



CHRONICLES OF GEORGE WATSON'S LADIES' COLLEGE AT 150

EDITION 1



Dear Ladies

Despite the challenges we have all faced during 2020, we are determined that we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of George Watson's Ladies' College in style. Even if that means we start our celebrations in 2021 and we are still celebrating in 2022!

As a Committee, we have been working hard on two things; firstly a programme of events to bring us all together to reminisce and celebrate the education we were all fortunate to have at George Square and St Alban's Road. Secondly, and just as importantly, we want to make sure that pupils at Watson's today, and in the future, know something about the history and legacy of the Ladies' College. Part of this will be to add our memories and artefacts to the George Watson's College Historic Archive and Collections.

This is our first newsletter update and we intend to keep you informed with our plans each term and how you can be part of the 150th celebrations. In this edition, we are sharing details of two projects, which will form a lasting legacy. The first is the Collecting Stories Project, where current pupils, studying Advanced Higher History, will interview former GWLC pupils to capture their stories for a collaborative project with The University of Edinburgh. This part of the anniversary year has been provided thanks to the support of the Watsonian Club.

The second project is the Tapestry Project. This is a project that will capture in thread and stitch the rich history of our education at the Ladies' College and our subsequent careers and lives. You can read more about how you can participate in both of these projects on pages three and four.

Finally, you will find on the reverse of this letter a detailed calendar of events and a booking form. Numbers are limited, so please complete and return your form, or book online, as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. We very much hope that the events will happen as planned, however at this time nothing can be certain, please be assured that if we have to postpone the events your booking will be honoured.

We look forward to meeting many of you throughout 2021 and 2022.

With best wishes

Gillian Sandilands *Pamela Chesters* *P. J. Morrison*
Liz Smith *Eileen Potts* *Anne K Runnalls*
 Catherine Stratford *Janet Young*

Gillian Sandilands née Begg (Class of 1978) Chair
Pamela Chesters née Beveridge (Class of 1974)
Pat Morrison née Thomson (Class of 1957)
Eileen Potts née Fletcher (Class of 1977)

Anne Runnalls, Former GWLC Staff
Liz Smith, (Class of 1978)
Catherine Stratford, Hon. Heritage Officer GWC
Janet Young, (Class of 1974)

GWLC 150 Committee

EVENTS OVERVIEW AND BOOKING FORM



Saturday 19 June – The Principal and Watsonian Club President’s Summer Celebration

School Principal, Melvyn Roffe, and Watsonian Club President, Gillian Sandilands, will host a celebratory afternoon of events at Colinton Road. Guests will have an opportunity to be taken on a tour of the campus by current pupils, enjoy a specially curated exhibition based on the history of GWLC, as well as enjoying an afternoon tea and musical performances in a marquee on the front lawn.

Sunday 20 June – Exhibition at George Square and Service at Greyfriars Kirk

With kind permission of The University of Edinburgh, guests will have an opportunity to tour George Square, reminisce and relax with friends.

The culmination of the Anniversary weekend will see a congregation of former pupils gather to give thanks for the founding of George Watson’s Ladies’ College at Greyfriars Kirk, which will be so familiar to those who attended George Square.

EVENT	DATE/TIME	TICKET PRICE
Anniversary Weekend Package This ticket includes the Summer Celebration at Colinton Road, the Exhibition and tour of George Square as well as the Service of Thanksgiving at Greyfriars Kirk.	Saturday 19 June Summer Celebration 1.30pm Sunday 20 June Exhibition and Tours 10am to 2pm Thanksgiving Service 3pm	£50.00
The Principal and Watsonian Club President’s Summer Celebration This includes the celebratory afternoon tea at Colinton Road.	Saturday 19 June 1.30pm	£40.00
Exhibition at George Square and Service at Greyfriars This ticket gives entry to the George Square Exhibition and the Service of Thanksgiving at Greyfriars Kirk.	Sunday 20 June Exhibition and Tours 10am - 2pm	£15.00

How to Book

The easiest way to book your tickets is to visit www.gwc.org.uk/GWLC150

Alternatively, complete the form below by 28 February 2021 and return this to;
GWLC 150, Development Office, George Watson’s College, Colinton Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5EG.

All events have limited capacity and tickets will be issued on a first come, first served basis. We recommend you book early for your chosen events.



GWLC 150 EVENT BOOKING FORM

Title _____ First Name _____ Surname _____

Maiden Name/Name at School (if different) _____ Year left GWLC _____

Address _____

City _____ Country _____ Post Code _____

Email address _____

- I would like to book Anniversary Weekend Package – £50.00
 Summer Celebration with Afternoon Tea – £40.00
 Tour of George Square with Greyfriars Service – £15.00

I enclose a cheque totalling £ _____ payable to *George Watson’s Family Foundation*.

COLLECTING STORIES AND MEMORIES FOR GWLC150

A small group of Watson's S6 pupils, studying Advanced Higher History, have taken their love for history to provoke an interest in the history of their school, particularly the legacy that the pupils of George Watson's Ladies' College have left behind. As we are coming up to the 150th anniversary of the founding of George Watson's Ladies College, the girls would like to collect memories from your own time at school and if possible, stories from previous generations of Watsonian women amongst your family and friends.

Their plan is to create an archive of these stories for future generations of Watson's pupils. Your reminiscences will also be used to help create displays at the events being held to mark the 150th anniversary. This will also include a digital display which will feature on the school's website. And, excitingly, these stories will also be used to create a new tapestry banner, which will be embroidered to mark the 150th anniversary. You can read more about participating in this project on page four.

The girls would love to hear recollections from your school days; from the physical aspects of the school, such as the building itself, to the opportunities you were offered, such as trips abroad and what your everyday school life was like, including your relationships with your teachers and friends. They would also be interested to know if and how you, as an individual, felt a sense of belonging while at school, and the connections you have kept as you continued life after GWLC. It will be intriguing to see how your experiences at school have compared to theirs. In particular, with regard to the social expectations placed upon you at the time. If you would prefer your comments to be stored in the school Archive and only available after a certain time, that would be fine and if you would like to remain anonymous we will make sure that is the case.

You can participate in this project in one of two ways, either send your memoirs to us electronically or by post, or we can arrange for one of the current pupils to call you and capture your memories. Below are examples of the places and aspects of your school day that might help to get your memories flowing. This is not an exhaustive list, so if there is something defining about your school journey that is not captured here, then please share that with us:

Physical Context and History of GWLC

The buildings and rooms at George Square and St Alban's Road; other buildings/events associated with your schooldays, eg. Greyfriars Kirk or the Usher Hall; travelling to the Games fields; the move to Colinton Road; your uniform and games kit; wearing indoor and outdoors shoes; and the Houses; Lauriston, Falconhall, Greyfriars and Melville.

Opportunities and Influences

Which teachers do you remember and why; memories of your Head teachers; what were lessons like; what made a good lesson and what made a bad one; what experiences beyond the classroom were important to you; how did your time at school prepare you for life afterwards; what was expected of you when you left; and what did girls in your year at school go on to do after school?

Values and a Sense of Belonging

'*Ex Corde Caritas*' - what charitable projects did you get involved with whilst you were at school; can you tell us about the sense of belonging that being a 'George Square Girl' encouraged; did the Women's Movement of the 1960s and 1970s have any impact; were current affairs discussed in school? Can you remember any particular examples?

A note from the project team:

We look forward to hearing from you and if you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact us. We would be very grateful if you could send your responses to us by **Thursday 28 January 2021**.

Kindest Regards,

Molly Morris Eliza Urquhart Lorna Macdonald

Molly Morris, Eliza Urquhart and Lorna Macdonald,



Responses can be sent by email to archives@gwc.org.uk.

Please could you include your maiden name and year you left GWLC.

Or by post to - GWLC150 Collecting Stories, The Development Office, George Watson's College, Colinton Road, EDINBURGH, EH10 5EG



THE THREADS THAT BIND US TOGETHER

You will now know that 2021 marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Ladies' College, but what you may not know is that to mark the 50th anniversary, a competition was held for designs for a tapestry banner. Open to the whole school, the competition was won by Gertrude Mitchell (Form IV). Her design was transformed into an exquisitely worked piece of embroidery by pupils and staff. Some of the details of this piece – those involved, threads used and the costs – now form part of GWC's archive. This provides an excellent illustration of where GWLC fitted into Scottish education at that time. The banner is made up of motifs that depict the four universities in Scotland, the City of Edinburgh, the school 'houses', the War Memorial and the subjects taught – art, science, music, sport, domestic science, literature, religious education – all interspersed with beautifully intricate Celtic patterns.

It is hoped that a new banner can be created to mark 150 years since the founding of the school and how, with all the changes seen in the education of women particularly, GWLC may have influenced the lives of those who passed through it.

The theme for the new banner will be to represent – in thread – how those influences have evolved over the years, reflected in the stories of the lives of former pupils. The design for the embroidered piece will be created by Andrew Crummy who was responsible for the design of The Great Tapestry of Scotland and the project is to be funded using a legacy gift which the school received from a former pupil.

How you can get involved

We are looking for individuals, groups/clubs of former pupils and the wider Watson's community who might like to create one of the 16 panels that will form the new tapestry piece. For the less confident stitchers, we plan to provide an opportunity for anyone in Edinburgh at any point during the creation of the banner to contribute a few stitches to the border of the piece.

Our intention is to launch the design and start the stitching at our 150th celebratory weekend in June 2021. We know from the records that the previous banner took at least three years to complete and it is likely that the new piece will also take two to three years!

If you are interested in being part of this project we would really like to hear from you. Whether you are already an enthusiastic stitcher or would like to learn and contribute to this piece, you are all welcome. We will provide lots of support, including creating videos to illustrate the stitches involved. These will be sent out along with all the necessary materials to all participants. COVID-19 permitting, we also hope to run workshops if there is sufficient interest.

Whatever your interest in being involved in this project please contact the Development Office by email or telephone by 31 January 2021, with your contact details and we will then get in touch with you.

Introducing the Project Team

The Project Team is looking forward to creating something wonderful with you!

Gillian Sandilands (née Begg, Class of 1978), Catherine Stratford (Honorary Heritage Officer), Janet Young (Class of 1974)