

# **Celebrating the Women of WSFG**

**Vivien Boateng,  
M.B.E.  
*Dentaa*  
Pupil 1994-1999**

**Presenter, Singer  
& Entrepreneur**



This is what Vivien said about her time in the school – *“I loved everyone in school”*. Vivien was born in Ghana and came to England at the age of five. She took A Levels in Media, Sociology & Performing Arts at Leyton Sixth Form College and then qualified as a Paediatric Nurse. She is best known for her stage name *Dentaa*. She has appeared in *EastEnders* & *Holby City* and hosts programmes on British and Ghanaian TV.

Dentaa is an advocate for the Ghanaian community in the U.K. and has been awarded many honours, including an M.B.E. in 2016. In 2011, she was named in *The Future 100 Awards* as a *“Young Social Entrepreneur”* and in 2017 she received the *Ghana Peace Awards Humanitarian Service Laureate*.

Founder and C.E.O. of G.U.B.A. Enterprise, she was awarded *Young Female Achiever of the Year*, in June 2019 at the *Men of the Year Awards*, in Accra. This award is given to a female under the age of 40 who has who has excelled and showed evidence of impactful contribution in her area of endeavour.

***“The only person standing in the way of your success is you.”***

**Ada Maddocks**  
**b.1927-d.2007**  
**Trade Unionist**  
**&**  
**TUC President**



Ada was born in Suffolk, and educated at Walthamstow County High School. During World War II, she was evacuated with the school to Wellingborough.

After school, she started work as a laboratory assistant in the Co-operative Wholesale Society, and went on to join the Women's Co-operative Guild and the Co-operative Union in London.

In 1990, she became the fifth woman to become President of the T.U.C. During the ambulance workers' dispute of 1989-90 she went to London's Smithfield market one cold winter's morning, long before dawn, to win the meat porters' support for the ambulance workers. They even let her stand on one of their barrows - an honour previously given only to the Queen Mother.

After the unbanning of the South African liberation movements in 1990, the Anti-Apartheid Movement launched a '*Call to Freedom Declaration.*' This called for an elected constituent assembly to agree on a new constitution for South Africa. She can be seen here signing the declaration at the 1990 TUC congress.

In 1982 she was awarded an O.B.E.

**Vanessa  
Onwuemezi  
Pupil 2000-2005  
Writer**



**Vanessa Onwuemezi is a writer and poet.**

**Her work has appeared in Prototype, frieze and Five Dials. Her story 'At the Heart of Things' won the White Review Short Story Prize in 2019.**

**She has a BA in Biological Sciences, which at first glance might seem worlds away from her current occupation as a writer, but she feels that what motivated her to study biology – a great curiosity about the world, nature and humanity – is also what motivates her to write.**

**She completed an MA in Creative Writing at the University of Birkbeck in 2018.**

**Her new book '*Dark Neighbourhood*,' has been described as heralding the arrival of a strikingly original new voice in fiction. The stories in the collection are influenced by the rich history of Yoruba and Afro-Cuban religions, mythology and art.**

**Bubbers,  
Dorothy  
(b.1908-)  
& Maude  
b.1904-d.1976**



**Maude & Dorothy**

**Dorothy and her sister Maude, both attended Maynard Road Junior School and they both went to Southampton University. Their father was Head of Joseph Barrett Senior School. Both sisters were talented French speakers, winning a French newspaper competition in 1922.**

**In July 1925, Dorothy went to study Science at University and was supported financially by the school through a scholarship of £20 for two years. She had many interests, teaching Science and Domestic Science and later becoming a Head teacher of Romford County High School for Girls from 1953 to 1969.**

**Maude became a Mathematics teacher in 1926, teaching at Mission Grove and then George Gascoigne School, where she remained until she retired in 1964. During World War II, she supported the evacuation of pupils of Winns Avenue, George Gascoigne and William Morris Schools, to Blaenavon, Wales, for a total of 3 years. Sadly, Maude was involved in a cycling accident, fractured her skull and died in 1976 at the age of 73.**

**Naomi Ackie**  
**Pupil 2002-2006**  
**Actress**



Naomi, received the British Independent Film Award in 2017 for *“most promising newcomer.”* Best known for her role in *Lady Macbeth* (2016), she has appeared in *Doctor Who*, *Vera*, *Cleaning Up*, *Star Wars IX* and will be appearing in *Game of Thrones*.

Her acting career began at 11, when she appeared in school plays.

Commenting on the rigours of film acting, she said *“every day was a challenge to figure out the tricks of surviving on set and working the camera, especially with such an intense script. I struggled playing Anna at times because she was constantly at the mercy of others. My sense of pride sometimes made it harder to show what I needed to show.”*

She loves to write poetry, something she explored while attending the Royal Centre School of Speech and Drama. *“When I was in drama school, I went through a period of writing a lot of spoken-word stuff. I'd wait until I got on the train. I think there's something so nice about all walks of life crammed into one tiny space.”*

**Dorothy Enid Barnard**  
**b.1925-d.2012**  
**Professor of Industrial**  
**Sociology and Principal**  
**of Royal Holloway,**  
**University of London**



**Born in Walthamstow, she was the youngest child of Frederick Barnard, a trade unionist carpenter, and his wife, Ethel, who had left school at 13. Both of her grandparents were blacksmiths.**

**During World War II, she was evacuated for three years with our school to Wellingborough. In 1943 she went to Girton College, Cambridge, to study economics, "*which I knew nothing about but which seemed relevant to my interests*".**

**Her name is inscribed on the Hewett Hall honours boards, after being awarded a scholarship to enter Cambridge University.**

**From 1980 to 2003 she was elected principal of Bedford College, University of London, which was part of the oldest women's colleges in Britain.**

**She was the honorary president of the Fawcett Society, which campaigns for gender equality, from 1986 to 2002.**

**Edith Trickey**  
**b.1903-**  
**Olympic Running &**  
**Walking Champion**



**In 1923, Edith Trickey became the first national women's walking champion in the world. She won with a time of 4:35·0 for 880 yards (805 metres).**

**The 1923 *Iris* magazine wrote; Edith Trickey - wonderful successes at running and walking. Fancy a W.H.S. Olympic champion. She won a Gold medal in the 1000m race in 3:08.8 minutes.**

**She is shown here is at the finishing line at the Olympic Games in 1926 in Gothenburg, Sweden.**



**Dr. Hilda Kate  
Whittingham  
b.1876-d.1965  
O.B.E., M.B., D.P.H.**



**Hilda qualified as a Doctor in 1903 after attending the London School of Medicine for Women and the Royal Free Hospital. She was a pathologist at the South London Hospital for Women. Her father was a publisher and she came of a large Liberal family in Essex.**

**During the 1914-18 war she worked with the bacteriological and hygiene section of the Royal Army Medical College at Millbank. She was also assistant in bacteriology and chemical pathology at the Middlesex Hospital. She was appointed O.B.E. for her work during the war years. In 1917 she became the first pathologist of the South London Hospital for Women, and she worked there for the next 30 years.**

**Judy Trim**  
**b.1943-d.2001**  
**Teacher and**  
**Ceramicist**  
**Teacher in 1966**



**Judith Trim was an English studio potter. Specialising in 'coiled pots', her work is in museums across the world, including the V. & A. Museum.**

**She took A-levels in the arts and natural sciences at Cambridge's County High School for Girls, and then studied at Bath Academy of Art. During the 1960's she was teaching art and pottery at our school and she can be found in the 1966 whole school photograph.**

**From 1969–1976, she was married to Roger Walters of the rock band Pink Floyd, her childhood sweetheart. She was shown on the gatefold sleeve of their 1969 album, *Ummagumma*.**

**She died on 9 January 2001, from breast cancer.**

**Aglaia (Athanasios)  
Macropoulos**

**Pupil 1918-1923**



Aglaia's father was born in Greece in 1832 and he married her mother Maria John Agelasto in 1902. She lived at the same house for most of her life. Her dolls house, toys and family photographs are on display in Vestry House Museum.

Her primary school in Highams Park was ran by 2 teachers, Frances and Annie Hitchman. Younger children had lessons in a church hall and older students were taught in the Hitcham's home. When she won a place at University, all the children in her primary school were given the day off to celebrate her achievement.

Here is an article about her work in the 1936 *Iris* magazine.

*Aglaia Macropoulos has now got a post as secretary in the Technical Department of Messrs. Stafford Allen & Son, Ltd., who are manufacturers of pharmaceutical preparations, essential oil distillers and drug and spice millers. She had an amusing six weeks in the depths of Suffolk when she was sent down on relief duty to their herb farm at Long Melford. She loved the fields of peppermint, lavender, dill (for dillwater for babies) and other herbs of which she took many interesting photographs.*

**Elizabeth (Lizzie) Reid**  
**Pupil 2000-2005**  
**Volleyball Player**  
**Olympic Games**  
**2012**



**Lizzie first took up volleyball at school, representing London at the Youth Games in 2006.**

**She made her debut for team GB in 2007 and gained the All-American AVCA and NJCAA awards, after a successful 2009/2010 season. She gained a scholarship to attend the University of Georgia, in America, where she played up against the world's top talent in the sport.**

**She represented G.B. at the London 2012 Olympic Games in the Women's Indoor Volleyball competition. She spent 6 years preparing for the event. All the players had to make major sacrifices, volleyball had to be their priority every day and each and every one had to keep their one goal *"to reach the quarter finals at the London Olympics and to put British volleyball on the world map"*.**

**Mary French**  
**b.1915-d.1962**  
**Lecturer on**  
**Magnetochemistry**



**Mary obtained her B.Sc. in Chemistry from University College London in 1937.**

**In 1940 she became a Lecturer at Bedford College, which had been evacuated to Cambridge.**

**From 1944 until she retired, she lectured on Inorganic and Physical Chemistry at Queen Mary College.**

**Despite becoming blind, she continued working by learning Braille and still travelled widely, lecturing in the Far East and America up until her death.**



**Dr Jill Slay (Abbott)**  
**Pupil 1964-1971**

**Engineer and  
Professor  
for Cybersecurity**



**Jill and her brother, attended Selwyn Primary School. She remembers spending a lot of time in Hale End Library.**

***'I owe my whole academic career to WHS in the 60s to 70s – I was just a working class girl from Chingford - first of my whole family to go to Uni. The teachers of the time just gave us a vision of being those who would the world – especially through technology – and this is what I have tried to do.'***

**Professor at University of NSW in Australia and Director of Australian Centre for Cybersecurity. She advises and trains the Australian government, police and army on cyber security. Last year she was awarded Australian Cyber Security educator of the year. She has published one book and contributed to many other books and journals in the last 10 years.**

**Avril Dankworth,  
b.1922-d.2013  
Musician and  
Teacher**



**Her mission in life was to "make music fun".**

**After attending our school, Avril attended Hockerill Teacher Training College, the Royal College of Music and Trinity College of Music. She worked as a teacher in various London schools, including Selwyn Primary School. She also travelled the world, lecturing, training teachers and adjudicating.**

**Jazz was a particular musical passion of her family and her brother was John Dankworth, the jazz musician. She was also instrumental in introducing jazz into the school curriculum. In the mid-1960s, she co-founded 'Sing for Pleasure' - a music camp for children aged from 7 to 17, where the only entry requirement was a love of music.**

# Marjorie Hayes

b.1913-d.2005

Dress Designer  
and Artist



Marjorie trained at the Royal College of Art in the mid 1930's.

She excelled in the design of clothes and handicrafts and established her own commercial design and bespoke clothes business.

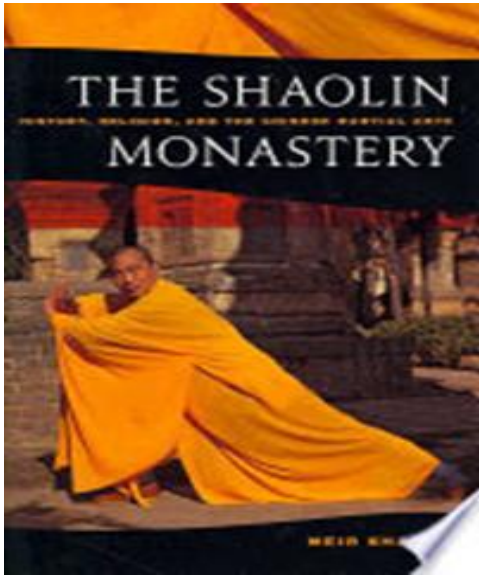
In the *Iris* of 1936 there is a description of how she worked—she attended fashion shows and visited the big stores to copy models for illustration in the daily newspapers.

She also contributed regularly to *Queen Magazine* and illustrated children's books.

She exhibited at the Society of Women Artists, (over 50 works from 1936-1972), the Royal Institute Galleries and the Royal Academy.



**Penelope Herbert  
Pupil 1959-1964  
Historian on  
Chinese history.**



**In 1965 Penelope went to the School of Oriental and African Studies, to study Chinese.**

**Later, she attended Clare Hall, University of Cambridge, where she researched her Ph.D. in Chinese History.**

**In 1970 she was awarded a Leverhulme studentship to do research at Kyoto University, Japan. She has written and contributed to many books about Chinese History.**

**In the *Iris* magazine of January 1971, Penelope's ultimate aim was to be a university lecturer in Chinese History.**

**KATE CASTLE**  
Dancer and Author  
Pupil 1960-1965



Kate trained at the Royal Ballet School and was one of just a handful of students selected for the Royal Ballet Company. As a teenager she danced in *Sleeping Beauty* with the legendary Margot Fonteyn. She also danced alongside Massine and Nureyev, appeared in the films *Ragtime* and *Heaven's Gate* and choreographed the TV programme *The Winds of War*.

*She said: 'My mother always said that as soon as I could walk I was dancing. She took me to see the ballet Coppelia before I was even old enough to go to school and I was on the edge of my seat.'*

*'Dancing for me is always a feeling of absolute exhilaration; it's as if I am doing something I was born to do. I love all kinds of dance.'*

*'I love encouraging people to take up dance and see performances' it's such an expressive art form that can communicate across barriers and boundaries.*

A mother of five, Kate has also had a successful career as an author, writing books for children about ballet and dance.

**Patricia Scotland  
Baroness Scotland of  
Asthall,  
Pupil 1967—1969  
Attorney General for  
England and Wales  
2007 to 2010**



**Patricia was born in Dominica, and her family emigrated to Walthamstow when she was two years old.**

**After attending Walthamstow School for Girls, she went to Essex Technical College, Chelmsford, where she obtained a law degree. She was called to the bar at the Middle Temple in 1977, specialising in family law, and was called to the Dominican bar in 1978.**

**In 1991, she became the first black woman to be appointed a Queen's Counsel. She was appointed Baroness Scotland of Asthall, Oxfordshire in 1997.**

**In 2005 she was voted one of the 100 Great Black Britons.**

**She was appointed Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations in March 2016.**

Blanche Hewett  
Headmistress of  
Walthamstow  
School for Girls  
Head 1890 to 1924



**At the age of 26, Blanche Hewett was appointed as Headmistress, the youngest in the history of the school.**

**She took her degree in Cambridge and became the eighth ‘Newman Wrangler,’ a 1<sup>st</sup> class honour degree in mathematics. In 1889, she gained 1<sup>st</sup> place honours (out of a 1,000 candidates) at London University.**

**She believed in the ‘*austere beauty*’ of mathematics.**

**On her retirement after 30 years at the school, she went on a round-the-world trip and many of her stories are recorded in the *Iris* magazines.**

**Frances Hooker  
(Horovitz)  
Poet and  
Broadcaster  
b.1938-d.1983**



Frances attended our school from 1949 and you can find many stories and poems in *Iris*, our old school magazines.

After obtaining a degree in English and Drama at Bristol University she went on to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. In the early 1960's she started writing, performing and publishing her own poetry. The combination of her own writing and performance of her work, as well as the R.A.D.A. training, helped her with her later career as a reader and presenter for the B.B.C.

Her son Adam (a poet and performer) commented on her;  
*She started writing again, having done so at school, because my father was writing, and that reforged the interest she had had in writing at school (thanks in no small part, I'm told, to a very important and encouraging English teacher). Writing became the focus of her creative life, not least because she didn't much enjoy touring with repertory companies post-RADA.*

Sadly, Frances died of cancer at the age of 45 in 1983.

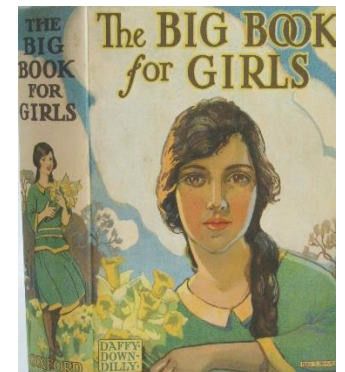




magazine of December 1914 reported that;  
*she is to be congratulated on many artistic successes  
the past year. She has obtained a silver medal at the  
Competition, for a stained-wood box, and was awarded a  
one for some illustrations, and a commendation for a still-  
life. Besides that she received a silver medal for figure  
drawing at the Regent Street Polytechnic."*

She was commissioned to illustrate a gardening book,  
which led to a career in book illustrations and advertising.  
She is best known for her illustrated book covers, for girl's  
magazines and annuals. Many of her illustrations are of girls in  
school uniforms.

When she lived in a house in Loughton  
designed by the same architect  
as the Loughton Town Hall.



Eunice Holden (Black)  
b.1914-d.2007  
Actress and Drama  
Teacher



Eunice was a regular writer in the *Iris* magazine, with poetry, school events and plays. It was noted that she *'sent in the most varied and most vital contributions. Everything she wrote showed a keen zest for life, and honest, sincere expression, as well as a lively sense of fun.'*

In 1932 she attended a Students' Conference of the League of Nations Union in Geneva, debating the Indian problems. The first meeting of the year took the form of a miniature Disarmament Conference. Members of each Form gave brilliant addresses illustrating the opinions of the Great Powers on the subject: *"There should be a 25 per cent. all-round reduction in armaments."*

She first performed on stage at the Unity Theatre in London in 1937 and later worked as an English and Drama teacher. She is best known for her role as Ada in the 1970's comedy TV show, *'On the Buses'*.



Phyllis Allison  
(Lovick)  
Artist and Teacher  
Pupil 1925-1929



Phyllis followed a long tradition of former pupils returning to work in our school. She was a prolific writer and illustrator for the *Iris* magazine and was gifted in many of her school subjects. Phyllis was Secretary of the Old Girls Association Literary Society and wrote this piece in 1933;

*This summer a 'bus-load of High School girls alighted at Regent's Park for the Open Air Theatre. It was a fine day, and the natural stage looked enchanting with its backcloth of real red hawthorns, its logs and its green grass.*

*The play was "Twelfth Night" with an all-star cast. Margaretta Scott was vivid as Celia, and John Drinkwater's voice came perfectly through the megaphones. Anna Neagle, the British film-star, was inexperienced in that sphere of acting, and although she gave a pretty representation, she was hardly convincing.*



**Yvonne Abbinett  
(Goppert)  
b.1923-d.2011  
"Bride-in-a-Box"**



**Yvonne was evacuated with our school during World War II, but graduated when she received a scholarship to Whitelands College, London, to train as a teacher.**

**Whilst teaching in Yorkshire, she met 1st Lieutenant Jean G. Goppert, of the U.S. Army Air Corps, from Texas. They were married three days after VE Day and as he was stationed in France she smuggled herself into France in an adventure known as the "*Bride-In-A-Box*" story. She later joined him in America where she continued her teaching career. In 1990 she wrote about her time as an evacuee**

**She is buried at a U.S. Air Force base in Colorado, where her husband served as a Colonel.**

**Dr. Joyce Reynolds**  
**Classics Lecturer**  
**and Doctor of**  
**Philosophy**  
**b.1918-**



**In 2017, at the age of 98, Joyce was awarded the Kenyon Medal for her research and study of Roman epigraphy– the first time a woman has received the honour. Joyce was born in Highams Park on 18th December 1918 and was a pupil at our school, before winning a scholarship to St Paul's Girls School. She studied Classics at Somerville College, Oxford and graduated with a first class degree in 1944.**

**She directed studies at Newnham from 1951-1979, was Lecturer in Classics from 1957-1983 and Reader in the Epigraphy of the Roman World at Cambridge from 1983-1984. She is working on what people scribbled on the walls at Pompeii. Her former pupil, Professor Mary Beard, commented on her and another teacher: “... *the greatest classicists and classical teachers in the world. I was unbelievably privileged to be taught by them. They taught me what it is to learn, there’s nothing more important than that.*”**

**Nesta Newmarch**  
**b.1892-d.1943**  
**Pupil, Teacher and**  
**Naval Officer**



**Nesta was a pupil here from 1903-11. She gained her B.A. degree with honours in History in 1914. She later returned to teach History here for 15 years.**

**In 1940 she joined the Women's Royal Naval Service and was given her commission as 3rd Officer in July, 1943, only six weeks before her death. She was stationed at Portsmouth, attached to the Commander-in-Chief's Unit, working especially with H.M.S. Victory, a training ship. On August 30th she died of breast cancer.**

**She was the first woman to be given full naval honours at her burial and was the first woman to be buried in the naval cemetery at Portsmouth.**

Edna Jenkinson, Dr.  
Classics Lecturer and  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Pupil 1935-1942



Edna has published works on the Roman and Greek empires and the Latin poetry and Philosophy. In 1945 she attained a B.A. at Newnham College, Cambridge, Classical Tripos, Class I. She studied during the war and recalls some of those experiences in the *Iris* of 1944:

*"Much, perhaps too much already, has been written about Cambridge by authors who, in retrospective mood, don the dripping mantle of false sentiment and let its moist, luxuriant stream pour from their pens. Yet, in war-time, even they are forced to cease from their conventional praises: for no light now streams through the stained-glass windows of King's College Chapel, to mock the candles burning there; not all man's cunning powers of camouflage can hide the real intention of the ornamental lake whose waters lap protectingly about its walls; the Backs are scarred with wheel tracks of innumerable Army cars, and yellow leaves float desolately down on to a brown and slimy sea of mud."*

**Arifa Nasim  
Pupil 2008-2013  
Human Rights  
Campaigner.  
Described as a Global  
Teen Leader.**



**I was 14 when I read, J Sanghera's book *Daughters of Shame*, about horrifying stories of forced marriage and honour abuse and honour killings, and I realised that I could do something about it. I spoke to teachers at my school and said, 'Look, I really want to do a fundraising dinner.' They were concerned about how this would affect my exams. I said to them, 'None of you in this room care more about my exams than I do. For you it's a statistic; for me it's my life. If I didn't think I could do this project I wouldn't be sitting here in front of you today.' We raised over £5,000 and Baroness Scotland gave a speech. I left that school with seven A\*s and six As.**

**I founded Educate to Eradicate, after meeting Hibo Wardare, who was a female genital mutilation survivor. The organisation aims to train all UK teachers about FGM, so they could protect young people in schools before these horrendous practices happen.**

**I was on the UK delegation to the United Nations and shared the stage with four world leaders.**

***"There is nothing that you can't do when you put your mind to it and you have a good team behind you."***



Pearce, Dorothy  
Pupil 1931-1936  
Nurse to Haile  
Selassi Family 1945



In 1943, Dorothy left Ormonde Street Hospital to nurse a grandson of Haile Selassie in Abyssinia.

She wrote about her a reception given by a member of the Abbyssinian royal family in the 1945 edition of the *Iris*; ***ABYSSINIAN DELIGHT.***

*Having returned to England and the monotonous diet consequent upon food rationing, it is amusing to recollect some of the strange meals I had during my sixteen months' sojourn in Egypt and Abyssinia....*

*Amongst a multitude of supper dishes was a sucking pig which had been served standing up! It bore such a pathetic resemblance to my pet that my appetite was quite ruined.*

*This gastronomic account of my travels must end, but I must add a warning for all would-be adventurers-I did not have a decent cup of tea all the time I was away!*