

THE BREEZE

No. 40

St. Michael's Association

November 2012

Letter from the Editor

The scene on the first day of school is always exciting and something to remember: children excited to be reunited with friends after the summer break, new classes, new teachers and, of course, new classmates to get to know. On top of the usual excitement, this year at St Michael's there was a new Head of School: Ms Gill Tyrer.

The School Board initiated an extensive search for a new Head after Mr Grisewood decided to move on. The Board was impressed with the quality of the candidates and selected Ms Tyrer after the final interviews at the School. St. Michael's Association thanks Mr Grisewood for all the work he has done at the School, and wishes him and his family the best in the future.

Ms Tyrer is the 11th individual to head the School, continuing a rich tradition at St. Michael's going back to Ms Lea. So please join me in welcoming Ms Tyrer as the new Head of St. Michael's.

1946 – Leonora E. Lea
1972 – Ruth Crawford-Brown
1980 – George E. Gibbons
1993 – Wilma K. Kresel (acting)
1995 – George E. Gibbons
1996 – Ruth Crawford-Brown
1997 – Sandra McGinley
1999 – Aileen Pardon
2002 – Paul Rogers
2005 – Hugh Mawby
2006 – Roger Lenk
2009 – Paul Grisewood
2012 – Gillian Tyrer

Ms Tyrer has kindly written an article for this issue of *The Breeze*. Elsewhere, we have a report from the now annual get-together in London, as well as interviews with Sarah Reynolds and Mairi Fraser, two newly arrived teachers.

I trust you enjoy this issue of *The Breeze*.

Keyji Johnsen, *Editor*

Message from the New Head of School

The new school year is always exciting; for me, this year is made even more exciting by the fact that I have started it in a new school, based in a new country. I have been very excited to move to Kobe and take up the position as Head of School at St. Michael's. Like many other westerners, my impression of Japan had been mostly influenced by movies, books and cartoons. Watching Hollywood epics such as *The Last Samurai* and *Memoirs of a Geisha*, reading books such as James Clavell's *Shogun*, as well as stories by Haruki Murakami, watching *anime* on television, and the ubiquitous *Hello Kitty*, left me with a distorted image of Japan centred around samurai, geisha, ninja and cute cartoon characters! The reality, of course, is very, very different. I have discovered Kobe to be a very international and cosmopolitan city populated by polite, respectful and friendly people who are not afraid to approach me to practice their English. Kobe has great cuisine and shopping as well as an efficient and foreigner-friendly transport system. Japan's reputation for safety and security seems well earned, and it is an easy and attractive place in which to live.

For an expatriate new to the country, St. Michael's International School is rather like working in a bubble. We spend all day delivering a British style curriculum to an international population. At the last count, we had 25 different nationalities, and so, to all intents and purposes, we could be anywhere in the world. What makes St. Michael's stand apart from other International schools, however, is its history and legacy. Over 65 years delivering education to the international community of Kobe is a significant achievement and something of which St. Michael's is justly proud. A family school, built on strong Christian principals has sustained the vision of the founders and seen the School grow, develop and change with the times without losing sight of its aim and values. St. Michael's has stood the test of time and is well placed to continue long into the future. Joining St. Michael's is very much like joining a large extended family and, in the short time I have been here, I have lost count of the number of alumni I have met. For a small school, St. Michael's has had a large influence on a great number of people: yet another testament to the positive influence and lasting impression the School leaves on its students and families. The reputation of St. Michael's International School is well established both at home and abroad. The legacy of Miss Lea and Bishop Yashiro lives on.

As educators we want a positive future for our world and so need to have a positive influence on our students. We have a responsibility to teach our children how to live a well-rounded life. We want them to be compassionate, respectful and peaceful. Taking into consideration their

unique talents, captivating personalities and varied interests, our students need to be confident that they can live happy and successful lives. They need to be given the tools and resources to make this happen. St. Michael's has a proven history of providing these tools and preparing its young people for a global, international future. It is a pleasure and a privilege to be part of the next phase of its journey.

Gill Tyrer, *Head of School*

Scenes from the London Gathering and the London Chapter of St. Michael's Association

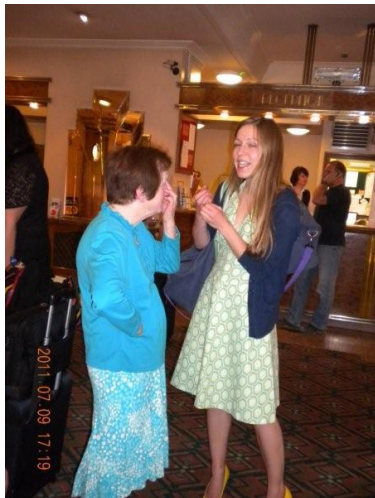
Our first gathering in London, with the IS and ELS associates together, took place on July 9th 2011. People covering as many as 40 years of school history met in Central London and exchanged memories of the good old days. Time passed very quickly and we agreed we should meet again.

The second gathering occurred on 7th July this year. The number of attendees was not as large as last year but we were as happy to be back in St. Michael's mode. We met in the same hotel lounge but moved to a nearby Indian restaurant for supper. Self-introductions, preceding the toasting and eating, were noteworthy and heart-warming. The essence was how special St. Michael's was, and still is, to all of us. Many anecdotes were shared and resulted in happy laughter.

Eating started and people were busy talking about their time at St. Michael's. We were so engrossed in sharing our news and getting to know each other that the idea of taking a group photo was forgotten!

SMIS Association is in the midst of expanding its global network, and we can happily report to you that the British Chapter of SMIS Association has been established to unite people living in Britain and neighbouring countries. Many thanks go to Julie Redpath, who volunteered to be the Coordinator of the British Chapter, and to Angela Takahashi, who will be assisting Julie.

Tazu Makino



New Staff

At the beginning of this school year, we welcomed five new members of staff in both our International School section and the English Language School. Mairi Fraser joined us as the Nursery teacher, as well as the Early Years and Key Stage 1 Coordinator. Sarah Reynolds joined us as the Year 4 teacher and the Key Stage 2 Coordinator. Jasmine Shallcross and Fusako Lang are the new Teaching Assistants in Years 5/6 and 2 respectively. Nicolas Foster joined us in the English Language School section.

We shall be profiling the two class teachers in this issue of The Breeze, while the profile of the two assistants and the ELS teacher will feature in our next issue. It was my pleasure to interview Mairi and Sarah and get to know them a little bit better. Here is what I found out!

Ms Reynolds

Sarah Reynolds was born in Birmingham, but at the age of 4 moved to Tamworth, Staffordshire. From there, she went to South Wales, back to Birmingham, to Atlanta, Georgia, and then to Dubai. She spent 3 years in Atlanta where she was part of VIF (Visiting International Faculty).

Teachers of VIF teach at schools where the students are not able to experience cultural diversity. The teachers bring their own culture and experiences to these schools. Sarah was also the Outstanding Cultural Ambassador for Georgia during her time there. After leaving Atlanta, she went to Dubai, and spent 6 years there before she came to SMIS.

Sarah had never heard of Kobe before she came across the job opening. She was keen to leave Dubai and explore a different part of Asia. She was also ready for the challenge of being a Key Stage 2 leader once again; therefore, when the job came up, she applied and then began to look up the School and the locality. When asked about SMIS, Sarah commented that it was during the interview that she sensed that SMIS was a very family-oriented school. People were friendly, caring and nurturing. She was attracted to that immediately. She was ready for a challenge and for something new. That is how she ended up choosing SMIS!

Kobe has been treating her well. The weather may be a little bit different from what she has been used to, but the people are friendly and it is easy to get around; thus, she has enjoyed it so far. According to Sarah, she is not great with languages. For that reason, the only Japanese she has picked up until now is counting up to 10, and saying 'thank you,' 'good morning' and 'good afternoon.' (*In my opinion, that is not too bad considering that it has been hardly 2 months!!!*) Sarah has not toured around Japan until now but there are a few places she definitely wants to visit such as Nagasaki, Hiroshima, Tokyo, and anywhere she can watch Sumo Wrestling. Since arriving in Japan, she has relished eating sushi, dim sum, and at the Indian restaurant, Aarti.

Does she miss England? Her family, teaching in schools there and the TV are a few things that she misses. The weather, the expensive living costs, and 'moaning' people are among a few things that she is glad she has left behind. She doesn't play any sports but really enjoys watching Football and Sumo. (She used to watch Sumo even before she came to Japan.) Reading, socializing and travelling are some of her hobbies. In the past few years, Sarah has travelled to Puerto Rico, Turkey, countries in the UAE, the Canary Islands and all over the USA. She would like to visit Australia and New Zealand in the near future and in 10 years' time Sarah wishes to be teaching in Australia or New Zealand.

Ms Fraser

Mairi Fraser grew up on an island, off the west coast of Scotland in the Atlantic Ocean, with the 'wind and the rain.' It was a small community and, like SMIS, the school she studied at was also a very small school. She studied languages in France and Italy too before she went to teach in Seoul, where she spent 6 years.

She visited Kobe in the early 1990's for a JET conference on Port Island. She also spent 2 years in Gifu before that. During her time in Japan, she developed a love for the country. She was keeping an eye open for a job opening somewhere in Japan apart from Tokyo. SMIS was an offer that 'fit in with what I was looking for', Mairi stated. A small-sized school, with a community feel where everybody knows each other, was what she wanted.

When asked to compare her previous school and SMIS, she mentioned that there are probably more similarities than differences. It was slightly smaller, but had only early years. Both schools had a family feel to them and long-standing staff.

So far, Mairi likes Kobe. She enjoys the laid back atmosphere and the clean air. She has not had a chance to travel since she has come to Kobe but is eager to visit Hokkaido during the Ice Festival. Udon, nabe, maguro sushi, and sukiyaki are among a few foods she appreciates. Since arriving in Kobe she has eaten a lot of Korean food but one of her favourite dishes is the mutton and spinach curry at the Indian restaurant, Aarti.

Scotland's long, dark winters and the gloomy weather are not missed at all, but Mairi does greatly miss her family, especially her nephews. According to Mairi, Skype has helped overcome this feeling.

Mairi enjoys travelling, good food, cooking for others, reading and hiking. She likes to practice yoga but also likes watching track-and-field and gymnastics during the Olympics.

Mairi's dream holiday would involve travelling on the Silk Route from Istanbul to Asia. She wants to learn the history, culture and the diversity of the route that merges the East and the West.

Avni Shah

Updating the mailing list

The running of St. Michael's Association is dependent on volunteers. Therefore, the actual costs of the Association can be kept to a minimum. However, there are costs involved in printing and sending hard copies of *The Breeze*. In the interest of minimizing this cost, we have initiated a project to collect e-mail addresses of school alumni with the eventual aim of moving to digital publishing in the near future.

To help us with this, I kindly ask you to send us your e-mail address to the following email address so St. Michael's Association can contact you via e-mail? I thank you for your understanding on this matter.

alumni@smis-mail.org

Donation Details

In the recent past, we have been very fortunate to receive occasional donations from school alumni and we would like to thank you for your assistance in the running of St. Michael's Association. We feel that it may be appropriate to include the bank details of St. Michael's Association in order to make it easier for you to donate.

Bank:	Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation
Branch:	Kobe Eigyou Bu (Branch No.500)
Account Name:	Sei MikaeruKokusaiGakko Dousoukai
Account No.	8579576
Swift Code:	SMBCJPJT

SMA Annual General Meeting

We shall be having the Annual General Meeting of St. Michael's Association on Saturday 2nd March 2013. This is a good opportunity to mix with alumni from different generations. Last year, we held a buffet dinner and trivia quiz. We look forward to seeing you at the next AGM.

Bazaar 2013

The next School Bazaar will be held on Saturday 27th April 2013 so if any of our overseas friends are planning to visit Japan you may wish to plan around this date.

Scheduled Events of St. Michael's Association (2012-2013)

22 nd August 2012 (Wed)	8 th meeting of SMA
17 th October 2012 (Wed)	9 th meeting of SMA
12 th December 2012 (Wed)	10 th meeting of SMA
20 th February 2013 (Wed)	11 th meeting of SMA
2 nd March 2013 (Sat)	SMA Annual General Meeting
17 th April 2013 (Wed)	12 th meeting of SMA
27 th April 2013 (Sat)	School Bazaar
18 th May 2013 (Sat)	Ms Hirose's 94 th birthday
12 th June 2013 (Wed)	13 th meeting of SMA

Meetings of St. Michael's Association are open to anyone who has been involved in St. Michael's in any way – International School students, English Language School students, or teachers. We publish *The Breeze*, organize alumni events, and generally keep in regular touch with past students and teachers of St. Michael's.

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