

A MESSAGE FROM THE INCOMING PRESIDENT.

Dear Alexandrans,

It is with a certain amount of trepidation that I step into Wendy's shoes as her successor as President of the Guild. For the past two years I have watched her with increasing amazement as she has hosted and attended on behalf of us all numerous functions and dinners as well as producing an outstanding Guild section in the Yearbook. She has an incredible variety of friends, some of whom have been persuaded to come on to the Guild committee or, failing that, to submit articles for the Alexandran. She has been a friend to all and a loyal and active supporter of the College, despite periods of ill-health. Thank you so much Wendy and we wish her well in the June Bank Holiday Mini Marathon which she intends to complete in a motorised vehicle to support the work of the Blackrock Hospice.

I am very fortunate to have continuing as Guild Secretary Yvonne Traynor who puts in hours of work in the background to ensure that mailing lists are correct, that invitations go out and that the President doesn't lose the run of herself! Thank you Yvonne! Gillian Haine will continue as Treasurer for the next year and to her also I am exceedingly grateful particularly as I am rather numerically illiterate!

The date of publication of the Alexandran has been brought forward to the end of the summer term and so rather than have two AGM reports in this issue I will briefly refer to this year's one. There was a reasonable turnout in the Library for the AGM on May 10th and we were delighted to welcome the Northern Ireland Branch. Wendy Porter addressed the meeting and then handed the chain of office to me. I think it was only at that moment that I realised what I had undertaken and that I hadn't rehearsed AGM proceedings! Next year's one should proceed in a much more fluent manner!

There were many questions for Alison Crawford about the new Cowper Care Home in Kiltiernan and some concern expressed about our involvement or apparent lack of involvement in it. The Northern Ireland Branch and Eva Bangle, representing the London Branch, were invited to visit the new facilities after the Reunion lunch and felt after their guided tour much more in tune with what has been going on since the closure of the Guild House in Rathmines.

Our speaker this year at the AGM was Rose Henderson, of the Class of '79, an actor (of Father Ted fame!) and more recently playwright, who performed a scene from her one act play 'Ruby Tuesday' for us. As the scene was set at a school reunion, those who had not seen it in Bewley's Café during the month of April might be forgiven for not realising straight away that Rose was acting and not just giving us her personal reflections on life and motherhood. By the end of her performance she had won over the whole audience though and she left us, as all successful artistes do, wanting more. The message she left us with, as we wiped the tears of laughter from our eyes, was that we must laugh more, that women shoulder so much in life that we really need more laughter to overcome our

anxieties and cope with so many responsibilities. Thank you Rose and please keep writing!

Before I close I would like to pay tribute to an amazing woman whose 90th Birthday celebrations I was privileged to attend in January last-Honor Stuart. I'm not sure whether it was because she once taught me or because I was once a colleague or because we share the same star sign (Capricorn) that I was one of the 90 guests invited to her most memorable party in the College canteen. Her brother David and younger members of the Stuart clan were there in evidence as were a wide variety of guests spanning the generations of the Alexandra community. The atmosphere was warm and friendly and it restored our confidence in the good things in life. Thank you Honor and Many Happy Returns! Thank you also to Aphra Maclaren for sending me this photo of the cutting of the cake.

Honor is a remarkable woman and very hard to contact as she is forever away. How she keeps us up to date with the Births, Deaths and Marriages I just don't know, although she does admit that she is now a little out of date not having taught some of those having babies nowadays! She spends months in Lanzarote with Aphra and her husband and two years ago couldn't meet me for coffee because she would be in China!

On a closing note, I'd like to quote Honor's reply to one of my many questions to her. I asked her what in her experience was the secret to a long and fulfilling life. Her answer was 'If you are lucky to enjoy good health, make sure to make and keep friends in every generation'.

Like Wendy before me, I would like that to be the theme of my Presidency, to create links between all generations of Alexandrans as we all in our different walks of life have much to offer each other.

As I teach in the College, I am easy to contact. Please write and tell me something about yourself and your friends and you may appear in the next edition of the Alexandran!

With best wishes,

Lesley Rankin