



## One Hundred and Ten Years On: Celebration and Renewal

December, 2010

Dear Friends,

It was with great anticipation in September that I travelled from Vancouver to Delhi, then on to Bagdogra and up the winding road to Kalimpong. I looked forward to being at the Homes once again to see the children, the staff and management, and particularly, as it is a special birthday year, to meeting many OGBs from around the world. It was a gathering to be remembered in so many ways, and it was heartening to see the UK so well represented by OGBs – some of whom were returning to the Homes after many years – and their families, some of whom were visiting for the first time.

This year's celebrations held many gifts for those attending. For me personally, some of the most memorable moments were during the Inter-Cottage Singing Competition; the Sponsored Walk (in which Miku Foning of Kalimpong and I were the final finishers, as in 2000!); a dance display from many cultures; the arts and crafts exhibition of the children; the picnic at the Relli River; a visit to the Gandhi Ashram in Kalimpong; a visit to Gangtok for dinner with the Sikkim OGBs and Thuten Kesang of New Zealand. A day of visiting the cottages with Des Meyers was also valuable and much appreciated. It was also a pleasure to meet and visit with Homes CEO Philip Gibson and his wife Eleanor, both of whom are clearly committed to the Homes and the well-being of the children.

A pleasant surprise was meeting, for the first time, my cousin Amanda Grant of the UK, who, with her friend Rachel Atherton, was on her first visit to the Homes. I am sure that it was the first of many. Her mother, Wendy Grant, who died recently, was a great supporter of the Homes. In a touching ceremony at the Garden of Remembrance on the morning of September 24, Wendy's ashes were interred beside the graves of her great-grandparents, Daddy and Mrs. Graham.

Dear Readers,

Wendy and I would like to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

During this season when we give and receive gifts, let us remember the lifetime gift which was given to us by Dr. John Graham.

Let us also remember that even today there are many children who need that same lifeline that was given to us.

Dr. Graham's Homes is as important today as it was when we were children.

Let that same generous spirit of our Founder live in us so that future generations of children can have the same opportunities that we were given.

We would urge you to get involved. Support the efforts of those involved in fundraising activities or sponsor a child.

We need you!

Wendy & Sylvia

An important part of the Birthday Week was the OGBs meeting on September 24 with the management and staff of the Homes. Many good questions were raised by the OGBs in attendance, and most were fielded by Lt.-Gen. John Mukherjee, the new Chairman of the Board of Management. Although he had been on the board for a relatively short time and had just taken over as Chairman that day, I was impressed with his grasp of and approach to the many issues that currently face the Homes, his willingness to face them directly, and the courtesy with which he answered the concerns that were raised. He was clearly interested in what the OGBs had to say, and from what I observed, values the input and support for the Homes of the worldwide OGB community.

We gathered happily at the Homes this year to celebrate another milestone, and for that I give thanks. Dr. Graham's Homes is a unique and highly complex organization, and there are many challenges and opportunities that the management and staff, and indeed all of us, will face going forward. May we continue to walk together in common cause for that much-loved place on Deolo Hill where Daddy Graham's vision was fulfilled, and continue to work together to renew and strengthen that vision through its second century.

With best wishes for the Christmas season and the New Year from me and my wife Wiluya, and all the Canadian Council,

Arifin Graham, Victoria, Canada

*Great-grandson of Dr. and Mrs. Graham, and chair of the Canadian Council of Dr. Graham's Homes.*



It's a magical time of year and I'm sure that many of you will be looking forward to some very well earned celebrations, relaxation and self indulgent entertainment.

As I look back over the last twelve months, it is easier to remember, locally and globally, many of the negative things that have happened in individual lives, in the Church, in politics, in natural disasters. Certain things, in their trauma, anguish and sense of unbearable loss, stand out starkly against a backdrop of thousands of events, both small and large, that have threatened to engulf us in a tidal wave of despair. I'm thinking of the earthquake of Haiti and its long aftermath, and all the other forgotten earthquakes of the last months, the mining disasters, the unending, seemingly insoluble agony of the Middle East, the relentless war in Afghanistan, the heightening tension with awful potential between North and South Korea, the BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, the inexplicable horror of Cumbria. Add to that the continuing effects of economic recession worldwide, the 'promise' of a further tightening of belts at home. All the tragedies of illness, broken relationships and bereavement with which people we know have had to struggle. So I could go on with a litany that would be never ending, all of these things demanding our attention, our prayer, our care, our giving, our presence, our awareness. We are not only responsible for our own little community, but, in the twenty first century, we are, whether we like it or not, citizens of the world. We are also, however, citizens of another kingdom- the Kingdom of Heaven. This Kingdom is not wishful thinking or a useful tool to enable us to abdicate from the world in which we have been placed at this particular time. We as Christians are commissioned to live in this 'now' – which is all that we have been given.

My friends, what good is it for you to say you have faith if your actions do not prove it. Can that faith save you? Suppose there are brothers and sisters who need clothes and don't have enough to eat. What good is there in you saying to them, "God Bless you! Keep warm and eat well", if you don't give them the necessities of life? So it is with faith: If it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead. Dear OGBs:

“Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.” The work never ceases and our fundraising continues. OGBs: We are a huge BIG family, we/you can help make a difference. Your School needs you.

May you all be blessed with overwhelming expectancy and with the challenge of new horizons. On behalf of my Committee we would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and God’s Blessings be with each and every one of you. Enjoy this Holiday season, and savour the time spent with your family and friends.

Margaretta and Vincent Purtill



Dear Friends:

As you know I have handed over the responsibility of President and Chairman of the Homes to Lt General John R Mukherjee on September 24, 2010. After having served almost 16 years as Chairman – the longest serving one since Dr Graham! - I believe I deserve a rest.

As I mentioned at the 110<sup>th</sup> Homes Birthday Celebrations not a day has passed in those sixteen years when I have not in some way had something to do for the Homes and therefore it will have a very special place in my heart for the rest of my life. There are many challenges ahead and I believe we have in place a strong and enlightened Board of Management who will steer the Homes through. As always it must be the children who we support who come first and no one else can have a priority over that. We must continue to ensure a solid foundation – certainly in education but also in the values that so many OGBs around the world have grown up with. Change must certainly lead the way but always keeping in mind the welfare of the children.

Marguerite joins me in wishing each one of you all the very best always. Whenever you pass through Kolkata do give us a call and we will always make it convenient to meet. I have told the children that as always my door is wide open to any of them who wish to seek advice or support when in need and I strongly recommend that they are encouraged to use this offer.

From us in Kolkata a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year ahead.

As always,

Michael Robertson



Dear Friends,

It was great to meet and interact with those of you who had come up to the Homes at Kalimpong for the celebrations and thereafter. The Board Members, my wife Linda and I had tremendously enjoyed the fairly detailed interactions we had with you all and gained insight into your views and fears with reference to the management and future of the Homes.

I must at the outset assure you all that the Board of Management of the Homes and I will try our best to resolve the many major problems that have beset the Homes with total transparency and diligence.

However, I must also be totally frank and blunt – problem resolution is not going to be simple or quick, as the Homes’ affairs have deteriorated for a number of reasons including the political situation.

We have a situation of acute financial deficits which if not resolved soon will result in the Homes going into debt – put plainly we have to generate much more income – if we do not generate more income, our shortfalls during the next financial year will be substantial. This means getting in more fee paying students and much more sponsorship besides having to try and generate income from every possible source including using our spare capacity for tourism and fee paying technical education. We simultaneously also have to cut costs whilst ensuring we have contented and efficient staff and teachers. The Academic standards of the school need to be restored. The land problems at Kalimpong and the case related to Birkmyre have to be resolved. The administration of both the school and the hostels has to tone up and discipline reinstated. All this has to be done in a politically supercharged and highly unionized environment which complicates discipline tremendously. That in nutshell is what I perceive to be a truthful summary of our predicament.

My aim is not to paint a picture of unsolvable problems – everything has some sort of feasible solution and we would do our utmost to attain the same. Whilst we have assured you of our best efforts – we must request you to please help us by redoubling your efforts towards getting more sponsorship for the students and donations towards renovation of infrastructure. I am sanguine that with God’s help and if we all couple our efforts together we will succeed in bringing the Homes back to its glorious past

The Board Members, my wife and I, all extend you our heartiest greetings and wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a wonderful year ahead

With Warm Regards  
Johnny



“Keep the Homes’ Fires Burning”

John Webster writes:

Gordon “Budgie” Bird was a most likeable pupil during the time my wife and I spent in Dr Graham’s Homes. On leaving school he joined the Indian Merchant Navy and, as an officer, acquitted himself with credit. We lost touch until one Christmas Eve in the 80’s, during a leave in the UK, he called to see us in our home in Troon and joined with the young people of “my” Church singing carols in the town for Dr Graham’s Homes! He had to leave later that evening to rejoin his ship but not before leaving a sizeable donation for his former home and school.

Our next meeting was not until 25 years later when Gordon, having become the sponsor of a child, came to visit us on the Isle of Arran.

Naturally, we talked and remembered times in Dr Graham’s Homes.

Over the years Gordon had built up a large database of his many friends from D.G.H. days. We discussed ways in which these friends could be mobilised to support “their Homes” in monetary terms. This was, we agreed, “an idea whose hour had come.” The slogan “Keep the Homes’ Fires Burning” was evolved.

Thus inspired, Gordon agreed to contact all his friends and I was invited to send a message to OGBs for the 110<sup>th</sup> Birthday Souvenir Brochure.

In addition to the traditional Birthday Greetings the following is an extract of that message:

“The current reality is that those from overseas who worked in the Homes and in India are getting fewer and fewer and the survival of Dr Graham’s Homes is becoming TOTALLY dependent on the support of OGBs in every corner of the world! Your Homes, (and they are yours!) will not survive unless all OGBs throughout the world rise up and give conscientiously and consistently.

Yes, indeed, celebrate this 110<sup>th</sup> Birthday – but if you are in earnest about wishing the Homes MANY, MANY HAPPY RETURNS of this day please be aware that this wish cannot come true without OGBs everywhere resolving to raise sponsorships or funds for the many deserving children turned away each year.

Today, as never before, the future of your Homes is in your hands”.

I went on to suggest that it seemed to me that in common with many other schools an alumni secretary be appointed to maintain a database of all OGBs and to encourage, collate and publicise all OGB activities and fund raising efforts.

A Report on the Birthday Celebrations is included in this Newsletter.



**Celebration of 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dr Graham’s Homes** in Kalimpong on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

During the Centenary Celebration in Dr Graham’s Homes in 2000, the OGBs gathered there decided that we should meet every five years at the Homes. So we met in 2005 and again this year.

I had been planning for this trip over the last five years, so on the 20<sup>th</sup> September I flew into Calcutta to be met by my friend Denzil Wong in the early hours of the morning. The road was clear, the journey to the hotel, which normally takes about two hours, took us 45 minutes. During the day I contacted Mr. Bernard Brooks and Mr. Michael Robertson.

It was very nice to see Bernard after so many years. We sat in Flury’s Restaurant and had a good chat about the good old days in Kalimpong over a lovely cup of chai. In the evening Michael invited me for a dinner at Bengal Club with two great-granddaughters of Daddy Graham. These two lovely ladies came this year to bring the ashes of their mother to be buried in Dr. Graham’s Homes cemetery. Michael and his wife looked after us very well in the Bengal Club and the food was delicious.

The next day I visited the Birkmyre Hostel where I spent nearly five years in the 60’s and the place still looks the same. Somehow it looks a bit run down although not very long ago it had been repainted, but like all buildings in Calcutta, it looks as if it needed another good coat of paint. I had a long chat with the Pandiji (Darwan). He was a young man at my time in the 60’s, but like all of us, age is catching up. It was great talking to him about all the boys that have passed through the gates of Birkmyre, who have now scattered throughout the world; and he still named the boys who left from the hostel to go overseas. I also had an opportunity to have a cup of tea with Eddie and his wife who run Birkmyre Hostel.

I knew Bill Esslemont and his wife from Australia were arriving in Calcutta, so I rang his hotel and spoke to Bill. He invited us to go for a drink at the Grand Hotel and we were joined by Bernard and Denzil. While we were having a drink we decided to go for dinner at Bar-B-Q Restaurant on Park Street. So I had a very enjoyable day and a half in Calcutta.

I left Calcutta on 22<sup>nd</sup> on my way up to the Homes. The journey from Bagdogra to Kalimpong was very tiring, the road was so bumpy, and I nearly got sick. But at last arriving in Kalimpong was like heaven, especially at Orchid Retreat where I stayed. Honey looked after us so nicely it was like home away from home.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> I went up to the school to register etc., and it was great seeing so many OGBs of my time – some I have not seen since I left school in 1962. We had a great time reminiscing old days in school. This day was devoted to employees' celebration, so they put on a great show and many gifts were distributed to those who served the Homes for many years.

We ended the day with **Silver Jubilee Reunion of Batch 1985 and OGBs Birthday Ball**. This was a great turn out and we danced to some very good music, and food and drink were in plentiful supply. We all had a great time.

**24<sup>th</sup> September, Homes' Birthday**, we all gathered in the Jarvie Hall and after a few speeches, David Foning read all the greetings from all around the world, wishing Dr. Graham's Homes a happy 110<sup>th</sup> birthday. Margaret and myself and two other people cut the birthday cake. Traditional buns and jelibies followed this on the school grounds for the children, and guests were invited to Crozier Club for the same fayre. Most of the OGBs went to their respective cottages for a photo session. This was followed by lunch at Jubilee House at the invitation of CEO Mr. Philip Gibson. This gave us an opportunity to meet the other OGBs and the guests at the Homes gathering. It was great meeting great-granddaughters of Daddy Graham, and of course, Arifin Graham from Canada. The families of Daddy Graham being there made the occasion even more memorable. It was also great meeting the Board Members and the Executive members of Dr. Graham's Homes and have an informal chat over a lovely lunch.

**Open House Discussion:** This was organised by Kalimpong OGBs Association and chaired by Mrs Margaretta Purtill, President of Kalimpong Association UK; and co-chaired by me as representative from New Zealand. However, it turned out the Dr. Migu Foning ran the meeting. The President of Kalimpong Association, Mr. Hiranya Mani Pradhan, welcomed everyone to this OGB forum 2010, and hoped that we go home with renewed commitments by the OGBs towards the work of the Homes.

I gave thanks to Mr. Michael Robertson, retiring after nearly 16 years service as the Chairman of the Board, for his commitment to the Homes all these years; and welcomed the new Chairman, Lt. Gen. John Mukherjee, assuring him of our support for the Homes. Then the meeting was open to the floor. Many OGBs spoke very passionately about the Homes, and said that they would like to see transparency in what is going on in the Homes. Some conveyed negativity towards what is going wrong in the Homes. Generally, those who attended the meeting had a chance to share their views of the Homes. Lt. Gen. Mukherjee answered many questions from the floor, and it is heartening for me to hear him say that from now on everything will be transparent and this will be up on the Homes website for everyone to see. I personally felt that there was a new beginning with a new Chairman and asked all OGBs to come together and support him for the better future of the children of the Homes. The meeting ended, but I am not sure that we said "we will meet again in 2015". The minutes were taken by Dawn Van Steensel and Glynis Johnson.

The OGBs Dinner was held in the Bazaar, again here we were all treated to a lovely evening and we were all relaxed and talked about our good old days in Kalimpong, with food and drink aplenty. I met up with so many students of my time, some of whom I hadn't seen since leaving school in 1962 – Jeff Fegredo and Freddie Manzies – and although we have aged, our love for the Homes has not, and it was great talking about our good old days. Then there was Bill Esslemont, Richard Johnson, David Gundlach, Robert Street, Ivan Holland, Dawn Van Steensel, Desmond Myers, and Margaretta Byers (Purtill); a few other names escape me.

25<sup>th</sup> September was a relaxing day with concerts and choir singing in the Jarvie Hall, and a lunch at the Crozier Club. There was a ball in the Jean Pratt Hall for the senior boys and girls, no OGBs were allowed to attend.

26<sup>th</sup> September started early, first to church and then the OGBs 18km sponsored walk. We were flagged off from the school compound and we all made our way slowly but steadily. First of all I walked with Arifin Graham and chatted most of the way, and then I met up with Lady Ball (Sedhar Chozam) another Tibetan, we got talking about the Homes and the situation in our country and we never stopped talking till we got back to the school. It was great to know another Tibetan from the Homes who is so passionate about the Homes. During this walk at one of the water stops, I met another Tibetan. We exchanged eye contact and he looked at my name tag and the year and he said he was at the Homes those years and then he said his name was Dhundop Tsering. I remember the name, and he said he was in Willington Hostel and we used to call him silver head, as his hair was quite silvery, and after nearly 48 years when I last saw him, we embraced each other and took some photos, and then we were on our way again.

When I learned about the sponsored walk when I got to the Homes, I immediately sent an email to my wife, Gwen, in New Zealand, to send out an appeal to all our members to sponsor me for the walk, with the money going towards the Kalimpong OGBs Trust to be used for higher education for the school leavers. I am delighted to report that when I got home there was about \$500 plus in the Homes' account for the sponsored walk. I will be transferring the money into their account as soon as I receive the details from them.

27<sup>th</sup> September, the Kalimpong OGBs had organised a picnic at Relie. It was not like the old days when we got up early and walked down to Relie, this time we drove all the way there and road was built all the way down to Relie. At the picnic site was a lovely swimming pool built by the Indian Tourist Bureau. It was well laid out. There was plenty of space to sit, and those who were brave enough had a swim, but most of us walked down to the river to soak our feet in the really cold Relie River. It was great, and most of us gathered some raw garnets. Generally had a lovely, lazy day with good music in the background. They finished the day with an auction which raised quite a lot of money for the Homes.

On 27<sup>th</sup> morning I was invited to Tibetan school in 11 mile by Mr. Kesang Bhutia, the Principal, who was an ex-student of the Homes, and who also taught Tibetan in the Homes for a while. Luckily for me, this was English-speaking day, so the assembly was conducted in English. With tears in my eyes I watched the assembly, first beginning with a prayer and then the children sang the Tibetan and the Indian national anthems. Then the senior children of the school conducted the assembly. Then I was introduced and was asked to say a few words to the children. As usual, I told them about our struggle and our future for Tibet is in their hands. Then I was shown around the school. I was very impressed by the high standard of education they have. Then I said goodbye, and left for Sikkim on the next leg of my holiday. The Sikkim OGBs put on a dinner for me and Arifin - that was great; we both thoroughly enjoyed meeting them, and having the chance to talk to them.

Then I finished my holiday in India by visiting New Dehli, and then on to Dharamsala, where I was lucky enough to get an audience with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, while I was there. On the way home, via New Dehli, I stayed with my niece and her husband. They took me to the Commonwealth Games, the night before I flew home to New Zealand.

I arrived home on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010. It was lovely to be with my loving wife.

I was very sad to learn that Aunty Jean passed away. Another chapter of the great institution come to close with the passing away of Aunty Jean. She devoted most of her life to the work of the Homes, and I have never known any other lady who is so proud of her Woodburn girls. I know many girls that have passed through Woodburn Cottage will remember Aunty Jean very fondly. Although she left the Homes some years ago, she always returned to the Homes during the Birthday celebrations. Due to ill-health, she could not attend in 2010. Our sincere sympathies go to Aunty Jean's family and the Woodburn Cottage girls. As we say in Tibet when we lose loved ones: "May their soul find rebirth soon".

*Article submitted by Thuten Kesang, New Zealand      Kesang@pl.net*



## THE SPONSORED WALK

When we mention our school to non OGBs ('Old Girls and Boys') they fail to understand the bond we have but are always in awe that after so many decades we are still in touch with each other and feel so much love and warmth for our old school. It is this bond together with the location and vision of Dr John Anderson Graham that has made our school so unique.

Dr Graham's School is unlike any other school. Despite financial and political difficulties the Homes has continued to grow. If the vision of Dr Graham is to be kept alive then DGH (Dr Graham's Homes) must remain primarily a 'home' and should at the same time prepare the children for life and a world beyond Kalimpong. It is this family unit that creates the bond that exists amongst OGBs today and is something that should never be lost.

When we first heard about the Sponsored Walk, Jeff and I felt that we ought to try and do it to raise much needed funds. Since I had been having problems with both my knees over a period of time we hadn't done anything further about it. However, after seeing on TV one of the victims of the Afghanistan war (who had lost both his legs and had prosthetic legs fitted) actually walk for charity and on reading the article written in the last Newsletter about the Bike Bengal Ride from Kolkata to Kalimpong, I felt that we couldn't let my knee pain stop us. Therefore about a week before we were due to fly out to the UK we sent off emails to family, OGBs and friends in the hope that we would get sufficient sponsorship to make the walk worthwhile. Once the emails came flooding in with pledges of sponsorship, the die was cast and Jeff and I were committed to doing the walk come what may, as we couldn't let our sponsors down!!

After a week of hectic activity in Kalimpong it was finally time for the walk. This year instead of walking from DGH to Rongpo the organisers had decided that we would walk from DGH to Algarah and back – a distance of 19 km. Having done the walk to Rongpo in 2000 I thought this would be much easier as it was quite a bit shorter. However, I was soon to be proved very wrong as the majority of the walk was all uphill!!



Algarah is a bazaar town located at a distance of 15 kilometres east of Kalimpong. It is at an elevation of 1,780 metres (4,840 ft) and has a population of about 3,000. Employment remains high and many work as casual day labourers. Most of the town's residents are ethnic Nepali.

Algarah is famous for the remains of the ancient Damsang fort. The surrounding villages of this small bazaar are Paiyung Busty, Santook Menzong, Tenderbong and Dalapchand. People of these villages depend upon agriculture, floriculture and milk production. Contribution of the people of Algarah in the Indian Army is worth mentioning as from every house at least one son is in defence. Another noteworthy fact about Algarah is that the famous birding mile starts from Algarah to Lava. Lava is one of the hotspots for Indian birdlife.

Sunday the 26 September was a beautiful sunny day. Jeff, Michelle (my daughter) and I had an early start at 8.00 a.m. as we had to make our way from The Soods Garden Retreat in town to the school for a pre-walk breakfast! Following this we attended a service in the Katherine Graham Memorial Chapel. It was wonderful being back in such an amazing building again and singing so many familiar hymns. The highlight was listening to the Choir whose voices reverberated all around the church and Jeff and I were honoured to be asked to help with the collection.

At 9.30 a.m. the girls and boys, OGBs and friends were all assembled outside the school office (near the gong) and following a brief pep talk by Miku Foning and Desmond Meyers and a flag being lowered by Florence Snell, we were on our way to Algarah!



*Jeff and I – ready to go!!*

*Some of the senior girls and myself before the walk*

We made our way past Graham House, the Elliott Bend, past the Stores, the Cemetery, Ronaldshay Park and down the Murray Road towards Rilli. After this we just followed the leaders; (we all had to wear white and red shirts so it was easy to make out the walkers) and stewards in cars and on motorbikes patrolled the route to ensure that all who were walking were OK. I wore elastic bandages on both my knees which gave me the support I needed to be able to complete the walk.

At first the walk was all downhill so Jeff and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and were in awe of the beautiful scenery and it was great waving to the local people and some rosy-cheeked little children. We soon caught up with a group of senior boys who were in very high spirits. We walked with them for quite a while and their laughter and banter was refreshing. We also had an opportunity to talk with a number of them and were disappointed to find that the kids don't have socials, hostel parties or pictures in the school anymore. We can quite understand the rationale behind not having pictures because all the cottages now have television so have access to quite a bit of entertainment on that score. However, we

hope that the powers that be will consider reinstating school socials and hostel parties once again as both of us remember what important events these were during our time in DGH and how we looked forward to them. Apart from anything else it teaches these young people social skills and how to mix in society.

It wasn't long before we encountered our first hill and I must admit that it was hard going. The exertion got our hearts pumping and our legs were aching and it was a relief when we actually reached level ground again. However, it wasn't long before we reached the next steep incline followed by another and yet another!

About an hour into our walk we came across a girl walking rather slowly who was clearly in some difficulty. We stopped and asked her if we could help. She said she was walking with a group of friends but because she had Asthma and had been experiencing chest pains couldn't keep up with them. We therefore asked her if she would like to walk with us and we promised her that we wouldn't walk too fast but would walk at her pace.

This girl turned out to be Nicole Saviel (daughter of Shane Saviel, the Choir Master). She showed determination and true grit and was an inspiration to us. The next four hours were spent chatting away as she enthralled us with stories and anecdotes. She also had such an in-depth knowledge of the surrounding area, having visited it many times with her dad.

At times the heat was overpowering and it was such a relief when we reached a refreshment stop where very welcome drinks awaited us. We plodded on hour after hour, resting every now and again when the exertion got too much for all of us. Giving up was never an option as all three of us were absolutely focused and determined to complete the walk. What we found rather disappointing was that a large number of children were quite happy to take lifts (especially when the going got tough) and it is difficult to ascertain who all actually completed the whole walk!!



*Nicole having a well-earned rest*



*Some local children*

It was wonderful when we finally reached the point where we could now make our way back to DGH. Thankfully this was all downhill and we all got a spurt on now that the end was in sight. The sighting of the giant Buddha, then the Holiday Home and finally all the familiar buildings brought it home that we were finally on the last leg of our journey. It was therefore with a great deal of relief and personal satisfaction that we finally rounded Elliot Bend on our way to the Jarvie Hall where lunch awaited us, courtesy of the Sikkim OGBs. We reached the Jarvie Hall at 2.30 p.m. The walk took us five hours – three of which were uphill!!

We hope that there are more children in DGH with the same determination and self-belief as Nicole Saviel. She could quite easily have given up and taken a lift but we saw such focus and commitment on

her part and it made us feel good that here was an example of what DGH was all about. She followed our motto of “Thorough” to the very end. Well done Nicole!

Jeff and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organisers of the Sponsored Walk for all their hard work in making this event possible and the various Associations for providing breakfast and lunch on the day.

In closing, our heartfelt thanks to all our family, friends, OGBs and others connected with DGH, for their generous donations in making this walk worthwhile. We still have the money to collect but at the last count we should have raised just over £700. Once all the money is received we propose sending a small amount towards renovation of the Auntie’s area in Lucia King (which is something we promised them when we visited Lucia King). For those non-OGBs Lucia King is the first port of call for the little children who are sent to Dr Graham’s Homes and is a very important milestone in their lives as their most formative years are spent here. The majority of the money however will be shared equally between the UK Committee Sponsorship Fund (handled by Jim Simpson) and the Kalimpong Association (UK) Charitable Trust so that this can go some small way towards helping with sponsorship of needy children.

Jeff and I are now back in Spain. DGH, Kalimpong and the reunion seem a million miles away but the memories still linger on.

*Yolande Fegredo, La Marina, Spain*



## INDIA HERE WE COME!

It’s that time of year again when many OGBs decide to descend on The Homes to celebrate its birthday and this year in particular it’s special 110<sup>th</sup> Birthday. The Homes is unique from other schools in the way it celebrates its birthday with hundreds of OGBs from all around the world making this special trip. I’m sure Daddy Graham would be very proud to see that his beloved ‘Homes’ has stood the test of time and hopefully will continue to do so for many years to come.

This year’s reunion was an extra special one for us as the ‘Johnsons’ planned to make it a family reunion as well with Richard, Tissa and family from Brisbane, Australia along with Charlie, Glynis and family and Malcolm, Linda and family from Swindon combining the trip to The Homes with one to Shillong the land of their mother’s birth. We were also fulfilling a promise to our children that we would take them back to the land of our birth and to see the ‘Homes’ which was and still is a big part of our lives.

It was early on the 18<sup>th</sup> September that Malcolm, myself, Yolande and Jeff (Fegredo) were awaiting our taxi to transport us to Swindon bus station where we were to meet our daughter Kirsty and our niece Kim (Pratt) before catching our coach to Terminal 5. Panic was setting in when the taxi did not arrive at the scheduled time and after a couple of frantic phone calls we were told it was on its way. In the hurry to get into the taxi we almost left one of our suitcases behind! We got to the bus station just as the coach was pulling in, talk about just in time! After off-loading our luggage we relaxed in our seats waiting for the off when we heard the driver being told that the motorway was closed because of an accident! Not a good start by any standards but it did get better. We arrived at Terminal 5 well in time and met our eldest daughter Tanya and her partner Dan and our niece Nicola and nephew Jason who were booked on the same flight as us. We had an overnight stop in Delhi on the 18<sup>th</sup> before catching an early morning flight

to Bagdogra. At Delhi airport we met Charlie and Glynis (Johnson) and their daughter Kayleigh, Lester and Yonten (Pratt), and my niece Michelle Meyers, quite a contingent!

On arrival at Bagdogra we were greeted with a welcome banner which certainly set the mood for the whole trip. It was unusually hot and muggy and the heavens decided to open just as we were loading our suitcases into the jeeps! Our first stop was Sikkim and after a rather bumpy ride from Bagdogra the roads did improve along the way and we were able to enjoy the breathtaking views. Some of the roads to Sikkim had bad landslides but our drivers were excellent and not once did we doubt their driving skills. Our hotel, The Golden Heights, was in the heart of Sikkim with a beautiful pedestrianised shopping area. Malcolm's fellow Assam Cottage mate Karma Bhutia. Secretary to the Government of Sikkim, had very kindly arranged our itinerary for the three days.

We were there and we also had a very competent tour guide in the form of Karma's son, also called Karma. On our first night we were invited to Karma's house for dinner where we met Seedhar (Chozam) and Shiva Kumar Rai. Karma and his family put on an absolute feast for us and we had a thoroughly enjoyable evening with the perfect host and some wonderful company. After some sightseeing the following day we met up with the Sikkim OGBs that evening for more food and drink. At that gathering we also met Annie (Hilton), Bir Bahadur Bagdas, Aaron Targon, Guru Ladaki and others whose names escape me! Lester and Yonten also joined us as they were visiting her family in Sikkim before making the trip to the Homes for the birthday celebrations.

The next day was some more sightseeing and another meal in the evening, this time with Yonten's family! All too soon our time in Sikkim was up but we take with us lasting memories of a beautiful part of the world and even more beautiful people.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> September we left Sikkim to make our way to Kalimpong and the much awaited and anticipated birthday celebrations. We had a slight hitch on the way as our jeep broke down and after about a 45 minute delay we finally made it to Kalimpong and Soods Garden Resort. After a quick freshen up we made our way up to the school and as we approached Ronald Shay Park the sights became more familiar and all the years that we had been away faded and we were transported back in time to the 60's and 70's when we were students! We made it just in time for the singing competition and though this was well contested by the cottages I have to say that the standard was not as good as in our day! The evening came to a close with a meal and drinks with our extended family at the Thai King Restaurant in town.

The next day we were up bright and early as we wanted to show our daughters as much as possible of the compound. After registering at the KG Department we made our way past the Jarvie Hall and the main school buildings to Murray Cottage. There we met Matthew Francis our sponsored boy for the first time and were able to give him some of the goodies that we had bought for him. Matthew is a shy but polite boy and it was nice meeting him after all these years. We then made our way to Assam Cottage which had been home to Malcolm for 10 years. The cottage was well kept and Malcolm even 'posed' on the bed he had slept on all those years ago! It was good to see that the toilets had been renovated from the money raised by OGBs in the UK and hopefully these will continue to be maintained. We then made our way up to the Steel Memorial Hospital where we were given a tour of the premises. Lunch was courtesy of Des and Flora Meyers who were staying at Laidlaw. After a lovely meal we spent some time catching up. It was here that Tanya's partner Dan proposed to her and it really was the highlight of the day especially as she said yes! They plan to get married in September 2011. That evening was the much anticipated Birthday.

Ball and we weren't disappointed. We all had a great time meeting more OGBs, eating, drinking and dancing. There we met Mr. & Mrs. L. Lama who are really looking amazing, Mrs. Kerr, Mr. and Mrs. Prakash, Mr. Luckose and Miss Colquhoun who made the long trip all the way from Scotland. It's not only OGBs who return but teachers as well!

As a special remembrance tribute to our dad and mum (Wilbur and Hope Pratt) who have both passed away, we lit a special night air balloon which floated high into the night sky as we said a special goodbye. They both had very fond memories of the 'Homes' and were held in high esteem by their many pupils.

The 24<sup>th</sup> was a beautiful day and the customary gathering in the Jarvie Hall was very well attended. As is tradition David Foning read out all the Birthday greetings that had been received from around the world to much applause. Both the School Song and National Anthem were sung with great gusto and soon everybody was making their way to school field for the traditional buns and jellabies. That afternoon we decided to make our way up to Deolo by foot to take in the views. The walk up was far from easy and I suffered more than the others, however we did make it to the top though the view was obscured by the heavy mist that had descended on the adjoining mountain. It did eventually clear enough for us to get a few snaps before we made our way back down again. Our next stop was Lucia King which we were happy to see was looking fabulous and all the children looked happy and well cared for.

That evening we attended a BBQ and Dinner which was organised by the Kalimpong OGBs, so did some more socialising, eating drinking and dancing! The next day was the sponsored walk to raise more funds for the Homes. From our party only Jeff and Yolande Fegredo and Michelle Meyers attempted and completed the walk and our congratulations go to them for their valiant effort!

The festivities ended the next day with a picnic in Relli which was enjoyed by all and certainly took us back to the times when we picnicked there is years gone by. Relli now boasts a mini resort complete with swimming pool, though the pull of the river was so great that most people had to at least have a paddle!

Many thanks to all the Kalimpong OGBs who organised the birthday events for us, we appreciate the hard work and organisation that goes into events such as these.

Some of the OGBs who I remember and had made the journey back for the celebrations were (and I apologise in advance if I have omitted anybody!) Thuten Kesang, Rosemarie (Baker), Richard Johnson, Bill Esslemont, David Gundlach, Robert Street, Freddie Menzies, Noel Shappell, Jeff Fegredo, Margaretta (Byers), Rosa (Nicholls), Heather (Nicholls), Malcolm Johnson, Yolande (Pratt), Freda (Johnson), Raymond Reade, Charlie Johnson, Sonam Tsering (Lung Tu Chang), Linda (Pratt), Gloria (Noel), Miku Foning, Dawn (Holland), Drenko (Tsentso), Rajni (Pradhan), Garth Webber, Mickey Palmer, Pema (Yuing Chang), Seedhar (Chozam), Geraldine (Taylor), Joanna (Taylor), Glynis (Pratt), Joseph Loyle, Sonam Gompu, Paljor Tsering, Andrew Noel, Shirley (Noel), Diana (D'Santos), Patsy (D'Santos), Alfred Khan, Lester Pratt, Yonten (Doma), Brenda Sherestra, Kathleen (Leslie), Kalpana and Pauline (Brooks).

The next day we left for Shillong with great anticipation as I had never been there before and Malcolm was returning after 38 years! Our home for the next seven nights was the beautiful and tranquil Lakkhotaa Lodge owned by Elmie (Francis, ex Elliott Cottage). This stay was to meet family and visit Jowai. It was an emotional journey for the Johnson brothers as their mother passed away three years ago in Australia and they had promised her that they would make the trip to her homeland which we were all honoured to do. We also got to see the real Shillong in the form of Elephant Falls, Shillong Peak and 4<sup>th</sup> largest water fall in the world at Cherrapunjee. Malcolm was also able to meet his old school friend Gregory (Gigi) Francis whom he hadn't seen since 1968! Unfortunately they weren't able to recreate the

'band' that they had formed in the Homes many moons ago but were certainly able to reminisce on the good times they spent together. A friendship has been rekindled!

We had another OGB get-together in Shillong courtesy of Robert Street and the Shillong OGBs and met Kevin Phillips, Keith Reid, David Reid, Edwin Barren, Julian White, Donbok Loudon, Jennie Miller, Bedora and Almora Sheldon. Thanks to Jennie for the lovely meal at her place and to everybody in Shillong for making our trip a really memorable one.

Next stop Kolkata! We stayed in the Hotel Lindsay directly opposite the New Market so were right in the hub of things. Being the Puja season the place was extremely crowded and we had forgotten how mad the traffic could be! However we still had a memorable time visiting the Victoria Memorial, St. Paul's Cathedral and Mother Teresa's. We walked down Chowringhee, Park Street and Free School Street for old times' sake and stopped to have lunch in Trincas. All too soon our time in India was drawing to a close and as we boarded our flight to Delhi we were a little bit sad but also happy to be coming home. A fitting end to our stay was in Delhi where we stayed at the Bhutanese Embassy courtesy of DawZam (ex Elliott cottage) and her husband who is the Bhutanese Ambassador to India. The beautiful surroundings of the Embassy and the superb hospitality afforded to us was really the icing on the cake of a memorable holiday.

On our return to Swindon we can only look back with fondness at the time we spent in the land of our birth as we are not sure when or whether we will be making a trip like this again. To all those who have not ventured back I say to you, you must do so at least once!

Linda Johnson (Pratt)



## Notices

### Events 2011

Another bike ride is being planned for February 10<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> 2011. It is hoped that it will go from Kathmandu to Kalimpong. Names are invited for the November Tour 2011 – Kolkata, Kathmandu, Darjeeling and Kalimpong. If you are interested or would like to send a donation please contact Rev John Webster. [Johnwebster@talktalk.net](mailto:Johnwebster@talktalk.net)

Mr. Percy Frizelle informs us that Miss Catherine Johnson fell and fractured her shoulder in December, and then fell again in April and fractured her hip. She was admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Woolwich, and transferred from there into residential care on June 16<sup>th</sup>. Cathy is now near her family. She has settled in well and seems content and happy. She is safe and being well looked after.

### Keeping in touch – HELEN MOWATT

Does anyone know the whereabouts of Helen Mowatt? Helen was in Birissa Cottage between 1948-1959. She worked as a care nurse in Lucia King. Helen may now be known as Helen Gill, and will be about 69 years old.

Louis Mowatt, her brother, would love to know where she is, and would be pleased to hear from anyone who has information about his sister.

His contact details are: 155, Gloucester Road, South Kensington, London NW7 4TH  
Telephone No. 0207 373 4781.

<b>Kalimpong Association UK Dance</b>	<b>Kalimpong Association UK AGM</b>
Date: 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2011	Date: 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2011
Time: TBA	Time: Doors open at 2pm
Venue: Bishop LaFranc School	Venue: Methodist Church
Ticket details: TBA	Hinde Street, London W1
	Tube: Bond Street



## Obituaries

### Larry Jarman

OGB and brother of Elsie Pettigrew.

An obituary for Larry Jarman: 1930 - 2010

Larry Jarman (Lucia King and Hart Cottage), aged 80, died in September 2010 in Seattle, Washington, USA, after about a ten year struggle with dementia. He was a highly regarded student in Dr Graham's Homes (DGH), Kalimpong, distinguishing himself both in scholastics and in sports. He was in a class with similarly distinguished students like Jimmy Kelly, John Walters and others. He left the Homes in about 1947 to enter the LaMartinere College in Calcutta, graduating with the ISc degree there. He had a sister Elsie who, after graduation, became a nurse in the Steele Memorial Hospital in DGH. It is thought that she currently lives in Toronto, Canada. Larry was taken into the orbit of Mr Fred Hill (who married Miss Gwen Hastings, an Australian teacher in the Homes). Fred and Gwen were both later residents in Melbourne, Australia. Mr Hill arranged for Larry to be accepted into Bristol University (England). Following that Larry emigrated to Canada and subsequently to Seattle, Washington, USA. Larry worked at Boeing, Seattle for many years. Larry leaves behind, seven children, who are all residents of Seattle. Anne Speckmaier is Larry's eldest daughter and has kept me regularly informed of Larry's illness over these past few years.

Those of us who knew Larry will sorely miss him; in fact, we have missed him for at least five years.

Harold Ross Mortimer, Bend, Oregon, USA

(Harry has been the life-long friend of Larry in India, Canada and the US)

There is also an interesting piece on Larry Jarman which can be found on the Memorial website:

<http://memorialwebsites.legacy.com/LarryJarman/Homepage.aspx>

### Joyce Wagstaff

It is with deep sadness we report on the death of Joyce Wagstaff on 18th June 2010. She was born 10<sup>th</sup> August 1921 - an old girl of DGH. She is survived by her only Son David. Joyce lived in Faversham, Kent.

**Margaret Brocklehurst**, died on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010 - R.I.P.

### Kate Mott

We were also sad to hear of the passing of Kate Mott of Bene Cottage.

### Alfred Chambers

Alfred Chambers of Scottish Canadian Cottage – aged 89 years.

Tribute: Old Boy of Dr Graham's Homes, my husband's uncle, Alf Chambers of 8 Priors Court, Ash, GU12 6QP has recently passed away.

Alf drew much pleasure reading the newsletters of your Kalimpong Association as he was on your mailing list. He was born in Behora Tea Estate on 5 October 1921 and was a pupil at St Andrews Colonial Homes from 1925 to 1937 where he spent happy times there. He died on 26 October 2010.

Ida & Peter Clemo

### **John Alexander Imlay**

We are also very sorry to announce that John Alexander Imlay has passed away. He was fondly known as Jack by his family and friends, and was husband to Lilian (nee Benbow) from Birissa Cottage. John died suddenly in a tragic accident in Chandigarh, India on 18th August 2010. Our thoughts go out to his family and friends.

## **In loving memory of Jean Burns**

By Rev Dr Simon Mainwaring, Homes Teacher 1997-2000

The last time I met Jean was at her Mussleburgh home. We shared a good East Lothian meal together, and sat and chatted about one of the two loves that we shared in our lives: Dr. Graham's Homes. Jean loved the Homes with a powerful passion, and even more, the Woodburn girls whose lives for an entire generation she did so much to shape. Nothing delighted her more than to share a tale of one of 'her girls' who had turned a corner in her life, found faith, or realized her potential. Her love for them just went on and on. And then, as was always the case with Jean, our conversation turned heavenward and to the other love that we shared: our faith in Christ. Jean paused as we spoke, and looking me straight in the eye, she said, "When I die, don't you dare mourn for me, for that shall be my crowning glory."

It is hard not to mourn for someone like Jean. The first time I came to Woodburn Cottage, the home in the Himalayan foothills that she made for thirty plus girls at a time, was to help the girls prepare for the upcoming inter-cottage singing competition. At first, Jean was nowhere to be seen and I was led into the room where the cottage piano was. The head girl, Anandi Sharma, marshaled the other girls into the room, and I have to admit that they pretty much ignored me as they played up while 'Auntie' was out of the room. And then, all of a sudden, Jean appeared at the doorway and a deadly hush fell upon the room. "Just what do you think you are doing", she said scolding her 'family' of eight to eighteen-year-olds. I gulped. Thus was my introduction to the indomitable spirit that was Jean Burns.

There are so many stories that we have about Jean. There is indeed much to mourn, yet there is so much more to give thanks to God for. I can count on one hand the people of Jean's stature that I have met in my life. She was a person that always had more to give and she would tell people of the faith that had been the foundation of all that she was and did at any opportunity: over the garden fence, on the bus, at the shops, and of course in that wonderful hospitality that many people knew in the kitchen at Woodburn. Such was the rarity of people like Jean that I have found myself preach about one or another aspect of her life in my own ministry. The last time I told a story about Jean in a sermon ended up being, unbeknownst to me, the weekend of her passing. Learning of that, the following Sunday I shared the news with the congregation, adding that I was sure that she was looking down on us now, giving St. Peter and St. Paul a hard time.

I do mourn you Jean, your crowning glory is still a painful loss for me and for many, many people. Yet, your memory will live on much in the same spirit of the man who founded the school that you gave so much of your life to, John Anderson Graham. The memorial to Graham in the Katherine Graham Memorial Chapel beside that same pulpit that Jean herself preached from on many occasion, reads about



the founder of the Homes: 'It was in thine heart'. That epitaph befits both Jean and John and oh what I would give to hear their heavenly conversation about the faith they found come to fruition in Kalimpong. May you rest in peace Jean, my dear friend, and rise in glory.

Tributes:

I was sorry to hear of Jean Burns' demise.

Although I was not in Woodburn Cottage, I had a very high regard for her. I heard nothing but good about the way she brought up the children in that Cottage. She was a genuine 'house mother' who loved all the children who had the golden opportunity of coming under her care. May she rest in peace, she deserves the rest. Bless her. Linda (Munro)

We are very sorry to hear that Ms. Jean Burns passed away. We send our condolences to her family and friends. Sharon (Monterro)

It was sad to hear of Auntie Jean's passing away but this was expected. She was a wonderful person and we were all inspired by her dedication and love for the children. A real mother figure just like Miss Parmar who was her good friend. Ruth (Glashon)

It is very, very sad news indeed. The Homes has lost a champion and an institution. The many people that benefited from the care and love of Auntie Burns know only too well the loss. May she rest in peace. Michael (Robertson)

What sad news. What a character Auntie Jean was and she led such a worthwhile life. There will be people all over the world who will be grieving for her. Lesley Walker (Minto)

### **Kenneth Kirk**

Kenneth Kirk was born 18 October 1943, in Calcutta, India. In late 1944 our father who was with the British troops in India returned to England and brought my mum and Kenny along with him, they arrived in Daventry and a few months later I was born. My mum was very home sick, and a year later returned to Calcutta, Ken was 3 and I was 18 months, when my mum got us in to Dr Graham's homes. We started life in the homes in Lucia King, at age 5 we went to Laidlaw cottage.

At 14 he went to Wellington hostel, at 17 Ken left school and worked for a few years in the homes bakery. He met and married Jenny Alexander who had been a Lucia King nurse in the homes before returning to Kalimpong to take on the duties of Laidlaw's uncle and auntie. Kenny and Jenny have three children Tony, Susan and Calvin. In 1985, Kenny immigrated to England, and worked with me at the Tate Gallery.

On the 1st of December 2010 Kenny passed away in hospital after a short illness. He leaves behind his wife and kids, and a heart broken brother. May his soul rest in peace. John Kirk.



**2011 Subs** are due from 1<sup>st</sup> January.

Married couples: £20.00

Single: £15.00

Life members: It would be appreciated if Life Members could send a little donation.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this newsletter.

If you would like to contribute to the next newsletter, please contact Mrs. Margaretta Purtill: [margaretta.purtill@sfct.org.uk](mailto:margaretta.purtill@sfct.org.uk)

