cooke and asked her about the detentions and Miss Cooke said she couldn't read my writing it was too small. My mother told her to go and buy herself a magnifying glass!!

Two girls in my form wanted references from Mr Myles (Principal) to apply for Air Hostess positions. He refused saying “No Wesley girl is going to be a glorified barmaid!”

There were different subjects offered to boys and girls while boys were encouraged to study Biology and Chemistry, girls were offered Domestic Science instead. Also, the uniform set us apart – we wore a red blouse, a navy pinafore with a red sash or a navy skirt, a blazer with the school crest, long grey socks and a navy blue jumper. Also it was compulsory to wear a hat, and a tie from second year, and from fifth year you could wear a scarf. In the summer we wore a blue gingham dress.

Education utilised different methodologies then; instead of the internet we used an encyclopaedia and the library. We used rote learning for French and Latin verbs, and there was a great deal of homework. If you failed to do your work you would receive detention, lines or essays on subjects such as “Manners”. There were exams at summer and Christmas. Also at Christmas there was an annual dance where the boys and girls would socialise, after all we had separate play areas during school.

Wesley College was a religious school there were assemblies every day, we attended the chapel from third year about two to three times a week, there was a Carol Service and Founders' Day was celebrated with a church service.

Sport was compulsory, you could debate or be involved with the annual school play or receive music lessons during class. We went on school tours too, every year we would take a day trio to visit other Irish Cities or in 3rd or 4th year we would go abroad.

My best memory is of friends. Many of them come and go, but I still



Prize Day 1963

have two to whom I write and email regularly. I sat beside one particular girl for six years; we went did everything together. When I tried to recall any bad memories about my time in Wesley, I couldn't come up with any- it was such a positive experience.

Best Regards,

ROSALIE MYERS

## Inez Fletcher

– CLASS OF 1968

In conversation with Yvonne Corcoran.

*'Boys had to wear their caps; girls had to wear berets from 1 October until Easter. One had to be respectable; if Miss Cooke Senior caught you eating sweets on the street you were in trouble.'*

What are your memories of Wesley in the late '60s?



WHILE I WAS IN WESLEY, there was not only 6th form but Upper 6th as well. One could repeat the Leaving Cert if one wanted to and then could also have a go at the Entrance Exhibitions for Trinity, not that many of us had a hope; I certainly didn't have a hope! I was just a bit young. There were quite a few who did, some even succeeded!

I started in 1962. The school moved to Ballinteer, in '69. I was seven years here. Around about the time I did the Inter Cert – 4 years it took in '66, I got a scholarship in the end of 1st form it more or less paid a term's fees. Then for the Intermediate I was awarded another scholarship. The results were sent out on postcards in the post.

There was an expectation girls would go to college. My parents had certainly taken it for granted that I would. Many of them opted for nursing and many more secretarial; Alexandra College had a secretarial school at the time.

The school on the Green was not exactly luxurious. There was the large schoolroom, and the gym was below. There was a big front door, and the chapel was on the right; all behind the Methodist Centenary Church in Stephen's Green, what I think is now Department of Foreign Affairs. The gateway is still there. The library was on the right, and to the left the Principal's office.

Underneath was the gym which was a great big basement that doubled up as the girls' cloakrooms, with hooks all around. One rapidly found one's own hook. The boys had to enter by the East wing. They had the yard behind with great big high walls.

The Domestic Science kitchen was next to the chapel, behind which was the junior dining hall.

The classrooms were out of bounds at lunch. I was a Prefect and I had the unenviable task of keeping the students out. Most of the classrooms had fireplaces, with boards over them, and there were raised platforms for teachers. The fireplaces would have been there from the time that it was the Principal's residence.

Boarders had their lunch in school and a certain number of day pupils were allowed. You could get permission to go to the Salvation Army hostel in York Street for lunch if you had a letter from your parents. Many students did but I'd say many more went to the chipper instead! However, the year before I started, the girls had been allowed out into Stephen's Green for lunch. I think a Prefect had to stand in the middle of the road to bring them back when lunch was over. There were many schools located in the area. Alexandra College was where the Conrad Hotel is.. The High School was on Harcourt Street where the Garda Head Quarters is, and the Diocesan School was on the corner of Adelaide Road. There was also the Loreto Convent and the Catholic University School all within a stone's throw in the middle of the city!

Boys had to wear their caps; girls had to wear berets, from 1 October until Easter. One had to be respectable; if Miss Cooke Senior caught you eating sweets on the street you were in trouble.

You had to carry everything with you, as there were no lockers. We wore gym slips in 1st year and then we had divided skirts; the baggy variety which looked like long shorts with pleats! One had to wear them for sports; there wasn't aertex just the regulation red blouse. Everyone wore ties, the boys had to wear their blazers and permission had to be sought take them off. Skirt length was contentious. It was the 60s and the mini was all the rage. It was decided that four inches above the crease of the knee was the shortest a skirt could be.

For the Leaving Certificate one had a choice Physics or Latin, History or Chemistry, French or Geography. Some might have studied German outside the classes. One needed four honours to get into Trinity, and you had to pass five subjects out of six, including Irish, to get a Leaving Certificate, pass in Latin was compulsory for UCD. The only practical subject was Domestic Science, which was for girls only, but girls could also choose to do Experimental Science. When I started, I was encouraged to do it, it was basically Physics and Chemistry, and there wasn't really much Biology in those days, though it came at a later stage

I loved Mac! TA MacDowell the Mathematics teacher. He was a brilliant teacher, and a lovely man. He taught for the whole of his life. He was still teaching at 81. He had a very sharp wit, and was a brilliant shot with some chalk or a duster too! If anyone wasn't attending, they'd get a wrap on the knuckles. And if anyone was daydreaming, and if there happened to be someone of the opposite sex in their line of view, he would just stop and would look, and the rest of the class would go quiet, and eventually whoever it was he was looking at would realise. And he'd say 'hmm lost in wonder, love and praise.'

The punishments were generally cubes there were no calculators in those days. You'd be given a three digit number, and you'd have to cube it,

and prove that you had done it. Ten cubes, starting with such a number...Detentions were the most common form of punishment. Three detentions meant you were sent to the Principal, and it went on your report at the end of the year.

Saturday nights in the winter, maybe once a month, they had a film in the Large Schoolroom, which was for everybody. They'd bring in the dining room chairs and the desks would be pushed to the back. The seniors would grab the desks at the back, and the juniors would have to sit on the wonky chairs. The teachers would go around with torches, just to make sure that there was nobody getting too close!

Wesley had schooling for all ages at one stage, they even had a kindergarten at Tullamaine; someone in my class had known no school other than Wesley.

Our Irish teacher would not speak a word of English to you in class. He was a brilliant teacher. He would do a mime, explain it in fifty different ways, rather than say it in English. Especially if a boarder had left a space in their homework, as they hadn't their dictionary with them in prep. He'd say: "Ní buachaill bó mé, ní maith liom na spásanna móra ar an leathanach!" – which was "I'm not a cowboy, I don't like the big open spaces (on the page)!" He also used to say, well it's an Irish saying: "An duine nach bhfuil láidir, ní foláir dó a bheith glic." – "the person who isn't strong must be clever." So he changed this: "An cailín nach bhfuil dathúil, ní mó di a bheith shíc." "The girl who isn't pretty has to be chic!"



INEZ FLETCHER

College Year Book, 1948



# Lorna Reid

— CLASS OF 1968

*'I was just fortunate enough to get one of twenty places on a new journalism course at The College of Commerce, Rathmines.'*

**M**Y ABIDING MEMORY of my first winter as a boarder at Wesley (1963) is of the cold. Two thin blankets, no hot water bottle, and sporadic heating from ancient radiators which clanked and spluttered around the rooms in Tullamaine House.

Tullamaine was to be our home for the next two years until we moved across to Epworth House, now Fitzwilliam Tennis Club.

Boarding for an 11 year old from Co Kerry in the early 1960s meant just that. One half term break of three or four days and one 'free' Sunday a month when you could visit relatives and wear 'colours' (no uniform.)

However, in spite of the heat deprivations and unimaginative diet: one banana for breakfast every Sunday morning and a boiled egg on Thursdays for tea, we survived. Every minute of the day was accounted for, breakfast followed by the crocodile walk from Epworth to school in St Stephens' Green; and after school hockey practice and matches in the winter and tennis in the summer.

For boarders there was supervised study after tea with no distraction of television, and then off to bed with lights out at 9pm. Sometime we envied the day pupils with their ready access to television and the freedom of their homes. But there was camaraderie amongst the boarders, which led to lifelong friendships.

Discipline then was strict, but fair. The uniform code was very strictly adhered to with berets worn on weekdays and the dreaded bowler hat on Sunday.

Academically we didn't think we differed from any other secondary school that we came into contact with; although some of the more modern school buildings were better equipped than the rabbit warren which was St Stephens' Green. Even in the early 1960s plans were afoot to move the school from the Green to a greenfield site and raising money for the Development Fund was a constant for parents and pupils throughout that time.

Career options for girls in the 1960s were still pretty limited with nursing, teaching and secretarial jobs being the most popular choices.

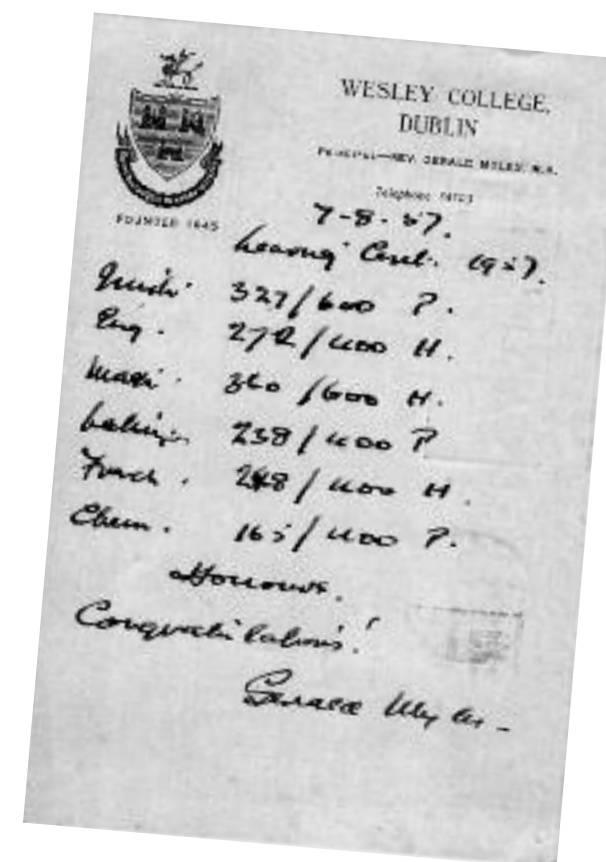
There was no Transition Year and a Gap year out after secondary school was unheard of.

Career guidance was also in its infancy then but luckily for me I always knew that I wanted to be a newspaper reporter.

I was fortunate to get one of 20 places in a new Journalism course at the College of Commerce Rathmines and the following year landed my dream job as a reporter with Independent Newspapers.

I had a 41 year long career with the paper, covering politics, tribunals, the courts and now spend my time travelling all over the world with my husband.

LORNA REID



Leaving Certificate results, 1957

## Gill Smeeth

(NEE BARRINGTON) – CLASS OF 1968

*‘I remember the long rows of wash hand basins in Tullamaine and Epworth, where we had to line up and strip wash each day. We were only allowed a bath once a week. When we were in Epworth it was a bath and a shower on alternate weeks.*

Hi Esther, Yvonne, Nathan and Thomas,

**I** WAS VERY INTERESTED to get your letter, but I’m not sure that I have anything to contribute.

I started as a boarder in Wesley at the age of 9. My first couple of years were hardest as being the “baby” in Tullamaine it was difficult to make friends.

At the age of 11 many more girls started in Wesley and it was then that I made many lifelong friends. To this day, when we meet, it is as though all the years in between melt away.

The social life of Wesley and the sport were my favorite. I was not academically minded and unfortunately studied as little as possible, but managed to scrape through exams!!

I loved hockey best. When I started school we had the old fashioned hockey sticks but later the others were introduced.

I remember the long rows of wash hand basins in Tullamaine and Epworth, where we had to line up and strip wash each day. We were only allowed a bath once a week. When we were in Epworth it was a bath and a shower on alternate weeks.

I remember walking to the college from the boarding house and being made to hold hands with the teacher at the back of the line when I first started. I hated it and often tied my shoelace badly so that it would come undone and I could stop and do it up, and hopefully lag one step behind to avoid the dreaded hand.

There was a fruit and vegetable garden at the back of Tullamaine which was out of bounds. One day, for a dare, I stole a strawberry from the garden but to my disappointment I was caught. The punishment was a whack of the hair brush on the bottom. I never ventured into the garden again. I would have been ten at the time.

How is it we remember punishments! I must have been a horror, but I can also remember being tied to the leg of the teacher’s desk by my tie

for talking in class and was not allowed to sit or kneel. Believe me, it was a most uncomfortable position but it had the desired effect and certainly did no harm. The ruler across the knuckles was another well-deserved punishment. I guess things have changed since those days.

I loved our uniform though my mother didn’t go much on the red blouses as I had red hair. I had never been allowed to wear red before. We had these amazing navy blue knickers (bloomers) over our pants. In the summer we had blue & white check dresses. A blazer was worn at all times.

Berets were worn every day and bowler hats on Sunday or special occasions. The school badge changed while I was there.

There was a fantastic monkey puzzle tree on the lawn at Tullamaine. We had to drink a small carton of milk each day and I hated it. The dorms were quite big, with a row of beds down each side of the room. As one got older we shared smaller rooms. We had some super dorm feasts, I wonder if they still do this.

My favourite subject was Domestic Science. Miss Moran was a wonderful teacher and always encouraged us. I love cooking; I have enjoyed it ever since school days, and have tried to pass some of these skills on to my children and grandchildren.

I think we had a very good all-round education; although I now wish I had studied harder. Life in Wesley was really great.

We always looked forward to the annual “educational trip” to another place, usually by train.

Having left Wesley I went on to the Adelaide Hospital to be a nurse, then to Perth (Scotland) to do midwifery. Later I specialised in Special Baby Care.

I married in 1976, have a daughter, two sons and four grandchildren to date!

We lived first in Wales then moved to Cornwall to take up dairy farming. We then sold the cows and became newsagents in Boscastle. We retired last year and are still living on the farm in Camelford.

Best wishes with the task you have undertaken.

Gillian Smeeth

P.S. English, Irish and Maths were compulsory subjects in our day. We also all learned Latin for several years.

## Liz Schweiger

(NEE KNAGGS) – CLASS OF 1968

*‘In Wesley I loved swimming and I have continued to swim marathons, competing in nineteen of the past twenty four marathons.’*

Dear Thomas et al,

I AM LIZ SCHWEIGER (nee Knaggs) from Kilkenny. I attended Wesley from September 1962 to July 1968. I then went to nurse at the Adelaide from 1968- 1972. I spent three months in St Loman’s Hospital in Palmerstown and then moved on to the Eye and Ear Hospital on the Adelaide Road. In August 1972 I went to Edinburgh Western General Hospital to do midwifery and qualified in August 1973. I stayed there until December of the same year before travelling to Bangladesh with my husband. We were working for Concern.

Tullamaine Summer 1969



My husband, Dr Martin Schweiger, was working with VSO and was seconded to Concern by Christian Aid. We married in July 1975 and returned to Concern until August 1976. We spent a month at the Institute of Child Health attending lectures in Tropical medicine. We returned to Bangladesh at the end of August with Lutheran World Service and worked with RDRS, then Rangpur Dinajpur Relief Service. We worked with them for four years and in that time our daughter, Carolyn was born (1977) and our son, Jason (1980).

In November 1980 we left Bangladesh for home travelling through Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya and Sudan making it back to Europe for Christmas. It was a wonderful to experience the different cultures

In January 1981 my husband took a course in tropical medicine for twelve weeks and then we spent four and a half years in Keighley, Nr Yorkshire. I was appointed the Bengali interpreter for Airdale health authority for three years, and then we moved to Leeds. In Leeds I worked as a voluntary Bengali interpreter until I began school nursing in 1995. I took GCSE Bengali, followed by BSc in nursing in July 2001. I now work full time as a school nurse.

In Wesley I enjoyed swimming and have continued to swim marathons here, competing in nineteen of the past twenty four marathons. Life is never dull. My daughter’s in- laws invited us to visit Xiamen in China last year. We attended the Tomb Sweeping Ceremony for our son in law’s great grandfather, Tan Kah Hee. It was a wonderful experience...and a world away from my childhood in Wesley.

Best wishes to you all,

LIZ

# Yvonne Wilkinson

(NEE MARTIN) – CLASS OF 1968

Hi Yvonne

Sorry for my late reply.

I WAS A PUPIL AT WESLEY from 1955 until 1968. I was a day pupil but regretted not being a boarder as I was very involved in sport and spent a lot of time traveling to and from practice. Also, I remember clearly walking in crocodile to the Ivy Baths for swimming and running the gauntlet of the taunts of the residents of that area. As I remember we had a very good 1st XI hockey team in my last two years but unfortunately came up against Dominican College Wicklow who not only had a **male** coach but had also started to play a new and very physical form of hockey!

One of the things that I recall was the very large cross section of pupils both from Ireland and abroad. I was friends with a girl from Persia called Negeen who refused to accept any form of discipline on the grounds that she did not understand, even though her English was almost perfect. She used to come out to us on Sundays in a stunning, real fur coat; which for Ireland in the late 1960s was positively exotic.

From both the debating society and dramatic society I think I developed an ease with public speaking which served me well in later life especially chairing meetings for the various voluntary committees on which I have sat.

Subject choice was sadly limited. If you were in an A stream it was Latin or science. I opted for Latin.

After Wesley I studied agriculture first at Gurteen for two years and then in Friesland, Holland. My first job was in Department of Agriculture in UCD at the Lyons estate. I left there to go to Australia for a year and when I returned I worked for a Farm accounts company until after my twins were born. From then until 2000 I worked with horses at home. In 2000 I was asked to work for Tattersalls Ireland (bloodstock auctioneers). I left there in 2008 and now spend most of my time in Ard Kyle Connemara.

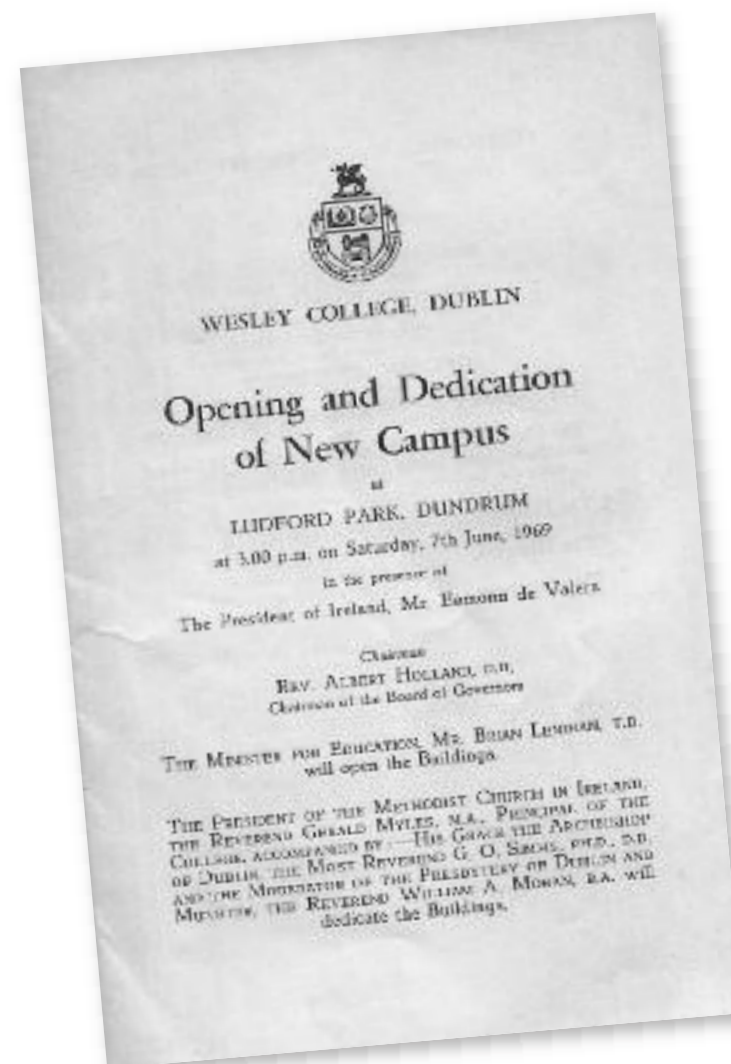
The benefits of Co Education were enormous. We are a family of four girls and all attended Wesley. In 1970s and 1980s the bloodstock industry was a very male dominated domain, and I have no doubt that my background in a mixed school benefited me hugely.

My three sons all attended Wesley and it was a great pleasure to meet the staff still there who had been there in my time. Henry and James still call in to see Rev. Reed if they are passing.

Briefly, I would say that I received an excellent, all-round education which has stood me in good stead.

Best wishes with your project

YVONNE



Notice of new Campus opening in 1969



## Deirdre Chadwick

(NEE FITZGERALD) – CLASS OF 1969

*'Junior pupils were posted as lookouts as we got down to the serious business of Co-Education in its broadest sense!'*

BY THE TIME I entered Tullamaine as first year boarder in 1963, aged 11, things had moved on somewhat since my mother had left in 1946, just after the war. We now had Senior and Junior dining rooms for lunch instead of the separate ones for boys and girls, so meal times were more interesting. Normally one progressed from Junior to Senior in third year but our tables were pretty boisterous and we were sent back (for sliding salt cellars down the table) and we were put under Mr Frank Hughes' care, in the Junior Dining Room for the rest of the year.

The uniform, which had been pretty basic during the war comprised of gymslips, navy blouses and black stockings (worn for class and games) had now mushroomed to include gabardine coats, skirts, jumpers, red blouses, ties, berets, divided skirts for hockey, black laced shoes, and that is only for winter wear. For Sundays, during the winter we had to have navy wool coats, crested felt bowler hats and gloves. Summer Uniform 1 May to 1 October was a nightmare of light blue gingham cotton dresses (which had to be starched), white ankle socks and brown sandals. For Sundays we had to wear blazers and white gloves to go with the dresses. This is not to mention the extensive list of prescribed underwear, gym knickers, tennis dresses, nightwear, and rug, tuck box which we had to pack into a trunk and which was then duly inspected by Matron or a Prefect each term.

Choir was now mixed with four parts, but we still had Willie Watson and his little jokes.

One of the big changes was the newly built labs for 'Experimental Sciences', and the opportunity for girls to take Physics and Chemistry (instead of Domestic Science.). The darkroom allowed a photographic club to be set up. The big attraction was the outing with the boys to the zoo et cetera.

We now had an annual 'educational trip'. The whole school went by train to a major city, for example, Galway or Waterford for the day. I imagine the supervision was a nightmare for the teachers. Junior pupils were posted as lookouts as we got down to the serious business of co-education in the broadest sense.

One thing that hadn't changed was the close bonds which grew between girls who had survived Tullamaine and Epworth together. My mother (who had been Head Girl, Captain of the 1st XI and winner of the Good Conduct Medal) was President of the Old Girls' Union and I, who although a Prefect did not get the other honours in school, was elected President of the Past Pupils Union. We are still both involved and enjoy meeting up with pupils of both sexes from all the years at PPU events.

I count some of my fellow girl pupils as my close friends still. We may not have become rich or famous but out of the twelve who entered Tullamaine as boarder girls Wesley produced four teachers, four nurses, two physiotherapists, one medical consultant and a botanist so I hope we have made a positive contribution to our fellow man. No one ever suggested we become lawyers or accountants, engineers, architects, dentists, vets et cetera; these were all professions for the boys! Thankfully things have changed in Ireland and Wesley since 1969.

All good wishes,

DEIRDRE CHADWICK



Advertisement from College Year Book, 1969

*Caroline Jones*  
(NEE HUGHES) – CLASS OF 1971

*'I grew to love that old building with its many dark corridors to hide in and escape class, which I did, under the ruse of going to music lessons!'*

Dear Nathan,

I DISTINCTLY REMEMBER the first day I came to Wesley College as a young preparatory student. In fact I was so young that I held my mother's hand as we walked up that long driveway on Stephen's Green, having passed through those huge gates. It all seemed very ominous to me and the many-storied building seemed like something out of a novel. I grew to love that old building with its many dark corridors to hide in and escape class, which I did, under the ruse of going to music lessons! I had many a nightmare about falling over the banisters at the top of the winding staircase, and landing in the safety net. The very thought terrified me.

I hated Assembly, mostly because we had to stand in the old hall and there was really not enough room or fresh air, so I often fainted, which, as a young teen was very embarrassing. Especially the day I tried to leave the hall *before* actually fainting, only to land right in the arms of music teacher, Frank Hughes, who never, ever let me forget it!

My days on the Green were full of a mixture of happiness and sadness; but mostly a longing for the privileges of the seniors. They seemed to have so many more privileges and I looked up to them with a blend of awe and fear. How I longed to be able to be part of the school plays, to be allowed *not* to wear that awful beret, to have the freedoms that I perceived they had.

We moved out to Ballinteer for my last two years at Wesley and they were blissfully happy years. There was no more fainting in Assembly because now we could sit down, and the hall was much bigger with much better air-flow. We no longer began every morning in that dark old gym without any natural light, but were in a building that was filled with light. And we had a state-of-the-art stage. Oh! What a stage, with an even smaller backstage where we could put on our own productions. That was the year that Steve Austin entered my life as my English teacher, and school became a place that I never wanted to leave.

As a senior, I had the privilege of spending every waking moment that I could in the Dramatic Society. Who could ever forget the Yeats evening

that we produced? I was given the task of going down the Quays to a monastery to borrow a monk's robe for our Yeats play. I remember hassling with a somewhat inebriated monk as I tried to escape with the robe he was lending us. The freedoms we were afforded! I blossomed in those years and my education became satisfying and rich.

I have now just completed twenty-four years of teaching in an elementary school in Northfield, Minnesota, where I live. The last fourteen of those years were spent as the Director of this school where, you won't be surprised, the arts are flourishing and alive! I am always grateful to Wesley College for fostering this natural love of mine all those years ago. Unlike many other Wesley women, I never cared for sports and felt very incompetent on the field or on the court. I'm thankful to have been part of a school tradition that valued the arts as highly as competitive sports. Good education honors the whole child and offers opportunities for all students to grow and flourish.

I'm very proud and blessed to have been a Wesley woman. I'm grateful for a tradition and teachers who honored all the diversity that we brought to the school. I have fond memories of ardent debates about matters of faith, where I often held a minority view. Nevertheless, I had the opportunity to speak and hold my own.

Whenever I return to Ireland I love to drive by the old school, and here in the school that I now lead I often tell the children stories of my life at Wesley. I was always proud to wear the Wesley uniform in public; I knew I was part of a fine, well-respected school. As a teenager I understood that well and, now, as an older woman I am very proud to call myself a Wesley Woman.

With very best wishes,

CAROLINE

# Micheline Sheehy-Skeffington

CLASS OF 1972

*'It's much more balanced and normal to be in a Co-ed school.'*

Dear Thomas,

I FOUND WESLEY COLLEGE an excellent training for studies and an academic career that I found myself eventually following. I have always been a strong advocate of co-education. I came from a small Quaker co-ed school (Rathgar Junior School) and for me; boys were just other play-mates. When I first arrived in Wesley, I was a bit shocked at some of the attitudes of my colleagues –boys and girls – most of whom had come from segregated schools: I was teased when seen talking to boys. Imagine! Girls were not, in fact, treated equally in my time. We could not go on an official Geography excursion with the boys – and I nearly ended up doing Domestic Science as I was – significantly – a girl with apparent poor Arithmetic abilities. My parents' intervention resulted in my doing science, but other friends were less lucky. However, that was in the late 60's, when hardly another school was co-ed. Things have changed.

My happiest memories of Wesley are when we moved out to the spacious place that was Ludford Park in Ballinteer, with (eventually) a swimming-pool! What luxury. I was not great at sports, but loved the fields and enjoyed hockey –and even played some cricket, as well as being on the school swimming team. I was also involved in the new Leonardo da Vinci Society (LDV) and teachers Dick O'Connor and Arnie Edge were terrific, taking us twice to England, where we visited the London Planetarium, Jodrell Bank and Chester town. In those days that was a huge adventure. It taught me that science was interesting and exciting and I've stayed with it, trying to instil a common enthusiasm in my own plant ecology students in NUI, Galway.

I also enjoyed Upper Sixth class; where only a few of us stayed on to sit the TCD Entrance Exhibition in 1971. We had fewer classes and found time –myself and a friend- to go into town and get involved in the Dublin Arts Festival. As we both were taking English as a subject, this was relevant as well as exciting. But the initiative was not always approved of, especially

since as the only two in that class, we were noticed when we were late!

I managed to get that Exhibition and have fond memories especially of David Wilson who taught me French (not easy as, being half French, I suspect I felt I 'knew it all!') and Latin (very tough for all three of us!). So the tenacity needed for achievement, both in sport (where I did not excel) and study (where I managed to do better), had a very good foundation in Wesley and its dedicated teachers. But above all, I never ever could see the point of segregated teaching, both by staff and pupils. It's much more balanced and normal to be in a co-ed school.

DR MICHELINE SHEEHY-SKEFFINGTON

Botany & Plant Science  
N.U.I. Galway.  
Galway.

## Heather Walsh

(NEE HUGHES) – CLASS OF 1972

*‘A few female fluttering eye lashes often worked wonders and shedding tears of remorse was a wonderful way to avoid detention. Most male teachers just couldn’t handle that – of course there were always the exceptions!’*

Dear Nathan,

IT HAS ALWAYS been somewhat of a joy to be able to call myself a Wesley Woman. The concept of a Wesley Woman stirs up for me images of women of courage and endeavour; multi-talented women and highly educated women who are able to play a meaningful role in society and parent the next generation with excellence.

I hope I have become one such woman in my own way. Wesley College became the place where I was to spend six very happy years when I joined as a very young first year in 1966. My sister was a year ahead of me having spent two years already in the school since she joined as a Prep. I had watched for those two years and waited eagerly to take my place. It was as I expected a place where everything was possible, excellence was expected and hard work was the order of the day. Mostly I went along with this but as I look back I realise how many opportunities were afforded me that I did not take up. I have watched my three children be wiser than me and enjoy every possible aspect of the college.

I was one of those children who were fortunate to have spent some time in the ‘old’ Wesley in St. Stephen’s Green. Every morning I donned my beret (somewhat reluctantly) to walk up the drive and then down what I remember as stone steps in to the gym where I would hang up my coat and ‘hang out’ with my friends till assembly time. The gym was grim – dark and dull with nothing of interest that I can remember. One thing I do remember was watching the senior girls putting on their make-up and fussing over their uniforms – especially the summer dresses which at the time had starched underskirts which I greatly envied. I loved the summer uniform of blue and white gingham dresses and I loved assembly. Singing the hymns was great and I can still sing every word of the School Hymn. I loved the choir and any opportunity to sing in the choir in the Chapel was a particular delight. There were plenty of opportunities for this as my sister Caroline and I sang together as a duet. I have fondest memories of

Mr. William Watson who was so proud of us. We entered the Feis Ceoil on a few occasions and he was nearly more proud than we when we brought back evidence of success.

Wesley in ‘the Green’ had its hardships. One of these was walking to Tullamaine to play hockey. I didn’t enjoy hockey anyway so to have to walk all the way first made the whole experience even more painful. Sportsmanship was and still is highly prized in Wesley however it wasn’t for me. Fortunately there were many other things to do. I remember being summoned to the vice principal’s office as a naïve first year. I walked to his office with fear and trepidation only to discover that he wanted me to play the part of a school child in the forthcoming production of Quality Street. That was such a fun time and the seniors of the day seemed so grown up I was awestruck! Although I was never a great actress I really enjoyed small parts in later school productions.

The move to Ballinteer was a very exciting time. Everything seemed so big and the facilities for the girls were a great improvement on what the old school had to offer. My parents decided that school lunches would be a good idea for me one year. We had great fun in the dining room although loud laughter seemed to be forbidden. I was quietly reminded one day by the vice principal that ‘A loud laugh bespeaks a vacant mind’. That put an end to our antics and from that day to this I have remembered that quote. I have also passed this piece of advice on to my children! The food was generally good but I recall that we were not always fond of all the dishes that were served and created new names for some – my favourite being Graveyard Stew – so called because there were so many bones! Still we ate it and enjoyed it and it fortified us for the day.

There were many times when I was glad to be a Wesley girl and not a Wesley boy. Boys got a rougher deal it seemed to me. They always had to wear their blazers – we got away with a jumper or cardigan in the classroom. Boys were called by their surname whereas we girls were afforded some dignity by the use of our first names. The teachers were definitely harder on the boys, especially the male teachers. A few female fluttering eye lashes often worked wonders and shedding tears of remorse was a wonderful way to avoid detention. Most male teachers just couldn’t handle that – of course there were always the exceptions!

There were many choices in Wesley; however, when it came to subjects for Leaving Certificate choice was not afforded to me. If I remember correctly the choice was between Commerce and Art or Latin. I chose Commerce and Art however Rev. Myles, the Principal of the time, wrote to my parents advising them that he felt that Latin would be a more appropriate choice for me. My parents agreed with him and the decision was made much to my despair. I hate to admit he may have been right as



Latin proved a good foundation for my career as a Health Professional.

After school activities were plentiful and I loved the Christian Union. My sixth year was particularly good in this regard. In the fall of 1971 Arthur Blessitt came to Dublin carrying a large wooden cross. Some of my friends and I were greatly impacted by this man's visit and spreading the word meant that the Christian Union grew greatly. Mr Armitage kindly allowed us to use the Geography room for meetings. I remember that Geography room full to capacity with students sitting on all the tables, chairs and the floor and in the spirit of the day the name of Jesus resounding around the campus as we responded to Paul Coulter's lead of 'Give me a J, give me an E ' and so on. These were very happy times for me consolidating the faith with which I had grown up and making it my own.

Overall I look back on my school days with fond memories. These were days that shaped me and gave me confidence to step out in life with courage. After some years living in England one of my greatest joys was to be able to give each of my three children the chance to experience education in Wesley College. I am justly proud of my Wesley heritage and very happy to be known as a Wesley Woman.

With my best wishes,

HEATHER

*Arinda Lyttle*

(NEE GILMORE) – CLASS OF 1974

*'If you couldn't bend back far enough for the skirt to fall into the correct length category, brown paper was tacked around the bottom of the skirt to mortify you for the day.'*

Hi Wyse

*A*T LAST, HERE ARE A FEW of my happy memories of Wesley days. I think I left about 1974.

I was lucky to have spent some time in Tullamaine House on Leeson Street where the First and Second year boarder girls lived. The junior boarder boys lived around the corner in Burlington House but there was a wall between the two houses! Every morning we walked to school (felt about 2 miles) down Leeson Street and to the Green and back again in the evening. We must have looked a sight; we were in crocodile and the boys all respectfully tipped their caps as we crossed the road at Earlsfort Terrace.

We walked the same journey on Sunday afternoon to Chapel, despite being at our own churches in the morning. I attended the Centenary Church just outside the school gates until it was burned down and then we attended Adelaide Road. We sat on the gallery opposite the St Andrews Boys! After church we went to Epworth House That was the senior Girls house and we had lunch there which I still remember distinctly: lovely Shepherds Pie and matron Smyth would pour us a big glass of milk-on normal school days you had to pay for it!

I was very lucky to have two older sisters Hilary and Arlette there so I was well looked after and spoiled by them and their friends.

Classes were streamed and if you ended up in a C or D stream you were deemed unsuitable for subjects such as Science and took Domestic Science instead. At the end of my first year there we moved to Ballinteer, Ludford Park. Some of the boys already lived there, I think. Well it was spanking new and lovely. We even had a local shop that we were allowed go to occasionally and on Saturdays we were allowed go to Dundrum shopping centre .which comprised of H. Williams and three or four other shops down below the church on the right hand side. Seniors had a longer leave out on Saturdays and could go into town.

We wore uniform most of the time and because storage space was

scarce we were only allowed have two or three other changes of clothing called coloureds or civvies. The uniform I wore in first year was a red shirt and tie with a navy tunic tied in the middle with a red narrow sash also tied with a tie knot and if it was cold we had a cardigan. Shoes were flat black laced and knee socks were grey.

In second year we discarded the tunic and wore skirts from then on well rolled up until you were hauled in by Mrs Alcroft who measured your skirt from the crack at the back of your knee and if you couldn't bend back far enough to fall into the correct length category she tacked brown paper around the bottom of your skirt to mortify you for the day.

In summer the girls wore a big flared short sleeved blue and white gingham dress. Later on this was replaced with a pale blue short sleeve blouse (big girls!) and we didn't have to wear the tie in summer.

We all carried school bags and always had your school homework journal with you.

Good luck with your project!

ARENDA LYTTLE

*Rebecca Foster*

(NEE CUDWORTH) – CLASS OF 1974

*'Listening to a classical recording each morning in Assembly has given me a lifelong love of classical music.'*

I STARTED WESLEY in September 1969. It had only just opened and walking up the drive for the first time I thought it amazing! The brand new school stood very majestically at the top of the long drive. I remember that most if it was concrete, But very nice all the same! A few of my friends also came with me from Taney School, Dundrum. They were Hilary Fitzell, Hilary Burgess and Siobhan Shepherd.

I am still in regular contact with Hilary Fitzell now Mitchell. My greatest memory is going to St Francis Xavier hall to listen to classical concerts and also listening to a classical recording each morning in assembly has given me a lifetime love of classical music!

My favourite teachers were Mr Austin who took us for drama. I got the lead part in *Zigger Zagger* when Helen Foster came down with chicken pox. I also liked Mr Giltrap who took us for Irish. I am ashamed to say I cannot speak a word of it now, although at the time I became quite fluent under his guidance coupled with spending a month in the Gaelteach.

My brother Simon Cudworth joined Wesley in 1971. He was very popular and was a whiz at all sports; a very popular chap he was too.

I left Wesley in July 1974 the year before my Leaving Certificate to go into nursing. I started nurse training in October 1974 at Hull Royal Infirmary. I qualified in 1977 and left Hull to live in Leeds with my husband Ken whom I married in October 1977. I got a job at Pinderfields Hospital doing my Diploma in Orthopaedic Nursing. I had my daughter Emma in 1982, Lucy in 1986 and Sophie in 1988.

In 1995 I attended the University of Leeds to do my Diploma in Cancer Nursing at and went on to do my BSc in 2009.

Currently I lead a large team of nurses and admin staff conducting clinical research across a very large hospital site just outside Leeds which is known as Mid Yorkshire N.H.S Trust. This incorporates (Pinderfields, Pontefract and Dewsbury).

I am now lead nurse research across the trust.

My family are all grown up now and we have one granddaughter Chloe, and another on the way in June.

I came up to Wesley in October and drove up the drive. It still looked just as impressive with lots of new buildings added on.

My memories of Wesley are very happy and I thank the school for moulding me into the person I am today. I loved their ethos of hard work and I have certainly applied that into my beliefs and that of my children.

Wesley holds many happy times and fun days and I feel very fortunate to have been a past pupil.

Kind regards Rebecca

REBECCA FOSTER  
Lead Cancer Research Nurse

*Dr Eileen  
Van der Flier-Keller*

– CLASS OF 1976

*‘My parents always encouraged my sister and me to believe that we could achieve anything we wanted, through passion and hard-work.’*



HANK YOU, both for the opportunity to contribute to your publication, and for the chance to reminisce a little about my time in Wesley College, and the impact of my schooling later on in life.

I have good memories of Wesley, the teachers and the opportunities available to us. As an athlete, I very much enjoyed playing on the First XI field hockey team for several years, as well as on the tennis, badminton and athletics teams. But, I think what I loved most were the early morning, pre-breakfast, summer-term swims in the pool and the opportunities made available to us to practice for, and achieve, all of the lifesaving certificates (including the coaching level). I didn't think so much about this at the time, but someone must have worked very hard to facilitate all of this for us. I would like to thank them again in retrospect.

My parents chose Wesley College because it was Co-ed and had strong academics and sports opportunities. Mam and Dad always encouraged my sister and me to believe that we could achieve anything we wanted, through passion and hard work. Wesley College built on this strong foundation and I am particularly grateful to one teacher who, together with my parents, helped guide me onto the course of my career as a scientist, educator and academic. Mr. Armitage was my Geography teacher. He was an amazing teacher and a wonderful human being. Mr. Armitage pushed us to think critically, he challenged us, showed us real science out in the field, and he encouraged and developed my interest in geology. I'll never forget his kindness in getting me a copy of the Geology Textbook for the Trinity College Matriculation exam. He encouraged me to study independently for these College Entrance examinations, facilitated my attending a geology lecture for interested students at TCD, and then arranged my attending the exams. You asked in your letter how we were treated relative to the boys in terms of career and university encouragement – I think what I have just said speaks for itself!

I was accepted into Trinity College on the basis of my Matriculation results and went on to complete a BA (with First Class Honors), followed

by a PhD in Geology at the University of Western Ontario in Canada. I have been working as a professor at the University of Victoria, currently in the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, since 1986. My hope for my two children, Connor and Allie, as they went through their schooling, was always that they too would find their own very special teachers, as this can make all the difference.

I would like to thank my parents for all of their support, both in Wesley and afterwards – their love, sacrifices; dedication and passion for life have guided me in mine.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute, I look forward to seeing the results.

EILEEN

Eileen Van der Flier-Keller PhD  
Co-Director pacific crystal  
Associate Professor  
School of Earth and Ocean Sciences  
University of Victoria.

*Ruth Lee (nee Morris)*

– CLASS OF 1978

*A*S A PAST PUPIL and third generation Methodist, I would like to suggest yet another area in which Wesley Women have excelled. Many of us followed the line in the Wesley College hymn ‘servants true for thee to be’ and have lived it. For me the whole ethos of Wesley, aided by a resident Chaplain, is encapsulated in the meaningful assemblies, special services to mark the beginning and end of the academic year, Founders Day, Harvest Festival, Remembrance Day, Christmas, Easter, and the lasting friendships which are so special. Wesley was a very positive experience for me; caring for the whole person: academically, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

I married a Wesley boy, David Lee (1963-1968) and we bought a house within a stone’s throw of Wesley and the Methodist church. We have four daughters, all Wesley Women; Sonja (23), Kathyrn (18), Veronica in transition year and Eleanor in second year. Our son Stewart (20) and Sonja and Kathyrn still retain close links with the college. Wesley has been a positive experience for them all.

Methodists are great committee people and the younger generation has always been encouraged into leadership positions. It has been my privilege to serve the Methodist church since leaving Wesley in the following capacities:

Sunday School Superintendent; Methodist Church Dublin District lay Youth Secretary; member of the Overseas Mission Committee for the Dublin District; member of the Leader’s Meeting (now church council) Prayer Team; Coordinator W.I.N.G.S (women inspiring, nurture and growth spiritually); Women’s Bible Study team; Wesley Parents Prayer Support Group Coordinator which meets for an hour’s prayer weekly, praying for pupils and staff; Methodist Women in Ireland, Dublin District president.

RUTH LEE



## Hilary Cooke

(NEE MCNICOL) – CLASS OF 1978

*‘With the Troubles at their height in the 1970s, Wesley had its fair share of bomb scares. Although there was always an element of fear, we found it quite exciting and a great excuse to miss a bit of school, even if it did mean standing outside in the rain!’*

Dear Yvonne,

**A**LTHOUGH I LEFT WESLEY in 1978, sometimes those 33 intervening years feel more like just two or three. So much has changed and yet so much is the same – it only takes one of my own children to come home reeking of the Science Block or Home Economics rooms to transport me straight back to my own days in Wesley, and I’m sure anyone who has ever been a pupil there will know what I mean!

Of course, there have been some obvious changes to the layout of the school. In my day, apart from the two boarding houses, Wesley consisted of just four main buildings – the Classroom, Science, Administration blocks and the Gym. There were a number of grass playing fields for hockey, cricket and rugby, and a couple of tennis courts, a world away from the fantastic all-weather sports facilities available today.

The main uniform hasn’t changed much over the years. Rules regarding the style of blouses and skirts were more lenient in the 1970s – as long as they were red and navy respectively, it didn’t matter where they were bought. There was far less disposable income around at that time and the College did take that into consideration – uniforms were expensive, so it was acceptable for our clothes to come from chain stores and I think we looked just as smart as the pupils do today, maybe even more so! We rolled up the hems of our skirts to shorten them, just as the girls do now! And it was quite acceptable and common for uniform jumpers to be hand knitted, with the red and white stripes embroidered on, in order to save money. Even my hockey socks were hand knitted! Industrial strength navy knickers were also mandatory – although how the uniform police were going to ensure this, I have no idea! For sports the girls wore a short navy skirt and red Aertex for hockey, white Aertex and skirt or dress for tennis and a hideously unforgiving blue leotard for PE – no tracksuits to preserve our dignity. We were subjected to further punishment by having our PE

classes in the Gym, with its vast wall of glass on one side and the balcony to the boys’ changing rooms on the other, so we could be seen by all and sundry!

Teachers also had their own form of uniform – a black gown worn over their clothes, which made them float around the campus looking like crows! I suppose it served the purpose of saving their clothes from blackboard chalk dust, but it gave the teachers an added air of authority too.

Having a swimming pool was great, although it was always freezing! One year during a fuel shortage, swimming went ahead in April after the Easter holidays in a completely unheated pool – when our poor limbs eventually thawed out the pain was something else!

When it came to away sporting fixtures it was up to the pupils to get themselves to their matches. On one occasion I was selected with three other girls to play a badminton match against a comprehensive school in Ballymun. We had to catch two buses across town and find our own way there without any accompanying teacher. (In 1977 private Protestant schools would not have been very popular, and the other school took great delight in thrashing us and sending us home with a flea in our ear!)

Back in the ‘70s assembly was held for the whole school every morning, during which we sang hymns from a little blue hymn book, said prayers (once a week we recited the Lord’s prayer in Irish) and were given various notices and sports announcements. If we had been absent from school we then lined up to hand in written excuses to the Principal. The juniors were always seated during assembly, while those from fourth to sixth year had to stand, and in the stuffy Myles Hall pupils fainted on a regular basis during lengthier assemblies – I found this quite amusing until it happened to me.

Getting to and from Wesley was quite different then. Very few mothers had cars, so local pupils walked or cycled (the bike shed was full!). Those living further afield could catch one of three private school buses. Maybe two or three wealthier sixth formers drove themselves to school, and some of the senior boys (the cool ones) turned up on motorbikes!

Every year the English department organised a trip to Stratford-on-Avon for sixth year, and when it was my turn we were fortunate enough to see ‘Coriolanus’ (the Shakespeare play on our Leaving Cert syllabus) performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company. There were other optional trips available during school holidays, but none of the outdoor pursuit excursions or bonding days that Wesley offers now.

One event that doesn’t seem to have changed is the annual fifth year field trip to the Burren for Biology and Geography students, although we didn’t stay in fancy hotels in my day! I remember being able to lie on the ground and look over the edge at the Cliffs of Moher, which you certainly couldn’t do now (even if safety barriers hadn’t been put there)!

I came to Ireland from the UK when I was eight, and when my first school in Dublin closed down I transferred at the start of second year to Wesley. At that first school I had mistakenly been exempt from learning Irish, so it was a terrible shock to be put in Mr Giltrap's scary Irish class and to be addressed solely as Gaeilge from the start. I hadn't a clue what he was saying, and was too timid to admit it, so it was not until I was threatened with detention (for constantly ignoring instructions!) that the school became aware of my situation. Mr Giltrap then made me his pet project, and thanks to his determination and patience I attained a 'B' in Honours Irish in the following three years to my Inter Cert.

Our version of CSPE was Civics. Our teacher had the bright idea of helping those less fortunate than ourselves in the Dundrum area by giving daffodils to people who didn't have gardens! So one day in March we all had to bring in daffodils from our own gardens, and then walk down to a little row of cottages in Dundrum, where we went door-to-door to present the poor, gardenless villagers with our daffodils! The teacher's plan backfired somewhat when a lot of offended local people viewed this as a condescending gesture by a snobby secondary school – and some even slammed the door in our faces!

Not long after I went to Wesley, I managed to set fire to a bin in the Science lab, causing quite a commotion! There weren't enough gas lighters to go round during an experiment, so I lit a twisted piece of paper from one Bunsen burner in order to light my own, but threw it in the bin without dousing it properly. A minute later there was a loud whoosh as the contents of the bin went up in flames. I have to say Mr Leeson was the essence of calm as he threw the fire blanket over it and averted disaster, but although he never demanded a confession from any of us, I was convinced he knew it was me and was never able to look him in the eye again!

Something we definitely lacked was proper career guidance, although a few people from various backgrounds did come and talk to us in sixth year, and each pupil was given a short interview with a teacher who, to my knowledge, had no formal training in career guidance. When it came to my turn I was told that I wouldn't even get into secretarial college based on my poor Maths result in my Intermediate Certificate. Coincidentally, my letter of acceptance to the secretarial college arrived in the post that same day!

With the Troubles at their height in the 1970s, Wesley had its fair share of bomb scares. Although there was always an element of fear, we found it quite exciting and a great excuse to miss a bit of school, even if it did mean standing outside in the rain! On one occasion I think the threat was quite specific, and I remember the prefects having to stay in the administration building and assist in the search for the bomb – quite unthinkable nowadays!

Parents didn't have the same access to the College as we do now. Apart from PTA meetings or Carol Services, and an annual Open Day visits to Wesley by parents were rare and probably not encouraged. It was probably better from the pupils' point of view – the College 'belonged' more exclusively to us – but parents didn't get the whole picture of life in Wesley – the incredible musical, creative and sporting talent, which never fails to astound me now.

My time in Wesley was marred by two tragedies from my own year alone. One of my friends suffered an asthma attack and died in the summer holidays after third year and soon after that a boarder was killed in a car accident while visiting his family in Zambia. This affected all of us deeply but we had to somehow get over it.

Overall I was very happy in Wesley, and made some great friends there whom I still see on a regular basis. When I look around the school now I am so proud of all it did for me over the years and what it continues to offer its pupils now – long may it continue!

Best regards,

HILARY

## Eleanor Walker

(NEE TANNER) – CLASS OF 1978

*‘Having boys to chat with was a great release from girls who could be cruel and nasty verbally.’*

Hi Esther, Yvonne, Nathan and Thomas,

I ATTENDED WESLEY COLLEGE as a boarder from 1974-1978. I was anxious as I headed off to a boarding school. My fears proved well founded as I was bullied by other girls in 1st and 2nd year. However, my experience of Wesley was not all negative. Back then we were streamed according to ability. I was placed in 1B2 as my older brother was in a B class, however in 2nd year I was delighted to move up to 1A2

Girls were certainly treated equally academically. In sports there was a greater emphasis when boys’ teams did well in matches and we were bussed to attend senior cup rugby matches. I don’t recall the same being the case for Girls Senior Hockey!!

What did Wesley give me? Well, I think the most important thing was my faith in God. I attended the Christian Union in First Year and found great solace there, particularly as I was bullied in other circles. This faith has grown throughout my life and knowing God is with me will carry me through the rest of my life. The CU was attended mostly by girls at that time.

We enjoyed school discos, films on Saturday night et cetera. Having boys to chat with was a great release from girls who could be cruel and nasty verbally. We mixed well with the boys and this I believe gave us a more rounded education than an all girls’ school would/could have done.

I was at our 30 year reunion last weekend; your Principal gave us a tour around the College and asked us to write to you. I am not sure if I have told you the kind of things you want to hear.

I went to Coláiste Móibhí in 1978 where I studied for my Leaving Cert in Irish and went on to CICE to train as a primary teacher. By the way only three of our year seems to have become primary teachers. I was unable to do Honours Irish for Inter Cert as the only Honours Irish class was full at that time.

All the best with your project,  
Regards,

ELEANOR (TANNER) WALKER

## Linda Ellis

– CLASS OF 1982

Dear Yvonne, Thomas, Nathan and Esther

HAVE SO MANY wonderful memories from school that it is hard to know where to begin. I pulled out a scrap book that I have retained to this day and which brought even more memories flooding back. Hijinks on several school trips (including one to Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg in 1980, the trip to Stratford-Upon-Avon, and the hockey trip to London), science classes/labs, sports days, athletics, lots of hockey, and the day my clog went flying off and broke a window at the back of the assembly hall! Yes, clogs were in fashion in the early 1980s.

I remember the choir, especially the Christmas carols. We sang quite a few Beatles songs courtesy of Mr Hughes. One particular advantage of a co-ed school was being able to sing in a choir with four part harmonies. And what a choir we had with James Nelson and Niall Morris!

Audrey Clarke, Rachel Pasley, Marianne Slazenger, Lorraine Harris and myself all won medals in the intermediate West Leinster track and field championships in 1981 and went on to compete in the all Irelands. I competed in the hurdles and relay. Very few girls’ schools had hurdles; not only did Wesley have hurdles; Dan Kennedy coached some of the top Irish athletes. The half-days off school to compete in the athletics in Belfield were an added incentive.

I really enjoyed hockey in Wesley. It was a big part of my time there. I was extremely fortunate in that Ken Blackmore became Principal in 1977 – my first year. Ken and his wife Joan were passionate about hockey and both were extremely good players and coaches. Further, we had several pitches and many supportive parents, who helped with training, lifts to and from matches, hosted after match parties and baked wonderful goodies for those same parties. I usually played centre forward or left wing. I remember the training, many hours, in all weathers. Standing on the circle or in front of goal, late afternoon, cold and dark, buckets of balls being rolled at me, one after the other; endlessly. But it was all worth it. I was on the Minor B in my first year, the Minor A in my second year and on the winning Junior B team in my third year, 1979-80. It may have only been the Junior B, but it was the first Leinster trophy the school had won in perhaps 21 years. The whole school got a half-day off for the final and lots of coaches were arranged. The excitement. The final was played in Alexandra College and the pitch was crowded with supporters; it seemed

like the whole school was there. I can still remember the final whistle and sticks flying into the air!

Many of my good friends to this day were in Wesley. Some now have children there, and I am starting to hear about the school again. So far, I have visited Wesley friends in Cyprus, Norway, London, Paris, Strasbourg, New York and Singapore.

My father and aunt (Ronnie and Ruth Ellis) both went to Wesley. Mr Morrison taught both of them and was a teacher when I was there. I remember Mr Morrison running the tuck shop and co-opting my brother into cricket scoring. My Dad ran the tuck shop for a year or so circa 1955 when Wesley was on St Stephen's Green.

I went on to study at Trinity College Dublin. I have a first class honors engineering degree and an MBA from Trinity. I am also proud to be a Scholar of Trinity College, and have no doubt that Wesley was the foundation for my academic achievements in Trinity.

Very best wishes for your project.  
Kind regards

LINDA ELLIS



Home Economics  
1983-84

## Heather Morris

— CLASS OF 1982

*'My life after Wesley took me into a female dominated career as I trained as a Speech Therapist, and then into a world which had more men than women in Leadership.'*

Dear Nathan, Yvonne, Esther and Thomas,

THREE STORIES, one about a Bible reading, one about a poem, and the last about a song came to my mind as I reflected on how my time in Wesley shaped me as a young woman and impacted my later life. First the Bible reading. As a very timid 12 year old in First Year I was asked to read at the Carol Service. I was terrified, I don't remember what the reading was; perhaps John 1, I do remember standing at the lectern in the half darkness of candlelight, glad that the lectern hid my shaking knees. Afterwards Miss Bunbury gave me a gift to say "Thank you". A kind act which made me think maybe I can do this.

I then went on to join the "Debating Society" and came to enjoy fervent, sometimes hot headed, but always good natured debates on capital punishment, politics in Ireland, and other issues of the day. As well as helping me to develop public speaking, Wesley gave me opportunities to learn how to lead. Looking back I suspect that it was because no one else wanted to do it but I loved chairing the Chess and Drafts Club, and there began to learn how to chair a committee and plan ahead. In Wesley there was a safe environment where I learnt that it was alright to try things out, even if I wasn't going to be the best, to take the risk and enjoy it. So that meant small parts in School plays, like "The Crucible", singing a couple of lines "Ripe Strawberries ripe" in Oliver (although I still think that that role should have gone to my friend Heidi, who was always a better singer than me!), playing hockey on the B's and C's. I was not the star on any of those occasions but the teachers gave me the opportunity to be part of them, to enjoy being part of something bigger.

Then the poem. I was in Wesley between 1976 and 1982. I hope that it is now different but at that stage very few girls did Physics and Chemistry for Leaving Cert. My memory is that there were three girls in one class and four in the other. Mr O'Connor was our teacher. He was brilliant. He excited the class about Science. He was interested in us as people. He encouraged us, took time with us, and mercilessly teased us girls! He



picked up very quickly that the girls in the class were budding feminists and after that began almost every class with the greeting “Good morning men!” Then in the last week of the summer term of 6th Form, when we were preparing to leave school, the Physics class was gathered in the Lecture theatre. Mr O’Connor spoke to us about the importance of Science, encouraged all of us as we approached the looming exams and then said that he wanted to read us a poem which he felt would be significant for us. So he began “If you can keep your head when all about you, are losing theirs and blaming it on you; ...If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew to serve your turn long after they are gone, And so hold on when there is nothing in you except the Will which says to them: “Hold on!”. It was Rudyard Kipling’s famous poem “If”. As it built to the last verse our eyes were filled with tears and our hearts stirred, these were moving, inspiring words. He continued, “If you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds’ worth of distance run, yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it,” and then he looked at us girls as he came to the last line “And—which is more—you’ll be a Man, my son!” My life after Wesley took me first into a female dominated career- as I trained to be a Speech Therapist and then into a world, which had more men than women in leadership, when God called me into Methodist ministry. Mr O’Connor taught me to develop a feminism that has a sense of humour.

And lastly the song. At one stage in my time in Wesley Mr Hughes rediscovered the old “School Song”, dating from perhaps the 1920’s and taught it to the School Choir. I don’t know if it is still sung. As a young woman I sang the words “Be strong O Wesley boy; be blithe O Wesley maiden” through gritted teeth. The words are but an echo of their time and times change. However the song goes on to speak of “cheer the heavy laden...for the weak and the helpless fight”. I am proud of, and was influenced by that emphasis in Wesley which encourages an outward-looking life and care for others, and am grateful to be “A Wesley maiden!”

Biographical details

Heather Morris (nee Kingston) was in Wesley between 1976 and 1982. She is now a Methodist minister, and stationed in the Methodist Theological College in Belfast. She is married to Neil, who also went to Wesley, and they have two sons, Peter and David.

Thank you very much for the opportunity of being a part of this.

Best Wishes,

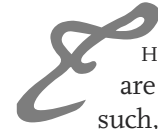
HEATHER MORRIS  
Rev Dr H.M.E. Morris,  
Edgehill Theological College,  
Belfast.

*Sarah Micklem*

(NEE SLAZENGER) – CLASS OF 1984

*‘A Muslim girl arrived to join our class and we were all amazed as she was our age and already married!’*

Dear Yvonne,

 THANK YOU for your letter regarding your project on women who are past pupils of Wesley College. I don’t really have any stories as such, but some of my memories from my time at Wesley (1979–84) are:

Cycling to school (in all weathers) and the bikes being packed into the bike shed several deep – I couldn’t comment on what went on behind the bike shed!

The tuck shop at the bottom of the stairs in the classroom block, always packed with customers at break time.

The freezing cold swimming pool!

The half dozen of us who took Economics with Mr Raymond Marshall and our class room was a tiny office off the library. A Muslim girl arrived to join the class and we were all amazed as she was our age and already married; her husband was paying for her education!

One of my highlights was taking part in a version of *Romeo and Juliet* which we performed with some success at the Dublin Shakespeare Festival.

I also remember with great affection PE teacher, Mr Dan Kennedy, who encouraged me to keep going with hurdles and running when hockey (not my forte) was the main sport for girls.

Some of the social highlights held in the Myles Hall were the film nights in the days before videos and DVDs and, of course, the school discos – carefully monitored by the teaching staff to ensure no close physical contact occurred between the sexes!

I am grateful that Wesley, as a Co-educational school, mirrored the work environment and therefore there was no mystery in relation to the opposite sex. It was accepted that we all, boys and girls, had the potential to be work partners with an equally valid contribution to make in society.


I hope some of the above may be useful to your project – good luck with it!  
Kind regards

SARAH MICKLEM

*Joy Marshall*  
— CLASS OF 1986

*'I remember taking part in the Shakespeare Festival with some classmates, and it was torture as we were torn to shreds by the adjudicator.'*

Dear Students,

 THANK YOU for your letter asking me to contribute to what sounds like a really interesting project.

I have always been an advocate of co-education as I attended Taney School, Dundrum before Wesley and it has always seemed the most natural environment in which to learn and socialize.

My experience as a primary school teacher has only been in mixed classes and I feel a healthy dynamic exists in a group that reflects the broader society.

Boys and girls benefit from interaction with one another in a very positive way.

I am still in touch with male and female friends from school and have always felt comfortable in male company as we were all just friends irrespective of gender.

I attended Wesley between 1980 and 1986 and as I look back I can't believe how many clubs, teams and societies I belonged to. No doubt another twenty new groups have sprung up since my time there.

Hockey dominated my afternoons but I did find time to represent the school at badminton, tennis, cricket, and athletics.

The school choir was brilliant and I really enjoyed being in the musical Oliver and a couple of class plays. I remember taking part in the Shakespeare Festival with some classmates and it was torture as we were torn to shreds by the adjudicator Myles Dungan.

I took part in a couple of debates in 'An Tobar', the Irish language group.

I suppose my most valued memory of my time in Wesley is the Lifelines Project. In 1985 my friends Collette Lucy, Steven Given and I were inspired by our English teacher, Mr MacMonagle to compile and publish a poetry anthology based on choices from famous people. Our publication was produced on the school gestetner but it was such a success that subsequent anthologies were compiled and last year Lifelines celebrated its 25th anniversary with an exhibition in the National Library!

I hope this is of some use to you all.


Yours sincerely,

JOY MARSHALL.

*Fiona Murdoch*  
— CLASS OF 1986

*'It was a surreal: a world-renowned novelist AND my English teacher visiting our house!'*

Hi Yvonne,

 WAS A SHY AND TIMID 11-year-old when I made my first appearance on the steps of Wesley College Dublin in September 1980. The vast campus stretched out before me and I thought I'd never learn to find my way around the maze of 'blocks' and the various paths and steps leading in all different directions. Older pupils pushed their way past and everyone seemed to know exactly where they were going. Except me.

An older pupil showed me to my assigned classroom where two boys made me feel welcome. A few weeks later one of these boys asked me out during art class. I was drawing a picture of a cat at the time (amazing the details that stick in one's memory).

I was mortified! One of the girls had told me he was going to ask me out and I hadn't believed her. I refused him out of sheer embarrassment, but I later regretted it: I did, in fact, like him, but I hated the whole class looking at me (or so it seemed) while they waited with bated breath for my answer. I had never liked being the centre of attention.

I'd always been top of the class in primary school and it was a shock to the system to find myself distinctly average in 1A2. It really knocked my confidence. Hockey was probably my saving grace in the early days. Unlike some of the other girls, I already had quite a bit of experience on the hockey pitch and many of my highlights from my first few years at Wesley revolve around hockey triumphs under the tutelage of Mrs Blackmore (Minors) and then Mr Eager (Juniors). I dropped hockey after the Inter Cert to focus on other interests, including photography with Mr Edge.

The other real positive from early on was the good friends I made, some of whom I still have regular contact with. None of them lived near me, so I didn't see a lot of them at the weekends, but on the last day of term we usually headed into town and we always went away together in the summer holidays. At the end of first and second year we spent a few nights camping on my grandparents' farm in the Dublin mountains while later summers saw us youth hostelling further afield on foot or bike. Those were my first experiences of 'freedom' from parents and teachers!

Irish had been my major weakness in primary school and I struggled with it from day one in Wesley. I took grinds and managed to keep up (just about). My biggest fear was that one day I would go into an Irish exam and not understand any of the essay titles. To this day I still have nightmares from time to time about this happening. However, I sat the Honours paper in the Leaving and achieved a respectable result.

The power that teachers have is phenomenal! I wonder do they realise it. Everyone has teachers who stay with them for life – those who belittled them, but also those who inspired, motivated and encouraged them.

It is no exaggeration to say that my life changed direction with the teacher who taught me English after the Inter Cert. Mr MacMonagle's passion for his subject was infectious.

From day one he seemed delighted to teach me. Not because of any inherent qualities on my own part but simply because of a distant relative I had never even met! On calling the roll in our first class with him, when he got to my name he paused to enquire if I was related to "the great Iris Murdoch". His jaw practically hit the floor when I replied in the affirmative (she was my father's second cousin).

As it happened, Mr MacMonagle was a huge fan of hers. I'd known of her since I was a child – my father and grandparents sometimes talked about her and some of her books were to be found on our bookshelves, but I'd never read any of them. When I'd enquired about them as a child I was told that they were adult books that would be best read when I was older.

I had been a huge bookworm as a young child, but found it difficult to find books to interest me when I entered secondary school. The pleasures of reading were quickly forgotten when I started playing hockey five or six days a week.

A few months later my father, who was a Maths professor in Trinity College, told me that Iris Murdoch was coming to Dublin to receive an Honorary Degree from Trinity. And so it was that on 13th July 1985, an evening when my friends were all glued to their TV sets watching *Live Aid*, I sat in awe listening to Iris Murdoch when she visited our home. Mr MacMonagle and his wife, Mary Clayton, joined us too. It was all a bit surreal: a world-renowned novelist AND my English teacher visiting our house! I was so nervous beforehand that I forgot to put baking powder in the chocolate Brownies I made as my contribution to the evening (they were rather deflated specimens)!

In January 1986, a few weeks before my mock Leaving exams were due to start, I woke up one day with a pain in my side. Mum sent me off to school with her usual "Try it and see how you get on", but I couldn't do PE mid-morning and the school nurse correctly suspected appendicitis. Next morning I was in hospital having my appendix removed and several weeks later I was told I had Crohn's disease.

On our very last day of school the whole class was amazed when Mr MacMonagle came into the classroom carrying a massive pile of presents. We were overwhelmed when we discovered that he had taken the time to choose a book for each of us that he thought we would like. I can still remember the sense of excitement in the classroom as he carefully read the label on each present and handed it to the recipient before we each unwrapped our individual gift. Not surprisingly, perhaps, I went on to study English at Trinity where I did my final year thesis on Iris Murdoch. I then went on to do a Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism in the University of Wales College of Cardiff.

After a couple of years working for Morton Newspapers in Northern Ireland, I entered into the joyous and challenging world of motherhood. That was 15 years ago; I'm now back in Dublin and have yet to return to full-time employment. Writing for a living can be done from home and fitted in and around school hours. I've had three (non-fiction) books published, which was good for the ego, but not particularly advantageous to the bank balance. I'm sticking with fact because I definitely don't have the fiction-writing genius of "the great Iris".

I no longer read much poetry but I did really enjoy our most recent book club meeting when we discussed the immortal *Soundings* (our poetry textbook for the Leaving Cert). I still have my old school copy, which contains not only my notes scrawled in the margin, but also my sister's and brother's jottings too. It was a great evening, which brought back a lot of school memories. It reminded me how rewarding poetry can be and made me determined to read more.

It was interesting to discover that my favourite *Soundings* poem remains John Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale*. The lines "Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget/What thou among the leaves hast never known,/The weariness, the fever and the fret" still resonate with me and remind me of the hours I spent gazing out the windows of the classroom block at the birds (seagulls?) which used to congregate on the roof of the assembly block. I envied them their freedom and desperately wished at times that I could soar away with them!

There was a time when I thought I would never make it to the end of secondary school – it seemed an eternity away – but, since leaving school, time has speeded up and the years are zipping past at an alarming rate.

Thank you very much for asking me to contribute and GOOD LUCK with the project.

All the best,

FIONA

Fiona Murdoch is Communications Officer of Eco-Congregation Ireland and author of *Everyday Heroes – A Celebration of Volunteering in Ireland*, *Able Lives – A Celebration of the Abilities and Achievements of People With Disabilities* and *Victor Bewley's Memoirs* (all published by Veritas).

*Brett O'Brien*

— CLASS OF 1986

*'At my time in Wesley there was one computer in the school that got wheeled in to Maths class on special occasions when we were taught about binary numbers. '*

Dear Yvonne Corcoran, Nathan Walsh, Esther Glenfield & Thomas Wyse Jackson,

I HAVE REALISED with great horror as I try to dredge up my memories of Wesley that I did my Leaving Certificate 25 years ago.

I think I was in the fifth form when the then President of Israel, Chaim Herzog, was invited to speak at morning assembly as he was a past pupil. He told a story of George Bernard Shaw being hounded by the college to recollect his thoughts of his time at Wesley, and after several ignored letters he finally wrote back saying something along the lines of "if you don't leave me alone, I'll tell you what I really thought of the place". I thought it was the perfect response and loved the idea of someday being able to use the line. 25 years on and the truth of the matter is that I loved my time there, and would never dare to compare myself to Shaw!

I was lucky enough to have two teachers who hugely affected my life. One was the phenomenal Mrs Vogan who is the best language teacher I have ever come across and who made damn sure we knew our French grammar. I went on an AFS scholarship to live and study in France for three months during my 5th year and was speaking fluently within weeks because I had had every rule drummed into me (and actually rather logically explained). The other was Mr MacMonagle who has convinced even the most hardened cynic of the beauty of art and literature. I'm now in my forties and still contact him for suggested reading lists.

Women were certainly treated equally in all things academic but young women did cause a fair bit of fear to the parochial school society. I was quite gregarious and knew a lot of the older pupils (boys included) and was once warned by a female teacher at the age of 12 or 13 that if I wasn't careful I would become just like a much talked about Sixth former (who had been expelled several months earlier for alleged inappropriate behaviour with a fellow pupil). Several years later on my return from France, when I thought I was so cosmopolitan and decided (admittedly quite ridiculously) that we should all be kissing as a greeting like our

continental neighbours, half the school called me a lesbian!

Miraculously and happily both many of my old Wesley comrades and I have managed to keep up with the technological revolution and, through social networking sites, have re-established contact across the globe. Perhaps we learnt something after all!

I hope you are enjoying your time there and wish you well with the project.

All the best,

BRETT O'BRIEN  
Class of 1986



Science 1983-84



## Doreen Lawton

( NEE ARMITAGE ) – CLASS OF 1986

*‘Wesley taught us how privileged we were and how important it is to give something back to society.’*

Dear Esther, Nathan, Thomas and Yvonne,

I HAD THE PRIVILEGE to attend Wesley during the years 1980-1986 as a boarder at Epworth. Wesley opened doors for me that have made a world of difference in the life I live today. My name back then was Doreen Armitage and I was a shy conscientious twelve years old when I arrived but in six short years I was transformed into a confident caring and competent adult.

I give Wesley a lot of credit for this. I also credit my parents, Berta and Bertie Armitage, with their love and support and the considerable sacrifices they both made for me and my siblings to attend Wesley. My parents had high expectations for me and I placed high expectations on my education at Wesley where I was provided opportunities to grow, learn, lead, care and to discover who I was and who I was capable of becoming. I tried things like batik hand dying during the after school Arts and Crafts Club with Miss Cannon, Tai Chi with Mr Kennedy ( D.K.) debating in Irish for An Tobar, the Irish language club ran by Miss Reed. In the summer I trained with the water polo team with Mr. Sherwood before breakfast and probably in the best shape of my life when I combined it with athletics training in the afternoons. Summer term was definitely my favourite and the swimming Gala was one of my favourite evenings in the year when I got to be part of the synchronized swimming team! One year I succeeded in swimming a mile, approximately 64 lengths of the pool as it was at the time. It was a sponsored swim for famine relief in Ethiopia.

I was in fourth year when Mr. MacMonagle arrived. He ignited our passion and our compassion and expanded our horizons when he encouraged our Fifth Form to write to world leaders to ask them for their favourite poem and so the first issue of *Lifelines* was born. Wesley taught us how privileged we were and how important it is to give back to society.

Boarding was tough at the beginning, with bouts of homesickness common especially on Sunday nights, but once we made friends we could have toast any night of the week and butter too if we swiped the leftover

pats from the teachers’ table as we left the dining room. I have never acquired a taste for Blueband margarine. On Saturdays evening before the disco there was a constant cry of “I’ve got nothing clean to wear” (we had to wash all our clothes) or else you might hear “Can I borrow your pink sweater?” There were subtle and not so subtle experiments with makeup. Sometimes the boys would tease us unmercifully, and yes, R.W. I have finally forgiven you for “mooring” at me the last time I ever wore a denim miniskirt at the vulnerable age of thirteen.

It was not all Fun and Games however; there were consequences of not following the rules. Getting caught out of bed after Lights Out meant detention: getting up a half hour earlier, pulling on our uniform in the dark, (back then girls wore red blouses and ties with the school tie permanently tied, we just had to slip it over the head and adjust the slip knot), and reporting to the teacher or prefect on duty to write an essay of 300 words or so. The most difficult one I remember having to write was 600 words on “Walls”! Later at breakfast as we sat opposite the boys we were no doubt subdued and bleary-eyed because of lack of sleep. Our punishments never seemed as harsh as the boys which for first years often meant having to scrub the filthy Rugby gear belonging to the Prefects on the First Team, until deemed satisfactory.

One of my favourite memories at Wesley is being coached by Mrs. Blackmore. She taught P.E. to first year girls and also coached Hockey, Tennis, Badminton, and Athletics. She is the mother of five boys and she also happened to be married to the Principal at the time, Mr Kenneth Blackmore. Her tanned face was always smiling and her compact body gave the illusion of a coiled spring. I was a tall gawky girl with huge feet and sport was not my thing, but one May morning on the way out to the tennis courts while carrying a bucket full of practice tennis balls, she opened a door for me when she confided in me that ‘Athletics is wonderful because there is an event for everyone, no matter what body type or size.’ That was a huge revelation to me because I felt very awkward in my skin.

Being tall with large feet and considerable upper body strength was a huge plus when it came to the Shot Putt. Participation allowed me to travel to many other schools and to compete at the Provincial level. I didn’t get to compete at the national level but members of our team did and we supported them fully. One of the nice things about Athletics is that we got to train with the guys and travel as a team. My first big crush was on one of the other athletes and I was so shy that I only let him know I cared about him by feeding him my delicious offerings through the windows of the Home Economics Classroom when he happened to saunter by. Ah the sweet torment of unrequited love.

You will be glad to know that I later successfully wooed my husband

while working as the cook at the Methodist Seminary in Belfast, Edgehill College, some years later. He was an exchange student from Wesley Seminary in Washington D.C. I live in Pennsylvania now with my husband Dennis and our two children. I recently returned to University in my forties to become a nurse and I graduate this May, when I will be working in Hanover Hospital PA. Having a First Class Education from Wesley College Dublin has stood the test of time, and my transition back into education has been smooth and trouble free because of a great foundation.

To those of you who are fortunate to attend Wesley now, I say seize every opportunity you get to discover who you are and what you are capable of. You will never get as many opportunities again. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

With best wishes,

DOREEN



Art class 1983-84

## Priscilla Robinson

– CLASS OF 1986

*‘I’d love to know if the Concourse smells the same, and if the portraits of former Principals are still hanging in the same place, and if you miss the 48A do you still have to traipse into Assembly late with everyone watching, and is there still all that talk of school honour.’*

Dear Yvonne, Thomas, Nathan and Esther,

**I** DON’T THINK ABOUT school much. It is a hazy distant place. I’ve attended two school reunions since leaving Wesley in 1986 and they dredged up some memories, but I also spent much of each evening trying to see familiar faces in the people around me.

Sometimes my strongest memories of Wesley seem to be of getting there and getting out of there! For me it meant a daily 48A bus trek from Milltown to Ballinteer. (Back in those days it wasn’t unusual to wait for an hour to get a bus home and we believed that the drivers only came down from the terminus when they had finished playing cards!) Alex, an all-girls school, was just a five minute walk from our house, but my parents believed too strongly in the value of co-education to send me there.

My family was boy, girl, boy, girl and I’d been to a mixed primary school so secondary co-education seemed unremarkable – until teenage hormones kicked in. Initially I was more aware of the boarder day-pupil divide than the boy girl one. It was rare for one to make friends with the other, and I remember in 5th year when a boarder dated a day girl it was almost a scandal! I would have liked to have known the boarders better and I sometimes thought that there were two Wesleys, and that whoever had thought it up that way forgot to work out how to bring them together.

It’s hard to write about school and be objective. Wesley was a difficult time for me, mainly due to family circumstances and it wasn’t until my last day in school that I got some help with this. We had English, my favourite subject from first year – taught by a succession of bright, articulate teachers like Miss Bunbury, Mrs Murtagh and Mr Austen and Mr MacMonagle. He swept into the room and announced that we should not worry, school days were undoubtedly not the best days of our lives, and we would have much better ones!

It seemed like a strange thing to hear on your last day when even the most embittered of us were feeling a few twinges of nostalgia, but I didn’t

care. I was delighted to hear from someone older what I had hoped for years: that one day I would be happier than this. He played us a song by Sam Cooke with the words – “don’t know much about a Science book, don’t know much about the French I took” and soon we were up on the tables, singing along, and trying to dance without falling.

So I left school and moved on, first to repeat my Leaving Certificate course in Ringsend Technical Institute – a sharp contrast to Wesley. I studied English and Sociology in Trinity and was far happier than at school, though I was confused about my future. I thought I wanted to do teaching or social work and then I didn’t know what I wanted to do. It was 1991 and some time spent on the dole seemed mandatory.

Since then I have had great jobs that paid very little – a recurring theme – and somehow found my way into stand-up comedy (a truly male dominated area) and then theatre. Now I work part-time in the Civil Service and write and perform my own shows on the side. One puts bread in my mouth and the other keeps me sane and sometimes I am surprised when the roles are reversed! My first show was an old-fashioned comedy slideshow, which took place in my flat. The last piece I made was a shop called *Help Me! Help Me!* Where I exchanged my personal belongings for help.

I’ve trod a muddled but happy way since school. It hasn’t been well planned. But I can see threads reaching back from my life now, to what I experienced in Wesley. In 4th year we were given a series of talks from people about their jobs, and I remember one distinctly. The speaker was an entrepreneur. The whole form was gathered in a lecture theatre and he asked who among us were in the lower B classes. Then he got them all to stand up. Tension began to build as Wesley was streamed academically back then and the divisions were palpable. He asked everyone else from the A classes to look at them for a few minutes, because, he said, contrary to our position at the top now, in the future we would be working for them. It was a theatrical moment and I revelled in his challenge to the system and suggestion that things were not always as they seemed.

Also, I still love cooking and mending just like we did in home economics with the teachers who would ask us insightful questions about our lives and the world, as we sat around like old women, making things and becoming friends.

There are other things I could cite, memories are coming back to me now: Mrs Carson – our gifted Irish teacher – bringing the subject alive with her seanfhocail, sitting in detention for my first time (for being caught doing my homework at the bus stop!) and finding it a good place to daydream, learning Hardy, Hopkins, Dickinson and Keats by heart, singing Carpenters and Beatles songs in choir despite being tone deaf,

smashing a teapot on stage in the 2nd year play, reading “The Portrait of a Lady” for the first time, the visit of some real life choreographers and dancers to PE, the boys singing ‘Patricia the Stripper’ in Economics when the teacher repeatedly got my name wrong, eating packed lunches with my friends in the sun, and being treated with new respect by teachers when we entered 5th year!

I think I’ve only been back to Wesley once since 1986. It’s funny what you are curious about after 20 years. I’d love to know if the concourse smells the same, and if the portraits of the former Principals are still hanging in the same place, if you miss the 48A do you still have to traipse into assembly late with everyone watching, and is there still all that talk of school honour? I’d like to sit in the Library, and the Home Economics room, to listen in on an English class and then shoot a few hoops in the gym. Perhaps this would be the ultimate in school reunions? To let us all go back for a day and wander the corridors. Maybe then I would see again – once every ten years – who the people at the reunions are.


Kind Regards,

PRISCILLA

*Claire Reilly*  
(NEE RITCHIE) – CLASS OF 1987

*'The excitement of being on stage and being part of the production was huge,'*

Dear Yvonne, Esther, Nathan and Thomas,

 HANK YOU for your letter. I have many happy memories of Wesley. Playing hockey on the grass pitches, wearing hockey boots and being told to hit the ball into the right hand corner for the right wing to chase!!! The ball bouncing so much you could never be sure that you would make contact, but it did mean that when by senior level we played on Astroturf in a couple of tournaments they seemed as smooth as ice!

Travelling away to Ashton in Cork was a highlight of the hockey year. Getting the early train travelling out to Douglas before playing whatever the weather, even in hailstones. Then travelling home again.

Hockey was definitely one of the major highlights of my time at Wesley. Four days a week, excluding double games periods, we would run to the gym to change, run up to the pitches and then train till it got dark or later. We trained in most weathers including pouring rain. Mr and Mrs Blackmore coached me at Minor and Senior level and Mr Eager at Junior Level. They gave so much of themselves and their time and we loved it. We were so sure we would win each time and usually did. Though I remember losing to High School in the Leinster Senior League in fifth year and being made to do laps of the pitch afterwards, Mr Blackmore deeming that a suitable punishment for such a poor team performance! (I'm not sure High School saw it that way!!)

We had a wonderful hockey trip to Scotland in fifth year (1986), thanks to Mrs Blackmore and Ms Ricketts. Travelling by boat and then train to Edinburgh it was a long journey but well worth it. Funnily enough I don't remember any of the matches but I do remember shopping in the Waverly Centre and having my first (and best ever) Chinese meal. I think Ms Ricketts was to thank for finding that restaurant!

The year after our 1987 victory in the Kate Russell All Ireland hockey tournament. hosted by Wesley, we qualified to take part in a European tournament in The Hague in Holland. How Mr and Mrs Blackmore survived bringing fifteen or so fifth and sixth years on a KLM flight to Schipol and on to The Hague by train I'm not sure. Hockey was still played

on grass then although we did have one match on Astroturf. Other highlights of that tour included a visit to Madurodam miniature town and a visit to Anne Franck's house in Amsterdam.

Although we had very successful hockey years then winning many trophies and having many Leinster caps, for me the strongest memories are of the everyday training sessions, the red shirts and navy skirts and the cold legs, the happy tiredness after a practice and the cold cycle home, the anticipation at the start of the season as we checked the team sheets hoping to see our names on the A team list. I played alongside many of the same girls from preps up to sixth year and enjoyed the team experience immensely. I will not be surprised if when I can still remember the names and faces of those team members when I am in my eighties!

There wasn't just hockey of course. There was tennis, cricket, athletics, gymnastics, after school swimming in the summer, the trampoline in PE class, so many opportunities and so much energy expended. I don't think I realised how fortunate we were to have so much time and opportunity to take part in so many sports but we loved it and hopefully our enthusiasm and commitment were some reward for our coaches.

#### PREPS

I entered preps in September 1980. As the daughter of a teacher it wasn't that daunting a beginning. I think I probably thought I 'owned' much of the school. My memories of that year are fairly blurred, although Miss Barrett does keep making appearances as I think of the classrooms at the far end of the Science Block. I do vaguely recall not being allowed to attend a story time class (on Wednesdays?) as my handwriting was so poor I had to have extra help! Unfortunately it took more than just that year to make it legible.

#### DRAMA

I think I was probably one of the most wooden volunteers to ever audition for a part in the school play. However as I sang in the school choirs I managed to land bit parts in Noyes Flood in first year, and then My Fair Lady in Form Five, in which Heather Holmes brilliantly played Eliza opposite Mr Auster's Professor Higgins. The excitement of being on stage and being part of the production was huge. I also landed a bit part, of a very overweight cook, in the Comedy of Errors in Form Six. However, as I was on stage for all of thirty seconds and I don't think anyone recognised me there is little to say on that.

As a spectator of the school play it was always one of the high points of the school year. In particular for those junior girls who had a crush of some sort on a senior boy. I am sure that almost any girl who was in the school



in 1984 could tell you which Form Six boy wore tennis shorts for his role in Tartuffe! Heart throb is an understatement!

Wishing you all the best with your project.

Sincerely,

CLAIRE

Form IV car maintenance, 1989-1990



*Jacqui Wilkinson*

(NEE HEANEY) – CLASS OF 1988

*'Although Sin, Cos and Tan are thankfully not in my daily life anymore I still know how they are connected.'*

Dear Thomas, Esther, Nathan and Yvonne

**S**OUR REQUEST for memories and anecdotes sent me upstairs into my bedroom cupboard where I knew I would find my Wesley jumper along with its prefect's badge and school tie. I also found an A4 envelope containing school memorabilia and my Minor B hockey trophy. These items have moved house with me innumerable times and have avoided skips and recycle bins. Opening the envelope brings back so many names, events and happy occasions from my six years in Wesley from 1982-1988.

Looking at the jumper reminds me of the traumas of buying uniform each August. This was a stressful experience, as it remains today as I buy for my own three children. The red shirts were standard and a dislike of wearing red has only abated in recent years. I wonder am I unique in this? The skirts were to be between two inches above and two inches below the knee and it was at this point that whispered negotiations had to take place between mother and daughter to select a skirt that would last the year! I do remember sewing up the front pleat in my skirt one year to try to make it more fashionable. It is not surprising that no red Wesley shirt or navy skirt is to be found in my collection. The other items I would have no hesitation but to burn if I saw them would be the horrendous royal blue leotard we had for PE in 1st year and the navy hockey skirt my mother bought at the clothes sale before I started. She bought large so it would last but the hem needed to be turned up three or four times and still reached my knees. It was heavy to wear and teamed with hockey pants (yes really!) and black hockey boots I must have been a sight to behold as I turned out on the muddy hockey pitch to play for the Minor D's.

Wesley gave me a few great sporting experiences. The pinnacle of my short hockey career was in 3rd year when I captained the Minor B's to victory in the Cup. I still have the trophy, the draw sheet with all our successes, a scar on my elbow received on the gravel pitch in Rathdown School in the semi finals and the newspaper reports of the replayed final

in 'dreadful' weather conditions at Alexandra College when we beat St. Killian's 2-0. We were coached by Mrs Mahwhinney who used to climb over her garden wall to get to the hockey pitch. After this success I 'hung up my hockey boots' and now years later am happily the 'hockey mum' watching my own sons and daughter play in much nicer kit on so much better pitches. Badminton was less time consuming and gave me free afternoons for my other interests.

In 3rd year I entered the Young Scientists' Exhibition with two friends and much help from Mr Kerr. It was a great event and our Highly Commended result was a relief to us all, especially our families who had endured us boiling and freezing liquids in kitchens for tasting surveys for weeks on end. The photo of our group is still in my collection.

One of the more amusing memories I have of my time in Wesley was when in 4th year Mr Lewis' Maths class decided to decorate his prefab. We spent a fun day painting Maths pictures including Silly Old Harry Caught A Herring Trawling Off America. I'm sure the prefab is no more but I can still see those pictures in my mind's eye and although Sin, Cos and Tan are thankfully not in my daily life any more I still know how they are connected. Maybe some day they will appear in a table quiz!

I also have my blue school hymn book from Assembly and have just turned through the hymns to find the one we used to sing to the tune of 'Every Breath you take' by The Police: 'Rejoice the Lord is King!' Mr Hughes was great at putting contemporary tunes to old hymns and at getting everyone to sing in school choirs; which were formed for Carol Services and the Music Festival, and gained us many free classes for rehearsals; we had to be careful to smile but not to laugh as he twinkled at us all. I am sure parents could always guess when Mr Hughes was trying to get us all to smile. Nervous grins would break out, especially in the front rows of girls. It was towards the end of my school days that he told us with great delight that he had found 'The School Song' and our hearts sank as we sang of 'blythe Wesley maidens' and 'strong Wesley boys.' I wish I could remember other pieces we sang but the School Song was trawled out for every occasion for a few years and that is what sticks in my mind. I hope it has been 'lost' again!

Choosing subjects was a stressful time then as I am sure it is today. I took German and Musicianship for Inter Cert and have so many memories of German class and Mr Bryan. I continued German to Leaving Cert too in a class of about 5 others. Mr Bryan's tape recorder and phone directory, carried around the school with him and brought to Room 24 for class to maximise sound quality will for evermore be associated with the German language. The smell of the lilac bushes down by the Methodist Church will also be always linked with Irish where after many early morning

classes before school with Mrs Reed we had our Irish Orals. This was crucial for me as I wanted to be a primary teacher and I knew all about Difhostaiocht and other essential topics for discussion. Presumably in the Ireland of today Difhostaiocht is also an important Oral language topic.

For Leaving Cert I also opted for Home Economics and Physics. Home Economics was a great break from other, more book intensive subjects such as Maths and English and my Hardback notebook is still to be found with my cookbooks. I have yet to find a better, more decadent recipe than the Viennese Chocolate cake and I will never forget the hours decorating the cakes for display at Open Day. My parents wisely suggested that none of us should eat the black and red icing that adorned my cake!

Several Prize Day programmes are also in my envelope and I have a few books on my shelf that contain the prize sticker in the front cover. It is, however, one small letter that takes pride of place in my envelope- that inviting me to be Head Girl. Never having been even a class captain over the previous years I was so surprised by this honour and really enjoyed my final year at school.

So what did I gain from my years at Wesley apart from a tattered envelope, hockey trophy and school jumper? I know I grew in confidence as a person; I worked hard and got the results I needed for college but enjoyed the whole six years too. Since school I trained as a primary teacher, was awarded Schol. in Trinity and got a Masters' Degree in 1993. I have written a series of primary school textbooks and am now a Learning Support teacher in a primary school in Cork. I married in 1994 and have three children, two of whom are in secondary school in Cork where we live. My husband also attended a Dublin school (Kings' Hospital) so perhaps living in Cork, rather than Dublin has saved us the debate about which school our children would attend. (Wesley of course!)

Thank you for the incentive to open my envelope of memories once again. They will now return to the darkness of the bedroom cupboard for another decade or more.

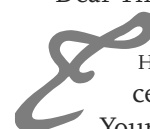
JACQUI WILKINSON (HEANEY)

Debbie Clinton

(NEE HEANEY) – CLASS OF 1990

*‘The influence of Wesley remains part of the person I have become and always will.’*

Dear Thomas, Esther, Nathan and Yvonne

 THANKS FOR CONTACTING me with respect to your venture celebrating the centenary of co-education in Wesley.

Your request for stories and anecdotes from my time at Wesley and chosen career path afterwards certainly got me thinking.

During my time at Wesley from 1984-1990 my overwhelming memory was of the domination of hockey in the life of the school. From 1st year onwards many of the girls started playing hockey and dreamed of playing it well. Inspired by the Blackmores and the previous generation of 1st team winners, we followed in the footsteps of many really great players. Playing 4 times a week I wonder how we ever did anything else. We cast a sympathetic glance every so often to the boys rugby teams who often in those days were first round casualties in the cup. For the girls hockey a first round defeat would have caused shock, and semi-final was respectable but we really wanted that trophy. I discovered when I got to university that rumours abounded that Wesley girls practiced hockey against the boys teams and that was why we were so good – actually this rarely happened as pretty much every time we tried it someone got injured. Looking back, I often wondered what people did who didn't play hockey, and then I remembered those girls who stunned us with their performance at the annual school play, those who had starring roles in the orchestra or the fashion show and those who managed to do pretty much everything. The school choir was one great place where unified in red shirts and ties, anyone who could sing (including me somehow!) got to enjoy missing class in the run up to the Carol Service – and singing at it. Who could forget the inimitable Frank Hughes, at the most serious moment before a complex choir piece began managing to wink at the entire choir - and the parents look on joyfully oblivious as to why their girls suddenly burst into enthusiastic smiles.

Between all that there was work, and subject choices. For some reason I ended up doing Home Economics for Inter Cert – something to do with avoiding doing Art or Music and the fact that there was no option to study Spanish which is what I really wanted to do. I learnt how to make cushions,

skirts and toys – none of which I have ever done since and all of which I think have either departed to the dust bin (or possibly may reside in my parents attic!). The cooking side was a little more successful as I can still whip up a mean risotto to the envy of my friends, which I credit to Home Economics at Wesley. Kedgeree was consigned to the bin though – and has never been made since. Some girl, to this day unnamed, managed to leave her creation in one of the ovens which was rarely used, to be discovered weeks later by an unsuspecting teacher covered in maggots. I suspect the teacher still remembers it! Leaving that experience to one side, Leaving Certificate choices beckoned. I decided to leave the Science block behind – too many incidents with broken test tubes and beakers for my liking, and confined myself to the classroom block. Avoiding Art and Music once more I landed on Economics (this time without the Home bit) which despite seeming rather strange to begin with, proved a good choice as I ended up studying for a degree in it.

And of course I remember those red shirts. Strange how I avoided wearing red for about 5 years after school – you can get too much of a good thing. It was also amazing the amount of variation girls could manage within the uniform guidelines – length of skirt, socks up or down or perhaps even tights (socks mostly down in my era). Of course there was also the seasonal switch to pale blue aertex from 1st May (even if it was cold) – for pretty much all the girls (and the occasional boy as well). Jumpers – well you couldn't change them much until you got to fifth or sixth year when you might get an “Honours” jumper which were pretty nice and awarded for lots of different activities – and a great thing to talk about in French and Irish orals. I am sure many still remember how to explain the school crest in Irish and French, sadly I am not sure I could do it now.

Now settled in London, having worked as a European brand and customer director for a major insurer, married with two children (not yet at school!), when back in Dublin, I still pass by the entrance to Wesley and think of all that happened there. Whilst virtually all the roads around it have changed, and Dundrum shopping centre certainly has (much better after school shopping now!), the entrance still looks the same and brings back memories of that drive in to school each day, books in lockers, friends in class, lunch, daily assembly... Whilst all inside has surely changed almost completely, and I don't play hockey anymore, the influence of Wesley remains part of the person I have become and always will. Amazingly I now live five minutes away from a girl I met at the age of eleven doing our entrance exam for Wesley – and we're still friends over 25 years later.

I hope these few thoughts are useful for you. Do let me know if there are any other specific areas you'd like some thoughts on and every good wish for your project.

DEBBIE CLINTON (nee Heaney)

Kate Egan

— CLASS OF 1993

*‘Ironically we had to write essays on current affairs topics, something which I have now found quite useful.’*

Dear Nathan and Yvonne,

**M**Y APOLOGIES for the delay in responding to you but I had been looking for my old diary which I kept during my time in Wesley.

There were a few things which jumped out at me from my time there. The first was the number of occasions I got a house detention (I think I counted roughly 10 over a 12 month period) for not getting up in time for school. Ironically we had to write essays on current affairs topics as punishment, something which I have now found quite useful. The second was my love of chocolate cake (which we usually got on Wednesdays). The third was an incident in the Girls’ House which involved a sofa:

“Jeez it’s really stuck. There’s no moving that”

Colm surveyed the scene he was confronted with and shook his head slowly. Before long, three more of the sixth year boys joined him, all shaking their heads and tut tutting at our predicament.

“It’s not good, not good at all girls” they said gravely, one by one.

Feeling the panic rising within I lost my cool and shouted “Don’t just stand there, do something” But I knew as soon as I said it that it was already too late.

Suddenly a voice bellowed loudly down the corridor “What’s going on?” My stomach suddenly felt as heavy as a rock and my legs were about to go from under me. We’d been rumbled. The two duty teachers marched towards us. “Well?” shouted the taller sterner one. “And what are those boys doing here?”

“Please Miss, we only asked them to come and help us” I said, hoping the panic in my voice would convey the fact that I knew we were all in big trouble. Although strangely I didn’t quite believe the mess we’d managed to get ourselves into.

Thankfully that’s when the teachers started to laugh, breaking the ice for the rest of us to follow. After all it wasn’t everyday you got a ten foot long sofa wedged floor to ceiling in a corridor.

It had all seemed like such a good idea at the time, as most ideas do.

In January 1993 a group of us in sixth year (Julie, Paula, June, Suzi and myself) had moved into an informal dormitory on the ground floor of Epworth House. It was like a real home away from home.

The room had five beds arranged around its perimeter. Raspberry pink walls complemented the blue/grey industrial carpet, complete with make up stains (which had been painstakingly gathered over the years) along with a smell of stale perfume. Office type lockers and chairs also provided that touch of home.

In the middle a number of tables were arranged in a rectangle, where Shakespeare’s hold on all our lives was discussed at great length over tea and buttered toast.

During the first week of living in our new accommodation, we quickly discovered the advantages of having the TV room just next door. It was easy to feed the aerial through the end window and two of us could manage to carry the big old antique TV set (no flat screens in those days) into our comfy new home.

We thought we had it made. Late night telly, microwave popcorn, all we needed now was a comfy sofa and life would be complete. And so the search began for a couch to complete our pad.

One afternoon we discovered a relatively unused sofa in the senior common room next door to ours. After posting a few lookouts in the hallway, Operation Sofa was underway.

One point to note about the couches in the boarding houses, they’re not your usual five foot long ones found in most homes, no, these have to accommodate around ten people in one sitting and are usually about ten foot long. Not an easy thing to move.

That day three of us took one end, another three the top and four were stationed in the middle. Out the door of the senior common room we shuffled with the giant, bright orange floral patterned couch. All we had to do was get it around the tight corner and then we could push it into its new home. But despite desperate efforts to push, pull, lift, heave and ho, we couldn’t manage it and instead got it completely wedged in the corridor. Not even a panic call to the boys’ house for reinforcements and toolboxes could get us out of this mess. That’s where we found ourselves when the teachers arrived.

As our temporary guardians tried to contain their laughter, one of the fourth years was dispatched to the maintenance office for help. We were ushered out to tea and then to study, as work began to remove the wedged sofa. Later after study we came back to Epworth only to discover that sadly the bright orange floral sofa was unable to be saved. All that remained of it was a sad scattering of sawdust.



The call then came for us to face Miss .Cooke (our house mistress).

“Girls” she declared, “Preparation, preparation, preparation”. That was where we went wrong apparently and of course she was right. Had we thought about it properly we would have measured the sofa first, then the corridor and then utilised some of Mr Lewis’s geometry theories from Maths to ensure the success of Operation Sofa.

Chastened, we returned to our room and accepted the fact that we had failed but did learn that being able to use a measuring tape is vital when considering moving furniture.

A few weeks later when we came back from our mid- term break a second hand sofa and two armchairs had been installed in our sixth year home, with a note attached saying-“ Enjoy!”

Ever since then I’ve never contemplated moving a large piece of furniture without first using a measuring tape or working out whether it will fit around the corner. But the bigger lesson was learned too.

Sitting at my desk now, typing this, I’m laughing at the drama of the trapped couch. I never forgot Miss Cooke’s lesson and “preparation” and taking a measured approach to life, were wise words, even if it was a hard lesson to learn at the time.

Best of luck with your project.

Kind regards,

KATE EGAN  
Senior reporter  
RTE News

*Caroline Filgate*

– CLASS OF 1994

*‘Our year had been given a day off to come all the way to Tipperary to support us, they were obviously told we needed them, and we did.’*

Dear Esther, Yvonne, Nathan and Thomas,

I RECEIVED YOUR LETTER and hopefully what I have to say will be of some interest.

I spent much of my out of class time playing hockey. In my six years there, I won a trophy every year, 1st year we won the Minor Bs, 2nd year we won the Minor As, 3rd year we won the Junior As, 4th year I played Junior As and 1st eleven, winning the Junior As, 5th we won the Senior League, and 6th year we did the double and won the League and the Cup. We went on to play in the All Irelands. We headed down to Thurles, Co. Tipperary. We lost our second match 0-1, on an unjust penalty decision (but hey, that is sport). We had not lost a match all season, and I played with a lot of the same girls the whole way through school so you can see from the above record that we were not used to losing. We were never taught how to lose in Wesley; the word just did not exist in our hockey world.

So we were feeling low that evening, I kept hearing the Tina Turner song “Things can only get better” in my head. We headed into the second day, not only having to win all our matches, but we were relying on the team that beat us to lose a match.

We had just started out first match of the day, when we heard the Wesley voices “ Be strong oh Wesley boys, be blithe oh Wesley maidens .....”. Our year had been given the day off to come all the way to Tipperary to support us, they were obviously told that we needed them, and we did. There was great support from the girls and the guys. We really raised our game; we were playing not just for our team, but for the whole school. We won our two games that day well. Unfortunately the team that had beaten us won all their matches and therefore won the tournament. This time the losing did not go very deep, we had our school behind us, and I will never forget the feeling of seeing our school friends arriving at the pitch to help us through. We were also given a lovely reception when we arrived back to Wesley.

Some of my best memories were playing sport in Wesley, I love playing on cricket teams and also in the 4x 100m relay team. A lot of my good friends now are the ones I played sport with at school. Of course school is about studying as well, and keeping the balance right. I still believe that sport helps get the mind ready for study, I believe the saying “a healthy mind is a healthy body” can also be reversed.

I once asked my father why we were “sent away” to school, being from Louth. He answered me very concisely “the schools in the country just were not good enough for sports”.

Okay, that is enough from me.

Best Regards,

CAROLINE FILGATE

*Dr Suzanne Kingston*

– CLASS OF 1995

*‘I have to say it was quite a shock when I moved to different surroundings where women still have an uphill struggle to be viewed as equal.’*

Hello Esther, Yvonne, Nathan and Thomas,

I’M WRITING IN RESPONSE to your letter of some months back about the centenary project. I’m sorry for being late to reply.

I’m so delighted to be able to send some memories of life at Wesley; even though I am a relatively recent past pupil I suppose (1989 – 1995). I was a boarder and then Prefect and I consider myself extraordinarily fortunate to have been able to spend such wonderful years at Wesley.

From a woman’s perspective, we were educated in a way that it never ever crossed my mind that women should not be able to achieve as great and greater things than men, and that the difference between sexes was wholly irrelevant in assessing merit. This belief gave me great confidence to go on to aim as high as I possibly could upon leaving. We were so lucky to have that as part of our education. Exceptional teachers were so important to our confidence, in addition to the fabulous extracurricular activities like choir, hockey, badminton and tennis. Who would ever forget the amazing feeling of winning the Irish choir competition with the Senior Choir led by Mr Duley and Mr Hughes?! So many treasured memories. Coupled with this the great and lifelong friendships forged in Epworth House under the ever patient and supportive Miss Cooke. I remember lining up every weekend to ask permission to go home on Sunday, which Miss Cooke invariably let us do; taking our fair share of responsibilities like preparing the oranges for the hockey girls on Saturday morning when we were first years; and of course causing our share of trouble with midnight feasts and practical jokes on the on-duty staff!

I have to say it was quite a shock when I moved to different surroundings where women still have an uphill struggle to be viewed as equal. This is the unfortunate reality – at least for now – in a number of places I’ve worked. I went first to Oxford to read law, which was still rather traditional (although my college had lots of women), and from there to the English bar, which was highly conservative in the chambers I was at. That conservatism led me to go to the continent to “escape” and work for the EU after studying in the Netherlands for a Masters and later a PhD. I found

the EU very egalitarian and meritocratic (I worked for the European Commission and European Court, plus for a law firm in Brussels in between). I then moved back to teach in Cambridge University and most recently am back in Ireland at the bar and lecturing in law at UCD.

I hope this is all of some help. Needless to say I'd be happy to help further in any way, including if there are any students interested in law who want some advice.

With best wishes,

SUZANNE KINGSTON

*Susan Leahy*

– CLASS OF 1995

*'If Wesley is still turning out both young women and young men who feel confident enough to be able to perpetuate the positive experiences they had then it can be content that the system is working.'*

Dear Thomas, Esther, Nathan and Yvonne,

*F*IRST OFF, apologies for my belated reply; since I received your letter I have thought about this a lot without actually sitting down to write. Here, finally are some thoughts and memories. This sounds like a very interesting project, and it is impressive that Wesley is about to reach one hundred years of co-education.

I attended Wesley from 1990 to 1995 as a boarder. For most of my childhood, my family had lived outside Ireland. At that time, my parents were living in Indonesia, so my experience in Wesley was a full-on immersion in Irish society in a way I hadn't experienced before. It would be entirely truthful to say that I found it quite difficult to go into a large boarding school from my previous school where there had been seven people in my year!

I began in Wesley in second year; this made things more challenging as many students had formed tight-knit groups of friends. They had also developed some pretty impressive hockey skills – something I never mastered (despite numerous attempts, and support from numerous coaches) in my time in the school! I played a lot of badminton and really enjoyed it, but I will be eternally grateful to Mr Kennedy who ran Friday afternoon basketball, and who was kind enough to let a junior girl join in what was a senior sport mostly attended by boys. Although we probably only played about four or five games against other schools during my time as a student in Wesley, basketball training was a high point in my week throughout my years in the school.

Ken Blackmore was the Principal for all of my time at Wesley. He impressed my parents in numerous ways, but one comment that particularly stayed with them was that he wanted every student to be able to stand up and speak in public. This is certainly something I took from Wesley, from debating to participating in the GB Shaw Public Speaking Award and the Poetry Aloud competition.

Thinking about this, I have tried to remember anything about which I

was particularly proud – as a girl – in Wesley. One thing was the mini-company module in Transition Year. At the time I attended, this was run by Mrs Eileen Corcoran. I interviewed for – and got – the position of General Manager of the mini-company my class was running. I was the first girl to have become General Manager of a mini-company. I'm sure that there have been many more since then, but I was much chuffed about that.

I never felt my gender affected anything I did in Wesley; this is a credit to the school. Equality in any situation is working well when nobody within the system has to think about it. As a student, I don't recall ever thinking that I received (or did not receive) anything because I was a girl. It is only if that is taken away that you realise what you had.

When I was in Form V in Wesley, I was involved in a project with fellow students Suzanne Kingston, Nicola Porter and Joy Rice, under the guidance of Mr MacMonagle. We organised the reproduction of paintings by Pauline Bewick as postcards, which were sold on behalf of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland. By the end of the project, part of which involved, amongst other things, an afternoon of packing sets of ten cards into small plastic bags (it was a very tight fit!) we had all, about a hundred times, changed our minds about which painting was our favourite and which our least. Yesterday, I came across one of those small plastic bags, with all of the cards in it. The images of women in those paintings by Bewick are of women who are confident in their bodies, comfortable with their intellect and with the world that surrounds them, and the antithesis of most women so celebrated by media directed at adolescents, both then and nowadays.

I don't ever remember thinking, making or hearing any overt statements about the women in the paintings and what they might represent; I just absorbed the images. In the same way, education is so much more than what you learn from the books in the classroom, it's what you sense in the atmosphere in a class, what happens between classes, on the sports field and at all the times when teachers aren't looking. If Wesley is still turning out both young women and young men who feel confident enough in themselves to be able to perpetuate the positive experience they had, then it can be content that the system is working.

I'm finishing this off during a free class; I am a teacher now myself. I hope that my own students will be able to say that they too did not ever feel that I cared for anything other than that they were individuals trying to do their best, and that their gender never had anything to do with how I responded to them and how I treated them.

I was talking about this project to Suzanne Kingston in December. We shared a room in our last year in Epworth House, where we were both

boarder prefects. I pointed out that we had now known each other for twenty years – a lifetime – even when you're in your thirties. I don't know that many people anymore from when I was a child; living abroad, we were all foreigners, to each other and to the inhabitants of the country in which we lived. To realise that I have known someone and considered that person a friend for twenty years was to me momentous; I felt a sort of rueful, relieved joy that my adolescence – with all its angst and elation – was over, that I had survived it, and that I had something to show for it.

Good luck with the project, and with the rest of your Senior Cycle. Enjoy fifth year and get some study under your belts before it ends; it will make next year that bit easier.

Best wishes, and thank you for including me.

SUSAN LEAHY



Sixth-year students from Wesley College, Dublin, (from left): Nicola Porter, Suzanne Kingston and Susan Leahy, with artist Pauline Bewick (centre) and the PRO of the Alzheimer's Society, Ms Barbara Scully, (right) in the Myles Hall of the college after the launching of postcards of paintings by Ms Bewick in aid of various charities. Photograph: Alan Betson



## Heather Jones

– CLASS OF 1996

*Heather is the grand niece of Hilda (1911-1914), Elsie (1911-1914) and Edith Ludlow (1925-1926; all of whom were among the first female pupils in Wesley.*

*'We learned the poetry of Eavan Boland which rallied us to remember the unacknowledged domestic achievements of women throughout history and to re-write their efforts back into historical narratives from which they had been wrongly excluded.'*

**G**ROWING UP, the introduction of co-education to Wesley was part of family lore, played out in the schooling of my grandmother and her sisters. Co-education arrived too late for my grandmother, May Ludlow, who went to school elsewhere; her three younger sisters always delighted in the fact that once they reached their teenage years, they, in contrast, were able to join their brothers at Wesley, which they always pronounced as 'Wessley'. Among the very first Wesley girls, my three great-aunts experienced the First World War, the Easter Rising and the following years of war and turmoil in Ireland from the perspective of the Wesley schoolroom; when, in my turn, I arrived in the school over seventy years later, at the start of the 1990s, I could not help but feel that my own time lacked the dramatic historic backdrop that they had witnessed.

Yet traces of their world remained. In the school song, we still sang the verses penned in their time: 'Be strong oh Wesley boy, be blithe oh Wesley maiden,' a source of enormous mirth all around. Another song which still made an appearance at school hockey matches was surely also from their era: 'We are the Wesley girls, we wear our hair in curls; we wear our knickers to our knees. We never smoke or drink, that's what the teachers think, because we're the mighty Wesley girls.' And yes, we did indeed sing that in the 1990s! Perhaps pithier was the short refrain which was sung at rugby matches against unfortunate opponents who were in single sex all-boys schools: 'We've got girls in our school' echoed the chant around the pitch. There was little that the rival all-boy supporter contingents could answer to that! Co-education was a source of pride and remained somewhat exotic within the Dublin schools' rugby league.

However, looking back with hindsight, my own time at Wesley no longer appears as devoid of historical moment. The 1990s were a time of massive social change in Ireland, particularly when it came to women's roles and the echoes reached as far as our classroom. It was the era of Mary Robinson and 'Mná na hEiréann' – I vividly remember one Physical Education class when a teacher rushed in to announce with gusto to a group of us girls that Ireland had just elected its first woman president. We learned the poetry of Eavan Boland which rallied us to remember the unacknowledged domestic achievements of women throughout history and to rewrite their efforts back into male-dominated historical narratives from which they had been wrongfully excluded. We were rigorously trained in sport to take on the boys in both hockey and cricket – and to win. And there can have been few schools in Ireland at the time that included the radical feminist poetry of Adrienne Rich in their English classes. Few schools too can have had an assembly taken by a Muslim girl reading the Koran or had an Israeli girl tell a Religious Education class about her military service or had a compulsory Home Economics course in transition year for both genders. It was only when I left Wesley that I realised how innovative some of our educational experiences really were.

The buzz in the air around gender equality at the time, in fact, drew attention to those small inequalities that persisted: the line of male Principals' portraits that hung on the way into assembly without a single woman among them. The constant bake trays of delicious biscuits and cakes provided at school events by what seemed like an infinite army of skilled and devoted mothers but never by fathers – tray bake goodies that I thoroughly enjoyed benefitting from at every chance! The constricting uniform rules for girls that we all sought to circumvent – rolling up our compulsory pleated skirts at the waist to try to make the skirt shorter and undoing our 'tie buttons' to lower the ties which we had to wear with our red shirts. In fact, the uniform list for girls was a source of constant hilarity as it listed items already well out of fashion by the time I started in Wesley – leotards for sport, leg warmers (which I think were on the list of prohibited items) and most amusingly 'riding boots' which could be worn 'in inclement weather.' In all my six years at the school, to my great disappointment, I never witnessed anyone wear any of these fabled items! In contrast, hockey skirts combined with hockey knickers remained compulsory for matches – heaven help anyone who suffered from a shy disposition who had to bend over wearing these to take a short corner from the sideline in front of a crowd of supporters!

During transition year, a group of us started a school newspaper Our Times which addressed social topics, including some on gender equality. We used to distribute the paper to students and teachers after the daily



Mrs. J. Perrin, Chairperson of the Parents' Association presents a prize to Heather Jones in 1994.

school assembly. And, on at least one occasion, the Principal, Mr Kenneth Blackmore helped us to photocopy it. We were in awe of his help: there could be no better illustration of Mr Blackmore's commitment to free intellectual debate within the school. It was fully in keeping with his character: on issues of gender equality, the Blackmores provided outstanding leadership – Mrs Blackmore was constantly on hand in the school, coaching hockey, providing encouragement and working to build students' confidence.

Ironically now, looking back fifteen years, what I recognise most is the solidarity of it all: the sheer level of female engagement within the school community at all levels which encompassed matron, parent, teacher, prefect and student, in a school where many parents and teachers had known each other all their lives; the strangely hybrid nature of Wesley culture that promoted a pluralistic ideal of female emancipation that was broad enough to encompass tray bakes and female presidents, motherhood and professional achievement. And there was never any sense that any one of these roles was mutually exclusive of any other. It all seems strangely ahead of its time now. We were taught that we were a generation of girls that could achieve whatever we wished and that gender was no

barrier. And we took it for granted that we could socialise, learn and form friendships with boys at school. The range of subjects open to us was vast and eclectic: I remember learning crochet and public speaking, Irish language declensions, horse-riding, the life cycle of the liver fluke, interview skills and how to hem a pair of trousers (although even Wesley's best efforts failed to instill in me anything beyond the most basic cooking skills!). The majority of girls in my year continued on to university: upon arrival, at Trinity College in 1996, I found the majority of my new fresher friends had been in single sex schooling and discovered to my surprise that it was a major advantage in tutorials that I arrived already used to intellectual debates with men and to confidently competing with male peers; Wesley had grounded us well in that. It has stood me in good stead in my career ever since.

Ultimately, my abiding memory remains of a school that promoted a quietly resolute belief in fairness, across creed, colour and gender, fairness of opportunity and treatment. Wesley in the 1990s had its own unique form of feminism – it was feminism with a small 'f' – a genteel, pragmatic kind of philosophy that promoted girls fulfilling their individual potential. I suspect it was heavily influenced by the Methodist tradition which had promoted women's rights since the time of my great-aunts. Even in their day, the school was already promoting women's careers: in the 1920s, my great-aunt Elsie Ludlow left Ireland for Nigeria where she spent many decades running a hospital and training African nurses – a singularly adventurous career choice for a single woman of her era. As one of the first Wesley girls, the school clearly instilled in her a sense that women could achieve anything, a tradition of gender equality that continued unabated during my own school days so many decades later.

DR HEATHER JONES is Lecturer in International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

# Amanda McConnell

(NEE MAIDEN) – CLASS OF 1996

Dear Yvonne, Esther, Thomas and Nathan,



HANK-YOU for your letter. The project you are undertaking sounds terrific and very worthwhile.

I was a pupil of Wesley College from 1990 – 1996, having received my primary education in Taney National School. Although I enjoyed the early years, it wasn't until transition year that I really began to appreciate all that the college had to offer.

The 'Poetry Aloud' competition was a highlight for me as my love for poetry and recitation found an outlet. Through the speaking of poetry in public my confidence grew. I have just recently had the privilege of entering some of my primary school children into a similar competition for their age group and it has reminded me of the sheer enjoyment that comes with poetry recitation. In fifth year I joined the senior choir and took part in the production of 'Joseph', both of which were great fun.

Throughout my years in Wesley I was involved in the running of the Christian Union, which at that time was run by students alone. Having the freedom to meet and the support of several staff members meant a lot to us. I loved our weekly meetings, and being allowed to take ownership of the group enabled many of us to grow in our spiritual lives and in our love of Jesus, a love which is integral to who I am today.

During my year as head girl the college celebrated its 150th anniversary. Needless to say there was much celebrating, with several special services and events. Wesley is particularly good at events, setting a very high, professional standard. Taking part in these occasions was something I really enjoyed. I also enjoyed the responsibility that the role of head girl afforded, including my weekly meetings with the then Deputy Principal, Mr O'Connor. As we discussed jobs to be done, I was given a tiny insight into the huge amounts of work that go into running a school like Wesley. I am very aware that women in previous years may not have been given such equal opportunities for leadership as I was and I am grateful for those opportunities. The year was made all the more memorable as it was Mr Blackmore's last year as Principal.

Whilst all the extra curricular activities have their place of importance and influence, it really was the people who made my time in Wesley so good. We had a great year of students who got on very well together. My closest friends to this day are a group of seven girls from Wesley. We look

back with many good memories of our time together in school. Of course, we were delighted that Wesley was a co- educational school!! One of my most embarrassing moments was being caught in the boys' house whilst visiting a particular favourite. I can still remember hearing the teacher's footsteps outside the door as I contemplated hiding in the wardrobe for fear of detention!!! Most of our romances faded with time although my closest friend is extremely grateful for the acceptance of women into the school as she and her husband started going out during Maths class, and have now been happily married for seven years, and have a beautiful son.

Since Wesley I have studied in Trinity, worked for a Christian organisation, lived in Australia, taught in Taney National School for six years, got married and now have two precious little boys. I am often amazed at how short our time in secondary school is in the span of a whole life, and yet how crucial it is in shaping who we go on to become. There are many important decisions made during those six years. The teachers and fellow students play a huge role in all of this and I will always be grateful for the wide variety of opportunities Wesley opened up to me. I am delighted they decided to let the women in!!!

AMANDA MCCONNELL

*Sylvia Gee*

– CLASS OF 1996

*‘I don’t think there are many women doing what I do but that has never bothered me,’*

Dear Nathan, Thomas, Yvonne and Esther,

I HOPE THAT SCHOOL LIFE suits you as much as it did me and that you are enjoying your time in Wesley. It sounds like an interesting project you have on your hands.

I loved school, well the part of school that wasn’t in the classroom anyway! I grew up on a farm in Laois with very few young neighbours around with whom I could play soccer, so to get to a place where there were loads of kids who enjoyed sport, was like heaven to me. Weekends were devoted almost entirely to hockey (on Saturday mornings) and indoor soccer (Saturday and Sunday afternoons and/or evenings) and in the summer, swimming and kicking the rugby ball around or tennis or anything involving a ball usually!

When I started school in 1990, boarders stayed in school for 6 weeks before we got a weekend off. I didn’t know anyone before I went initially but that was not a hindrance at all as we were all pretty much in the same boat. The transition from having one’s own bedroom to sharing a dorm with 14 or 15 other girls took quite some adjustment. After ‘lights out’ the midnight feasts, ghost stories and harmless pranks for the teachers on duty started. There was also morning detention for anyone who got caught talking or messing after lights out and many essays about “the life of a cornflake” were written at 7am. I also remember having to go to Miss Cooke to get money for the week (which had to be put in at the start of the term and had to last the whole term usually!) and for laundry tokens for the washer and dryer too. We had our tuck boxes in the room opposite and again these were full at the start of term but usually emptied fairly quickly unless your parents came to visit in between times!

As we got older we had the luxury of using the kitchenette and the toaster, kettle and fridge and those of us lucky enough to be prefects got a room between two instead of a dorm or the sixth form room.

The whole boarding experience definitely broadened my horizons as I met people not only from different parts of Ireland but from different parts

of the world. There was Penzy from Hong Kong, Michelle from Norway, Emma from Sweden and Juliana who had spent time growing up in LA and I had never been outside Ireland! Just living with all those different cultures was an eye opener and a great experience.

The boarding house was also a place where friendships were made that are still lasting. I try to stay in touch on some level with a few of the girls from my year; of course there were people I didn’t get on with too and that was also part of the experience as I had to learn tolerance

When I started I was told by my teacher in Primary School that I should take Home Economics and not Mechanical Drawing (which I had wanted to do) so my parents duly put me in HE and I, naturally enough, only took it for first year and then changed to Mechanical Drawing in Second Year! I was not at all enthused by cooking or sewing and much preferred the T-square. I thought I had a very good range of subjects to choose from and for the Leaving Certificate took Technical Drawing, Construction Studies, Agricultural Science and German along with the core subjects. Of course my favourite subjects were double PE and double Games.

Sport was the biggest part of my life in school. I love football and was always kicking a ball around with someone it was always irrelevant to me what age they were. I remember playing indoor soccer with Eric Miller and the lads in his year even though they were in 5th or 6th year and I only in 1st or 2nd. Soccer was always going to take a backseat to hockey in Wesley though, so I played hockey and won medals every year! This was not down to my own brilliant talent rather to the fact that there was an extraordinary talented bunch of girls coming through the school at the same time. From the time I set foot in the school and saw the 1st XI playing I badly wanted one of those red and navy halved shirts and was thrilled and could scarcely believe it when it finally happened in 5th year.

The biggest sporting experience I have from my time in Wesley is also the saddest memory I have of my time there. In 1995 I was lucky enough to be part of the hockey squad that travelled to Zimbabwe to play and travel for a couple of weeks over there. I was so excited; I had never been on a ‘plane before, indeed I had never been out of the country at that point! The hockey was a great experience, and we did well in most of the games, but everything paled into insignificance when Andy Greenlee passed away from meningitis. I had spent most of my time on the trip hanging out with Andy playing football and throwing rugby balls around and the day before he died I remember playing pool with him in our hotel. It was my first experience of losing a friend; my heart still goes out to his sister and his parents. I also remember arriving in to school to be collected after that trip and Mr Blackmore coming out and giving me a big hug as I waited for my parents. When I look back at that situation now (as a coach of young players) I can’t even imagine how difficult that time was for them also.



When I left Wesley in 1996 I went to University of Limerick ostensibly to study Production Management, but also to grow up and to play soccer. Probably in reverse order! I think if I had not been to Wesley I would not have gone to college. I enjoyed college but again not really the study or large chunks of the course! College was also the start of my competitive soccer playing and it quickly gave me opportunities to play internationally with the Irish Combined Colleges team and the Senior international team.

After college I played soccer near Boston for a summer, and came back to work in Wyeth in Newbridge for a year and then decided I wanted to try and play soccer at a more serious level and headed to Leeds in England for a season where I worked in the ticket office dealing with international /overseas ticket applications. I got back after that season away and ended up working in Dell in Limerick building laptops and trying to decide what I was going to do with myself! At that point I had started soccer coaching and came to the conclusion that I might be able to help kids enjoy playing soccer. I decided to start up a small business coaching soccer to primary school children. The fact that I could fit my own soccer playing in UCD around the Primary School hours was a definite part of the reason for choosing to take that path also.

I played in UCD for 6 seasons and captained them in the UEFA Women's Cup three years in a row in Norway, France and Croatia and loved every minute of it. Seven years later I am still working for myself and trying to make ends meet! I love what I do and don't think I would swop it for the big bucks in all the "real" jobs out there! I still haven't given up on playing soccer at a serious level and have been to USA the past 3 summers playing in a National League called the WPSL over there.

I don't think there are many women doing what I do but that has never bothered me. I suppose one thing about boarding school is that it forces you to be quite independent at an early age. In my case I was probably fairly independent to begin with so Wesley just reinforced that!

The biggest impact Wesley had on me was to open my eyes to the possibility of being able to do almost anything. There was such diversity there and so many different experiences that it was an awesome place in which to grow up. It was the best decision that was ever made for me and I am so grateful to my parents for sending me there! I wish you every success with your project.

Best Regards,

SYLVIA GEE

Shona McCarthy

– CLASS OF 1996

Dear Nathan,

HANKS SO MUCH for your letter. In the several weeks it has taken me to reply, I've enjoyed reminiscing on my time at Wesley.

My most recurring memory is the view from every classroom window. These vistas are so vividly embedded in the mind's eye I could paint you a picture. The one classroom where there was no window to stare out of was the Maths block. And I don't think it's any coincidence that I was abysmally poor at the subject.

I was a terrible day-dreamer. I was also a teenager, which was most unfortunate, but couldn't be helped.

My fondest memory is that of our trip to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1996. A gigantic pink velvet umbrella descended from the ceiling; hundreds of twinkling light bulbs became the night sky's constellations; acrobats somersaulted through the air; the RSC's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was truly magic. I remember looking around at my classmates at one stage, all of us in hysterics of laughter, and thinking that after five long years of banging our heads off the desks, we finally, on that very afternoon, understood Shakespeare.

That evening we saw the RSC do Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* in the beautiful Swan Theatre. The entire set and every prop was painted a pastel green, which made a stark contrast to the uniformly black costumes. And the stage was surrounded by a gossamer thin veil that only became visible when a green light shone on it. The veil was patterned in leaves. It was a far more sombre experience to the high spirited afternoon, but just as memorable.

I also recall smuggling forbidden cigarettes into our hotel rooms and getting caught smoking. Teenagers!

My worst memories are Monday afternoons. Nothing can compare to the dreary gloom of a Monday afternoon in your school years.

Ms Kate O'Carroll did a cracking production of *The Playboy of the Western World*, and I'm not just saying that because I was in it. This was speech and drama for the heavies, and I enjoyed every minute of it.

As it happens, I now work in story-making, so all those days staring out windows and dreaming of life outside the classroom didn't go to waste.

Best of luck with the project.

Kind Regards,

SHONA MCCARTHY

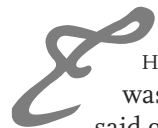
# Rebecca Halliday

– CLASS OF 1997

10 years: Will be a hippy.

– Probably composing her own symphonies in Italy or conducting the Berlin Philharmonic or maybe just presenting Top of the Pops.

*Having been a friend of Beck's for 14 years now, I am in a good position to describe her. And how would I? In a word, crazy. Ever since I first met her hanging treacherously from the climbing frame in Taney she has proved herself to be the girl most likely to do anything. She has entered into everything fearlessly and with strong-minded determination and a refusal to listen to those who stood in her way. Although she only reached Minor B status in hockey, she will surely be remembered for her fantastically choreographed gymnastic displays in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year and perhaps for falling out of a chair-lift while skiing with Jackie Freer thus perfecting her off-piste skiing technique.*



THIS IS A SHORT QUOTE from 'Memories of the Class of 1997', which was a work of collaboration by students when we parted ways and said goodbye to our days as Wesley boys and Wesley maidens. We each nominated a friend to submit an honest and amusing piece about us and our personal highlights of college life in Wesley. (Rigorous selection processes ensued; employing the wrong author could leave a ruinous, unbecoming legacy after all!). I was one of the lucky ones, my friend Judy obviously quite liked me and clearly focused on my proudest moments.

I think what this quote demonstrates is that my time in Wesley was, above everything, great fun, and a place where I made lasting friendships. Friendships that will genuinely last a lifetime. Wesley made me feel strong and confident, I felt my opportunities were endless and my creativity and talents were nurtured. It was an easy place to share ideas and forge relationships.

I have quite a strong link with the school, considering that both my grandmothers, Peggy McCulloch and May Chambers were in the same class. They left in 1934 having been students there for four years. Only a small number of girls went on to the Leaving Cert in the 30s. They were not allowed to study science so they both took a secretarial course. Being a boarder, Peggy was only permitted to wash her hair once a fortnight and take a bath once a week. We have come a long way in 75 years in Epworth! May, being a day girl, had ablutinal advantages.

My father, Michael Halliday, was a pupil in the 1950s and 60s (for 14 years) and subsequently taught History there for 34 Years. He had the pleasure of teaching his deceptively lazy daughter for Leaving Cert history. Obviously, I pretended to sleep and pay no attention to him in class (while secretly studying very hard).

As a girl in Wesley College, I never felt that I was being pigeonholed or pushed in any particular direction. I felt that wherever my interests and talents might have been, they would have been recognised and encouraged, whether it was hockey, debating, creative writing, physics, javelin throwing, pottery or perhaps an interest in politics or a social concern group such as Amnesty International. The opportunities were endless and they were never limited to boys or girls. I now teach in Wesley one day a week in the Music Department and I feel that a majority of the students here enjoy freedom of artistic expression and do not live in fear of judgement from peers. I think that Wesley is really unique in this respect and I am proud to be part of the teaching staff.

The Wesley ethos instilled a strong sense of justice and equality in me. After moving on to study music in the Royal Irish Academy and later, in the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, I always felt that if I worked hard I would succeed, whatever gender, race or nationality I happened to be. I never really expected to be confronted with bullying or misogyny, or to be treated in a different way to my male peers. In a way, you could say I was possibly ill-prepared or slightly naïve in the manner that my upbringing and my educational environment shaped me.

In 2002, at the mere age of 22, unlike my grandmothers, I was not rushing down the aisle and giving up my career in Bewleys, I was starting a new job in the Orquestra do Algarve in Faro, Portugal. The idea of a new language, culture and climate (sun, beaches, barbeques, parties... ahem, ignore that...) was extremely exciting. It showed my strength in character that I was able to 'up and go' and take on a new challenge, alone.

I ended up spending over four years in sunny Portugal and even bought an apartment for myself and embarked on a relationship with a Portuguese man. I had a fantastic time and learnt a lot. However, I always felt homesick and I struggled with the attitudes of the Portuguese people, and in fact many Mediterraneans I worked with in the orchestra. The women seemed to have the same goals as my grandmothers, to find a man as fast as possible and settle down and have children. They didn't have the same ambition or independence as my Irish girlfriends and they lived in fear of judgment from men. That was probably because if they spoke out too much, the men would put them in their place. This happened to me a number of times at work and I was quite shaken when I learned that my employers were happy to tolerate this behaviour. It seemed to me to be

unbelievably old-fashioned and chauvinistic. I don't intend to generalise about Portuguese people, as I have met some strong and inspiring Portuguese ladies, but they were working and studying in Lisbon. The more regional the town, the more conservative the attitude it seemed to me.

I decided it was time to come home in 2006 and I immediately started working in Wesley and forging my own freelance career as an oboist. I have been lucky enough to travel the world, sometimes working as a musician, and sometimes just for pleasure. (Travelling *as* a musician is also an honour and pleasure, don't get me wrong!) My education has given me a genuine curiosity for travel. What I have taken home from my experiences living and working abroad, is that we, as women, are so lucky and privileged to be born into a society such as ours that gives *relatively* equal opportunities, and if you were lucky enough to have had an education in Wesley, I hope it was as happy and positive as mine.

With best wishes,

REBECCA.

*Emma Blain*

– CLASS OF 1998

*'I followed my two sisters, Judy and Nikki into Wesley. Both of them had performed top button duty, alas I never got that privilege. The closest I got to the Prefects Room was when I was put into detention for being there, without entitlement.'*



WHEN YOU TOOK YOUR FIRST DIVE into the swimming pool, and it was warmer in the water than shivering on the edge, you knew that spring had arrived. When swimming in that same pool gave you freckles on your face, and the blossoms on the cherry tree behind the glass doors in the Myles Hall were in their fullest bloom, then you knew that summer was around the corner. Starting hockey practice, with the floodlights lit meant winter was upon you and the arrival of Founder's Day meant that memories of the summer past were becoming ever more distant, and, well, you really should have settled down by then.

Your schooldays are supposed to be your best days. At the time, when you've fallen off your chair in Assembly, in front of the entire school, or your teacher reads out the note that you passed to your friend in class, you think you will never forget the most embarrassing moments. But time has a glorious way of filtering memories, so that all you are left with are the best. My days in Wesley were full of them. I remember dancing around the stage, arm in a cast, for the 5th year play; looking completely ridiculous, but not caring. The broken wrist was a result of tripping over a schoolbag, while the lights were dimmed for our regular video in Miss Cooke's double History Class. The consequence was having my heels measured, in the library, with a ruler, by Mr O'Connor the Vice Principal. My broken wrist was the death knell for many of my classmates' high heeled shoes, and the enforcement of a temporary, teacher's policy of unscheduled heel measuring.

I remember the team talks by Mrs Blackmore between the goal posts in the Minor B cup final when she told us to stop being downcast and "get out there and win." I remember the pride I felt when I won the English prize – the Thesaurus I bought with my book token still takes pride of place on my bookshelf- performing in the National Concert Hall for the 150th Anniversary of the school, and every time I put on my navy and red to play hockey. I remember the daily "top button" patrol by the prefects on

your way into assembly, and building up my appetite before Home Economics so that I could eat all of the very badly cooked food I had just made.

I followed my two sisters, Judy and Nikki into Wesley. Both of them had performed top button duty, alas I never got that privilege. The closest I got to the prefects room was when I was put into detention for being there, without entitlement. But it didn't matter, because although I didn't get a prefects badge from my time in Wesley, the reality was that I got so much more. The English department, in particular, Mr McMonagle and Miss Kavanagh, nurtured my love of writing and truly influenced my future career as a journalist. They encouraged creativity, and a true exploration of the subject, rather than learning scripted answers with the aim of gaining points. My "Commonplace Book", started in my first year is still filed away somewhere in my stack of books, as is my much scribbled on copy of Soundings.

We learnt that school spirit could be manifested in many different ways, whether that was by performing with the choir or orchestra in the Inter Schools Music Festival, on the hockey pitch, on the athletics or rugby field, or just by respecting each other. Whether you were a Wesley boy or a Wesley maiden, you knew that both deserved equal respect. Though those equal rights between the sexes is something that still does not necessarily translate into the working environment, at least you learnt the way that it should be, and what you should endeavour towards.

Memory filter has left me with the best possible snapshots, not least of which was the words to the School Song- must remember to always endeavour to be a blythe Wesley maiden- whatever that actually means?

EMMA BLAIN attended Wesley College from 1992-1998. She graduated from University College Dublin with a BA (Hons) in Politics and Greek and Roman Civilisation in 2002. In 2003 she graduated from UCD with an MA (Hons) in Politics.

Emma worked as a journalist for the *Sunday Independent* from 2003-2007. Since then, she has also contributed to *IMAGE Magazine*, *Irish Tatler*, the *Evening Herald* and *The Dubliner*. Emma currently works for Fine Gael party where she is the Party's new media manager.

*Cheryl Swarbrigg*  
– CLASS OF 1998

Dear Yvonne,

**I**F I CONSIDER my experience in Wesley, I can honestly say the over-riding feeling is positive. I know I thoroughly enjoyed my years there, although now it seems like a lifetime ago. Unfortunately details I thought I would never forget are already blurred and some memories have 'evolved' over the years.

When I envision my time in school I think of red shirts and the evasive 'top button', running to the classroom block in the rain, piles of school bags under the stairs before we all got decent lockers; daily Assemblies- and the poor unfortunate who inevitably fainted along the sides- hockey (and lots of it); rop bags of Chickatees from the Tuck Shop; expanses of playing fields; a never-ending row of cubicles in the loos; school dinners when one person brought a tray to each table (and there was no choice), the smell of the Science Block, climbing the wall to Gort Muire; sneaking non-Prefects in to the Prefects' Room after school... I could go on.

It is of course the people, and not the buildings or facilities that 'make the school'. The tone is set from the top, so to speak. I had the privilege of being there with Mr Blackmore and Dr Harris as Principals. There were also many teachers who had a large influence on me, academically, developmentally and spiritually – you know who you are, and thank you! And of course solid friendships with other pupils are still very much intact.

It is nearly impossible to pick out specific highlights, but in 1998 the Senior Team won the Leinster Cup in Girls Hockey – a great end to our school hockey careers.

There are a few other things I will never forget – thinking it would make sense to measure the temperature of the Bunsen Burner flame with a mercury thermometer (!); our 4th year production of the musical *Grease*; a spontaneous swim in the ocean on the 5th year Burren Field Trip (we were all fully-clothed); certain comb-overs and very distinctive smells; idiosyncrasies of specific characters; elaborate excuses for consistently being late; "innocent merriment" in the Prefects' Room, sitting state exams in the Sports Hall; and our final day celebrations as Class of '98!

Wishing you all the best with your publication,

CHERYL



# Jennifer Sheehy-Skeffington

— CLASS OF 1999

*'I hope to return to Ireland some day, to work as a lecturer and give back to its education system some of the invaluable qualities it gave me.'*

Dear Esther, Thomas, Nathan, Yvonne,

*&* THANK YOU for your letter. I am delighted to make a contribution to your project.

I attended Wesley from 1993 to 1999, having graduated from Rathgar Junior School, itself co-ed.

At 11 years of age, I remember the absence of a sliver of a doubt that I'd attend a co-ed school; the situation of my local friends, who had attended single-sex schools, seemed odd and unnatural to me and, unlike them, I found interacting with boys no big deal at that age!

I thrived at Wesley thanks to the opportunities it offered and the dedication of its staff. While I had always performed well in Science and Maths (my Leaving Cert subject choices were: Chemistry, Biology, Applied Maths and French), I loved literature, drama and public speaking. I went on to win the Malyn Prize for Shakespearian Studies (1997), the Poetry Aloud Cup (1998) and the Shaw Award for Public Speaking in (1999).

I also took advantage of the excellent sporting facilities, playing on school teams in hockey, badminton, athletics and cricket, enjoying this even though I never excelled in any of them!

One of the greatest sources of satisfaction was the opportunity to sing in a choir: though I had no musical background, choir classes at Wesley encouraged me to give the auditions a go, and I remember being ecstatic when I was selected for the Senior Choir. At interschool competitions, the Wesley Senior Choir stood out as one of the few mixed voice choirs, enabling us to sing Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass and to compete at the National Concert Hall and perform on invitation in Limerick and Belfast.

I suspect it was this strong extracurricular involvement and academic achievement that led to my election as Prefect and awarding of the prize for 'Best All-Round Girl'

Since graduating from Wesley, I completed a degree in Psychology &



Jennifer Sheehy-Skeffington at prizegiving

Philosophy at Trinity College Dublin, and travelled to London to obtain a Masters in Social Psychology from the London School of Economics & Political Science. I then worked as a Senior Strategic Analyst in the UK Ministry of Defence, studying conflict and terrorism from a psychological standpoint. I moved to the USA in August of 2009, and am currently in my second year as a PhD student in Psychology at Harvard University. I hope to return to Ireland some day, to work as a lecturer and give back to its education system some of the invaluable qualities it gave me.

All the best with the project!

Warm wishes,

JENNIFER

JENNIFER SHEEHY-SKEFFINGTON  
*Department of Psychology  
Harvard University*

# Rachel Wallace

— CLASS OF 2000

*‘Students who attend Wesley come away with a rounded academic education whether they embrace sport, music or art.’*

Dear Esther and Thomas,

*THANK YOU* for your letter inviting me to contribute to the celebration of the centenary of co-education at Wesley and every best wish for your venture.

As I approach my ten year anniversary of leaving Wesley it doesn't seem anywhere near that long ago that I was wearing the uniform or seeing my friends day in, day out. Long after you leave the place it stays with you – whether it be the friends you make there or the memories.

It's difficult to pick out any one memory from my time at Wesley but, in the context of my time as a woman at the school, a huge amount of memories stem from the hockey pitch. From going to my first training session as a shy little first year on the grit pitch, doing physicals on wet winter afternoons to leading the 1st XI out onto the pitch at Three Rock for a cup match in my final year and representing Wesley at interprovincial level. The list could go on but the abiding feeling was one of enjoyment and I got a huge amount from playing hockey during my time at the school. Indeed, you could say I attended Wesley during some golden years for girls' hockey. A combination of facilities and exceptional coaching staff meant that, come March, a large number of girls' teams had made it to the finals of competitions at all levels. Indeed the commitment of the coaching staff to girls' hockey at Wesley merits a mention – from Joan Blackmore, Ruth Henderson and Robin Madeley at the junior level to Louise Tallon at Senior level we were certainly not lacking for enthusiasm and encouragement.

A standout memory was when I played on the Junior A's in the 1998/1999 season. We had reached the finals of the competition where we faced Mount Anville. Finals of schools competitions were always played in Three Rock and were a big occasion for the team involved - the whole squad wore blazers to school on the day of the final and a few busloads of supporters were dispatched to cheer the team on. In that particular game we were 2 – 1 down in the dying minutes and the feeling of potential disappointment was weighing heavily. That was until Laura McCoy, our star forward, was awarded a last gasp flick. Our captain Lynne Beck stepped up

and coolly slotted home to send us into extra time. Extra time passed in a bit of a blur if I'm honest but two moments of sheer euphoria will stay with me – we won two short corners and my job on both was to take the post. Even though I'd had many misses from that exact position during the season and was by no means a regular goal scorer, I managed to put the ball in the back of the net both times. Cue unforgettable celebrations and a headline in the Independent the next day which I still have somewhere – “Wallace hammers Anville”.

I played on the Senior 1st XI the following year and in my final year captained the side. More memories to share, both highs and lows - playing with the talented Nikki Symmons who has gone on to amass endless caps at international level, Sarah Walker's unstoppable reverse stick shot goal to defeat Loreto Bray in the Senior League final, endless entertainment from Emma Delahunt during training sessions and losing on penalty strokes to Muckross in the Cup semi-final in my final year. But amidst the highs and lows, I'll leave you with one final story from the hockey pitch, albeit this is one that probably won't have made it into the official records or heralded as a major moment! In my final weeks at Wesley the 1st XI organised what was to be our final match in Wesley colours. On a sunny late spring day we took to the pitch in the infamous luminous yellow away strip (deemed by some to be a tactical ploy to distract opposition!). After two halves of competitive, punishing hockey we emerged victorious with a convincing score line of 3 – 0. Why so memorable a game you ask? Our opposition was the 1st XV rugby team. Victory seems to taste even sweeter when you beat the boys!

I may have only shared anecdotes from the hockey pitch with you but I want to emphasise that hockey, for me, was only one part of the overall Wesley experience. Students who attend Wesley come away with a rounded academic education whether they embrace sports, music or art.

Sincerely,  
RACHEL WALLACE



# Lara Dungan

— CLASS OF 2001??

*‘ I look back with great fondness today at a school that provided me with so much; friends that encouraged and loved me and teachers who shaped and moulded me to look to the future, demanding nothing in return but expecting everything.’*

Dear Esther, Yvonne, Nathan and Thomas,

I STARTED IN WESLEY as a young, and let’s be honest terrified, first year in September 1996. I’d come from a local primary school, Taney National School, so there was a whole host of students that I knew, all standing in our first assembly that morning looking as filled with trepidation as I was, top buttons done up and ties tightened right up to choking point. I remembered that feeling each year as I saw the newest recruits arrive on the first day of September in their new uniforms, some gleaming, some bedraggled from years of abuse at the hands of older siblings, with that look of worry and fear gleaming in their eyes. As I quickly found out, and as I hope each new student did too, there was no need to be scared. Wesley became my home. I was following in the footsteps of my older brother and with the beginning of each new class, with each new teacher, came the familiar line “Dungan eh, would you be any relation to Rory?” To which I was forced to shame-facedly answer in the affirmative and wait for the knowing smile that spreads across the face of any teacher who had the unique experience of having my cheeky older brother among the ranks of their students.

Looking around the classes you could see the soon to be well established groups beginning to seed; the untouchable preps with their extensive one year of experience, the boarders fresh from counties and countries afar, and all the rest of us struggling to find our niche in this new and unfamiliar environment. The huge diversity within the student body was one of the most enriching aspects of Wesley. There are few schools in Dublin where you rub shoulders every day with children from Malaysia, Kenya, China, Egypt and every county in Ireland. You learn to understand and respect other cultures and customs, and this is a trait that I certainly took into my life beyond Wesley.

After we’d found our way around the buildings, established our



Lara Dungan

teachers, classrooms, routines and learned to negotiate the difficulties in remembering which books to bring to which classes we were thrust into the world of sports. The facilities in Wesley allowed me to sample every sport that I could have ever wanted to try. I played hockey and cricket every year in school, but I was also able to try my hand at badminton, netball, swimming and even skiing. I still play hockey and ski to this day and I think the ready access to sports and the healthy lifestyle that Wesley set up for me from such an early age has helped to mould the love I still have for the game.

I was shy for the first three years of school. People I meet now wouldn’t believe it of me, but I was. Unlike other schools at the time, Transition Year in Wesley was compulsory and when I look back I will always see this as a huge turning point for me. We did classes that we never dreamed would be available to us. I was allowed to meander up from my astronomy class in the science block straight to my drama class in the boarding houses. I was forced into new classes, new groups and out of a shell that had never really fitted me. I was allowed to expand and experience a side to myself that I was pleased to find existed. I was instilled with a love of the arts and humanities that has never wavered to this day. Like everyone at

Wesley I learned life lessons so huge and important they are beyond definition; but I'll never forget the tiny lessons, the subtle and daily education that seemed unimportant at the time. Each one of these lessons was like a chisel that chipped away the outer stone covering to reveal my true shape and form below. I'll always remember being given back my corrected English paper from my fifth year Christmas exams. I was never the most attentive of spellers and often my pen would get away from me, scribbling words across the page before my brain had a chance to proofread a single one. Mr MacMonagle had jotted a small message in the otherwise gaping margin beside one particularly repetitive offence; 'There is A RAT in separate!!!' It may seem like a small and insignificant comment but I have never spelt the word incorrectly again in my life.

Wesley was the platform from which I jumped into my life. It didn't mould me into the person I am today; it did something so much more important, it gave me the tools to mould myself. Not only this but even though I have left the school, a vital part of the school has never left me; the people I met there. I'm grown up now. I know this because I have bills in my name and I'm expected to pay them. It's been nearly 10 years since I walked out the doors for the last time, Leaving Certificate results clutched under white knuckles; but the friends I made back in Wesley have never changed or faltered. My friends from school have become my family today and for this I will always be appreciative.

As if Wesley wasn't big enough and intimidating enough I went on to study science in UCD after school. I finished my degree in cell and molecular biology in four years graduating top of my class. Before I even had time to sit my viva I decided to go travelling for a year. One year became three and I saw everything I dreamed I would and more. I've rehabilitated orphaned pumas in Bolivia, skied my way through the Alps, walked on glaciers in New Zealand and floated down lazy rivers in Laos. When I returned to what I was reliably informed was my real life I began studying for my PhD in immunology in Trinity College. I'm working in the laboratory of Professor Kingston Mills and a great deal of my research is based around the neurodegenerative autoimmune disease multiple sclerosis (MS). In Ireland it is a fairly safe bet that most people know at least one person who suffers from this debilitating disease. In fact MS affects over 7,000 people and their families in Ireland today and as many as 2.5 million people world-wide. It is the most common progressive and disabling neurological condition in young adults and can go as far as leaving its victims partially or completely paralysed with a range of cognitive, visual and speech impairments among other symptoms. We have recently published a paper in the Journal of Immunology based on my research which helps to describe a potentially important drug target

which may treat MS and other autoimmune disorders.

Working in this field provides me with a satisfaction that I know very few other career paths would be capable of. I feel like I have the potential to help people that do not have the facilities to help themselves. Last December I was awarded the title of 'Young Scientist of the Year' by the British Society of Immunology at their annual congress which was one of the greatest honours of my life and career. I am proud to work in a field that has the potential to change mankind for the better, to alleviate the suffering that is so omnipresent in the lives of so many around the world, and to expand our knowledge of the human body and the systems within. I feel lucky to have been given the life I have; to experience the things I've experienced and to live through the things I've seen. I believe each one of us is a sum total of our experiences and who we are made up of our responses and reactions. The remarkable staff and students at Wesley helped to give me the confidence, knowledge and integrity to face the world head on and achieve all I dreamed of. I look back with great fondness today at a school that provided me with so much; friends that encouraged and loved me and teachers who shaped and moulded me to look to the future, demanding nothing in return but expecting everything.

Kind regards,

LARA

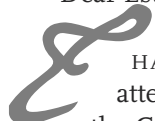


*Dr Rebecca Zahn*

— CLASS OF 2002

*‘I am not sure I can really comment on whether there was a discernible difference between how boys and girls were treated in my time,’*

Dear Esther,

 HANK YOU for your email. In order for you to understand why I attended Wesley College I need to explain a little bit about myself and the German education system. I was born in Germany but my parents moved to Dublin when I was 2 years old as my father was posted to the German school in Dublin. We then moved back to Germany when I was 10 and I went to a normal German school. At the time, German secondary school took 9 years and in the 7th year (if your grades were good enough) you could go abroad for a year without having to repeat a year when you came back. I decided to go back to Dublin and stumbled across Wesley by chance. I started Wesley as a boarder in 5th year and found out that I actually really liked it there so I decided to stay on for 6th year and to do my Leaving Certificate rather than returning to Germany. I chose to do German, French, English, Maths, Biology, History and Music, all at Higher level. I also joined the orchestra, the choir, the Model United Nations team, the netball team and played a bit of tennis. Overall, I really had a great time at Wesley. The girl that I shared a room with in 6th year is still one of my best friends and I often think back to my time there.

I think my stay at Wesley helped me a lot to get through University. In particular, the study methods helped me prepare for countless exams and living in a boarding school made the transition to sharing a flat at University a lot easier! Although I couldn't bear to live in catered accommodation after enduring the boarding school food for 2 years! I chose to share a self-catered flat with 3 other female students instead. After leaving Wesley in 2002 I did an LLB in Law and French at the University of Edinburgh, followed by an LLM with a specialisation in Human Rights Law at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. I then went on to do a PhD in Law at the University of Edinburgh. I submitted my PhD thesis this summer and am currently doing a one year postdoctoral fellowship at the European University Institute in Italy.

I am not sure I can really comment on whether there was a discernible difference between how boys and girls were treated in my time. In any case, I cannot remember any differences but I might have just been very lucky! Best wishes,


REBECCA L. ZAHN

*Ita Shanahan*

— CLASS OF 2004

*‘Fortunately I attended school when the divide between the sexes had been blurred, if not totally eradicated.’*

Dear Esther, Nathan, Thomas and Yvonne,

 OOKING BACK ON MY TIME in Wesley College, I remember a sense of community and inclusion. I left school in 2004, by which time the Women's Revolution had long since achieved parity for both genders. On the surface at least, it appeared that girls and boys were offered the same opportunities and censures to guide all aspects of their development. In fact, girls were well represented on international teams for both cricket and hockey, were considered the academic equal of any boy and participated in all areas of the school curriculum without disparagement.

However, it cannot be said that there was never any difference in the treatment of girls and boys within the school system. These small incidents were hotly disputed by students and it was the identification and solution of these problems that highlighted just how far the school and society have come along the path of equality. For example, one of the burning issues that enflamed school consciousness was the wearing of sports uniforms during Physical Education (PE) sessions in our more senior years. Girls and boys attended separate PE classes and while boys could wear their own clothes and choose the activity they participated in, the girls' classes were a much more regimented affair! We wore the official red aertex and navy tracksuit bottoms without fail and followed a strict timetable of activities. This struck us as incredibly unfair and was a cause of much discussion within our Tutor classes. Despite this, we continued to wear full sports regalia throughout our school careers.

Uniform continued to be a source of contention within the school environment. While I was in Transition Year, girls' school trousers were introduced as an alternative to our navy skirts. These were assumed to be a more pragmatic option, on a par with male uniform choices. Despite these lofty ambitions, only a handful of girls ever wore the new trousers on the grounds that they were both unflattering and uncomfortable. In complete contrast to our battles over sports uniform, we rejoiced in our dissimilarity to our male counterparts and unsurprisingly, the addition of girls' trousers to the approved uniform list was quickly abandoned!

In spite of Wesley's policy of inclusion, both sexes tended to follow the traditional subject choices for their gender. Home Economics was populated mainly by girls while Construction Studies remained a very male dominated course. Having said that, for a brief period I was a member of the school Woodwork club and found the atmosphere to be welcoming and instructive. While I was one of the few girls there, I was given no extra concessions or castigation. I was simply another student with the same responsibilities and expectations, regardless of my gender. Yet despite an atmosphere of tolerance and encouragement as regards academia within Wesley, students still tended to opt for more traditional subject choices. This may have been due to personal aptitude or perhaps social conditioning from childhood onwards, but Wesley provided support and encouragement to each student, irrespective of their academic route.

In addition to this reputation for fostering academic excellence, Wesley is also perceived as a "rugby school". Even though this is justified, the College has also won prestige on hockey, badminton and cricket fields. During my own tenure in school, both boys and girls teams held All Ireland titles in badminton and hockey, a trend which can still be seen in the present day. Yet in the eye of society, part of the school ethos seems to be based primarily on a sport which excludes the female student body by its very nature. Within Wesley itself, each sport has always received parity of esteem which invites the notion that Wesley must exist in a dichotomy. It must remain true to its own ideals and traditions but also remain mindful of its perception within society. The College has the heavy burden of catering to the needs of its community but also ensuring these values are emphasized in a more global viewpoint.

Fortunately, I attended school in a time where the divide between the sexes had been blurred, if not totally eradicated. Wesley has only been co-educational since 1911, but in those hundred years, girls have been supported, galvanized and fostered by a school which has always recognized the worth of each unique individual. My time in Wesley College was one which I shall always treasure, as a student and more specifically, as a female student. I feel privileged to be part of a lineage which combines the traditional with progressive, which moves forward without sacrificing its history.

ITA SHANAHAN

*Sarah Railton*  
(NEE KENNEDY) – CLASS OF 2005

*'When girls were allowed to wear trousers very few did even though many had asked for them. It must be said the design was neither flattering nor comfortable.'*

Dear Ms Glenfield,



THANK YOU for your recent letter including me in celebrating the centenary of co-education in Wesley. My six years in Wesley were very enjoyable and I have many fond memories of my time there. I was a day pupil for the six years as I lived just a short drive from the school. I am the sort of individual who loves trying new things and getting involved in whatever is going on around me! As a result I took part in a number of extra-curricular activities. I played hockey until my Junior Cert year when I found myself enjoying netball more and decided to pursue it instead. I also played badminton regularly after school. In the summer I enjoyed playing tennis and softball with my friends and swimming in the pool before it was emptied. When I began to play netball in school it was a relatively new sport for the college but we soon had a team of which I was the captain. There were a number of schools in Dublin who ran a netball league each year and we began to enter this. One year we came second and were presented with silver medals. While in 5th and 6th year I often helped to coach the junior netball team as there wasn't always a coach available.

In 4th year I took part in our Transition Year production by helping out backstage and by also taking a small role onstage which I really enjoyed. However, I was always too nervous to audition for a part in the annual school performances and always opted to help out backstage instead! Working backstage however was a lot of fun each year and I have many happy memories of the antics we got up to! A group of friends and I also took part in a competition called Young Social Innovators in 4th year where we had to research a social issue (ours was Young Offenders) and then come up with possible solutions. This culminated in a trip to the RDS where we had a stand and got to talk about our project. 4th year also involved a trip to Cappanalea Adventure Centre, taking part in Gaisce, the President's Award and a bonding day up the Dublin Mountains where we had to build a man out of straw, take part in trust exercises and get everyone in our class through some string strung between two trees!

My favourite extra-curricular activities had to be the various choirs and the orchestra! During my time in Wesley I played flute in the orchestra and sang in a number of choirs – Junior Choir, Senior Choir, Gospel Choir, a madrigal group, Chamber Choir and a girls' choir. I enjoyed these immensely. I have many great memories of winning awards at the Interschools Music Festival each year as well as singing in St Patrick's Cathedral and taking part in a service for RTE. We also, one Christmas, got to perform some festive jingles for the radio which was a lot of fun.

I also took part in The Poetry Aloud Competition a number of times although I was never successful and I was a member of the Christian Union for my entire time at Wesley where I saw it go from strength to strength. I chose music and Home Economics at Junior Cert level and enjoyed them both although, after myself and a friend managed to set our soup on fire in 2nd year, I have yet to attempt soup making again! I enjoyed the subjects I took at Leaving Cert level – English, Maths and Gaeilge along with French, History, Music and Biology. In 5th year I was highly commended for an essay I wrote for Biology. I was also a member of the Student Council for a while and I remember we campaigned for boys to be allowed to have long hair (which since I left has been allowed) and also that girls be allowed to wear a blouse and no tie. I began to wear a blouse as soon as it became part of the uniform and it was very successful. However, when girls were allowed to wear trousers very few did even though many had asked for them! I believed this was to do with the trousers that were designed as they weren't the most comfortable or flattering!

As you can see I have many memories of my time in Wesley. I had the good fortune of being awarded a prize or two at each prize giving and was especially delighted to be awarded the Martin Smyth Prize as well as the Spirit of Music Trophy in my final year. Having always enjoyed learning and knowledge as well as working with children I went on to study primary school teaching in the Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines where I graduated with a First in 2008. I then completed an honors year in TCD and in the summer of 2009 married. I am now working in Delgany National School and enjoying both my teaching career and married life!

I hope this is of some help to you in your project,

SARAH RAILTON

*Kate Ferguson*

– CLASS OF 2006

*'I remember returning to my locker at 4 o'clock on September 11, 2001, and coming across a geeky classmate in a state of excitement. He was pounding his fists together to describe the trajectory of a plane's crash into a skyscraper.'*

"IMAGINE THAT YOU HAVE FOUND the most delicious-looking plums on your kitchen table", Mr Mac Monagle began, in *media res* on the occasion of my very first English class. "You gobbled them up" he continued, "and now you must write a note to the rest of your family apologising for what you have done". Luminous sheets of card fluttered onto our desks and twenty-six young fountain pens began to scrawl lines of contrition. "Time up", yelled MacMonagle. "What have you, Ms Fleming?" A scoff. "Erm.. *Sorry I ate the plums*" "Excellent!" Then silence, then a poem. I have been hooked on language ever since.

The fight for girls to wear trousers was won in the summer of 2001, when I was thirteen and about to enter my second year at Wesley College. Clutching the uniform list triumphantly, I dragged my mother to Rita's uniform shop in the 'old' Dundrum shopping centre, and we purchased a pair of over-sized, shapeless navy slacks, which I am waiting patiently to grow into, ten years and several hundred cupcakes later. The design was so ghastly that I was the only girl in the year to condescend to wear the garment and even at that, my resolve faded with the advent of spring.

I have the young and kindly music teacher, Mr Gifford to thank for my introduction to Google. One afternoon in the computer room in the library, while my friend and I were typing up our entirely fabricated research project on Simon and Garfunkel, he bent his head tentatively between us and whispered, "There is a great new way to find information. It is called *Google*". A rather silly name, I thought. Hardly one that will catch on.

I remember returning to my locker at 4 o'clock on September 11, 2001 and coming across a geeky classmate in a state of excitement. He was pounding his fists together to describe the trajectory of a plane's crash into a skyscraper. I thought he was talking about a computer-game. Later, on the 48A bus home a lady spoke into her mobile phone, "who knows what will happen now; that Bush is a maniac". By the time I got home, the TV was on, and the blown-apart pieces came together.

The very best bit of my time at Wesley College was my involvement with



Kate Ferguson, Sunday Tribune Journalism Award.

the establishment of a school newspaper, *Fullstop*. The editorial team comprised of seven people: six of my very best friends and me. (It's all about who you know in this country!). Tonight I reminisced over a coffee with David Kearney, then-Editor-in-chief about some of the gems that the publication produced. The second issue, released on 26 January, 2004 featured a six-page interview with

Graham Norton under the promising headline *The Full Norty*.

No area of school life was passed over by *Full stop*: the controversy about the new swipe card attendance system was neatly summarised by the headline *Swipe Strife!* and tensions between prefects and non-prefects were explored under the provocative question: *Prefects or Defects?* My baby was a column on page 3 called The Toilet Wall, which is so full of righteous indignation that it makes me cringe with nostalgia.

On Thursday 18 November 2004, *Fullstop* ran an exclusive interview with the one and only Christopher Woods, after he was announced as the new Principal of the college. The headline read *Out of the woods* and boasted an exclusive "fifteen-minute intensive grilling about Wesley, Africa and the secret to a good education". Mr Woods mused that "if I can look back in fifty years time when I'm old and grey and can say that everyone enjoyed their time in school and learned a lot ... I'd be a very happy man". It was a privilege, in my final two years at Wesley College to have a principal so dedicated and so interested in his pupils as individuals. I am sure that Mr Woods, old and grey will be a very happy man.

I studied English literature and Psychology at Trinity College, Dublin and now I spend much of my time at home googling jobs but all I can find are telesales positions requiring proficiency in Dutch. I do a little bit of teaching on the side which I enjoy but if I'm honest, what I really want to do is to get paid to write *The Toilet Wall*. Wesley College inspired me to dream of great things and life since graduation has coupled that entitlement with a dollop of humility. The class of 2006 may have considered themselves the crème de la crème, but many of us are still sorry we ate the plums.

KATE FERGUSON

*Sarah Lewis*

– CLASS OF 2008

Dear Esther, Yvonne, Nathan and Thomas,

*"Super, super Wes..." "Oh when the Wes, go marching in..." "We are the mighty, the mighty Wesley!"*

**E**VEN NOW, hearing those chants inspires a sense of excitement, passion and school spirit in me, emotions reflective of my time spent in Wesley, both in and out of the classroom. There were so many occasions during my six years spent there that I felt a wonderful sense of belonging and dedication. Sports matches were awesome occasions for everyone to actively express their school spirit. The place became awash with face paint, jerseys, banners and flags, and alive with chants, screams and excited voices. The early days at Donnybrook were always those of greatest excitement, along with many hockey finals at Three Rock and cheering from the pavilion.

We all know that music plays a large role in the lives of many Wesley students, particularly choir, which is one of my fondest memories. The Inter-Schools festival was undoubtedly one of my highlights of the Wesley calendar, the school buzzing and the talent astounding. Weekly choir practices were something I always looked forward to, partly for the tea and biscuits but also for the fun we had, especially getting ready for the carol service. Singing in the National Concert Hall and in the Sacre Coeur are times I will never forget.

In the classroom, the range of subjects and teachers meant we got a taste of everything: from tai chi with Mr Kennedy to Irish ballads with Mr O'Coimin, Hershey's prizes with Mr Reed to Mars bars for Shakespeare's birthday with Mr MacMonagle. Art classes will always hold a special place in my heart, double art making half day Wednesdays even better.

Once I open up the store of Wesley memories, they all come flooding back...the dreaded 'long run' and bleep test which I secretly kind of enjoyed, the excitement of getting both pizza *and* chocolate cake on the hot lunch menu, badly rolled-up skirts, the happy changeover to summer aertexes and the routine 'please be seated' as the morning began with another assembly. These memories will be kept alive through the brilliant friends I made during those six years; friendships which I know will last and always give Wesley flashbacks to remind me of good times.

Wishing you all the best with your research,

SARAH



*Aoife Cassidy*

– CLASS OF 2009

*‘Huge, ill-fitting pantaloons in the school colours that seemed to have been designed with a non-human form in mind, and were definitely in breach of several fashion laws.’*

Dear Esther, Yvonne, Nathan & Thomas,

*W*HEN I SAT DOWN to write this letter I was truly stuck: I could not think of a single story from my time in Wesley that occurred because I was a girl. I met an old friend of mine from school for lunch and asked her for some suggestions as to what I could write to you. She, too, was stuck. But then she remarked that perhaps the reason I couldn't think of any events that I had experienced as a girl in Wesley was simply because being a girl made no difference! I was lucky to have been in a school where I had exactly the same opportunities and experiences as any boy.

However, an appalling discrimination did occur and it came in shiny nylon form: Hockey Knickers. I can remember my horror, when, buying my first uniform as an anxious first year, the shop assistant held up the navy monstrosities and insisted that all the girls wore them. Huge, ill-fitting pantaloons in the school colours that seemed to have been designed with a non-human form in mind and were definitely in breach of several fashion laws. Thankfully, over the years Wesley righted this wrong and introduced much more flattering and practical hockey “skorts”. Much hockey-knicker burning ensued in celebration.

One other gender-specific memory I have was when, during Transition Year, as the only girl in my class who hadn't taken the subject for Junior Cert, I found myself in a Home Economics class of all boys. I can still clearly see the look of despair the (female) teacher would share with me as yet another boy asked what a sieve was, or what was the difference between a teaspoon and a tablespoon. When sewing, whilst I had my choice of any thimble to protect my delicate hands, the boys were shooed away thimbleless until their fingers almost bled!

Now I am in Trinity College studying medicine, where for the first time in many years the number of men outweighs women. The experiences I had in not just a co-ed school, but an open-minded and inclusive school,

have helped me in an environment where I must work everyday with a team of people of all genders, cultures and beliefs.

Maybe your older contributors will have different experiences from other times of being a girl in a co-ed school, but I am lucky to be able to say I have no other girl-specific memories. And I am proud to have been part of a school where opportunities, challenges and successes came to every student, no matter boy or girl.

Best of luck with the rest of your studies,

Kind regards,

AOIFE CASSIDY

Science class, 2000



## Eve Kearney

– CLASS OF 2009

*‘Certain idioms such as Dining Hall; Monitors; TY Environmental Studies and, of course, Commendations, will pepper one’s speech to the bewilderment and bafflement of those not familiar with the system and will warrant much light-hearted abuse.’*

IT’S STRANGE HOW certain things follow you in life, cropping up when they’re least expected. Old friends, exes you never wanted to see again, even your favourite TV shows can all make appearances years on – sometimes for better but more often than not for worse. Yet when these things do stride forward from the back of your mind, they can take you back to a different time and place in your life and make you re-evaluate your perspectives. “All that worry and stress and it ended up fine!”, “I guess he wasn’t such a bad kisser after all” or even as simple as “Maybe the uniform wasn’t as bad as we made it out to be.”

Seeing as I only entered Wesley in 2004, some may argue that we had little or nothing to complain about. Our navy skirts were almost Paris runway worthy when compared with the ankle length plaid of other schools in the area, and our equally navy jumpers, while frustratingly baggy in all the right areas (a clever ploy by the school perhaps?) were a God-send when we saw certain maroon monstrosities across a muddy rugby pitch or in Dundrum on a Wednesday afternoon. You couldn’t look good, but you could at least look passable. Looking back, we were really lucky during our time in Wesley. We escaped the morally upright days of ties, were presented with blouses instead of top-buttoned shirts and in the name of equality were blessed with trousers. Trousers... not so much a blessing as a curse!

Put seventy-odd bored teenage girls together in one year, there will be natural divisions. Put 500 together for seven hours, five days a week, and soon they’ll be looking for ways to stand out, to distinguish one another and to discriminate to get ahead. Thanks to strict uniform regulations we had few ways to individualise our navy stodginess – even shoes were policed in an almost fascist frenzy – but trousers were the exception. As soon as trousers were introduced, they became a distinguishing factor. Girls who did wear the unflattering navy slacks were instantly marked as ‘different’ or ‘weird’, but this is the politics of not just school life, but female life.

But politics must always be governed, and while democratically, we were ruled by the constitution of the debatable uniform policy, we were also pitted

up against the secret police of the Heads of Uniform. Walking into the school on a wintery morning became an elaborate game of cat and mouse as we skirted the concourse and cut through the classroom block to dodge the eagle eyes of those on duty, lest we be caught wearing a non-uniform hoodies. Our excuses of it being navy, or sold by a TY mini-company fell on deaf ears, and we were forced to disrobe in the cold and bundle the jumper in the bottom of the locker until the last bell rang. Then the game started all over again.

Summer was no different, except we swapped contraband sweatshirts for illegal t-shirts under our aertexes (which, if caught, warranted an arduous trip to the bathroom to be removed). However, the best times for uniform were the snow days of 2009 and 2010. These flurries fell like a thousand doves that had flown into a ceiling fan and caused a mass disruption not only to academic life in the school (even causing a brief closure in 2010) but also threw everyone into disarray when it came to everyday administration and, to our joy, uniform.

While we were expected to wear sensible shoes to and from school in the perilous slush, we gleefully swapped wellies and boots for Converse and soggy Ugg boots, and even more gleefully flaunted this lenience when challenged in classrooms and corridors. “But look at the snow,” we’d smugly protest before scurrying off to secure a seat beside a radiator for next period, feet squelching in soggy shoes. For those three days we dressed like kings...metaphorically speaking of course – even with the snow, Wesley drew the line at capes and sceptres.

It’s true that certain things in life follow you, and regardless of whether this is a positive or a negative, Wesley is no different. Certain idioms such as *the dining hall, monitors, TY Environmental Studies*, and of course, *commendations* will pepper your speech to the amusement and bafflement of those not familiar with the system and will warrant much light-hearted abuse. Expecting people to have actually enjoyed their school days appears to be something unique to Wesley, as does the idea of Transition Year not only being mandatory but actually worthwhile. While all these attributes have cropped up occasionally in my everyday life, the thing I was most surprised to see appeared down the bottom of my wardrobe a few weeks ago. There, nestled between old shoes and worn out jeans lay my senior jumper, exactly the way I had worn it my last day. There was the tear in the left cuff for which I was constantly getting into trouble; there was the pucker in the stitching that I’d pick at during boring classes. And there, to my delight, was the Prefect Badge I thought I’d lost, still pinned neatly in place beside the crest.

EVE KEARNEY

## Thelma Harris

— CLASS OF 2010



HERE IS A POEM by Michael Longley which I studied for my Leaving Certificate entitled *Wounds*. In this poem Longley shares with the reader three images associated with war and conflict from his father's head. You might find it unusual that I chose to refer to such a poem when I think back on my time in Wesley but I found the idea of Longley's three images an excellent way to explain my association with the school.

My two older siblings had attended the College before me and, as I am currently remaining in the college as a member of staff in Epworth House, I would like to share with you three memories from my own head that rekindle my fondness of the school each from the different stages of my association with the College.

The first school event I attended was my sister's Leavers' Service in 2002. It was here that I first became aware of the great prestige associated with the College. The formality of the service intrigued my ten year old self. The navy, red and blue sea of the students' uniforms that sat before me was truly overwhelming. The Service continued. The Head Girl spoke of the great times she'd had and of how much she'd benefited from the school. After her speech the school hymn was sung. The sense of school spirit and the College Motto "Prove all things, Hold fast that which is good" rang through the Myles Hall as we stood and sang.

For me the pride shown by the students was similar to that of fans of a sports team or even patriots showing their love for their country. I had never seen anything like it before and from that moment I knew that to be part of such a school meant not only doing what was expected of you with regard to academics but also embracing all aspects of the school.

When I finally entered First Year 2004 I was ready to hit the ground running. Much of my time in the college was spent taking part in extra-curricular activities and I think if you look back you'd have difficulty finding a team or club to which I did not at some stage or another take a liking. However, as this piece is for the celebration of Women in Wesley, my second recollection is about one such extra-curricular which, although traditionally dominated by males, the Wesley Girls managed to make their own.

In Third Year I was approached regarding a weekend trip to Manchester with the Model United Nations. Of course I instantly accepted the offer only later (after the novelty of a weekend abroad on a school trip wore off) did I realise what I had actually agreed to.

It seemed that in preparation for the MUN conference I would have to research the current political views of Rwanda, which at the time did not

seem terribly exciting. I trojaned on, and by the time the conference came around I was fully informed on Rwanda's stance on such issues as the international drug trade and conflicts in the Middle East. On arrival at our host school Cheadle Hume School I was surrounded by students from all over the U.K. and Ireland dressed as I was, in a smart work suit ready to take on the issues of the world for one weekend.

Although nervous at the prospect of debating in front of all these people (the majority two or three years older than me) I soon realised that they were equally as terrified as I was. The weekend turned out to be a great success and although I did not win any prizes at this conference it was for me the beginning of a very long and enjoyable relationship with international politics.

Although Wesley College had participated in Model United Nations for many years it was not until 2008 that the school chose to hold its own conference. Months of preparation went into the event, which saw schools visit from all over Ireland and the UK. For this I was lucky enough to be on the organising committee and was given the title of Head of Secretariat. The preparation work was endless and many hours went into organising how we would host the visiting delegates and which important world issues would be discussed. The event was a great success and we were given the go ahead for another conference the following year. This time I was delegated the post of Deputy Secretary General alongside Secretary General, Eve Kearney. Our organisational skills were really put to the test this time. After many months of searching, we ended up with two guest speakers; then T.D. Tom Kitt and Senator David Norris. Again the conference went off without a hitch and gave the females of Wesley a chance to show their great talents. It is no doubt my experiences with MUN that encouraged me to study Politics in University.


The final image I leave you with is that of a frenzied girls' boarding house with trunks and suitcases lining the hallway. The sun is blasting through the windows, young girls are exchanging stories of the summer and, of course, the new first years are arriving. Many look around unknowingly at the numerous different faces; if you're crafty you may even spot the odd tear as a parent threatens to leave to grab a cup of coffee and return in the afternoon to say their final farewell. When everything is unpacked, it's time to face the day school. The new girls accompany each other out down the stairs and to the duty office to hand in their newly assigned number to the mistress on duty. They then congregate until everyone is accounted for. Finally they walk out the door of Epworth to face their first experience of Wesley, having truly no idea of the years ahead of them. Not knowing that when they leave that door for the final time they will be part of a history of strong and able women.

THELMA HARRIS



*Carin Hunt*

— CLASS OF 2011

 TO BE A GIRL IN WESLEY is simply to be a part of Wesley, and in discussing the life of a female student, I'm happy to say that I am discussing the life of any student here. With the exception of sport and physical education, there is a complete absence of segregation among guys and girls – we share classes, lunches and extra-curricular activities. Perhaps the only thing that would reflect any kind of difference between us is subject choice, which for the most part is split fairly evenly save for home economics which tends to draw more girls, and business and materials technology, generally attracting more boys. But having said that, it seems to me at least, that this is purely based on preferences and not feelings of gender appropriateness, and that being one of the few girls in a highly boy populated class warrants no stigma, nor even a second glance. And I imagine this is because we have had the good fortune to grow up in the time when the effects of feminism and women's rights movements have truly influenced and changed our society. We don't associate ourselves with being an example of equality because we don't hear about equality of opportunity and equal rights on a regular basis, because for the most part equality had been achieved – and the stigma that used to plague women who wanted to succeed in life on their own merit has been dissolved, now attaching itself to anyone claiming that women can, or should, do less with their lives. And so, when we sit in careers lectures during Transition Year or listen to talks on exams and CAO points during our last few months, no one is expecting us to do any less work than the guys, nor to achieve anything less, and in fact statistically, we are all more likely to do better than them. Ambition in Wesley is for everyone, as is achievement and success.

That's purely the academics. Wesley, and indeed any secondary school, becomes an important institution independent of its educational merits, in any young person's life; from the outset, when we walk our first awkward steps through the hallways, weighed down by over packed bags snagging on ill-fitting uniforms. After all, we spend six incredibly formative years here, learning life skills as well as academic ones, and this is equally true for both the guys and girls here. And while I feel that by its very nature school becomes somewhat of a 'bubble', and can't really emulate the diversity or the opportunity that real, or 'adult', life possesses, its value in preparing us for life after compulsory education would be significantly diminished were it not at the very least to emulate one of the

most basic aspects of society – in its composition of both men and women. Men and women attend college together, men and women sit side by side in boardrooms, they protest for change together, they vote in the same booths and they create families and relationships with one another. Why then, would you exclude one group from the other? Why shouldn't we start learning from each other, and start discovering the nature of our collective voice and experience as early as possible? Co-education has been a consistently positive factor in my experience of school, and I find it to be a defining feature of my education here.

Something else that I feel defines Wesley, on both the landscape of Irish secondary schools and in my own personal view, is the choice available to students – whether you play hockey or badminton, draw or sing, there is very little that Wesley doesn't offer. It is the presence of this choice that has afforded many of us the opportunity to find something we are good at, and perhaps more importantly, something that we enjoy and value during our time here.

For me, my time in Wesley has probably been most characterised by what has occurred outside of the curriculum – because while the education we receive here is important, the learning of facts and figures from what is a rather uncreative education system doesn't compare to our growth and development as people – the opinions and preferences we form, the friends we make and the experiences we share. Wesley has presented me opportunities to learn many different skills and looking back on my time here I see the scope for improvement that was presented to me because of the time, energy and passion with which extra-curricular activities were organised. The fact that we have both an academic and arts and sports awards evenings testifies to the fact that whatever it is that you have to contribute; it will be valued and acknowledged. And that is a comforting feeling that I fear we won't have outside of Wesley, because the real world simply doesn't work that way; people won't go out of their way to make us feel appreciated, and the triumphs that we have here would surely go unnoticed 'out there'. But at least we all face into that world with a better sense of ourselves and our abilities as result of the time invested here in finding everyone something at which they can excel.

It is quite a strange experience to think back on my time here as it draws so rapidly to a close. And with only a week or so left of school it's strange to realise what a powerful influence school has on you, because it's here that you have experiences that shape your thoughts and ideas about the world, and it's here that you have the opportunity to become a part of many different things. In my second year of school I participated in my first ever debate. I was nervous, incoherent and quite honestly, a little hysterical. However, there was something about the whole experience that



let me know that it was for me, and in time debating began to be an important aspect of my school life. Thanks to our coach being so enthusiastic and my good fortune of having both a great debater and friend at my side in competitions I began to discover something that I really enjoyed. Not only did debating teach me more about the world and how to form a convincing argument, it also afforded me the opportunity to travel and meet new people. Poetry Aloud was another aspect of Wesley that I felt was really special. The musicals held annually were another highlight of the school year, and with every production I was somewhat astounded by the amount of talent that came from our year alone.

So as both a girl and a student here I can say that Wesley holds some important memories for me, and at this time when we are all simultaneously looking towards our futures and back on our time here it's becoming very clear what a significant part of our lives Wesley has been.



The other Wesley women – 2011, all of whom taught at Wesley College, St. Stephen's Green and Ballinteer; Eda Byrne (nee Moran), Maureen Sheehan and Ida Reed (nee Bunbury)



Co-Education 2011





# The first girls to enter Wesley College as pupils in 1911

ERNEST ARMITAGE

THE WESLEYAN CONNEXIONAL SCHOOL was founded in 1845 by the Methodist Church in Ireland in St Stephen's Green South, Dublin, for the education of boys, either as day or boarding pupils. In 1879 the College moved into new buildings close by and the institution was renamed Wesley College. In 1868 Dr Crook, then headmaster of the Wesleyan Connexional School, was appointed the first headmaster of her sister school, Methodist College Belfast and in the next year girls were admitted to that College. Very few second level schools in Ireland had attempted co-education and this experiment was carefully watched by Thomas J. Irwin, vice principal and, from 1910, principal of Wesley College. In June 1911 the Wesley College Trustees received the permission of the Conference of the Methodist Church to admit girls. Florence Boles nee Forsythe claimed to be the first girl enrolled but she did not enter the College until 1912.

There were 175 boys on the roll in 1911. Twenty one girls including 6 boarders arrived in September and were joined by others as the school year progressed. The boarders were accommodated in Epworth House, a former hostel for young Methodist business men which had ceased to serve its purposes, located on the west

Wesley College Quarterly announces the arrival of the girls





side of St Stephen's Green, a few minutes walk from the College entrance. An adjacent house was later purchased and the first and second floors of a third house were rented as the number of girls increased. Miss Molyneaux, B.A. was in charge in 1911.

What was Wesley College like for those first girls? Miss Nora Alexander who taught English and was in charge of Epworth House from 1915 recalled: "That old house had on the lower floors large rooms which served as dining room, studies, and sitting rooms, but on the upper floors, what a difference! There one found a labyrinth of long passages, steep flights of stairs, and small bedrooms.... That part of the house always made me think of a rabbit warren." She recalled the line of girls going to the College every day "in those long, wide skirts, in blouses of every colour under the sun, and with wide-brimmed hats that were so often carried off by the wind."

The College was very much a male world. For some years the majority of pupils in any class were boys. Not surprisingly as the number of girls in the college increased so did the number of boys – co-education was successful from a business point of view as well as from an educational point of view. In 1911/12 there were 22 male teachers and 6 female teachers including part-timers. The curriculum was organized into four 'schools':

Preparatory, Intermediate (Junior Grade, Middle Grade, and Senior Grade), Commercial, Civil Service. The subjects included Holy Scripture, Greek, Latin, English, French, German, Mathematics, Experimental Science, Drawing, Shorthand, Piano, Organ, Choir, Elocution, Carpentry, Gymnastics. For about 50 years the choice of subjects offered a pupil favoured the boys rather than the girls. Games included rugby, cricket, athletics, swimming, and handball for the boys. By 1912 the girls had a hockey team. Boys were addressed by their surname while the girls had their surname prefixed by 'Miss'. Co-education involved boys and girls in the same classroom, but outside class times they were carefully segregated. Nevertheless the girls soon made their mark: winning subject prizes, prizes for 'lady-like deportment', Intermediate certificates and cash awards – achieving high places in the results for the whole of Ireland – matriculating in the universities and graduating with honours and prizes.

For this period the College archives preserve very limited information: ledgers with pupil accounts, rolls, class and team photographs – often without names – and the College Quarterly, a mainly literary magazine which was normally published three times a year but news items unfortunately were comparatively rare. The records show surnames with initials so it is often difficult to distinguish boys from girls, and when girls changed their names on marriage the researcher's task becomes even more difficult. For these and other reasons this researcher has failed to track down more than the barest details for a third of the girls who entered Wesley College in 1911. I wish to acknowledge the assistance of many

people including Mr Peter Lydon, Wesley College's archivist, Revd Robin Roddie, archivist for the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland, and past pupils Linda Patton and Linda Ellis.



Amongst the first girls in Wesley College were the three daughters of Mr William Arthur Storey, himself a former boarder pupil and the son of a Methodist minister, Revd John Charles Storey. William taught in Methodist College Belfast (1884-88), was Principal of Mardyke Intermediate School, Skibbereen, Co. Cork, and was a teacher in Wesley College, resident for a short period, teaching mathematics and experimental science (1905-29). He married Hester Connell. They lived at 28 Lower Beechwood Avenue and later at Grosvenor Road, Dublin. Their son, Cyril, was a day pupil in Wesley (1907-15).



Standing: W.J. Rudd, T. Mills, G. Saunders, Rev. T.J. Irwin (Principal).  
Seated: J.W. Gillespie, J.W. Costello, W.B. Doak, Irene Storey, W. Laidlow.

**Irene Frances Storey** (day pupil 1911-15) was a twin sister of Cyril. Irene was born in Skibbereen in 1897 and died in 1982. She attended Diocesan Intermediate and Commercial School for Girls, Adelaide Road, Dublin, before entering Wesley College. Irene was awarded a prize of 3s. 6d for English. She obtained a distinction in the Intermediate Certificate examination, a £3 prize in Mathematics and £2 in Modern Languages. She trained as a pharmacist and had her own pharmacy in Morehampton Road, Dublin. She enjoyed painting water colour landscapes.





The first girls' hockey team, c. 1912. Back row fifth from left is Irene Storey. In the front row 6th from left is Myra Storey

**Myra Winnifred Storey** (day pupil 1911-15) was born in Skibbereen in 1898 and died in 1986. She entered the Civil Service and later trained as a nurse in Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin. She offered her services to the Methodist Missionary Society and after training in the Wesley Deaconess College in England she served in The Gambia (West Africa), transferring to government service in Nigeria in 1937. She retired in 1953.

**Edith Lilian Storey** (day pupil 1911-21) was born in Skibbereen in 1902 and died in 1991.

The Intermediate Education Board awarded her certificates – Junior Grade in 1918, Middle Grade in 1920 and Senior Grade in 1921. She played on hockey teams, was awarded a prize in Holy Scripture and obtained the Trinity College of Music, London, Certificate in piano in 1921. Edith entered Trinity College Dublin, studied for a year in France (1922-23), was awarded the Littledale Prize in English, the Hutchinson-Stewart Literary Scholarship and graduated Moderatorship B.A. in French and English. She was awarded H.Dip. Ed. from TCD in 1927 and her Teaching Certificate from Alexandra College in 1928. She obtained a TCD Diploma in Social Studies in 1935 and qualified as a Hospital Almoner from the Institute of Hospital Almoners (London) in 1937, working while training in St Thomas' Hospital, London and the Adelaide Hospital, Dublin. She

was employed as an Assistant Almoner in Rotunda Hospital, Dublin (1937) and Almoner in the Royal City of Dublin Hospital, Baggot Street (1939). She retired in 1975.



**Mr David Ludlow** of 138 St Catherine's Terrace, South Circular Road, Dublin, was the father of a distinguished Methodist family of nine children, of whom seven were pupils in Wesley College: Ernest (1904-07), John Wesley (Jack) (1904-07), David Hall (1911-16) later an ordained Methodist minister, Elsie Maud (1911-14), Hilda J. (1911-14), Nelson R. (1915-21) later an ordained Methodist minister, Edith (1925-26) (Mrs Siviter) who organized a junior school in Brighton Road, Dublin.



This may be Hilda J. Ludlow



Elsie Maud Ludlow

**Hilda J. Ludlow** was born in 1896 and died in 1990. She was a day pupil in Wesley College (1911-14). She was awarded a prize of 2s.6d for music. She married Jack Forster in 1925 and they had a daughter Doris who married Harry Coote. Her grand-children were Jennifer and David. Hilda published a book of verses (1940) and four inspirational Christian books (1972-80).

**Elsie Maud Ludlow** was born in 1898. She was a day pupil (1911-14). She was awarded a prize of 2s.6d for English. She trained in the Adelaide and Rotunda hospitals and secured her SRN and SCM qualifications. Elsie offered her services to the Methodist Missionary Society and served as Sister and Matron in the Wesley Guild Hospital, Ilesha, Nigeria, 1929-60. She was awarded the M.B.E. for her outstanding service. During her long retirement in Dublin she was a very active member of Rathgar Methodist Church. She died in 1997, aged 98 years.

\* \* \*

**Isobel Eithne Bamford** was the daughter of Mr Joseph Bamford, a Presbyterian of 66 Grosvenor Square, Rathmines, Dublin. She attended Wesley as a day girl (1911-20). She was awarded a general proficiency prize of 4s od. Eithne served as superintendent physiotherapist in the City Hospital, Belfast. She was an enthusiastic member of the Northern Ireland branch of the Wesley College Old Girls' Union and was active in the Girl Guides as district commissioner and Ulster advisor for handicapped Guides. She was vice president of Belfast Trefoil Guild and a foundation member of Belfast Professional Women's Club. She was born in 1902 and died in the early 1960s.

**Pauline Jane Colton** was born in 1895 into a Church of Ireland family and died in 1983. Jane's parents, Abraham Edward Colton and Margaret Ann nee Odlum lived in 5 Charleville Square, Tullamore. Abraham was an auctioneer and hotelier. Four of their children were educated as boarders in Wesley College including Jane (1911-13). She trained as a physiotherapist spending 20 years in America. She returned to Tullamore in 1950 and practised in the County Hospital. One of her brothers, Frederick (1914-15) was killed in France during the First World War.

**Norah Gwendoline Donovan** (born 1895) was a day girl (1911-13), the daughter of Revd Patrick Ernest Donovan, a Methodist minister of Myross, Elton Park, Sandycove, Co. Dublin. Gwen was an invalid and died in 1960. Her brother Charles, a day boy (1912 – 21), was awarded a C.B.E. for his services as Director of Education in Sierra Leone, West Africa.

**Arabella Ruby Ffolliott.** Boarder girl (1911-12). Her parents, John and Margaret were members of the Church of Ireland. John was a farmer living at Headfort Place, Kells, Co. Meath. Their daughter was a nurse with the British army medical services, appointed a Sister in 1943, and may have served in India. She was born in 1893 and died in East Sussex in 1983.

**Olive Irene Harpur** was born in Athlone in 1895. She entered Methodist College, Belfast in 1910 and subsequently transferred as a boarder to Wesley

(1911-14). She was the daughter of Revd William Harpur, a Methodist minister of Dalkey House, Dalkey, Co. Dublin. She married William Norman Bladen (Captain North Staffordshire's Regiment) in Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire) Methodist Church, Co. Dublin, 1918. She died in 1966.

**Lilian Adelaide Harris** was born in 1895 the daughter of a Methodist minister, Revd Alexander Harris and his wife, Annie Jane. She was a day girl (1911-12) and lived at 1, Epworth Terrace, North Circular Road, Dublin. She was a music teacher in Enniscorthy where she died.

**Jeannette Mary Moore and Dora Lois Moore** were the daughters of Mr John and Mrs Caroline Moore of Iona, Sydney Parade, Dublin. Jeanette was born in 1896, and was a day pupil in Wesley (1911-18). She was awarded prizes in French, German, Mathematics (2s.6d. each). She emigrated from Southampton to Quebec, Canada in 1923 on board the ship Andania with her mother and sisters. Her married name was Williamson and she was resident in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Province, Canada. Her sister Dora Lois Moore, born in 1896, was a day girl (1911-14). She graduated from T.C.D. B.A. (1920), M.A. She lived at 1212 Redland Avenue, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and was a typist.

**Ethel Patricia Rea** was a day girl (1911-17). Her father was Mr John Rea of 19 Kenilworth Square, Dublin. She was a member of a Methodist family — which included Revd Fred Rea (Methodist missionary) and Miss Florence Rea (Head of Tullamaine Kindergarten and Preparatory School). She married Jack Shaw in 1928 and had two sons. After her husband's death she married Mr Kent.

**Dorothy Crawford Robinson** came from a Methodist family who lived in Cowper Road, Dublin. She was born in 1897 to Philip Robinson (a manufactures agent) and Robina Margaret nee Crawford. She was a day girl in Wesley (1911-14) with her two younger brothers Philip Bernard (1910-20) and Robert Crawford (1910-15). She was a member of the senior hockey XI which was defeated in the Cup Final and had the honour of reading the report on girls games at the Prize Distribution in 1913. She married in 1920 and had 2 daughters and a son.

**Olive Muriel Rudd** was a boarder in Wesley (1911-12) as were her brothers William John (1909-14) and Samuel Lowe (1912-17). Their parents, William, a corn miller in Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, and Ellen Sophia were members of the Methodist Church. She was awarded a class prize of 10s. od and German and French prizes of 3s. 6d each. She married Bob Smyth of Stone Hall, near Askeaton, Co. Limerick. She had two sons.



Maud Vickery

**Maud R. Vickery** was born into a Methodist family in 1896 and died in 1995 in her 99th year. Her parents, George and Ellen Vickery managed Vickery's Hotel and a posting establishment (coach service) in Bantry, Co. Cork. Maud went to Wesley as a boarder girl (1911-13) accompanied by her brother, William (1911-13). She played on the hockey team. Maud trained as a nurse at the Prince of Wales General Hospital, London, and later qualified in midwifery at the Central Midwives' College, Westminster. She served as a general nurse and midwife in Chelsea and Pimlico. Many years later she commented on the culture shock it was for a girl from a sheltered background to experience the conditions in the slums of London in the 1920s. Maud retired from nursing in 1933 and returned to Bantry to look after her mother who lived to be 100.

**Esther Mary Warner** (1896-1958). She was a boarder (1911-14) along with her brothers Thomas (1911-13) and Samuel (1913-17). They were Methodists, children of Mr Samuel and Mrs Hester Warner, Barrack Street, Bantry, Co Cork. Esther played on the hockey team. She was a lifetime friend of Maud Vickery. She married William Warner of Whiddy Island and had a daughter, Hester, who lives in Rathnapish, Carlow. Both of Esther's brothers were in Wesley, William Thomas (1911-13) and Samuel (1913-17) and were killed in France during the First World War.



*Other girl entrants to Wesley College in 1911 for whom I have only a minimum of information:*

**Harriet Murray Bastow** was born into a Methodist family in 1895. Her parents were John and Jane Elizabeth Bastow, of 3 Altona Terrace, N.C.R., Dublin. Her father was a valuer and surveyor. Harriet was a day girl (1911-13). She may have died in Dublin in 1946, aged 51.

**Georgina Bryant** was born into a Church of Ireland family in 1896. Her father, Charles Bryant who had been a manager in the bankruptcy court died and she lived with her mother, Mrs Annie Bryant at 3 Upper Pembroke Street, Dublin. She was a day girl (1911-14).

**Emma Burgess** was born into a Church of Ireland family in 1898. Her father William, a tea agent, died. Her mother, Annie Burgess lived at 4 Annesley Park, Rathmines, Dublin. Emma was a day pupil (1911-17) as was her brother Richard (1911-17).

**Eileen Victoria Cuthbert** was born into a Church of Ireland family in 1897. Her parents, John and Sarah Cuthbert, lived at 77 Kimmage Road, Dublin. Her father was a Civil Service clerk, working in the Valuation Office. She was a day girl (1911-13). Also in Wesley was her sister Wilfreda (1914-18).

**Lelia Day** was born into a Church of Ireland family in 1897. Her father, Joseph Day, a farmer, died and her mother, Elizabeth remarried and lived at 24 Brighton Square, Dublin. Lelia was a day girl (1911-12).

**Annie Edith Deale** was born into a Methodist family in 1894, the daughter of Alfred Deale, a wholesale stationer, and his wife, Martha Sarah. They lived at 102 Marlboro' Road, Dublin. Annie Edith was a day girl (1911-13) as were her brothers, James Edward (1910-18) and Alfred William (1913-14), and her sister, Enid (1914-19).

**Lilian Gladys Dunne** was born into a Church of Ireland family in 1899, the daughter of John, a clerk in the G.P.O. Dublin, and his wife Annie. They lived at 37 Park Avenue, Sydney Parade, Dublin. Lilian Gladys was a day girl (1911-12).

**Janey (Janie) Grinspon** was born in 1896. Her father, Mr Moses Grinspon, and her mother, Hannah, were Jews from Russia and lived at 42 Synge



Street, Dublin. He was a master baker and grocer and founded the Bretzel Bakery in Lennox Street, Dublin. Janey was a day girl (1911-13).

**Sarah Meehan** was born in 1895. Her father, Mr. John Meehan of 2 Upper Gardiner St., Dublin was a Roman Catholic. She was a day girl (1911-13) and she may have died in 1943.

**Irene Maud Potts** was born in 1901, the daughter of William and Alice Potts, a Methodist family. William Potts was a tea merchant and they lived at 34 Gilford Road, Sandymount, Dublin. Irene Maud was a day pupil (1911-13) as were her brothers, Harold Robert (1910-12) and Victor Cecil (1910-13).

**Mary Eveline (or Evaleen) Rathborne** was a day girl (1911-13). She was born in 1896 into a Methodist family. Her father, Joseph, a flour agent, must have died before she entered Wesley. Her mother, Mrs Rathborne, lived at Portmellick, Finglas, Dublin. Her brother, Joseph William Lombard was a boarder in Wesley (1907-12).

**Wilhelmina Waldron**, a Methodist, was born in 1899, the daughter of William Waldron, a livestock exporter, and his wife Isobel. They lived at 3 Epworth Terrace, North Circular Road, Dublin. She was a day pupil (1911-15) as were her brothers, Leslie (1908-13) and Noel (1911-15).

**Beatrice Weir** was born into a Methodist family in 1896. Her father, Samuel, a draper and grocer, married Annie Pasley and they lived at Holly Lodge, Tinahely. Co. Wicklow. She was a boarder girl at Wesley (1911-13) as were her brothers Hubert (1906-08) and Horace (1910-12). She married and lived in England.

*If any reader can add to any of these stories, offer corrections or identify pupils in the photographs, please contact the Wesley College Archivist at Wesley College, Dublin 16, Telephone 01-2987066 or E-mail: [peter.lydon@wesleycollege.ie](mailto:peter.lydon@wesleycollege.ie)*

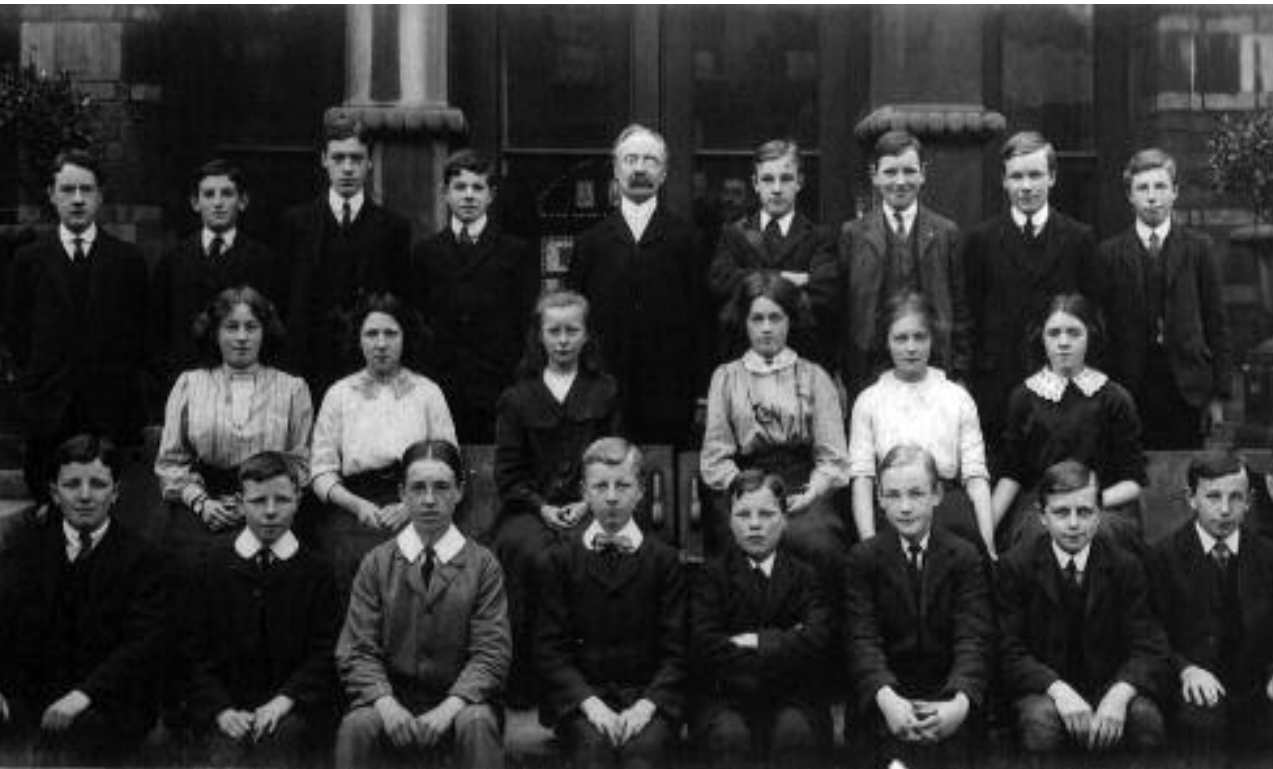
CLASS PHOTO 1 (1911-1912)



Row 4 seated: 5th from left Miss E. Addey, 6th from left Mr Vaughan



CLASS PHOTO 2 (1911-1912)

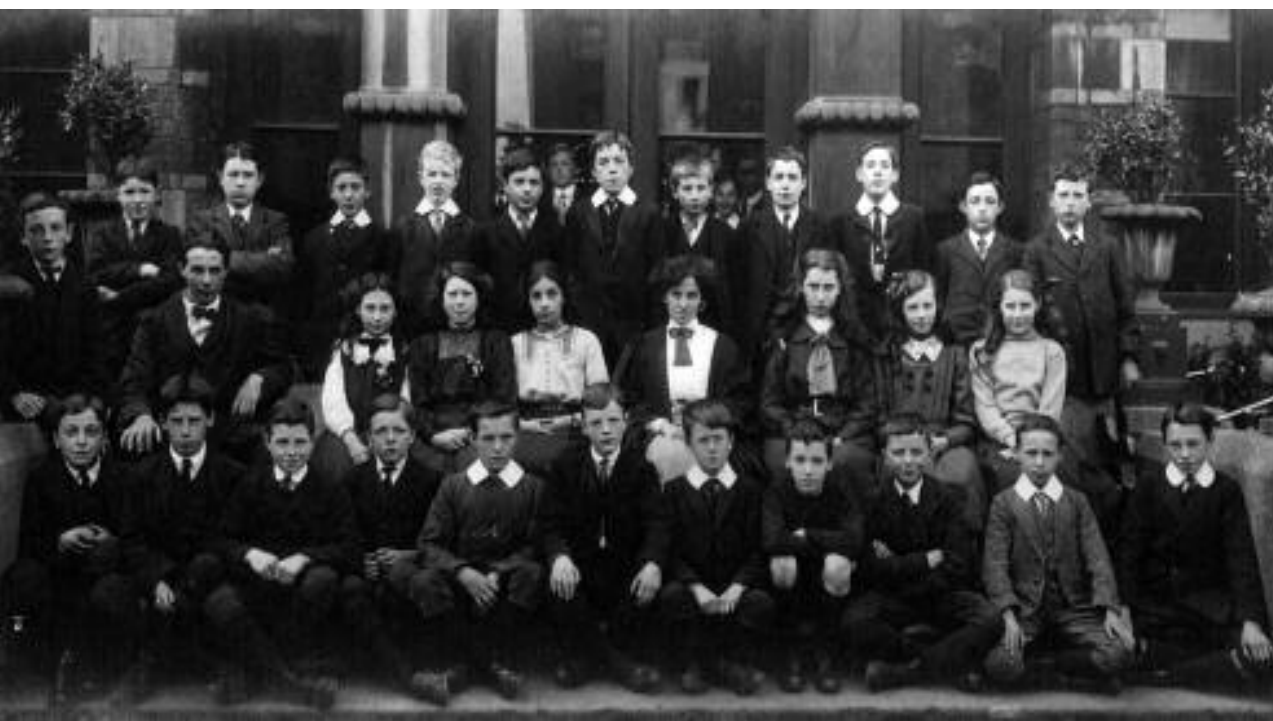


Back row: 5th from left, Mr William Arthur Storey  
Middle row: 3rd from left: Irene Storey, 6th from left, Hilda Ludlow?  
Front row: 4th from left, Cyril Storey

CLASS PHOTO 3 (1911-1912)



CLASS PHOTO 4 (1911-1912)



CLASS PHOTO 5 (1911-1912)

