

## **Christina Worthy (nee Yiend) 1966 - 1973**

My name is Christine Worthy (nee Yiend), I was a pupil at Plymouth High School for Girls from 1966 to 1973.

I remember my first day at school, wondering how I would get on without my one best friend from Montpelier Primary (who had gone to Devenport high).

We were seated in alphabetical order so I ended up next to a girl called Nicola Vincent. From that very day we were friends and we still are to this day!

I always feel sorry for people who say they were unhappy at school as I enjoyed it and look back on those years with pleasure.

I was no good at sports, but always had to compete in the House Sports Day for Temple as being rather tall (I'm 5 ft 8" now), I was "persuaded" to have a go at the high jump.

My favourite subject was Biology, taught by my favourite teacher, Miss Stella Jeffery (later Mrs Tracey).

She was our form teacher, in 3rd year I think. One day she brought a baby owl into school. She had rescued it and needed to care for it throughout the day. I was thrilled to be one of the few pupils she showed it to.

One time at registration, I sat beaming at her. She asked me what I was smiling about and I just said I was happy, she replied "I'd hate to see you when you're sad!"

On a school trip, she pointed out all the mosses growing along the side of the lanes - that started an interest which resulted in my Applied Biology degree dissertation being on mosses on Dartmoor.

She only had to smile at me to make my day!!

My two main extra-curricular interests were music and drama.

I joined the school orchestra, playing the flute, which I enjoyed (Although I found the Plymouth Youth Orchestra more satisfying)

First Years weren't allowed to be in the school play, but from 2nd year (3rd weasel in Wind in the Willows) right through to the sixth form, I was involved in every production allowed.

Miss Mills (my Physics teacher) was the prompt. One year, when I was Madame Chaillot in "The Mad Woman of Chaillot", I forgot my lines.

This was unheard of for me, so no prompt was forthcoming! I just paced back and forth across the stage until eventually I remembered where I was in the very long monologue and off I went again.

Afterwards, Miss Mills explained that she thought I was pausing for dramatic effect!!

A highlight of my acting experience came when I auditioned for the part of Ophelia at Sutton High (where one of my brothers attended).

That year I had a fairly small role in our own PHS production of a Shakespeare play, but this part became all-consuming. My friends said I became dreamy, just like Ophelia.

Related to drama were the annual Public Speaking competitions. The whole form had to write a speech which was then presented to the form and voted in or out. (I can't remember but maybe 2 entrants per form). My first effort failed, but having realised that humour went down well, I changed my style and after that was picked, every year I think.

The speech that sticks in my mind most clearly is the one I entitled "Silence". I announced my title and stood saying nothing for a long time. Finally I launched into song: "Silence is golden, golden, but my eyes can see..." (Engelbert Humperdink) Then I delivered my speech which had bits in it that made the whole school laugh, and I won. I was chuffed to bits!!

I wrote quite a lot of poetry and each year entered whatever I thought might stand a chance of getting into the school magazine. I was always on tenterhooks to see what, if any, had been accepted. To this day, I submit the occasional poem to our local newspaper and experience the same thrill on seeing my work in print.

When we went down to the basement for our "practical's" we used to say we were going to the dungeons. If we had lessons in the annexe, it seemed like an escape from the confines of normal school (I went there for art lessons mostly). I was one of a very small number who ever cycled to school. On cookery days I had to catch the bus like everybody else, and by the sixth form I had too much to carry.

By the time I left PHS I had three very good friends, we have stayed in touch all these years and we still talk about our schooldays when we meet up!!

Not school day memories but for your interest:

I was hoping to become a doctor, but sadly failed my Physics "A" level. After my degree I went into teaching (Secondary school, Combined Science and Biology), but after having our family (4 children), I became a peripatetic music teacher in several Primary schools (recorder, flute and clarinet) and really enjoyed this.

My husband got a job in PNG in the 1990's and while there I taught classroom music for the whole secondary school for a year when the music teacher became seriously ill.

Many years later he worked in Indonesia (2005 - 2008) and again I was called in to fill a gap and taught four year 6 classes for music and all the woodwind lessons for the secondary school.

So, what was a hobby and an interest became my career.

I would say to anyone who fails at something they were aiming for, "Go for what you enjoy. Be open to trying something different even if you're not as qualified as some others."

The Music Service accepted me because I was a trained teacher even though I didn't have a music degree (Just as they accepted folk who had a music degree but weren't qualified teachers!)

yours faithfully

Christine Worthy (Mrs, nee Yiend)