

Summerhill News

A.S. Neill's Summerhill School; a co-educational boarding school in Suffolk, England, is the original alternative 'free' school. Founded in 1921, it continues to be an influential model for progressive, democratic education around the world.



Welcome to this, our seventh edition of the Summerhill School Newsletter. In this edition, you can read about the BBC children's drama "Summerhill" and how it got on at the BAFTA's, an interview with Albert Lamb ex pupil, ten things to make you wanted by girls and about Paul Muthers, House, houseparent. We wish you a healthy and prosperous 2009.

Summerhill BAFTA Nomination

Following very positive reviews of "Summerhill", the four part BBC children's drama screened earlier this year, the programme was nominated for BAFTA's in three categories.

These were Best Breakthrough Talent – Eliot-Otis Brown Walters for his part as Ryan, the new kid with issues, Best Drama, Stephen Smallwood, Jon East and Alison Hume (writer) Tiger Aspect Productions/CBBC and Best Writer – Alison Hume.

And the winners of the EA British Academy Children's Awards in 2008 representing the best children's productions of the year - in film, television, video games and online were Ellis-Otis Brown Walters, one of the youngest ever performers to win a BAFTA, and Alison Hume who spent many hours at Summerhill gathering ideas and speaking to the kids about school life.



Best writer, Alison Hume receives one of 13 BAFTA's awarded to Childrens BBC, including channel of the year for CBBC and Cbeebies.

Autumn term

The autumn term was very busy with the arrival of new kids, house parents and teachers.

Andrew Sturman, an ex- Shack & Carriage houseparent, has returned to Shack and Carriages once again. He has been living in Greece with his partner, ex-Summerhill staff, Nana. Paul Muthers, an ex-pupil who has been working with children for some years, has come back to be House, house parent. They have both brought a lot of excellent things to the table and have had a great term.

Tobe, the new IT teacher is from Belgium. He has been teaching part-time at a democratic school there as well as mainstream. He met Summerhill people at the EUDEC (European Democratic Education Conference) and was pleased to apply for the IT post.

The newly appointed science teacher did a moonlight flit and it was only after another advert on the school website that Adrian applied and got the job. Adrian, has been living on a Spanish fishing boat monitoring catches for the EU - he said it wouldn't be so different living at Summerhill! Both have settled in well, even though they joined us a couple of weeks into the term.

With fewer younger kids this term, the San (where the younger kids board) has been empty and Pascal swapped her houseparent role to teach both French and German. Next term the Cottage kids will be moving into the San where Pascal will resume her role as houseparent because their own houseparent, Belka is leaving for two terms whilst he has a knee operation.

Nacho came to cover for Esther who is having a year off and is teaching snorkelling in Thailand, but he has been offered a job in Germany that he couldn't refuse so has cut short his time at Summerhill promising to return soon! He has been doing a lot of film work with various kids - some of the results can be seen at: <http://vimeo.com/user884767>

There is also a new Summerhill photography site which is linked from the school website and is worth a look, www.summerhill-photographers.co.uk.

Donate to the Trust

Please help to make a difference to a child's life right now. Click on the link and make a donation to the A. S. Neill Summerhill Trust via the school website <http://www.summerhillschool.co.uk/store/products.php>
Thank you – your generosity is very much appreciated.

Interview with Albert Lamb...

..... ex Summerhill pupil, now 60 years old, living in the Cotswolds where his step-daughter, Anna, is running Chalford donkey project. When he's not working on writing and drawing projects, he's the College Coordinator for the Waldorf College Project.

When were you at Summerhill?

1961 to 1964 and 1965 to 1966

Can you remember your first day at Summerhill?

Vividly. My mother brought me to the school early in the day and then went to a B & B, which was all very embarrassing. I went down to the Carriages and thought it was a loveable dump. I met my room mate Wicke Walsh. Olly and Ena were there and they both laughed at me and Wick for being such tall Americans. They had never seen anything like it. I remember being surprised by the chickens and geese all over the place. I went up to the dining room to have tea as the kids came in from the London train and I was impressed by how cute the big girls were. The House seemed very big and solid.



Picture: Albert and his wife, Popsy talking to Daphne Oliver (Ollie) who died last year.

How much was poc?

Two pence a year and a shilling for one trip to the cinema (three pence of which was for an ice lolly).

Who were your best friends?

Nick Flowers, Irene, Peter Dogan, Popsy, Chris, Nicky Barnett, Janina, Zoe, Peter Wood and Johnny Condon.

Which was your favourite meal?

Roast beef with Ena's roast potatoes. I used to take day old buttered bread to my room and toast it on my electric heater after breakfast. I can still taste it.

Were there any memorable meeting cases?

When Peter Dogan stole the door to my room and the meeting wouldn't take it seriously. At the time there were only two or three private rooms in Summerhill.

Which Summerhill crime do you consider to be your best?

Becoming dictator with Johnny and Nick Flowers as my henchmen. Actually it all went horribly wrong. My girlfriend Popsy finally called the school to a secret meeting in the hockey field and we were overthrown. I had to eat alone in the little kids sitting room for weeks.

Were you ever brought up in the meeting?

Hardly ever.

Can you remember your first crush?

Yes, and 28 years later I married her. But I did have lots in between.

Any memorable moments with Neill or Ena?

In a PL (private lesson) Neill wanted me to tell him three words that started with the letters P-E-N. I said, "Pencil, penicillin and pendicitus." and he said, "You forgot PENIS, laddie," and I remember I blushed.

Any funny Summerhill moment?

Funny in retrospect. The time I flipped off the rope of the Big Beech when I noticed below me that Peter Dogan was snogging with the new Danish girl. That put me into the Ipswich hospital for almost a week.

Do you remember any quote from your time at the school?

A tribute someone made to Li's "magnificent norks."

Do you ever dream of being at Summerhill?

Frequently. A while back I dreamt of Neill sitting on the end of my bed having a conversation with me.

Are you still in touch with any old-Summerhillians?

These days I'm in touch with many people from Summerhill. Too many to list.

10 Things to make you wanted by girls

1. Be clean and hygienic. A girl cannot stand a smelly guy. Cologne is a girl-magnet. They will come a running.
2. Always act like you own the world and you rock.
3. Girls like guys with some cockiness and a backbone.
4. On occasion, be sweet and sensitive. If you are always a dick then you say something nice, it stands out.
5. Girls dig tight abs. Work out till you look like a body builder.
6. Being touchy and huggy is so flattering for a girl. (Alfie, you rock)
7. When talking to a girl talk to her face, not her boobs. Plus, do not have your hands down your pants while talking to her.
8. Remember her birthday.
9. Always provide fat-free chocolate if she's on a diet.
10. If a girl asks, "Do I look fat in this?" the correct answer is, "I'm taking the chickens for a walk".

Written by the Summerhill girlz

10 things to make you wanted by Guys

1. Grow your nails. Short nails aren't sexy.
2. Play hard to get and always leave them wanting more.
3. Use makeup. But not too much: it's not attractive. Just enough will have them walking around with their tongues out.
4. Confidence is sexy. Act like you know exactly what you're doing, even if you don't.
5. Be a tease. For example, if you're eating yogurt with a teaspoon, be subtly suggestive but *don't be obvious*.

Written by the Summerhill boyz

[The Boyz were distracted by food. We apologise for the inconvenience—Eds]

Can you help?

Winsor Rowe is looking for contact information for Vaar Schjelderup. They were both at Summerhill in 1962-63. You can contact Winsor at P.O. box 1657, Yelm, WA. 98597 USA, 98597. Email fwr@fairpoint.net
Tel 360.894.8193

Michael Rutherford is trying to find out more about his aunt, Josephine Desiree Rutherford who went to Summerhill in the 1930's. In 1936 (at the age of 18) she married Patrick Townshend (a former Summerhill pupil) at Leiston Church. At some stage after the wedding, the couple went out to Africa. Michael would like to hear from anyone who might have records or recollections from Summerhill in the 1930's so he can fill in the gaps. Please email him on mike.rutherford@eastriding.gov.uk

Anne Southin is a family historian trying to find out more about her cousin David Johnson or Trafford who may have attended Summerhill in the 1950's. If you have any information please contact Anne on 0116 266 1905, or write to her at 232 Gleneagles Ave, Rushley Mead, Leicester, LE4 7YL.

Paul Muthers ~ Houseparent



When I first met Paul Muthers (27) I was struck by how confident and self-assured he was. Tall and lithe, with the stillness of a Buddhist monk, he is without doubt well equipped to deal with the unruly mob of boys that appear at the door - shields and swords at the ready.

I'm here to interview Paul, an ex pupil who has recently returned to Summerhill as the new "house" houseparent. He's responsible for looking after a group of 20 kids in 5 bedrooms. It's a job he's really enjoying though it hasn't been without its challenges. "When I first arrived there were a few problems with the kids staying up, sneaking out in the night and winding each other up", says Paul, "but that's changed now". Paul used to sneak out when he was a kid at Summerhill but for different reasons. "It was more a right of passage and a sense of freedom than getting up to mischief to annoy others", he says.

After leaving Summerhill, Paul studied computing in Norwich before completing a BA in Philosophy. He has since lived and worked in Brighton and London, looking after children in residential care. "It's a job I've really enjoyed", says Paul, "living in London has prepared me well for Summerhill - it's full on here, you don't get much time for yourself and you have to learn to let stuff go".

Paul is currently on a mission to turn the kids TV room into a relaxing space. The plan is to furnish the room with a few home comforts, "We've formed a committee and we are saving up for a new TV and DVD player", says Paul.

As the lunch bell rang (for the second time!) and Paul made his way down to the dining room, it struck me how lucky my son Freddie is to have such a mature house parent who is without doubt a great role model to learn from.

GILLIE McEWAN nee BLACK.

29/6/30 – 22/12/08.

Some of you will remember Gillie from her days at Summerhill when it was evacuated to Wales during the war. She had many happy memories of her time at Summerhill and enjoyed returning there for the reunions. In fact it was at Summerhill she met her first husband Jimmy Shand with whom she had Garrow and Murray, both of whom attended Summerhill in their early years. Later Gillie moved to London and married John McEwan and had Ewan and Islay. For many years she lived in London with John, Ewan, Islay and her mother Kirstie who had been a house mother at Summerhill. Later she moved to Anglesey in North Wales and had spent much of her time there heavily involved with the restoration and up keep of the Victorian Terrace that she lived in.

Gillie had many friends and interests especially the Opera, and walking. One of her most memorable holidays was to Nepal on a 3 week trek in the Himalayas.

Gillie had 9 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren all of whom she was very proud. She had kept herself fit with regular swimming and walking, and had many interests.

Sadly, just before Christmas, Gillie died peacefully in her sleep at her daughter Islay's house in Sandbach, Cheshire. She leaves her younger brother Mac Black and her 4 children, Garrow, Murray, Ewan and Islay all of whom will mourn her loss for some time. She was a great lady and will leave a deep hole in their lives.

Anyone wishing to hear more about Gillie please contact Garrow and Helen Shand on hmschand@btinternet.com or 01394 389013.

A. S. Neill Summerhill Trust

In October 2008 the trustees met in London and agreed to make a bursary award of £1,500 to a current pupil.

We are pleased to report that there are now over 800 subscribers to the Newsletter. Those on the mailing list include ex and current pupils, parents, educationalists, trustees, teachers, politicians, kids from around the world and actors who starred in the BBC drama "Summerhill", screened in 2008.

Newsletter

Editor: Steve Fawdry Tel 01502 675008
e-mail stevefawdry@home.greenisp.org

Summerhill School

Westward Ho, Leiston, Suffolk, IP16 4HY.
Tel & Fax 00 (44) 1728 830540
www.summerhillschool.co.uk
General enquiries: office@summerhillschool.co.uk
Principal: Zoë Readhead zoe@summerhillschool.co.uk

A.S. Neill Summerhill Trust

For further information, or to make a donation contact:
Tony Readhead at Hill Farm, Theberton, Leiston, Suffolk, IP16 4TD. Tel: 01728 830030 / Fax: 01728 831689
Email: trust@summerhillschool.co.uk
Registered charity no. 10898