

ALUMNAE NEWS

May her friends still be many



Former students and staff at the 30-year reunion in June

GOLDEN THREADS OF FRIENDSHIP....

A message from the Head, Mr Ian Keary

"It has been another incredible year at The Tiffin Girls' School, and students and staff are enjoying a well-earned summer holiday. The end of term culminated in our final assembly – a beautiful reminder of our unique 145-year history and the strong sense of belonging that defines us.

The summer also saw the Class of 1995 return for their 30-year reunion, where the school song rang out with as much enthusiasm as ever. That same song resonates at every milestone, connecting generations of Tiffin girls.

As our Head Girl Yolana so perfectly expressed at our Open Evening on 8 July: 'Tiffin Girls' is a place where, if you have a passion - regardless of what it may be - it will be met with enthusiasm, encouragement, and unwavering support from both staff and peers. It is a community that believes in nurturing ambition and making the seemingly impossible entirely achievable.' We hope this newsletter will bring back fond memories, showcase the exciting journeys of our alumnae, and remind you of the golden threads of friendship that continue to bind us all together."



Recent leavers return to the school for a celebration

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ALUMNAE NEWS



30-Year Reunion - Class of 1995



By Janice Kent (Miss Rees - Modern Languages)

On Saturday 28th June, the Class of 1995 returned to the school for their 30-year reunion. There was much excitement in the build up to the event on various WhatsApp groups as the former students reconnected, spread the word and collated old photos and memorabilia to be shared on the day. I was a form tutor to the B form and also taught French to some of the other pupils in their year. I remember them as a very talented and exuberant year group who took advantage of every opportunity the school offered them. They have not changed one bit!

The afternoon was a very joyful occasion full of laughter and reminiscing and it was wonderful to see so many of the students reconnecting after 30 years. Many have kept in touch and some had been to a previous reunion at the school but for quite a few, it was the first time they had returned to the school in 30 years or met up with their former classmates. It was also wonderful that a few former teachers were able to attend, including Lorna Donkin (Miss Turk who taught music), Isabel Gracie (Modern Languages), Sue Urquhart (who still teaches at the school) and myself Janice Kent (Miss Rees, Modern Languages).

The afternoon started at 2pm with registration (and much hugging) in the school hall, followed by a welcome speech by Naia Edwards, the School Development Manager. A few members of the B form entertained us with their very humorous memories of their time at the school. Following this, there were tours of the school given by current sixth formers who also treated us to some delightful music during a delicious afternoon tea. It is always wonderful to speak to them, hear how they are thriving at the school and what they are planning to do next. There was also a memory tree with names of former staff and students who are sadly no longer with us. During the afternoon, tributes were paid to two members of the B form who have sadly passed away in the last twelve months – Cassie Kinsman and Zoe Hart. I was their form tutor and I remember them both with much fondness. We raised a glass in their memory.

During the afternoon, everyone enjoyed looking at the table of memorabilia, watching the powerpoint of photos from their time at the school and buying some TGS merchandise to support school funds and as nice mementos of the day. The reunion ended with group photos and singing of the school song, which I personally always find very emotional. Especially the line 'golden webs of friendship are of threads unbreaking wrought'. Seeing the emotion and happiness of everyone at the reunion shows the webs of friendship are still strong and bringing joy to many. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making the afternoon such a success, especially Naia Edwards, current students and the PFA for the delicious afternoon tea.



ALUMNAE NEWS



Class of 2022 - University Graduation Reunion



In what has become an annual tradition, we welcomed back the Class of 2022 to celebrate their university graduations and the end of their higher education journeys.

Staff were delighted to catch up with these inspiring young alumnae, and the school community is excited to watch their next chapters unfold.



Kingston Dragon Boat Race 2025



For the third consecutive year, the PSA entered a team—**Tiffin Titans**—into the Kingston Dragon Boat Challenge on Sunday 20 July. The team of parents, students, and alumnae raised over £1,000 for the Bright Futures Project to install energy-efficient LED lighting in the Holdsworth Building.

Please use this link for any donations and help our enthusiastic team to reach their fundraising: [JustGiving Link](#)





ALUMNAE SPOTLIGHT

Katherine Parkinson (Class of 1995)

We are thrilled to congratulate Katherine Parkinson on her casting as Molly Weasley in the upcoming Harry Potter TV series.

Katherine first rose to fame in Doc Martin and later in the beloved sitcom The IT Crowd. Her career has included roles in The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, BBC One's Here We Go, and Disney Plus's acclaimed Rivals, for which she earned a BAFTA nomination.

And of course, Katherine's first performances were on the Tiffin Girls' stage!



Source: IMDb

Celia Silvani (Class of 2009)



Celebrating our writers

Celia Silvani (Class of 2009) published her debut novel Baby Teeth (Orion, 2025) to great acclaim. In this alumnae interview, Celia reflects on discovering her love of writing at TTGS and juggling authorship with motherhood.

About your time at The Tiffin Girls' School

What are your fondest memories of school?

I made friends for life at Tiffin and my fondest memories are just spending time with those girls. Some formative moments include the surreal half-days after the school burned down in Year 8, chanting songs we'd learned in music ("Wade in the Water"), the annual buzz of the School Birthday, a French exchange trip to Marseille in Year 11, and the giddiness that took hold every July as the summer holidays approached.

Were there any teachers or lessons that particularly inspired you?

Miss Hocking, my GCSE English teacher, was the first person who told me I could write. Before that, I think I was too scared to really try. She showed me that writing could be playful, joyful - that the act of trying, of effort itself, is something to take pride in.



More...



ALUMNAE SPOTLIGHT

Celia Silvani *(Continued)*

Did you always know what career path you wanted to follow while at school?

Not at all. I wasn't a natural scientist or mathematician and I often felt a little cowed by the intelligence of my peers. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I studied English at the University of Nottingham and still felt fairly directionless. In my final year, I applied for graduate schemes and a PR agency took a chance on me - that was the start of my career in communications. More on that later!

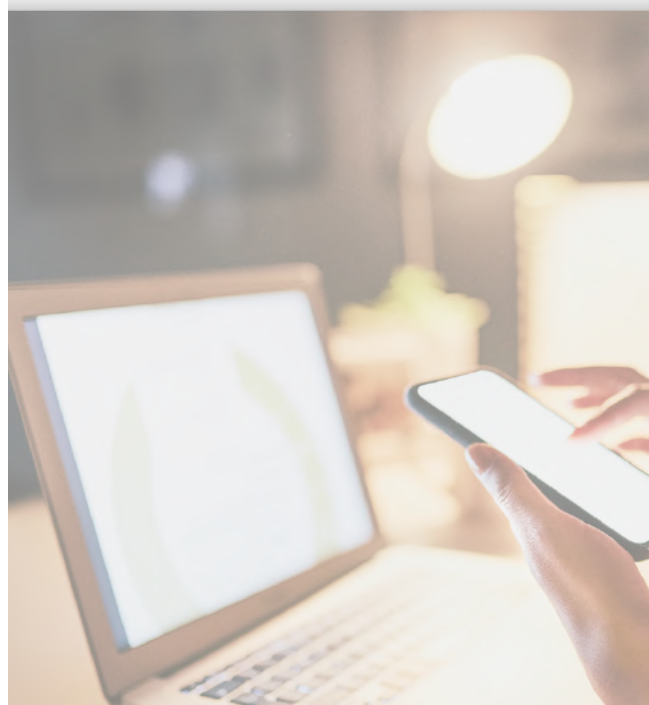
After school

How did you become a writer?

I've worked in communications since 2012 (I'm currently on maternity leave with my second child). In 2019, I decided to put myself forward for some freelance writing commissions. My thinking was: I do this on behalf of clients - pitching features, ghostwriting them - so why not try it for myself?

I've always been a bit of an internet magpie, constantly on social media and fascinated by the weird and wonderful. I started pitching trend pieces based on what I was noticing online, and that opened a lot of doors.

I've written for titles including the BBC, Times and Telegraph about fruit-powered batteries, the rise of baby name consultants and the origins of hurricanes (and more).



Tell us more about the work you do

Before maternity leave, a typical working week looked like this: I looked after my children on Mondays, worked for my employer Tuesday to Thursday and wrote on Fridays. It sounds neat, but the reality is messy.

My priority is my family, and I'm often still typing at midnight and scheduling emails so I don't wake anyone up! I get a real sense of satisfaction from helping people with their communications, especially when I get to develop a company's messaging and see it land.

That said, nothing compares to the euphoric feeling of seeing my own work, with my name on it, in print. Like Baby Teeth in bookshops! In that moment, all the hours, all the self-doubt, all the small sacrifices - saying no to seeing old Tiffin friends, for example - feel worth it.



ALUMNAE SPOTLIGHT

Celia Silvani *(Continued)*

Congratulations on Baby Teeth. Can you tell us some more about the book, the inspiration and getting published?

Baby Teeth was my lockdown project! I read an article titled “I brainwashed myself with the internet” about a woman who became deeply involved in increasingly insular freebirthing groups online - communities that encourage members to avoid any medical intervention during pregnancy and birth. Tragically, something awful happened to the woman who wrote the piece.

Freebirthing was a totally new concept to me. I’m extremely privileged: I’ve never had a traumatic experience with healthcare professionals and hold them in the highest regard. I couldn’t stop thinking: what would make someone trust the internet over a doctor?

That became the heart of Baby Teeth: when does community, and the balm of being seen, become control? I spent months researching and interviewing, always approaching the subject with curiosity rather than judgement.

It took six months to draft the novel alongside my day job. I sent it to agents (‘queried’) and signed with one within a week! But the book needed a lot of work. While I’m a voracious reader and understood the broad shape of a novel, I’d never had formal training in creative writing and it showed. My agent and I edited it together for over a year, and I signed a book deal in 2022. It was published by Orion (part of Hachette) in February this year.

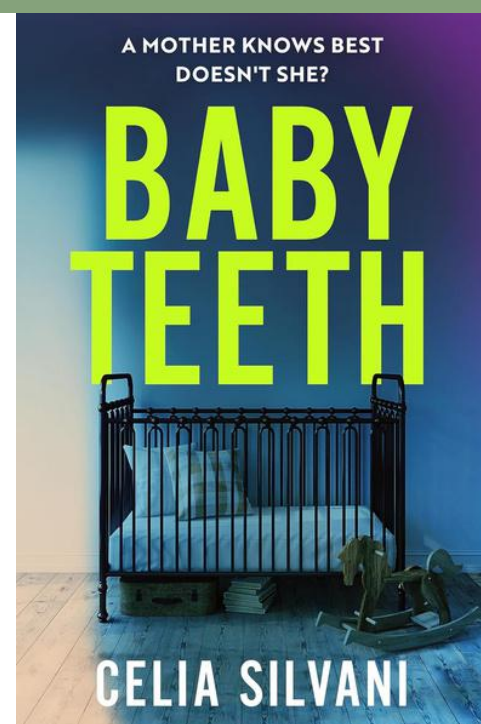
Have you got more books in the pipeline?

Yes! I’ve nearly finished my first draft of book two. I’m currently chipping away at it while caring for my newborn (Jude is seven weeks old). It’s about bridesmaids and the wedding industrial complex and much cheerier than Baby Teeth!

How do you juggle being a mother of two with your writing?

Short answer: with difficulty.

Longer answer: very few writers are able to rely on it as their only source of income. So my juggle is about balancing paid work (my part-time job and freelance writing) with unpaid work (writing a second book, out of contract) - all alongside being a mum, a daughter, a sister, a wife and a friend. It’s hard. Really hard. But I keep going because I love it.

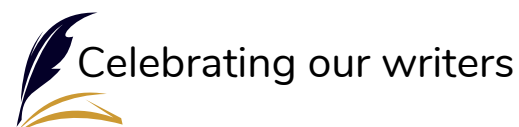


Baby Teeth: The compulsive, unputdownable and thought-provoking novel that you won’t be able to put down! Publisher: Orion. Publication date: 6 Feb 2025. ISBN-13: 978-1398714410



ALUMNAE SPOTLIGHT

Sarah Onions (Class of 1977)



Sarah Onions (Class of 1977) co-wrote the award-winning YA novel *One Year One Night* under the pen name S L Roman, inspired by a WW2 story from Egham. Sarah still lives in Kingston and, earlier in the summer, took part in a street party to celebrate VE Day. She created a wartime quiz which was a great success and promoted her book.

"I joined The Tiffin Girls' School later after my cohort, in May 1972. I stayed through to the U6 and left in 1977. I think it was a 3 form entry in my year and I joined 3C. The Head was Miss Weedon, Deputy Head, Miss Murphy and Miss Travis taught me French. Mrs Cousins and Zabani taught us English. I did A-Level French with Mrs Cooper and English with Mrs Spalding. I was Deputy Head Girl and the Head Girl was Zoe Richardson. We both took part in a concert in Kingston Parish church in our final year. She sang and I gave a reading.

Me, Zoe and the other senior prefects used the green room behind the stage as our room in the old school and a tray of donuts was delivered every break time! Sharon Stebbing was the sports secretary.

After university I went into radio journalism, starting at Essex Radio. I carried on working in Radio and TV news including ITN News until I had a family when I went into the teaching of media studies starting at Richmond FE College. After 17 years in teaching I returned to news at Radio Jackie."



It's never easy to go back, especially when...

Annie returns to her home village after a long absence and rediscovers the diary she kept the year she turned 16, the year that changed her life.

Based on a true event in World War Two, we witness through her eyes her blossoming love story with a handsome soldier and her growing affection for an evacuee child.

A tender and amusing story of love, resilience, and loss by a fresh new voice.

Publisher: Independently published. Publication date: 18 Aug 2021.

ISBN-13: 979-8544729518



SCHOOL NEWS



Follow our school news updates on bluesky: [@tiffingirlssch.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/tiffingirlssch.bsky.social)

Royal Academy Success

Congratulations to Vivika (Year 12), whose painting *Liminal Space* was selected for the Royal Academy 2025 Online Exhibition.



VE80 Celebration

The front field came alive with 1940s music, skipping ropes, jelly and custard tarts, and a poignant memory wall of WW2 stories.



U15 Surrey Plate Winners

Cricket is becoming increasingly popular at the school and we were delighted when our U15s played an exceptional match against Tormead to secure the Surrey Cricket Plate win.

Fond Farewells

This year, we said goodbye to beloved staff members **Saira Barakzai** (26 years of Maths teaching!), **Nadia Flay** (Physics), **Angus Meryon** (Music), **Sophie Dixon** (French & Spanish), and **Abigail Cohen** (Geography). We are delighted that alumna **Rebekah Sturge** will now lead the Music Department.

Do you remember these days? Our Year 13s donned school uniform for a day of celebration and goodbyes ahead of their exams, while our Year 11s also attended a wonderful celebration breakfast on their last official day of school before study leave.

Shirts signed, cake, hoodies, year books, ice creams - tick!



Exam Success 2025

It has been wonderful to see so many smiling faces in school for their exam results in the last few weeks. Congratulations go to our students for all of their hard work. We are so proud of all they have achieved and wish them all the best for their future endeavours.



Year 13s celebrate success. Credit: Tiffin Girls' Bluesky



COMMUNITY NEWS



TiffinTalks: Creatives

Our TiffinTalks are greatly valued by our current students for the insight our alumnae give them into various careers and professions.

In the summer term, our TiffinTalk focussed on the creative industry and we were delighted to hear from two of our alumnae:

Tracey Low (Class of 1996)

Head of Producing Operations, National Theatre

Cecile Shannon (Class of 1983)

Silver Specialist and freelance art valuer, Bonhams



If you can share your career insights with students in any field, we would love to hear from you: n.edwards@tiffingirls.org. You can listen to all past TiffinTalks [here](#)



Careers Fair 2025

The school will be hosting its second Careers Fair on **Thursday 6 November, 6pm to 8pm**, following last year's inaugural, and very well-attended, event. We were really pleased to have several alumnae exhibiting last year and would love to have even more this November, to showcase to students the great range of careers that Tiffin Girls move into.

If you are interested in taking part this year, please let us know using this [form](#). We welcome interest from all sectors, but are particularly keen to have several exhibitors to field the high level of interest in healthcare, legal and STEM roles.

University Interview Experience

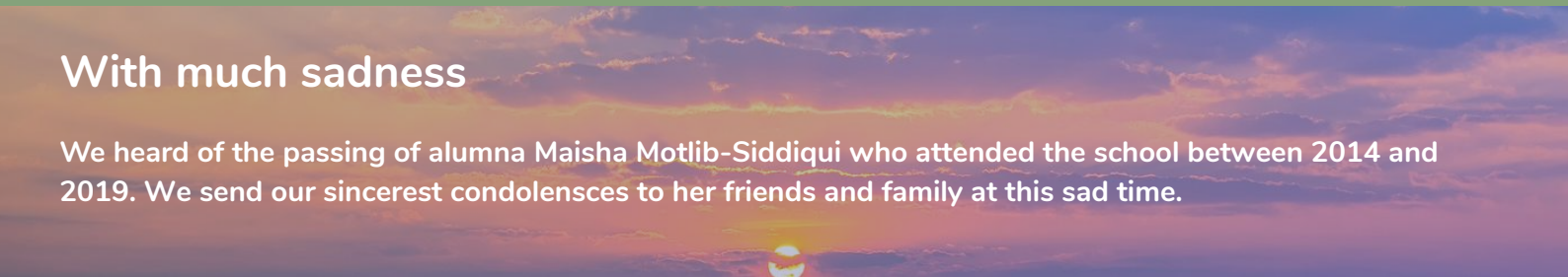
We're exploring how to draw on our alumnae's university interview experience to support current students. From the autumn interview round, we plan to match students with alumnae for practice interviews, much like our careers programme. We hope many of you will share your expertise, with practical details to follow soon.

BMJ Publications

Our Biology Department would welcome any old copies for aspiring medics. If there are any doctors amongst you who might have an old copy of the BMJ you would consider donating to the school library, we would be very grateful.

With much sadness

We heard of the passing of alumna Maisha Motlib-Siddiqui who attended the school between 2014 and 2019. We send our sincerest condolences to her friends and family at this sad time.





CONNECT

Join the community...

It has been wonderful to meet the alumnae who have come back to the school and we are so grateful to them all for the support they give the school. From reunions to online career talks for students and their parents, to in person conferences for local schools, the school is a much richer place because of our alumnae community.

The Alumnae Committee

We are looking for more alumnae across all year groups to join our committee. Help shape events, support professional growth, and direct TOGA fund allocations.

Meetings are held online several times a year - please do consider volunteering!

Let us know: alumnae@tiffingirls.org

Connect with the Tiffin Old Girls and Alumnae community



Join The Tiffin Girls' Together community to:

- Connect with friends and colleagues
- Offer or receive mentoring and career advice
- Access reunions, events, and alumnae news
- Share updates and build your profile
- Browse photo galleries

SUPPORT

Tiffin Tiles

A memorable way to support the school

Leave a lasting mark at Tiffin Girls' with a beautifully engraved tile. Choose your own name, celebrate a group of friends, or honour a teacher or loved one. Two sizes available.

Scan the QR code or visit community.tiffingirls.org to order.



TOGA Merchandise

We are currently ordering new stock across our merchandise range. Please contact: alumnae@tiffingirls.org to express your interest or place an order.

Christmas will be here before you know it!





SUPPORT

Donate

“Being a Tiffin girl is everything. The opportunities, experiences and facilities we enjoy here encourage us to step outside of our comfort zones and explore our passions. We grow and learn in a way that will enable us to make positive change in the future.”

Charline and Mitra, Year 10

For many years, students at The Tiffin Girls' School such as yourself have benefited from an outstanding learning environment and opportunities that are only achievable thanks to the generosity of parents, alumnae and other donors. We are grateful to those who have so enthusiastically given their support to the school over the years.

However, today, in an increasingly challenging economic environment, we need your support more than ever before. The funding we receive from the Department for Education barely covers the cost of delivering the basic national curriculum and maintenance of our external site. If we are to continue to deliver an education with a broad and exciting co-curricular programme, with great teaching and learning resources and with school facilities that are fit for purpose in the modern world, we continue to need your help.

The Support Tiffin Girls' School Company (STGSC) is an independent registered charity (number 1069996) which was set up in 1998 in order to raise funds for the school to improve and expand educational facilities and opportunities, and support the health and welfare of the students, so they may fully realise their potential. Additionally it supplements the educational provision and facilities for sport, art, music, IT and DT. The school's motto is 'Our community is vibrant, curious, creative and inspires positive change. We dare to be wise'. We cannot deliver on that vision alone - we need your help to make the difference.

Give online



Set up a regular donation



Gift Aid It



Leave a legacy



Please visit community.tiffingirls.org/supportus to find out more and to make a donation. If you would like to discuss a gift or discuss ways you can give to the school, please contact the school.

“Golden threads of friendship” truly remain unbroken—thank you for continuing to be part of the Tiffin Girls' story.