

St Helen & St Katharine bursary fund

# Life changing opportunities

How bursaries inspire, enrich and transform lives, as told by three St Helen's girls.



Louisa Green  
2006 - 2010



In the microbiology lab



Reading lesson at the  
carol service



Last ever day



Smiles on results day

"From the moment I walked through the large oak doors as a new member of Year 9, I was immediately aware of just how privileged I was to have been awarded a bursary at St Helen's. For anyone else, the move from the state to the private sector part way through the academic year might seem rather daunting, but I found the transition very smooth – my new class and teachers were very welcoming and I soon felt as though I had always been a member of St Helen's. What awaited me was a unique experience; St Helen's has it all, from the high standard of education, to quirky traditions such as St Kate's Day and I enjoyed every minute of my time there. During my first few weeks as a Helkat I bounced through school with eyes like saucers, marvelling at the outdoor swimming pool, the orchard, the listed buildings, and still couldn't quite believe that this was to be my school for the next four years.

Year 10 and 11 flew by and before I knew it I was standing in the Long Gallery holding my envelope enclosing my GCSE results in a shaking hand. I needn't have worried though, for the devoted staff had worked their magic and brought me up to the educational standard of the rest of my year group. During this time I represented St Helen's in lacrosse, badminton, hockey, rounders, netball and swimming, completed the Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award and won an academic commendation during each of these two years at Prize Giving.

The Upper School at St Helen's prepared us well for life in the outside world; a delicate balance of free time and lessons encouraged us to develop crucial time management skills needed for University. I won an academic prize in Upper School 1 and 2 and was honoured to be voted a Prefect – I remember vividly the moment when we were all fitted for our famous St Helen's boaters! I chose to study biology, maths, French and economics to AS Level and continued with biology, maths and French to A Level, with a view to studying biology at University to eventually lead to a career in medicine. Applying to University was made easy thanks to the genuine care of the staff and, after having sent my application only one week earlier, I received the first offer in my year group – ABB from Leeds, swiftly followed by offers from Exeter, Loughborough and Warwick. Meanwhile, Mrs Marsh, the Higher Education Co-ordinator at St Helen's, had found a position at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, where the successful applicant would become part of the Biomedical Scientist team as a Trainee for 4 years. The full-time position also included an NHS funded part-time BSc Biomedical Science degree at Oxford Brookes University, which meant no student loan!

The post seemed perfect – experience in the UK's second largest teaching hospital, a degree, no debts, a high salary(!) and one step closer to a career in medicine. A few weeks later I was sitting in front of a panel being interviewed and in less than a week the job was mine.

I have been working at the John Radcliffe for just over three months and I absolutely love it. I'm currently based in Microbiology and my daily work entails examining cultures and agar plates, carrying out tests (with a qualified Biomedical Scientist next to me of course!), data entry, preparation of specimens for culture/examination and setting up machines to process them. I don't think a day has gone by where I haven't learnt new facts about a certain species of bacteria, the activities of a particular virus or how to use a new piece of high-tech equipment. It's not easy juggling the demands that a degree and a full time job require but I'm already realising the benefits of my decision. My degree course and work at the hospital complement each other very nicely; I am able to use knowledge from work to increase my understanding of particular topics at University and of course, my daily work is like one big science practical so I get plenty of practice at good laboratory techniques! After a year and a half in different laboratories, I will choose my favourite in which to work for the remaining two years, before I become an accredited Biomedical Scientist and hopefully remain employed by the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals Trust.

So that's it; my story in four paragraphs. To an outsider St Helen's is just another school; to us it's a community in which life-long friendships are made. Memories of Kit-Kats, swimming in the summer, 2p races, summer fetes, trips and visits, Christmas Reviews and summer balls will stay with me forever."

LOUISA GREEN

*"It's all thanks to the generosity of the families who donate to the Bursary Fund. Without them, it would have been impossible for me to attend St Helen's and I will be making a monthly donation so that for girls in years to come, maybe the St Helen's dream can turn into reality too."*

"It is now just over a year since I left St Helen's and increasingly I am aware and grateful for the years that I spent there and all that they have given me as the result of being granted a bursary. I have many happy memories from my time at the school, fantastic friendships and a wealth of experience that gives me confidence and a huge variety of options as I look towards the future.

From my very first English lessons at St Helen's the dedicated and passionate teachers inspired a real love for the study of literature which continued to grow throughout my seven years at the school. Within this stimulating environment and with the unfailing support of all the staff and fellow pupils I was encouraged to aim high and face intellectual challenges with determination. In particular the Higher Education and Sixth Form staff who were enormously helpful and always ready with a huge amount of valuable advice that helped us all to plan our next steps after St Helen's. I remember sitting in Room 10 during a maths lesson in Year 9 chatting with a classmate about how we would love one day to study literature at Oxford University. What started as a slight daydream distracting me from equations grew momentum as the years went by. GCSEs and A Levels in geography, art, English Literature and Italian came and went and I am now very excited to be preparing to start an English Literature degree at Lincoln College Oxford next week!

As well as the academic opportunities that I was given through my bursary at St Helen's many of my happiest memories come from involvement with the extracurricular activities. A keen artist and double bass player, the wide range of activities and endless possibility for creative outlets at

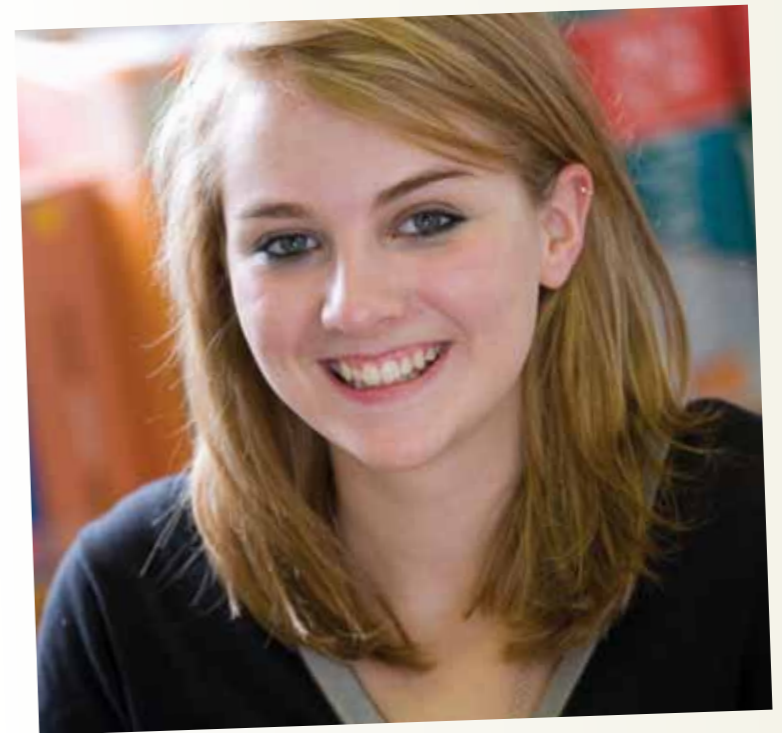
St Helen's was constantly appreciated and enjoyed. This was a highly artistically liberating environment in which embracing projects, however ambitious, was always encouraged. On leaving the school every one of the Old Girls has been given the fantastic and unique opportunity to fully explore and mature in their chosen artistic field.

During my final year at St Helen's I was very pleased to be chosen as Head Girl and one of the tasks of the Prefect Team was to welcome guests to the school. From groups of Old Girls of 30, 40 and 50 years ago to prospective parents, it was always a pleasure to give tours and meet visitors. We were really proud to show people around and one of the aspects of the school that people complimented most was the friendly atmosphere and attitude of the girls themselves. It is true that the diverse mix of girls at St Helen's is very important in establishing its unique and warm school community, with every individual personality and talent adding to and enriching the school.

The Bursary Fund is so very important in ensuring that St Helen's continues offering these incredible opportunities, both academic and otherwise, to girls regardless of constraints of any kind."

MIRIAM CARTER-FRASER

*"From my own personal time at St Helen's and my own experience of the Helkats' community, I cannot emphasize enough the value of donations to the Bursary Fund."*



Miriam Carter-Fraser  
2002 - 2009



My first day at Lincoln College Oxford.



Enjoying an art class while at St Helen's.



With friends at St Helen's

"Seven years ago, I opened a letter that changed my life. It offered me a place at St Helen's, and told me that I had the honour of being the school's first Foundation Scholar. I was so excited about going to a school with such an excellent academic reputation, and yet so nervous at the same time! Above all, I remember feeling overwhelmed with surprise, that such an opportunity should be given to me. Since that day, I have spent seven fantastic years at St Helen's. I have met so many wonderful people, and have made friendships which I hope will last for many years to come. In all that time, I never forgot how lucky I was to be there, among such dedicated staff, and in such a beautiful atmosphere for learning.

I always felt honoured to have been the first Foundation Scholar, and, throughout my time at St Helen's, I always strove to prove myself worthy of such an honour. Out of my seven years at school, I was awarded a prize for Academic Achievement for five years, and for the other two I was highly commended. I gained A\*s in all eleven of my GCSEs, and in all four A-Level subjects. In the Sixth Form, I took history, maths, Latin and Greek at A Level. I applied for Law at university, and was accepted at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

Within the classroom, my teachers were always passionate about their subjects, and inspired me to feel the same. They helped me and supported me, and encouraged my fellow students and I to do the best we could. It is difficult to do justice to their commitment, and I can only say that I always felt lucky to be at St Helen's. Outside of the classroom, I took part in the wider aspects of life at St Helen's. I really enjoyed debating, and in the Sixth Form I used to organise weekly

debates with a friend. I also liked to play the violin, and had great fun playing in the school orchestra and with my chamber group. I completed the Duke of Edinburgh's Award at Gold, Silver and Bronze Level, and I discovered my fear of heights during one very memorable expedition in the Peak District! However, I must admit that I never could boast of any great prowess at sports, as, despite my best efforts in this area, proficiency on the pitch always eluded me!

I am now studying Law at Cambridge. For most of my life, I have dreamed of coming here, and St Helen's has given me the opportunity to make that dream a reality. I know that if I had not received the Foundation Scholarship, I would never have had the opportunity to have such a wonderful education.

I know that I will make my own contribution one day, and I hope that, with your generosity, another life can be changed."

HAISHIN SHI

*"The kindness of those who donate to the Bursary Fund has changed my life and raised my aspirations. Thus, it could be said that I understand, more clearly than most, how an education at St Helen's can be a gift, a gift that will last a lifetime."*



Haishin Shi  
2003 - 2010



My first day at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge



In the new library

# The St Helen and St Katharine Foundation Bursary Fund

## The Foundation

The Foundation was created in 2001 to formally manage all donations received by the school, thereby maximising funds through the tax-efficiencies available to registered charities. It is run by a body of Trustees that represent the school's wider constituency – governors, parents, Old Girls and former parents.

## Our aim: more free places

The aim of the Foundation, to which we are passionately committed, is to extend the provision of bursaries in the school and, in particular, to fund an increasing number of completely free places. We remain committed to our long-term goal of being able to say that no child, for whom St Helen's is the right School, will be refused entry because of a lack of parental means.

## Awards already funded

At present the school funds academic and music scholarships based on merit, and assists with fees for a number of families who are unable to meet the full cost. The Foundation is able to extend this and three girls have already benefited from the receipt of Foundation Awards which cover the full cost of fees, lunches, travel, books and uniform. The cost of such an award at present is around £11,000 a year for each child.

## How You Can Help

The amount we receive from friends of the school will determine how many children can be offered Foundation Awards. We are appealing to you to support us in our aim to help children benefit from an education from St Helen's.

## Gift Aid

Gift Aid is a simple and straight-forward scheme set up by the UK Government to allow charities to claim tax relief on gifts from those who pay UK Income tax and Capital Gains Tax. Donations of any size are eligible for Gift Aid. The St Helen and St Katharine Foundation can reclaim basic tax on your donation, which will add an additional 25% to the value of your gift. If you are a higher-rate taxpayer, you will be eligible to claim additional tax relief thus significantly reducing the net cost to yourself.

## Online

You can make a gift, whether a single donation or a standing order, online at [shsk.org.uk/our community/foundation](https://shsk.org.uk/our-community/foundation). Alternatively, you can make your donation as outlined below.

## A Single Gift

Simply complete and sign the Donation Form, enclose your cheque in favour of the SHSK Foundation and return it to the address below.

## A Standing Order

If you would find it more convenient to pay a sum each month, please sign the Donation Form and Standing Order mandate attached, and return it to the address below.

## Annual Tax Return

Anyone who completes a Self Assessment tax return is able to nominate a charity to receive all or part of any repayment due to them. All you need is our charity code: HAG18AG.

If you like to talk through any of these options, the Foundation Office would be happy to help by calling 01235 532 012 or via email [foundation@shsk.org.uk](mailto:foundation@shsk.org.uk)

## Making a Bequest

**The benefits of making a legacy:** Leaving a legacy is one of the simplest and most tax efficient methods of making a gift. Not only can a legacy reduce or eliminate Inheritance Tax, it is also a wonderful opportunity to do more than you might have been able to do in your lifetime. As a registered charity, all bequests to the school are exempt from Inheritance Tax which means that a legacy to St Helen's can be deducted from the value of your estate, thus reducing its liability to Tax.

**How your legacy can help:** Legacies will play a crucial role in securing our future. The cost of providing an education with broad and challenging curriculum is rising faster than general inflation. For this reason, we would especially value legacies for unrestricted purposes and general endowment so that Trustees are able to spend the money where it is most needed. Providing free places is a priority and you may wish to leave your gift specifically to the Bursary Fund. The Pledge Form enclosed gives you the option of making a bequest to either the General Fund or the Bursary Fund.

The wishes of our benefactors are clearly paramount and we would be very happy to discuss your proposed legacy with you.

**The Sister Jean Society:** Making a Will is a private matter and we would respect your wish to remain anonymous. But, if you would like recognition for your gift, we would very much like to have the chance to thank you during your lifetime. That is why we have created The Sister Jean Society, named after the first Headmistress of the amalgamated schools.

If you choose to join you will be invited to a special lunch, every other year, with the Headmistress, Chairman of the Foundation and other guests. It will be our way of thanking you and we hope you will enjoy the opportunity to revisit the school.

Whether or not you decide to join, it would be helpful if you could let us know if you plan to remember us in your Will by complete the form enclosed. All bequests will be treated as confidential.

*“We train our pupils to know that real happiness lies in giving, not getting.”*

– SISTER JEAN BENEDICT, 1963.