

Once again, spring is in the air and Luckley's grounds look better than ever, thanks to the hard work and dedication of Luckley's Maintenance team. How lucky our community is to have such inspiring surroundings, ready for the plethora of activities and events that help shape Luckley life. This issue highlights news from you, as well as Luckley, and interviews with two extraordinary former pupils; one from Oakfield, class of 1959, and the other from Luckley, class of 2014 (below). Thank you to a growing number of you taking part in a wide variety of Luckley events and activities; we are grateful and honoured to have you back. Do get in touch with your news, views and ideas of what you may enjoy reading about and taking part in. It is such a joy to hear about times when you were young and discovering life at Luckley, or indeed, Oakfield!

## Here Comes the Girl

Ella Nonini, class of 2014, is one young lady realising her dreams. She began dancing at the age of seven, inspired by the film, Center Stage, and the main character's red point shoes. Ella recalls the early years at Jayne A Coleman Academy of Dance. The highly technical dance moves demanded precision and Ella found perfecting such movement challenging. It was the summer of 2011, aged 14, that Ella shot up in height and suddenly dance moves fell into place much easier. Subsequently, Ella was thrust onto centre stage, embracing the manicured style of dance that had previously been difficult. Watching some of Ella's dance videos, her dancing is articulate, elegant and dynamic.

At Luckley, Ella loved sport, and describes the hours spent playing netball as joyous. She recalls with fondness, Sports Day, county running competitions, the swimming galas, stretching and lifting weights as well as the strong comradery between House and team members. Sport and dance were what Ella loved most. She worked hard on her GCSEs, which is what her mother had hoped for – a fall back to a dancing career. Ella believes Luckley provided a better chance of academic success, as well as a wood to roam and laughter with friends. Ella's passion for dance and single-mindedness lead her to performing arts school, Laine Theatre Arts, where she received a scholarship for the three-year dance programme. She was eager to be the best.

Since leaving Laine Theatre Arts in 2015, Ella has starred in some of the UK's most renown musicals including Mamma Mia!, Wicked as well as touring Europe and Asia with Cats – the latter being physically demanding, with a rigorous touring schedule. Over Christmas, Ella returned to The London Palladium to star in Peter Pan, as a member of the ensemble cast. Ella's first performance two years ago was one of her all-time favourites – hashtag 'stagefave'.

Two years ago, Ella made a conscious decision to explore television and film. Remarkable performances are aplenty, including roles in Hollywood blockbuster movie 'Barbie',



Ella Nonini in 'Cats' pictured right (above)

in BBC action drama series 'SAS Rogue Heroes' as well as in 'The Winter King'. Ella tells me about her most recent dance role in the film re-make of 'Snow White', not to be released until 2025. Working with renown choreographer, Mandy Moore, responsible for choreographing film 'La La Land', sparked Ella's imagination and creative flair for choreography. Ella plans to move laterally and widen her repertoire.

Clearly, Ella makes her own luck, challenging herself, working hard and making sure she gets quality downtime. A perfect day off; a Sunday roast, waking up with a good cup of coffee, time spent with friends, and plenty of laughter. Interestingly, most of the roles that Ella has played in film and on television have come through word of mouth, testament to her talent, strong network and hard work ethic.

Success for Ella is having the freedom to move through life with authenticity, continuing to secure work that ignites passion and allows for self-development. Recently teaching at her old school, Laine Theatre Arts, Ella describes inspiring young dancers to 'give it their all' as, "a beautiful thing". A little luck and charm may have helped Ella get into the room, but it is talent and effort that have kept her there. Ella Nonini is a name I know we will hear and see more of.

## ALUMNI NEWS

### Ian Vallance Presents Luckley Lecture, Mathemagical



Queen's 'It's A Kind of Magic' sounded throughout The Whitty Theatre in February as Ian Vallance, former Deputy Head Academic, Mathematics teacher and magician, returned to present Luckley Lecture, 'Mathemagical'. A series of famous magic-themed soundtracks graced the airwaves as a pre-show quiz got the crowd thinking. The audience were put to the test with quiz sheets and calculators in hand, providing insight into the wonders of magic – all created through mathematical calculation, of course! The crowd watched in amazement as artful tricks were performed on stage using playing cards, ropes, and coins and with the audience's participation – who proved to be excellent sports. It was a clever act and a brilliant show of magic, leaving us all awe-inspired, including alumni Paige Norton-Edwards, Samuel Bradford and Chris Gadsby.

Look out for Luckley's next lecture, bringing entertainment and something to contemplate to the community.

### Talking Sports Nutrition

In January we welcomed back alumna and registered nutritionist, Leila Lingner (class of 1981) who travelled from her home in France to deliver a talk on sports nutrition to Luckley sports scholars and interested pupils. Pupils learned about the importance of the various food groups to health and physical performance, as well as some shocking facts about the foods we eat and their sugar content. I hope it has put them off the idea of Red Bull for good! Ideas were shared about healthy meal options and pupils took part in making healthy snacks; protein balls and drinks. Thank you to Leila for visiting and to pupils for their excellent participation in the discussion.



(left to right) Paige Norton-Edwards, Samuel Bradford



## ALUMNI NEWS

### Careers Taking Shape

Coinciding with National Careers Week in March, Luckley's Careers Fair welcomed local businesses, parents and alumni who presented a world of possibilities to Luckley's Year 9 – 13 pupils. Pupils were able to approach and network with potential employers as well as get valuable advice about opportunities within specific industries – learning about new occupations and what skills were needed to follow a chosen career path. Not everyone's path was linear, and several had dual occupations and multiple careers, opening pupils' minds to the reality of working life. The fair would not have been the same without the participation of Luckley's alumni, Emma King, class of 1996 and Jess Vevers, class of 2016. Emma spoke about opportunities working in space while Jess spoke about the highs and lows of working in Ecology and what pupils could do to help sustain the planet.



### World Book Day

In celebration of World Book Day, author and Luckley's former Head of English, Clare Rees, returned to talk to Luckley's year 9 pupils about the making of one of her books, 'Jelly'. A writing workshop followed for Luckley's avid readers and writers and those that attended were gifted with a signed copy of 'Jelly'. As always, Clare captivated pupils with her storytelling and inspired many to continue their love of English reading while cultivating their writing skills. Thank you to Clare, pictured right, for igniting imaginations and bringing a sense of joy back to the community.



(above) Clare Rees, left, with Luckley Librarian  
(left) Luckley Year 9 pupils engaged in Clare's writing workshop

## ALUMNI NEWS

### Celebrating International Women's Day

Connecting positively with others brings a sense of belonging that nurtures the soul. As we celebrated International Women's Day, we also shone a light on some of the strong Luckley alumni women who I have had the good fortune to speak to and interview. Collectively, Luckley's alumni are paving the way for a richer world – the thinkers, the creators, the givers, the caretakers, the movers and the shakers.



(top row, left to right) Emma J King, Ella Nonini, Laura Buckenham  
(bottom row, left to right) Lisa Hutchins, Femke Okten, Stephanie Still

### Catching Up with Sally Hills

Luckley welcomed back the much loved Sally Hills for lunch in March, whom many of you will know – not least because Sally spent 33 years working at Luckley. Once a Boarding Assistant, PE teacher, SENCo, Safeguarding Lead and then Deputy Head Pastoral, Sally seemingly knows everyone. She also managed The Duke of Edinburgh and Combined Cadet Force programmes. Sally made a significant contribution to Luckley and its pupils. For this, we are thankful.

Since leaving Luckley four years ago, Sally has kept up an active and adventurous lifestyle. As we lunch, she tells me of her imminent trip to Borneo, just five days away. Sally shared stories of her remarkable and enriching journeys; to meet long lost relations in Nova Scotia, her travels to Costa Rica, Namibia and The Galápagos Islands – some of the most beautiful and bio-diverse places on the planet.

A big thank you to Sally for returning to Luckley and brightening our day and our spirits. Pictured with Mrs Claire Gilding-Brant and with Chef Steve Taylor.



Sally Hills, left, with Luckley's Deputy Head Pastoral, Claire Gilding-Brant

### Leading the Way at Luckley

It was in March that publication, Absolutely Berkshire, visited Luckley to interview one of the leading female business leaders in the area – none other than Luckley's Headmistress, Mrs Areti Bizior (pictured below). In Areti's five years at Luckley, taking up her first headship position, she has continued the good work of those before her; increasing pupil numbers by almost 30%, updating facilities and introducing a wider sporting offer. For Luckley's calm, fair and most charming Headmistress, no challenge is too great and her vision for excellence is reflected in all she does. Many of you



have commented on the thriving nature of your old school, where pupils are happy and aspire to reach their full potential. To find out what is planned for Luckley this year and what inspires Areti click [here](#) and turn to page 50.

## LUCKLEY ALUMNI INTERVIEW

### The Colourful Life of Oakfield Girl, Jennifer Fell Hayes

**Jennifer Fell Hayes is an Oakfield alumna, as was her mother, Kathleen Banks, who was Head Girl while there. Jennifer was vice Head Girl when she graduated early, aged 16, from Oakfield Upper Sixth in 1959, the last term before Oakfield moved from Kirkby Lonsdale to merge with Luckley in Wokingham. Jennifer is now a published playwright and poet, as well as drama educator.**

She was only nine when she entered the school, May 1952, and was the smallest and youngest girl in the school. She mostly loved her time at Oakfield, inspired by the beauty of the grounds by the River Lune with its great banks of purple and pink rhododendrons, enjoying her classes and doing well, and finding many great friends there. She liked telling jokes, playing tricks and writing a one-copy only newspaper called "The Onlooker" that was secretly handed round during Prep. It was marred only by many visits to Sick Bay, where Matron Prosser ruled, and who would keep Jennifer there for two or three weeks at a time with only one book a day allowed (usually finished by breakfast) and no homework. There was no TV, phone or laptop in those days! She still managed to be in the top three of the class.

The food was unappetizing and not well cooked (not long after the war) and when unwell in Sick Bay Jennifer had trouble eating it. Fish that smelled, lumpy mashed potato and big grey peas did not appeal and one day she stirred them all down the little sink in her sick room. Later Matron appeared, asking what Jennifer had done with her lunch the day before, a steely glint in her eye. Apparently while parking her car she had trod on peas that had overflowed from the Sick Bay drain, revealing the awful truth about the lunch. Afterwards, someone would sit with her every day as she ate.

She was a passionate reader, and wrote her first "book" age six, about the Princess Atalanta and a woodcutter saving the Land of Happiness from an invasion by the Land of Grumblers and Groaners. By eight she was reading Jane Austen, Mrs. Gaskell and Charles Dickens. She read aloud well and was often chosen to read the lesson in Kirkby Lonsdale church by Miss Randle, and had to have a stool at the lectern to make her tall enough to see the Bible. Her mother had warned her not to expect to be in plays till she was bigger, but Miss Lishman did A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Jennifer was chosen to be Puck, in a green bathing costume and with green paint on her arms. She loved every moment and soon knew the whole play by heart, reciting to her brother on a bike ride in the summer holidays. She remembers her schooldays with affection and humour, and cherishes the many friends she still has from that time.

A graduate of the Central School of Speech and Drama,



**Jennifer (centre) with friends on a school outing**

(London University), Jennifer taught successfully in London before moving to Manhattan in 1973 and marrying an American. She taught English and Drama at Riverdale Country School, eventually becoming Head of Performing and Visual Arts. After her daughter, Emma, was born, she was hired to create the Performing Arts Department at the Spence School, where Gwynneth Palrow was among her students. Later she moved to be Director of Drama at Friends Seminary, where she taught for 22 happy years. She also taught Lubaina Himid (in London), who won the Turner Prize for Art in 2017, the first black woman to do so, and who had a solo exhibition at the Tate Gallery in London last year. They are still in touch.

Looking back at her extraordinary teaching career, spanning 49 years, Jennifer remembers the joy and satisfaction of helping students, directing plays late into the evening before going home to care for her family. She has many stories of the transformative power of drama, of students who found self-confidence and ways of self-understanding through classes and plays.

Now back in her much-loved Yorkshire, Jennifer recently read a poem she wrote at her church's Easter service. She also gave a talk at a Rotary Lunch on "A Yorkshire Lass in New York" and has been asked to write pieces and read them on a radio program for the blind. Always in demand, she has been asked to take one of her plays to a reading by the Harrogate Dramatic Society with a view to a production. Jennifer is also taking an art class and writing her memoirs. Not long ago, Jennifer flew with her husband to Los Angeles to welcome her grandson, Jalen Bryant, into the world, returning to assist her Vicar with a reading of an inter-generational pantomime. Jennifer's often lively schedule keeps her life very colourful.

Click [here](#) to read the full version of this interview.

## ALUMNI NEWS

### Class of 2019 Reunion Dinner



(clockwise) Claire Gilding-Brant, Gordon Cromb, Jemima Mills, Samuel Bradford, Paige Norton-Edwards, Molly Long, Mikhail Mironov, Emily Brown, Sarah Pierce, Katrina Jablonovska, Esther Brown, Kirstie Hobson

In March we had the pleasure of welcoming back the class of 2019 for their reunion dinner. It was an evening of fun and laughter, helped along by a delicious three-course dinner with wine, good conversation and some incredibly entertaining videos created by the leavers themselves. We also enjoyed a surprise visit from Gordon Cromb, who was summoned by Paige Norton-Edwards to join us for a cup of coffee (as you do at 9 pm!). Thanks to all those who travelled back to their old school and provided yet another lovely Luckley evening. It was an enjoyable way to wind down at the end of a busy term.

### Down at Carters Barn

Over the Easter holidays, Luckley alumni, Lisa Hutchins, kindly hosted Luckley Year 12 student, Lisa S in her home and on her farm for a week. Lisa S was introduced to the world of sheep farming; caring for sheep young and old – learning the art of bolusing, clipping and tailing sheep and assisting with lambing. She had fun with Lisa's beloved horse, Jazz, and enjoyed a visit to dairy farm, Roadford Valley Milk, to rub shoulders with the beautiful cows, visit the milking parlour and take in the views. Lisa S seemed to settle in perfectly to what alumna Lisa terms her crazy farm life, although lambing season is always frantic.



Lisa S learning the art of bolusing with Lisa Hutchins' partner, Nick



(left to right) Lisa S, Lisa Hutchins

Lisa is the perfect example of how Luckley's alumni support the school by enriching the lives of current students. Thanks, and gratitude goes out to the wonderful Lisa Hutchins for her caring, thoughtful and kind nature. May her farm, Melken Jacobs & The Woolly Wagon, be blessed for many more years to come.



## ALUMNI IN BUSINESS

### Sorrel Porteous to the Rescue

Recently I spotted news posted by the wonderful Sorrel Porteous – a heart-warming tale, but first, a little background. Sorrel left Luckley in 1991 and went on to Peter Symmonds College, Winchester. Following an early career in the City working in asset management, Sorrel followed her heart and set up her own 100-acre international competition livery yard, Pentire Sport Horses, caring for and training racehorses with the help of her five dogs; one of which is a greyhound rescue. Sorrel has owned and ridden horses all her life, so the career shift was a natural one. With a good business head, Sorrel later started a small construction business, Dalphy Developments, as well as an electronics company, Testime Technology, serving defence and medical customers. She runs and owns all three businesses simultaneously; all in a day's work if you are Sorrel. And now for her recent tale, the story of Pentire Pingu.



Sorrel with her old Great Dane, Baloo



**Apprehended and behind bars, the amazing officers at Basingstoke Cops (pictured bottom left) went above and beyond to help the little pony (pictured left), who was lost and on the run. It took some doing to catch up with him and bring him to safety. Looking for temporary shelter, Sorrel took him in, and has somehow become the owner of this lovely boy. He seemingly enjoyed his trip to Pentire in Sorrel's big horse truck and on arrival, found his new surroundings inviting. Luckily, his new friends, the event horses at the yard, were able to lend the little pony some clothes – slightly on the large side but warm enough until he goes shopping.**

**Following a successful rescue mission, the owners of the little pony did come forward and very kindly agreed to sell the pony to Sorrel, who named her latest rescue, Pentire Pingu – after the name of the yard and the resemblance to the colouring of a penguin (well, sort of). Pingu is settling in well and he's even ordered himself some new pyjamas; ones that fit his smaller size. In fact, Pingu has acquired the finest new wardrobe from the kind people at Premier Equine International Ltd. After a lengthy bath, and his new set of clothes, Pingu has decided to stay put and no longer give the folks at Basingstoke Cops a run for their money. Pingu is featured in the Basingstoke Gazette and is preparing for visits and autographs in the near future. It was a lovely ending for a lost soul.**



## ALUMNI MEMORIES

### Sue Bailey (née Pike), Luckley Pupil 1972 – 1974



Sue Bailey was schooled at Luckley-Oakfield from 1972 to 1974. In this short time she built lasting memories of Luckley and of life in England, being Canadian and from a military family. She flew back to visit England with her husband, John, in June 2019 to join in Luckley's Centenary celebrations. From the memories of Sue Bailey, she shares recollections of Luckley below.

"I do not remember my English teacher and yet I remember studying Shakespeare and taking a school trip to a Roman amphitheatre to watch a play, possibly Twelfth Night. I think of this often as we have retired to Stratford, Ontario, which has been a renowned theatre town since 1954. This year, in preparation to see Richard III, I read the play first, using techniques to understand it I must have learned at Luckley. We thoroughly enjoyed the production.

We read 'Time and the Conways' by J.B. Priestley in English and throughout my life I have referred to and made use of one of its quotes, "Life is made of joy and woe, when this we rightly know, safely through the world we'll go". The book remains treasured on my bookshelf, almost 50 years later. I see I have the quote slightly wrong (it should be "Man was made for joy and woe..."). I like my version better!"

## ALUMNI IN BUSINESS

### Luckley Alumni and Artist, Jill Flower

Jill Flower, class of 1973, continues to produce contemporary works of art from her home studio in Devon. She is an experimental textile artist who has been exhibiting her work across the UK, Ireland and Europe for the past 21 years. On occasion, Jill collaborates with other artists and is currently working with recycled papers as well as stitch. Who knew that recycled paper could look so good.

Jill spent her childhood in West Africa and this is reflected in some of the vibrant textiles used to produce dynamic works of art that explore heritage, as well as represent theatrical structures.

Jill hosts workshop days for those enthusiastic about creating patterns, brooches, and delicate paper lace as well as upcycling items of clothing. To find out more visit Jill's website [here](#).



Miniature recycled paper artworks, giving the illusion of fabric



Jill Flower in her Devon studio

## LUCKLEY HIGHLIGHTS

### Luckley All Singing and Dancing

Luckley's Drama and Music departments came together in perfect harmony to present the musical, 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat'. The singing, the acting and the live musical orchestra kept the audience charmed. The costumes were vibrant and beautifully made. The West End-style props and theatre backdrop, worked together to take us back through the sands of time to relive the story of Joseph from the book of Genesis. Luckley's Textiles and Design Technology departments had a hand in the making of costumes and props and performers, year 7 through year 13, joined forces to spread a little magic. Thanks goes to Director of Music, Janice Ellwood, who's music students stole the show with pitch-perfect songs and to Esther Brown and her theatre pupils for their immaculate performances.



### Luckley Young Sport Personalities



Photographs courtesy of Neil McQuoid, Racer Ready Magazine

**Brothers and current Luckley year 8 and 9 pupils Benjamin and Toby S attended the English Alpine Ski Championships in Bormio, Italy in February. Both skied for their alpine club, CDC and contributed to the club winning joint English Club Champions, which is a huge achievement. Toby skied well in a very challenging Giant Slalom event, putting down two great runs and finishing in the top 30 English skiers. Ben achieved impressive results across all three events and showed great nerve taking on a steep and icy Super G course for the very first time, finishing in the top 30 English skiers across all his events. Luckley has a growing number of pupils achieving across sport. Barely a week goes by without Luckley's Headmistress congratulating the many successes of its pupils. Sport continues to be an important part and growing aspect of Luckley life.**



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Oakfield School, 1952 – 1959



Courtesy of Jennifer Fell Hayes, photographed above is the beautiful Oakfield School at Underlay Hall, Kirkby Lonsdale, as well as photos taken in the 1950s of Oakfield's senior leaders (below) and of Jennifer with her peers on the school grounds (right). Underlay Hall was the home of Oakfield School from 1945 to 1959, although the building in its present form dates back to 1825, with an in-depth history of occupants, which you can read [here](#). In 1959, the Church Society, which owned both Luckley and Oakfield schools at the time, decided to combine the boarders from Oakfield School, Underlay Hall with 35 Luckley girls in Wokingham – creating Luckley-Oakfield School with Miss Ethel Randle as Head. In the 1958 Oakfield School magazine, Miss Randle presented the move to Luckley, while no small task, would offer Oakfield girls the same secluded surroundings as Underlay Hall and the benefits of closer proximity to London, with its art galleries, theatres, concerts and more. There was mention of the newly installed pool – something of a luxury at the time and that all the Oakfield girls were looking forward to using.



Jennifer (left of crouching peer), Autumn 1952



Jennifer (left) with friend on the lawn

1959 was a momentous year. Oakfield Headmistress, Miss Randle, Deputy Headmistress Miss Denning and Matron Miss Prosser travelled to Wokingham with 55 girls and a convoy of removal vans full of furniture. Miss Randle welded the two schools into one, which was perhaps made easier by the fact that both schools were founded on Christian principles, with similar histories.

The amalgamation of the schools significantly influenced Luckley's future trajectories. The strong leadership, commitment to providing a well rounded Christian education and the exposure to a breadth of programmes and activities beyond the curriculum.



Miss Randle (left), Miss Denning (right)

## LUCKLEY HIGHLIGHTS

### Fun and Games for a Worthy Cause

Luckley's recently appointed Charity Prefect, Tabby W, organised a brilliant RAG or Raising Giving Week at the end of April. Over £800 was raised for The Echo Heart Foundation – supporting families with children born with heart conditions. Week-long activities included the obligatory cake sale as well as the chance to rent a Sixth Form student for the day. Year 12 volunteers were handed over to the highest bidder and tasked with running errands and helping younger pupils with their school work. Fun was had by all and Luckley's younger pupils were given a taste of taking charge. The change trail activity involved the whole community donating their spare change, which was then arranged to form the letters 'LHS'. Impressively, £100 in loose change was collected. The week ended with a fiercely competitive tug of war competition; students versus teachers. Students narrowly claimed a 2 – 1 victory, with both sides giving it their all.



(left – right) Prefects Tabitha W (Lower Sixth), Evelyn B (Year 8)



(Winners of the highly competitive tug of war contest. (left – right) Alex H-L, Eli B, Ethan S, Henry P-B, Nikita T, Lucas S, Seb M, James B, Peter B, Keogh S

### Luckley Young Speaking Personalities



(left – right) Tara T-K, Dylan M-H and Ella D

Luckley were in with a good chance at the Rotary Youth Speaks Competition, having completed three rounds successfully in the Cluster Finals. While the team did not win the Finals they put in a solid effort. As you may well recall in your time, Youth Speaks is an excellent way for pupils to work together and build effective communications skills. Public speaking competency is a wonderful skill to take forward to the world, which I know many of you have. Well done to Luckley's senior public speaking team for putting their best feet forward as Luckley's ambassadors.

## Gifting Luckley In Your Will



Miss Bertha Drake, centre, in the 1940s

Looking back at archived photographs of Luckley, and the many pupils that have passed through its gates since 1918, there remains many similarities. The main house has been lovingly preserved, as have the grounds, which are often the topic of conversation with visitors. Pupils enjoy a close-knit community where each can experience a breadth of subjects and enrichment activities within an aspirational environment. For a small school, Luckley's facilities are truly outstanding – providing pupils with the room and infrastructure to explore and grow their talents. Without such modifications, the School would not have continued to flourish and grow.

Much of Luckley's development has been made possible by the extraordinary generosity of its benefactors together with the sale of school grounds. The introduction of formal legacy giving was introduced several years ago and we have been fortunate to receive financial gifts from three alumni to-date. Our hope is that legacy giving will play a part in supporting Luckley's future plans and allow this wonderful community to continue its mission years into the future. Find out more about Luckley Society 1918 by clicking [here](#) where Luckley introduces legacy giving, providing an opportunity to those that may wish to give back to the School in their will.

## Sustainable Luckley



Since writing last, Luckley's Eco-Schools committee has been busy. A group of students visited Maya's Refillables in Wokingham and learnt about how to shop 'plastic free', which is part of the Marine topic they are studying. Alumna and Marine Ecologist, Jess Vevers visited with colleague and Geomorphologist, Barney B who spoke to pupils about the role of Marine Ecology, careers in sustainability and how to act immediately for the benefit of the planet. The Luckley Eco-Schools Committee was able to show off their International Green Flag Eco-Schools Award (with Merit) for improving their school environment, environmental learning and awareness.

Pupils also took part in a national survey, 'The Big Plastic Count' and the RSPB Big School's bird watch, and have been planting pots of flowers for the Sixth Form patio.

The new Luckley eco-garden is in the making, with lots of ideas submitted as part of a school-wide competition. Exciting ideas included a pond, flower bed for bees and butterflies, raised beds for vegetables and flowers and homes for mammals and insects. The winner, Aoife, won £15 worth of gardening vouchers to use at home and some sustainable chocolate, whilst runners-up Sofia, Coral and Evelyn, won seed planting kits and chocolate too. Our wonderful maintenance team have dug the pond (funded from cake sales and second-hand sales) and surrounded it with logs and deadwood – perfect homes for a variety of insects! Pupils have since weeded, then scattered wild flower seed in the garden, in the hope to create an area attractive to birds and insects by early summer.



## IN MEMORY OF...

### Margaret McLeod, 1951 – 24 December 2023

Luckley Honorary alumna, Margaret McLeod, was very unwell for quite some time and was taken to Royal Berkshire Hospital in early December 2023, after collapsing at home. Former friend and colleague, Helen Chaddock, kept in touch with Margaret whilst she was in the hospital, and Margaret remained positive. Sadly, Margaret passed away on Christmas Eve at the age of 72. Her brother flew over from the United States to be with her.

Before joining Luckley to teach Biology, and later becoming Head of Science, she spent time in Iran doing post-doctoral research. This must have been quite an adventure, being around the time the Shah was deposed. Margaret later spent nearly a year lecturing in Canada, and back in the UK taught for some time in Chelmsford at King Edward VI Grammar School (KEGS) before joining the Science Department at Luckley. For many years, Margaret also took responsibility as Head of Drake House, involved with House competitions. She will be fondly and affectionately remembered by her former colleagues and pupils. Mrs Di Mason, former Science Teacher and Pastoral Head, held a gathering in February with Margaret's Luckley-Oakfield teaching colleagues to celebrate her life and remember their friend. Donations collected at the gathering went to the Diana Brimblecombe Animal Rescue Centre in Hurst, where Margaret had acquired at least one of her pet dogs; the latest quickly re-homed by the rescue centre.

Dr Margaret McLeod 2013



Gil Riley at a LOSRF lunch

### Gil Riley, 1944 – 21 December 2023

December 2023 proved to be a very sad time for Luckley-Oakfield School alumni, with the deaths of three beloved former Luckley teachers all taking place within days and weeks of one another.

Mrs Gil Riley worked at Luckley for several years as a Science Technician and regularly joined coffee mornings and lunches after she retired. She passed away peacefully, aged 79, after being admitted to Royal Berkshire Hospital just a few weeks earlier. She was a very much-loved mother and grandmother and her family and close friends will miss her company, as she lived locally for over 50 years. Donations were welcomed for the British Red Cross.

