



Pembroke Hall School

*40th
Anniversary*





A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

As Pembridge Hall School marks its 40th anniversary, we must take this unique opportunity to celebrate our fascinating past and honour those who have created the extraordinary school we know and cherish today. This year, we commemorate where we come from while acknowledging all that is exciting about the modern school and the future that lies before us. Whilst proud of our heritage, we are a forward looking and dynamic school preparing emotionally intelligent, resilient girls for the ever-changing learning landscape that our young people are immersed in. We feel deeply honoured to be the guardians of this special school and look to the future with confidence.

I feel immensely proud to have been Head at Pembridge Hall for the past seven years. Each day, as I walk around the school, I see girls who are grounded, gracious and inquisitive, who approach school life with determination and enormous gusto. Offering a challenging and contemporary curriculum and extra-curricular activities, strategically focused upon our increasingly globalised and technological world, yet still small enough to ensure that every girl is known as an individual – Pembridge Hall is an exceptional place of learning, creativity and lifelong friendships.

Beyond mere celebration, we wish to use these 40th celebrations as a catalyst, further connecting pupils and parents with the school, to engage with friends in our community, and inspire alumni to associate with Pembridge Hall in fresh and powerful ways. We aim to focus on the Pembridge Hall Bursary & Scholarship Fund, which has supported both girls joining Year 5 for two years on full bursaries as well as current parents who have found themselves in financial difficulties. Both aims of the fund go to the very heart of our sense of community and benevolence.

I look forward to celebrating with you all and seeing you as the academic year unfolds.

With best wishes,



Henry Keighley-Elstob
Head, Pembridge Hall School



A RELATIONSHIP FOR LIFE

Last year, we established the Pembridge Hall School Association for our community of over 2,000 Old Girls. This is a network for all past pupils, and former and current staff of Pembridge Hall to connect with each other and the school. Being part of our alumni community provides a wide range of benefits - whether that be taking part in our events, meeting other Old Girls, or just staying in touch.

Our burgeoning alumni community is slowly growing into an excitingly active space ensuring a lifelong connection to the school for all our past pupils. We hope that those of you not already registered will do so by visiting: alumni.pembridgehall.co.uk

“I have to say I have very fond memories from my time at Pembridge Hall. Learning to swim with Michael and his incredible dreadlocks, various drama classes with Mr Tim (including him writing the Letterland end of school play when we were in 6th form) and creating the magazine YO-YO (You’re only young once) in Ms Summerfields class. However, I think my overriding memory is of Ms Wiltshire’s gym class mantra – ‘Share. Care. And be fair’.”

Caroline Ayling, Head Girl 1987 – 1994



1981 Mrs Quigley and Miss Biri



1982 Miss Howe



1983 Mrs Swan
(She used to call us Prepsies –
Beth Wynne-Evans nee Crocker)



1985 Miss Sheehan



1986 Mrs Marani



1987 Trial by Jury



A SHORT WALK THROUGH HISTORY

Lady of Sion Origins

In the early 20th Century, around 1906, Father Theodore and Father Alphonse, two Jewish brothers who had converted to Christianity, bought a large site on the corner of Chepstow Villas and Denbigh Road to build a convent for the education of young girls. The school was run by nuns of the Order of Our Lady of Sion. Education was always important to the brothers, and they and the Sisters worked to break down prejudice between Christians and Jews and to build up understanding.

The red brick five storey building had a huge playground, a beautiful chapel, an imposing entrance hall and an enormous staircase. A Statue of Our Lady stood on the second floor external corner of the building. Over the years, the convent evolved into a school for girls from infant school age to secondary.



The Nuns of the Order of Our Lady of Sion

Wartime Interlude

Not much more is known of the school from before the Second World War but during the war, a bomb was dropped just outside the corner of the school and the statue of Our Lady fell into the basement. Despite the statue's huge weight and the long fall, it remained completely undamaged.

Sion Manning

In the late 1950s, two new catholic secondary schools were established in the borough by Cardinal Manning, one for boys and one for girls, but there were not enough girls to fill two schools and so they had to be amalgamated. The new school was named Sion Manning. All of the senior girls moved over to the new site on Ladbroke Grove leaving the convent half-empty so the top two floors were turned into a hostel accommodation for young ladies. This continued for several years until the number of nuns dwindled and lay staff were brought in to run the school. The

Order had also established a catholic boarding school in Worthing, Essex, and were trying to staff and manage both schools at the same time. Eventually, the nuns took a hard decision and accepted an offer from a construction company who wanted to develop the site into luxury flats. The building sold for £3 million in 1979 and is today known as Thornbury Court.

Pembridge Hall Inception

Davis, Laing and Dick (DLD) owned various tutorial schools in London, Cambridge, Birmingham and Manchester as well as Falkner House Pre-Prep School for boys in Pembridge Villas and Wetherby Pre-Prep for boys at 11 Pembridge Square. They decided to buy the 'goodwill' of the school along with No. 16, 17 and 18 Pembridge Square although No. 16 and 17 were promptly sold off to fund the renovation of No. 18. The buildings were purchased by Mencap for the purpose of housing disabled orphans who were spotted being pushed daily, come rain or shine, to Kensington Gardens in special wooden wagons.

DLD wanted to call the school Sion Hall but the nuns refused to allow the name to continue at this location and so it became 'Pembridge Hall' for the first time. Finally, over the summer of 1979, the contents of Sion Manning School were moved into 18 Pembridge Square where only one member of staff remained employed. The new school year started in a fresh new building with an average of 10 girls in each class and the Independent Schools Council census recognised Pembridge Hall School for the first time.

Mrs Thomas

At first, Pembridge Hall occupied only the ground and first floors of No. 18. The basement housed Dr. Rolfe's Montessori Nursery and the upper two floors were known as the Pembridge Hall Section House and used as accommodation for Women Police Officers. The first Headmistress was Mrs Hilda Thomas.

Originally, Mrs Thomas was a Year 6 teacher who had started with the nuns in the 1960's, but she became Headmistress after the last remaining nun, Sister Maria, retired in about 1975.

"Mrs Thomas was short, rotund, very Welsh, a great Maths teacher and very light on her feet when dancing."

Laura Marani



Mrs Collison

After Mrs Thomas came Mrs Elizabeth Collison who was brought in to modernise the school. Mrs Laura Marani, who attained the role of Deputy Head, joined Pembridge Hall when it moved into No. 18 as a part-time newly qualified teacher with a very young daughter of her own. Together, Mrs Collison and Mrs Marani eventually took over the whole building and increased numbers to 270.

Mr Keighley-Elstub

The next part of the story sees the school under new ownership and a new direction under Head, Henry Keighley-Elstub, joined by Rebecca Raffan as Deputy Head. The story enters a new chapter as the school begins to build the foundations of an alumni network from connections with one girl after another, whose experience at Pembridge Hall has continued to shape and colour their lives.



“Eve Pomfret, the school secretary, started in my first year and far outlived me. It was largely due to her welcoming voice on the telephone that we picked up so many registrations in the early years and I am sure many generations of girls remember her fondly.”

Elizabeth Collison



Eve Pomfret – much-loved school secretary



"I have very fond memories of our wonderful plays. Every year we thought 'this is the best one ever' and the next year was invariably even better."

Laura Marani

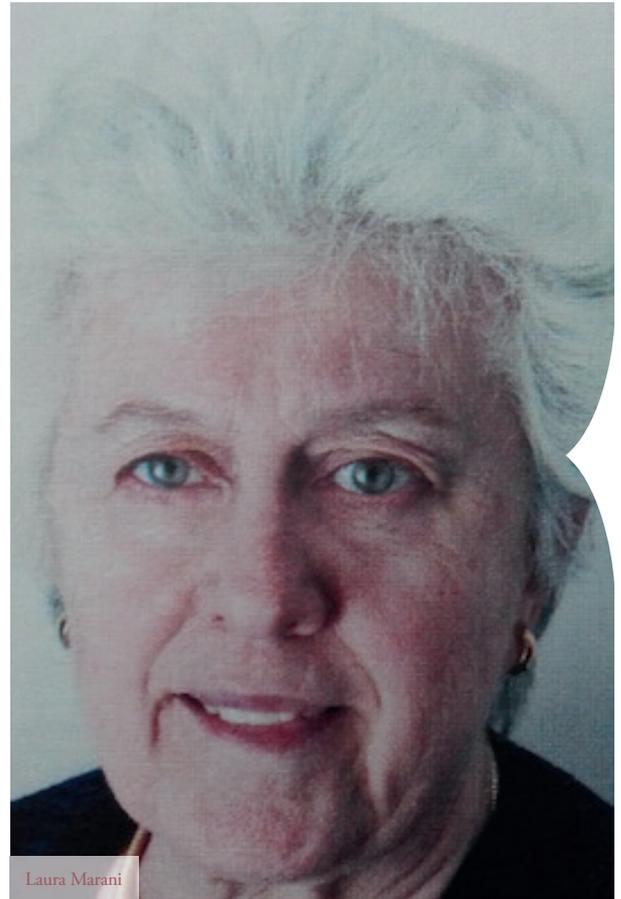


“I remember an amusing tale from a charity bring and buy sale one year. I asked a mother if she could be in charge of the takings, adding up the totals from each stall and then the overall total. She was very apologetic but said she was no good at adding, especially money. I later discovered that she was the director of an American bank!”

“We held end of Year summer parties in the Square Gardens, which were always based on the summer term school project. One year, we had the best-attended auction stall. Fathers especially were bidding quite fiercely... possibly influenced by the fact that the auctioneer was none other than original page 3 girl, Jilly Johnson.”

“A very sweet story about ‘little cheeses’ turned out to have been inspired at Christmas time by ‘Baby Jesus’.”

Laura Marani



Laura Marani

BURSARIES AT PEMBRIDGE HALL

Pembridge Hall is a school with a distinct sense of community and a clear moral purpose. In the last few years, we have made efforts to raise funds to provide scholarships and bursaries for exceptional children who otherwise would not have the means to attend the school. Alumni and parents have been extremely generous in supporting this mission. However, the number and size of bursaries that the school provides has increased substantially over the last few years, increasing the pressure on this resource. Our fundraising efforts for the Bursary Fund are now more important than ever.

Our goal is to make an increasing number of full fees awards for deserving children. We hope to achieve this through the regular giving society as well as through developing our endowment fund, through which we can fund children who will flourish individually and have a positive influence on others.

We believe passionately that we should work actively to help more children who would benefit from everything we are able to offer.

With our anniversary in mind, it is now our goal to grow our funding for this purpose whilst continuing to provide an essential safety net for current pupils. We aim for our door to be as wide open as possible and warmly invite you to help us. We do hope you are able to join us in supporting the Fund, knowing that we are only enriched by its two purposes; offering places to deserving children and also supporting parents who fall into financial or other difficulty.

We hope you will choose to support in whatever way you can. While we appreciate that not everyone will be able to make this gesture, we encourage you to participate in whatever way you are able to, as smaller gifts combined together can provide life-changing opportunities for individual children. If you would like to find out more about how to donate, please visit: goldstandardcharitabletrust.co.uk
Email: info@goldstandardcharitabletrust.co.uk or refer to the Pembridge Hall Bursary Appeal Brochure.





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