

# Alumni et Amicitia Association



for former pupils and staff of Leehurst, Swan, La Retraite,  
La Retraite Swan, and Leehurst Swan Schools

Newsletter 4  
June 2011

## From the Headmaster

Welcome to the summer edition of the AAA newsletter.

### Compliments from the Inspectors

We have received the report following the Independent Schools Inspection in March. I am delighted to tell you that the inspectors recognised the strengths of the school, all areas inspected were classified as 'good' and many were 'outstanding'. The school was classed as outstanding for the personal development of the pupils, for the family atmosphere where all pupils are caring and responsible members of the community, and for the relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils achieve above average results in national tests and show good understanding of their work. They enjoy learning, apply themselves energetically to tasks, and have the ability to organise their own work. The overall provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage was graded outstanding.

The report can be found on the school website, where you can also find full details of the trips and activities the pupils have been involved in recently. Keep up to date with current events by logging on to [www.leehurstswan.org.uk](http://www.leehurstswan.org.uk).

Why not come to the summer fete on Saturday 2nd July? (details right). The children will be performing and running a wide variety of stalls on the main lawn. I would love to meet former pupils of the school.

I hope you find this newsletter keeps you in touch both with the present and your past school.

with my best wishes *Roger Leake*

## Sister Louise Cuming

We were very sad to hear of the death on 25 May of Sister Louise Cuming. She was headmistress of La Retraite from 1969 to 1976, one of the last sisters to hold that post. Subsequently serving as chairman of the governors, she oversaw the period of transition for the school towards being under lay administration.

As headteacher Sister Louise was equally loved and respected by both staff and girls. It has been said that she ran the school as a 'gentle autocrat' with great fairness, her quiet presence making for an atmosphere in which the pupils at that time flourished.



Since 1990 Sister Louise lived at the Centre Jean XXIII overlooking the city of Yaounde, Cameroon, a diocesan centre co-run by the Sisters of La Retraite and the Pallotine Fathers. There she was involved in a variety of projects, for which her many gifts were highly appreciated. You can read more about the Centre on their website:

[http://www.laretraite.ws/en/a\\_aboutUs/a5\\_fromTheCommunities/a52/a52a\\_jeanXXIII.htm](http://www.laretraite.ws/en/a_aboutUs/a5_fromTheCommunities/a52/a52a_jeanXXIII.htm)

## Leehurst Swan School Summer Fete

Friends of Leehurst Swan School are organising the biennial summer fete on Saturday 2 July 2011 in the school grounds, from 12 noon to 4 pm. There will be all the usual attractions and more, including delicious teas. Everyone is very welcome.

## Performance album

Former members of staff Fiona and Paul Donovan have presented the LSS Archives with an album of programmes and photographs recording the many plays they were involved in here. The very special ones were unique to La Retraite, written by Fiona and designed by Paul, usually with music and further invaluable contributions by other members of staff including Brendan Jackson, Robert Taylor, Mary Candy, Hilary Flack and many more.

## People

It has been a great pleasure to hear from so many people in recent months. Thank you to everyone who has contacted us since the last newsletter, and sent in information about what they are doing now and their school day memories. Please keep this coming, and spread the word to your relations, friends and acquaintances.

Pamela McIver (Bray) [Leehurst 1940-45], Patsy Lacey [La Retraite 1958-65], Paul Dean [Swan 1957-62], Victoria Stretch [La Retraite 1997-2002], Margaret Rochefort (Harley) [La Retraite to 1968], Amy Bell, Fiona Harvey, Chris Hope-Jones [La Retraite Swan 1998-2007], Charlotte Amos.

We had a visit from Emma Laycock who is archivist of the Order of La Retraite, based in Bristol. I have been in correspondence with Farnborough Hill School which is still run by the Sisters of Christian Education who were here in Salisbury before the Sisters of La Retraite took over the school in 1953.

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### Retirement: Sally Butcher

Sally Butcher was first on the teaching staff here from 1978 to 1983 when, as head of English she taught throughout the school, including Oxbridge entrance. She was instrumental in expanding the variety of activities in the department including theatre trips, and drama productions. Amongst those that readers might recall are 'The Thwarting of Baron Bolligrew' and 'The Crucible'. A break from La Retraite saw Dr Butcher teach elsewhere and complete her PhD at Southampton University. Her thesis analysed the benefits of cross-curricular study post-16 for English Literature and Art. She also kept in touch with the school while her son Simon was a pupil here.

Seizing the opportunity to develop her skills while fully appreciating the importance for education of computer technology, Dr Butcher undertook a number of training courses, and rejoined the school in 2004 as a teacher of ICT. As head of department two years later, she soon saw remarkable GCSE results with all pupils taking the half-course a year early, at the end of year 10, and achieving 100% pass rate.

Sally Butcher has been a form teacher and has involved herself in many other aspects of the school. In particular she has been facilitator of the Christian discussion group for students run by The Bridge.

Her decision to retire to pursue some of her many other interests has left a large space to fill. Her enthusiasm, professionalism and versatility will be missed. We wish her the best for the future.

Sally's legacy to the school will include the establishment of an ICT link to a school in Juba, Southern Sudan.

## Lynsey's career

*Lynsey Docherty writes:* I loved school. I realise this seems a little sycophantic, writing in an alumni newsletter, but it's true. I loved being part of pretty much every activity going, every sports team, every concert, every play and La Retraite (as it was then) gave me the platform to develop and nurture my interest in music that was to become my career. I went on to do a music degree in London and am now a professional opera singer. Work life involves being a soloist for opera productions, oratorio concerts in cathedrals and concert halls, concert works with orchestra and recitals as well as immersing myself from time to time in education work, bringing opera to young people and disadvantaged groups in my role as a Vocal Animateur. I also run voice coaching classes and teach private students when I get the chance to be at home. Life generally involves lots of travelling, music learning, role learning, music coaching, language coaching, the pressures of performing, long rehearsal periods, costume & wig fittings, long chats with the agent, long chats with the husband, mid-show diva tantrums (not mine), after-show parties and dreading (or loving) the critics' review. I love what I do - it has been, and still is a long and sometimes bumpy journey, but I stayed true to what I dreamt of as a teenager and now hope this career will last me until retirement. Well, at least until I get a 'proper job'. (La Retraite 1990-97) [www.lynseydocherty.co.uk](http://www.lynseydocherty.co.uk)



*Lynsey Docherty as Noor in Codename Madeleine 1996 from Mrs Donovan's album*

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### Milford Street Bridge Project

Many of you will have noticed the striking mural that has recently appeared under the ring road flyover where Milford Street meets Rampart Road. The Milford Street Bridge Project has involved the community of that district of Salisbury in recording oral history and collecting pictures to commemorate the area before the inner relief road was constructed in the early 1970s. They have held an exhibition, and

produced a CD as well as the mural. One of the buildings, 88 Milford St, St Martin's Church Hall, housed Swan School from 1954 to 1963.



We would be delighted to hear from anyone who was a pupil of Miss Swanton at that time.

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Jane Howells

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