



## A warm Hello from The Mount!

I am sure that most MOSA members will have heard the news that I have taken the decision to retire from the teaching profession and to leave The Mount School at the end of this calendar year. By the time I leave at Christmas, I will have been in post as Principal for six years. I have found my time at The Mount the most rewarding period of my career, and I can honestly say that I have enjoyed and will continue to enjoy each day working in School. I passionately believe in an all-girls' education and that The Mount is the place in York to educate girls. I am immensely proud to have led the School and to be part of such a remarkable community.

One of the aspects of my role I have enjoyed the most has been working with MOSA and meeting Old Scholars. It has been an honour to get to know many of you and to hear stories of your time at The Mount. Since its foundation in 1785, The Mount has been innovative and pioneering in its approach to girls' education and I have no doubt it will continue to do so for many years to come. The Mount is a School truly steeped in history and it is vitally important that this is remembered, and the Old Scholars remain a valued part of The Mount community.

As you will know over the past couple of years, I have overseen the handover of the running of MOSA from the MOSA Committee to the School. I thank those who worked with me to help make this transition happen in June 2020. I will continue to drive MOSA forward and further develop the communications between the School and the MOSA community over the next six months along with Kate Linfoot, Director of External Relations, and Sarah Moore, Librarian and Archivist.

Thank you to everyone who attended the first Annual Gathering hosted via Zoom on Saturday 8 May. You can read more about the Gathering in this newsletter. The event was a great success, and it is evident that online events will be part of the future of MOSA communications. I will not be leaving The Mount until the end of the Autumn Term in December 2021, and I will be adding another online MOSA event to the calendar in October so we can meet once again before then.

With best wishes,  
**Adrienne Richmond**  
 Principal of The Mount School York

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## Exploration is in our nature . . .

One of our daily texts in May read *'Exploration is in our nature'* and it could not have been more apt for that week, as we saw trips reinstated in the School calendar.

*"It was nice to see people outside of school again in situations that wouldn't normally happen."* - Morgan (Year 10)

The last year has of course meant many changes and one thing Mount girls have missed the most has been trips and expeditions. As well as enhancing the curriculum and learning, opportunities to explore and travel are an essential part of personal development. This was evident from the conviction we witnessed from Year 10 girls who were delighted to finally partake in their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh activities. Despite being faced with some torrential rain and hail they were determined to pitch their tents in the School grounds. Accommodating Covid restrictions meant that the expeditions were non-residential. Girls completed their treks over three days but could not sufficiently socially distance in tented accommodation. Instead they practised assembling and dismantling their tents and cooking a meal using the camp equipment in the School grounds. The clouds did clear as we waved them off on the walking part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award challenge, although we are told they did not remain dry for long but their resilient nature and encouragement from team members kept them going! New advice from the City of York Council has now allowed for the Silver Award to be run as an overnight residential expedition and girls in Year 11 have very recently been out on their first expedition. The girls were excited to sleep in tents and cook a meal at their camp-sites, but a little less excited to carry all of their equipment for three days straight!

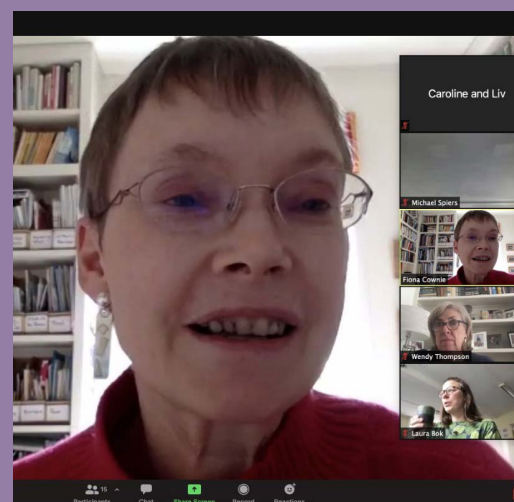
College geographers also put their learning into practise outside of the classroom exploring urbanisation in York and natural geography in Crandedale. Girls also organised several trips to celebrate the end of exams including visits to Alton Towers and Go Ape Treetop Adventure Park.

## Former Pupil Fiona Cownie Inspires Mount Girls

This Term during College's Liberal Arts sessions, students welcomed Fiona Cownie, Emeritus Professor of Law at Keele, former barrister and herself a former pupil of The Mount School. After introducing herself and explaining a bit more about her career she hosted a Q&A session providing the girls with some sound advice about attending university and the law profession. She also took the opportunity to quiz girls about The Mount today comparing it to her time at the School!

*"It was useful because she had been to two universities, which gave me an idea that if you want to change career, you can always go back, it doesn't matter what age you are."* - Georgina

*"She was very funny and told us about her life. She still had all the pins from School and asked us if we still sing the School song."* - Lily



# Archives Corner

Sarah Moore, Librarian and Archivist

## HELLO!

What an exciting year it has been so far. I now feel very settled in to my role at The Mount. I am extremely lucky to call the library my office, to work with bright and confident young girls and to learn more about the amazing women who have attended The Mount.

I am getting to grips with the many archives and have received a lot of requests over the past term. Here are some of the highlights.

## RIDING SCHOOLS

Dr Hannah Smith (Tutor and Fellow in History at St. Hilda's College, Oxford) got in touch to ask if The Mount School ever had a resident riding teacher on its staff or, if not, whether the School arranged for its pupils to ride elsewhere? Hannah is working on a project about horsemanship in Britain and with a particular focus on riding schools and the teaching of riding in the early-mid 20th century. I received numerous responses on our MOSA Facebook forum:

"We very much used to support 'Riding for the disabled in York' and our pupils would help on Wednesday/Saturday afternoons when we were a full boarding school. Our pupils also had riding lessons themselves off site. I seem to think at one stage it was discussed that we would have our own riding teacher, but I can't remember this happening."

Many Mount girls are still keen riders. During the end of the first half of term, our Equestrian Team enjoyed training sessions together in preparation for their individual competitions during the half term break.

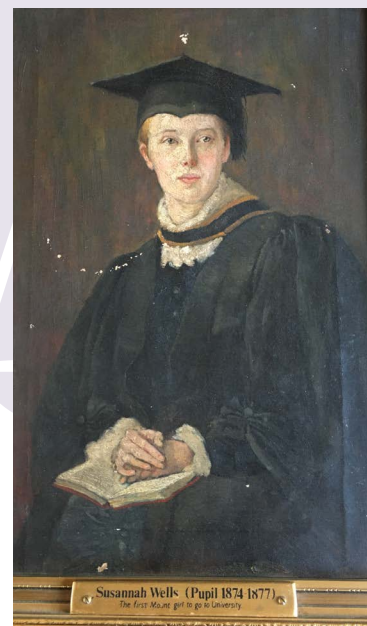
*"I got one point on the third fence but after that we flew around and it was an amazing experience. Overall, I placed about 75th out of 200, which was really good."*

- Alice (Year 9)



## INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN

Laura West, a student studying history at the University of York, has been working on a project with York Museums Trust which is focusing on Victorian and Edwardian women of York. She has chosen to focus on Susannah Wells, The Mount's first pupil to attend university and who later returned to teach. I found a lovely painting of Susannah in the school archives.



In 2019 Professor Cynthia Burek of Geoconservation visited the School archives to research one of our former pupils, Margaret Chorley Crosfield.

Cynthia has now completed her research and this month sent me a copy of her published paper. Margaret became the very first female Fellow of the Geological Society, elected on 21 May 1919. The article includes an account of Margaret's education at The Mount:

*"In 1878, Mount School girls began to sit exams that made them eligible for university and this included Margaret. It was thus one of the first schools to send girls to university. Consequently, Margaret was able to enter Newnham College, Cambridge at the age of 20."*

Derek Turner is currently researching the careers of pioneer professional women gardeners around 1900, in particular 'The ladies who gardened at Kew'. One of our former pupils Eleanor Moreland is amongst them. The following extract is taken from an article Derek is writing:

*"The fourth member of the original Kew Ladies was Eleanor Morland. She was a much more typical Swanley Miss than the other three: definitely middle class – her father was a JP. But she was not in fact a Swanley student. She was born on October 10th 1874 at Glastonbury in Somerset but educated from 1899 to 1902 at a prestigious girls' boarding school in York, today known as The Mount School but then as St Mary Bishopshill. The School's website describes how the superintendent (headmistress) Lucy Harrison, appointed in 1890, "raised the academic profile of the School... Only qualified University graduates were appointed to teach. In science girls began to undertake their own experiments." During her last two school years at least it is therefore likely that Eleanor received a good scientific education with an emphasis on practical science, explaining why she decided on a career in horticulture."*

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

I mentioned in our last newsletter that I had been promised a treasure trove of artefacts from various members of staff. I have not been disappointed! The Mount's lab technician Lisa Bond sent me photographs of archaeological remains found in the Science Department in 2019. These bones went to York Archaeological Trust to join the other bones exhumed during the excavation of the Science block foundations in 1987. Our bones comprised one individual with one extra human femur and horse bones. He was believed to be a Roman soldier, with whom partial horse burials were not uncommon. The only downside was that the GCSE Biology Room could no longer be considered haunted!



## EMBROIDERY SAMPLERS

I received an enquiry from a friend of Mrs Lorna Hill who was a pupil at The Mount in the 1940's. She talked about her time at school where she learned to weave on a loom and was asked to make a sampler for the school walls. Unfortunately, I didn't find this sampler in our archive collection but we do have examples dating from the early nineteenth century! I also stumbled across photographs of weaving and rug making classes taken from an article about The Mount in a 1949 issue of York Illustrated magazine.



## MOUNT SCHOOL MAGAZINE VOLUNTEER PROJECT

The Borthwick holds a large quantity of Mount School magazines which have been digitised for internal use. They can be hard to navigate however without an index and they contain a wealth of information that would really benefit from a detailed database of content which could be sorted and cross-referenced. The School recently agreed to support a project for offsite volunteers to index issues of the magazines. The finished index will be made available online and shared with The Mount.

Collections Information Archivist Dr Sally-Anne Shearn reported: *'It will be wonderful to finally have a working index, the magazines are fascinating social and cultural documents that I think researchers (and hopefully current Mount School students) will find really useful.'*

## THANKYOU

Finally thank you to everyone who has contributed to the newsletter, it is always so lovely to hear from Old Scholars so please do keep in touch. Thankyou as well to those who contributed memories of the Creative Arts for the first Mosa Annual Gathering in May.

**Sarah Moore, Librarian and Archivist**  
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The Mount School  
York

WE KNOW GIRLS CAN

We are leaders in educating girls and understanding their needs.

Inspiring and empowering confident young women, enabling them to believe nothing is beyond their reach.

Our leading day and boarding School in the heart of York offers weekly and flexi boarding to Senior School girls age 11-18.

*"I am really glad I chose to weekly board. The extra academic support with my school work during the evenings is extremely helpful, for both my progress and finishing homework. My parents and I enjoy blissful work-free weekends, my relationship with them is better than ever before."* Mount Sixth Form Pupil

# Mount Uniform over the Years

We received an enquiry from a lady called Linda Vitale who is researching her mother's education in the UK from 1937 – 1948. She has a picture of her mother that is labelled on the back 'Margaret England school uniform'. Can anyone identify if this is a Mount School uniform?

Our uniform has evolved over the years and in September we will be introducing optional trousers for the girls. This inspired us to look in our archives and to our surprise we found the following uniform exhibits: dress competition sketches 1964; school blazer badges 1960s; summer dress c1972; blouses 1980s; green gym vest 1930-50s plus many photos from the 1940s to now!



1940s UNIFORM



1960s UNIFORM



DRESS COMPETITION



BLOUSES FROM THE 1980s

SUMMER DRESS PATTERN, 1972



PRESENT DAY SCHOOL UNIFORM & COLLEGE DRESS CODE



BLAZER BADGES FROM THE 1960s



GYM VEST, 1930S-1950s

## MOSA REFLECTIONS

ROHATI  
CHAPMAN

Rohati Chapman joined The Mount in 1989 at the start of her GCSE years. Joining as a boarder moving to the UK from Australia she experienced quite an adjustment, not just a change in schools but a change in climate! *“Starting at The Mount from the Australian school system was a culture shock on many levels. A lot of my first memories of The Mount are linked to contrasting habits: wearing thick grey tights, gaining a toast addiction, memorising the daily texts and the silence of morning meetings,”* reminisces Rohati.

In 1992-1993, Rohati was particularly proud to be named Head Girl at The Mount, an important leadership role that perhaps helped shape her career. Rohati currently works as an Executive Director for Programmes & Impact for a large UK charity. *“This means I am responsible for the development of strategic and sustainable social impact partnerships and programmes that serve our mission. As part of the leadership team, another key part of my role is to take care of the wellbeing and professional growth of people within the organisation,”* explains Rohati.

We caught up with Rohati to find out more about her time at The Mount and her career since.

### What is your fondest memory of The Mount?

It is impossible to choose one - but they all revolve around a feeling of sisterhood. I have so many lovely memories of tea, clandestine biscuits and long chats after lights out. Leaving school with qualifications is important, but I consider myself lucky to still have so many Mounties in my life over 30 years later!

### How important an influence has the Quaker ethos been to you?

When you are growing up and trying out different ideas for size, you are influenced by lots of things, knowingly or unknowingly. The Quaker ethos was a good fit with my multi cultural background and general bias against anything dogmatic. I liked that the Quaker ethos was not about which God you believed in, but a belief that there is something of God in everyone. My exposure to the Quaker ethos at The Mount nurtured my values and interest in social justice in subtle ways. Its influence never felt obvious at the time.

### Through your years in Higher Education, did you feel conscious of any influences from your time at The



### Mount that helped you through your studies?

I had fantastic teachers at The Mount (Sarah Sheils and Sally Hebron), as well as a deeply supportive pastoral housemistress (Elisabeth Lunn) who encouraged my interest in History, which I like to describe as the science of social change. Since leaving The Mount in 1993, I completed further study at The University of Newcastle (BA Politics & History) and The London School of Economics (MSc Industrial Relations). I have them to thank for pointing me towards a path of further study I really enjoyed.

### Describe a moment in your career in which you felt connected to your Mount education?

I wanted a career path that would allow me to make my small contribution to social change, and this aspiration has resulted in a career in Social Impact. In practical terms this has meant building skills and experience in research, policy, programme management, and partnership development across different sectors and organisational cultures. A lot of the thematic areas I have worked in that tackle structural inequality build on the legacy of Quaker social reformers. The underpinning values in my field are very much about equality, integrity and sustainability, which are also core Quaker values.

### How and how often do you keep in touch with girls from your school cohort?

We are all spread out all over the world now, but still keep in touch on a regular basis. Over the pandemic we put in weekly catch ups that covered multiple time zones! This says something about the friendships you gravitate towards when the whole world appears to be up-ended.

### Looking ahead, what are your hopes for the future?

Over the last year, the global pandemic has meant that most people in the world have been living through extremely strange and challenging times. Our way of life has been totally disrupted. I hope at an individual and societal level - we can all get back our sense of joy, alongside the serious endeavours.



# MOUNT OLD SCHOLARS' ASSOCIATION FIRST ANNUAL GATHERING

Thank you to everyone who attended the first Annual Gathering in May. Although we were disappointed not to be able to welcome you into School, it was wonderful to see so many people come together virtually. To welcome Old Scholars from across the UK, Thailand, Hong Kong and the USA was remarkable. It was such a success we will continue to use Zoom as a platform in the future as well as hosting events at the School.

During the Annual Gathering, Mount staff including, Adrienne Richmond, Principal, Bridget Perks, Deputy Principal, Rachel Capper, Head of Junior School, Kate Linfoot, Director of External Relations, Sarah Moore, Librarian and Archivist and Wendy Thompson, Careers Leader shared news from the School including a video tour made by College girls, a video round up of the year hosted by the College Leadership Team and a video performance from the School's new Steinway pianos. The videos can be viewed using the links below. MOSA members also heard an update on The Mount Foundation from Aileen McLeish, discovered more about the history of the Creative Arts at The Mount and shared their memories of the Arts, before breaking up into smaller breakout rooms to catch up with friends.



## THE MOUNT VIDEO TOUR Hosted by College Girls

<https://vimeo.com/569268409>  
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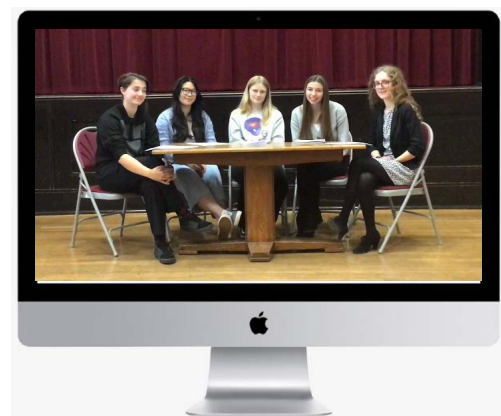


## A ROUND UP OF THE SCHOOL YEAR AT THE MOUNT Hosted by the College Leadership Team

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## STEINWAY PIANOS PERFORMANCE

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# *The Creative Arts* at The Mount

This year's Annual Gathering celebrated the Creative Arts as 2021 marks 70 years since the revival of the York Mystery Plays. The anniversary prompted the School to investigate the history of not just of the York Mystery Plays but also of the Creative Arts at The Mount.

Both girls and staff have taken part in the Mystery Plays and School plays, and gained lots of experience of being on stage. Some have gone on to have illustrious acting careers including our famous pupils Mary Ure and Dame Judi Dench.



The Arts have a very long history at The Mount dating right back to the eighteenth century when lessons in Geography were taught by making embroidered maps. Music took off in the 1880s with the instruction of the choir and a delivery of seven pianos which mirrors our recent Steinway piano delivery. The building of the assembly hall theatre marked the school centenary in 1931 making dramatic performances possible. The stage has hosted numerous performances since including Shakespeare plays, musicals and dance extravaganzas that go all the way across the School from young children to College girls.



In the late 1980s a new Art and Design area was opened and Design Technology was introduced to the curriculum. The Art department continues to evolve along with creative technology whilst keeping up the highest standards of traditional art techniques.



Today the Arts are just as buoyant and pupils and at the end of the year staff hosted a Creative Arts Festival celebrating 100 years of Agatha Christie's murder mysteries. The Covid pandemic has not stopped pupils from performing. In the past year, several online performances and showcases have taken place as well as an online Art Exhibition.



At The Mount the Arts is much more than creating and performing and we know that young girls benefit enormously beyond the stage. Performing Arts will continue to be a strong vision for the future of the Mount allowing girls to grow in confidence and explore their creativity by working together and developing compassion.



# A look into

# The Creative Arts Archives

In her role as Archivist, Sarah Moore is responsible for cataloguing and archiving School items liaising with the Borthwick Institute for Archives at The University of York. Working in a school with over 200 years of history, there is plenty to keep her busy and many interesting artefacts to uncover. She also maintains the Alumnae MOSA database, liaising with and hearing many memories from former Mount Scholars.

For the First Annual Gathering, Sarah took a look into the archives looking for content relating to the York Mystery Plays and the Creative Arts at The Mount and reached out to MOSA members to share any photos or memorabilia they had. For the Annual Gathering she compiled a slide show of images from 1931 to the present day, set to music from current Mount Music Scholars. Sarah comments:

*"It has been fascinating delving into our archives and finding artefacts and liaising with so many of you who have kindly shared your photographs. The slide show features the Hall, leavers plays, chamber music, orchestras/bands, York Mystery Plays including some famous faces (Mary Ure, Judi Dench), Bootham and The Mount joint productions (operas, plays, musicals), Theatre Royal schools' matinees, cinema tickets, programmes, scores, cast lists, the Creative Arts Festival and much more!"*

MOSA members were also invited to share their memories of the Arts from their time at The Mount. (See page 10)

*"I'd like to thank all of you who contributed. It has been wonderful to have so many memories shared with us and to hear the influence the Arts have had on your lives."*

If you have any memorabilia or items you would like to donate to the Archives please contact Sarah at [mosa@mountschool.york.co.uk](mailto:mosa@mountschool.york.co.uk) or send it directly to the School. A big thank you to MOSA members for their past donations. We regularly receive donations of old photo albums, school correspondence, uniform and School publications. All contributions to the Archives are very appreciated.

**A LOOK INTO THE CREATIVE ARTS ARCHIVES**

<https://vimeo.com/569289245/5f977bc701>

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# MOSA MEMORIES OF *The Creative Arts*

## Thank you for giving me the confidence to go on and try all sorts of crafts!

I was hopeless at Art, and found the traditional approach of Miss Brooke ('Phoebe') very hard going. Painting trees in watercolour - no way! But luckily for me, we had to do crafts on a Wednesday and Saturday afternoon, which I enjoyed a lot more (though I wasn't any more proficient at basketry.... or weaving). THEN, a new crafts option was introduced, called, rather prosaically, 'Experimental Crafts'. It was taught by a young Fine Arts graduate who encouraged us to do whatever imaginative crafty thing we wanted to. It was liberating! I made a huge tortoise soft toy (and even won a prize for it). Then I made an equally huge orange cushion, with a very complicated ruched pattern. It was a revelation, that I could actually do craft! I have never forgotten that teacher (though sadly I have forgotten her name!) and have her to thank for giving me the confidence to go on and try all sorts of crafts (with very mixed results, but a lot of pleasure!)

- **Fiona Cownie**



## Sixty-four years of string quartet playing that started at The Mount.

I don't think I learned very much in formal class Music lessons at The Mount in the 1950s. We were not very kind to our music teachers, who were often temporary. However, the opportunities for making music together in orchestras and choirs outside of class lessons were excellent. I particularly enjoyed making music in small groups and this experience set me up (as a viola player) for playing chamber music for the rest of my life.



For several years at The Mount, Jane (Brockbank) Fox, her flautist cousin Elizabeth Parker, Lydia (Coles) Thomson, and I would go to a downstairs music room after Evening Reading on Sundays and play quartets for as long as we dared. In College 2 we sometimes had to race across the road to Rowans before it was locked for the night. When we started playing in the Fourth Form, Jane was already an accomplished cello player and later became a member of the National Youth Orchestra. Lydia, a violinist, already knew the string quartet repertoire well. I was just a novice viola player so learned a lot from them.



Since leaving The Mount, Jane, Lydia and I have played together as often as possible; for seven years when we all happened to live in Newcastle and later in Gloucester, Grimsby, Aberdeen, Knaresborough and at several residential string playing weekends with family and friends.

When Jane and her husband, Jonny, came to live in Guiseley a few years ago, she came with her daughter, Alice (violin), to our home in Knaresborough once a month to play string quartets with my sister Liz (Webster) Collins and me. Sometimes we were joined by my husband, Nicholas, who plays on a cello that used to belong to Jane's mother, Margaret (Parker) Brockbank, and before that to Jane's great aunt, Annie Tangye, when she was the first Music teacher at The Mount in the 1880s.



After sixty-four years of playing music together this came to an end last year when Jane became ill and died in October. I have many happy memories of Jane and miss her hugely for her music, her lovely personality, her loyal friendship and her wicked giggle! - **Hilary (Webster) Evens**



## The Arts is a distinguishable part of The Mount

I attended The Mount between 2013 and 2020, and can honestly say that the Arts were one of the most important aspects of my time at The Mount. English was consistently my favourite subject; I will be studying it alongside Creative Writing at University later this year. The English Department at The Mount is so strong, and provided me with countless opportunities to develop and expand my Creative Writing, which is my passion, and the career that I hope to pursue in the future. English lessons themselves were always engaging, interesting, and conversational; all three of the English teachers that I had whilst at The Mount have inspired me more than I can say. Tramlines Live was a highlight of my time at The Mount; I wrote about everything from my Year 9 German exchange trip, to School charity events, to the classic College 1 Pantomime. Tramlines is funny, engaging and challenging; I truly believe that my non-fiction, journalistic writing has developed as a result of it. Another key memory of the English department are the wide variety of trips. A trip that really stands out for me was the trip to Stratford-upon-Avon, exploring various historical Shakespeare houses, as well as experiencing two stunning performances in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and the Swan Theatre, respectively.

There are too many Theatre trips to mention but a few that stood out for me were 'Wise Children' at the York Theatre Royal, an outside promenade version of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', and 'The Tin Drum' at the West Yorkshire Playhouse. Having studied Drama GCSE, I can honestly say that visiting the theatre really bought context to my studies, and gave me ideas on how to improve my own performances. However, without doubt, the fondest memories that I have of the Drama department stem from the School productions that I took part in. I began my Drama life at The Mount with a performance of 'The Witches' by Roald Dahl. As a shy Year 7 who lacked confidence, the thought of acting in front of the whole School, and parents, was slightly daunting at first, but proved to be a highly rewarding experience! My next production was a musical adaptation of 'Animal Farm' by George Orwell when I was in Year 10. Despite struggling to march in time to a fairly basic rhythm, and having short-term neck pain from the heavy goat mask I spent strapped to my head for the best part of two months, it was a brilliant performance, that pushed me out of my comfort zone in a very positive way!

The Music Department at The Mount provided me with so many chances to enjoy and improve both my clarinet playing and my singing. Throughout my time at The Mount, I enjoyed participating in Senior and Chamber Choir, Orchestra, Clarinet Group and Swing Band. As a result, I was able to be a part of many fantastic music concerts, every one of them unique in their own way. We were twice given the chance to perform at the stunning Duncombe Park House, and enjoyed Christmas carolling outside The Ivy in York, and in the doorway of Browns Department Store. It was freezing, but worth it! Senior Choir ran on a Friday after school; this was always a lovely way to finish off the day, and let off steam after an often busy week.

My all-time favourite memory of the Arts at The Mount was hard to choose, but it would really have to be 'A Night at the Musicals', a celebration of the West End and Broadway, that I took part in in College 1. It really was an unforgettable evening, with songs from musicals ranging from 'My Fair Lady', to 'Les Miserables', to 'Fame.' Iconic costumes, singing, dancing, bright lights, and even a smoke machine helped to make the performance so memorable! It is a production that I will remember for the rest of my life; I was so grateful to be given the chance to perform songs from all the musicals that I love so much.

The Arts is a distinguishable part of The Mount, and the memories I have made will remain with me always. - **Hannah Walton-Hughes**

## The Magic Flute

I quote from the 1956 Annual Report. The Headmistress reported - "The most memorable event of the year was the joint production by Bootham and The Mount Schools of 'The Magic Flute'. This seemed when first proposed, a most ambitious undertaking for a school choir, but with the help of professionals in the parts of Tamino and the Queen of the Night it was carried through most successfully. For the girls who took part it was a never-to-be-forgotten experience, and the whole school had the pleasure of hearing one performance. Percy Lovell, as musical director, and all who assisted in the production are to be congratulated." Now I know why I have kept annual reports for almost seventy years! - **Barbara Shepherd**



## I learned vicariously, by hearing cast members practising in the bedrooms, bathrooms, and everywhere!

I learned a lot about the Arts at The Mount, even though I cannot carry a tune, and am hopeless at anything. But I learned a lot about classical music, learned to love plays and dramas (going to see Sir Laurence Olivier in The Master Builder at Leeds; the 3rd (I think) performance of The War Requiem in the Minster, and of course the Mystery Plays, where one of The Mount girls had an important role - the Virgin Mary.) The alternating annual performances of opera and play - I remember those well. I learned a lot of HMS Pinafore and The Marriage of Figaro vicariously, by hearing cast members practising in the bedrooms, bathrooms, and everywhere. And what better way to study The Crucible than by having one's classmates acting in it?



The other thing that I found fascinating is a small wooden stool I have which was carved for my grandmother as a wedding present by one of her Mount friends. My grandmother was Sybille Robson, who married in 1906. I thought Victorian young ladies wouldn't be allowed to wield anything so dangerous as wood carving tools, but no, apparently quite common! - **Chris MacIntosh**



## A Lesson Learned

A Poem by Heather Montford

Once it was an actress that I longed to be  
Always in starring roles at school, girls school  
Contralto voice, so usually played men  
Then chance arose, joint play with brother school  
Twelfth Night, Olivia must be the part for me.

But no, producer chose another girl!  
Disappointed, devastated, how could this be?  
What could I do but pray that the good Lord  
Would find some way to let me play the part,  
Some sickness fall on Shirley, chosen one.

So every night I prayed and lo, He answered  
Two days before the first performance Shirley  
Caught a cold and lost her voice, boys drama teacher  
Producer of the play asked me to take her place,  
Now I had 48 hours to learn the part.

Two nights I played Olivia and all amazed  
That I could learn the part so quickly  
Grateful that the performances could continue  
While I thanked God for answering my prayer  
And revelled in what I felt to be my right.

But did God's answer to my prayer confirm my faith?  
Sadly not so, I've struggled through the years  
But one thing I learned how God shows us the truth  
Shirley played in the last performance, voice restored  
She was Olivia while I could only speak the words.

A prayer was answered and God showed me the way  
I never became the actress that I had longed to be.

### My warmest memories at The Mount centre on the Arts.

Music has transformed my life. I arrived at The Mount already quite a keen pianist and continued lessons on the piano, with moderate success. I began learning the flute, and soon joined the orchestra. I loved making music, and holing up in the piano cubicles was such a pleasure. Best of all was the singing. The deputy organist from the Minster came once a week, and we learned to sight-read, a skill for life, although a deadly dull activity. We behaved extremely badly in his classes, and another member of staff had to sit at the back of the hall and growl threats if things got out of hand.

The next year, I and my friend Margaret joined the Joint Choir, practising twice a week in Clifford Street Meeting Room after meeting every Sunday and Wednesday. Every Easter we sang the Matthew Passion under Percy Lovell from Bootham. No nonsense there! Turn up on time and keep your eyes fixed on the conductor or death would follow, or so we thought. I loved it and can still sing most choruses from memory, and I once had a tiny solo. I had fun playing flute sonatas again with Percy when we met up one year at the Buxton Festival not long before he died. When I went to Oxford I joined seven choirs, one for each evening of the week, but of course I had to cut it down to three. One year we sang under Barbirolli, which was enormous fun, as he behaved at times quite outrageously, to our great delight. At the age of 86 I am still singing.

Art too was important. I loved to paint, and when at the age of 12 I was told to choose between Maths and Art for School Certificate, you can guess which I chose. I argued logically that if there was a free choice, I would exercise it. In the event Art was the only SC exam I took, as I passed out in the exam and was then confined to bed with bronchitis.

Drama was so important. Mary Ure was a good friend, and Judi Dench was in the year below. I saw the Mystery Plays of course, with them as the Virgin Mary. And we had so many plays at school. Judy as Ariel was unforgettable. I once had a part as Scrooge, and our Latin teacher made us dress up in sheets as togas and recite Cicero's speeches or bits of Latin plays. Judi told me years later that Mrs Mac taught her all she ever needed to know about acting and voice-production. Before Mrs. Mac we had elocution lessons, a priceless activity – and one incidentally that was strangely useful in my job. - **Joy Saunders**

### Happy times of making Music with friends.

Not least because my career has been as a musician (professional consort singer and practical scholar), I feel I should contribute something to this conversation. The foundations were certainly laid in my experiences at school – many happy times of making Music with friends.

In particular, music-making with Joint Choir and Orchestra under the warm and encouraging direction of Percy Lovell: the opportunity to sing both the St John and St Matthew Passions of Bach, and also to appear on stage, in the rarely performed G & S opera Utopia Ltd. And as a very clumsy violinist, to explore at first hand Mozart's Jupiter Symphony, and his Piano Concerto in C minor. One remembers those experiences for ever, and I can't emphasise too strongly how important they were to me, opening so many significant doors.

A fine grand piano was delivered to the hall at The Mount in my time there, making the playing of hymns in Evening Meeting a better experience, along with occasional public performances. Also a record player (should I explain what that was, for the benefit of younger people?), opening up the exploration of orchestral music. On the night that President Kennedy was shot, some of us had tuned into the broadcast on the Third Programme of Benjamin Britten's opera Gloriana – of course radios were not allowed - and the sad news quickly spread.

I remember, perhaps in my dreams, the Music 'holes', the subterranean practice rooms that just had room for a piano and a person but none to spare – I wonder if they are still there?

And finally, the opportunity to play in the back desk of York Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Francis Jackson, then organist of the Minster and now at the distinguished age of 103. - **Sally Dunkley**





# Noni Jabavu: Black Briton, South African

Makhosazana Xaba, Athambile Masola,  
Sarah Moore, Charles Fonge and Janet Remington (Chair)

Sarah Moore was delighted to be represent The Mount School for a talk on British-South African writer Noni Jabavu (1919-2008), who attended the Mount School in 1934-36. Working in conjunction with Charles Fonge of the Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York, Sarah provided a brief historical context about The Mount School in the 1930s - explaining what school life for the girls was like at the time - and exploring Noni in the archives. A huge thank you to Sarah Sheils for sharing her research.

The virtual panel shone a spotlight on the black British-South African writer Noni Jabavu, whose work and fascinating story deserve to be better known. Through an innovative collaboration, the event uncovered Jabavu's footprints in 1930s York and tracked her movements across the globe.

During her years as an international student at The Mount School York Noni developed her literary and musical talents, and learnt about the Quaker connections that brought her to the UK and boosted her own networks. She worked as a BBC broadcaster, columnist, literary editor, and author of two memoirs, Jabavu visited scores of countries, writing of 'the peripatetic print' of her feet. She also spoke of being part of *'two worlds with two loyalties; South Africa where I was born and England where I was educated'*.



**TO VIEW A VIDEO OF THE TALK PLEASE VISIT <https://youtu.be/k7xv6dL0F7c>**

## MOSA REFLECTIONS

Each Term, we invite a Mount Old Scholar to be interviewed for the School Termly Magazine, Reflections. Old Scholars tell us more about their lives, careers and the memories they have of The Mount.

To read previous interviews please visit

[mountschool.york.co.uk/mosa/mosa-reflections/](https://mountschool.york.co.uk/mosa/mosa-reflections/)

If you would like to be interviewed please contact  
[mosa@mountschool.york.co.uk](mailto:mosa@mountschool.york.co.uk)

## NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

We would like to feature more news from MOSA members in our upcoming newsletters. Alumnae contributions are greatly appreciated, and add an incredible value to this newsletter.

If you have any stories, articles, photos or anything you would like us to consider for publication, please email or phone Sarah Moore.

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