

## INTRODUCING THE NEW HEADMISTRESS



As many of you will know, Miss Ogilvie retired last year and Mrs Zelma Braganza took over as headmistress of CHS. On your behalf we asked her a few questions about herself and the school.....

### **Your life so far:-**

#### **Do you have a family?**

Yes, I have a husband and one daughter

#### **Tell about yourself, your education and previous posts**

My first school was a co-educational school; I then moved to an all girls' school in London where I completed my secondary education. I read Botany and Zoology at University, trained to be a teacher and then completed a Masters Degree at the University of Durham. My first teaching post was at a boys' comprehensive school; it was both challenging and satisfying. I then spent several very enjoyable years at Guildford High School as Head of Science. After that, I became Deputy Head at Caterham School where I gained valuable experience of a boarding school environment. In 2003 I returned, once again, to an all girls' school becoming Headmistress of St Catherine's School, Twickenham. My next move brought me to my current position at Croydon High.

#### **What are your hobbies?**

I enjoy badminton, skiing and spending time with my family. Travel is another passion.

#### **What subjects do you teach and will you still teach at CHS?**

My main subject has always been Biology although, in the early years of my career, I taught Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. Teaching is a wonderfully fulfilling profession and I would like to think that I might do some teaching in the future.

#### **Why did you choose teaching? If you hadn't been in the teaching profession what would you have done?**

I chose teaching for many reasons which include: the privilege of working with young people and helping them develop into responsible, caring and sensible young adults, the excitement of inspiring an interest in a subject one loves, the opportunity to help pupils achieve their very best, the pleasure of seeing them grow in self-esteem and confidence and the chance to make a positive difference in their lives.

If I had not been in the teaching profession I'd probably have wanted to pursue a career in medicine.

#### **Has teaching changed much since you first started?**

The fundamental process of teaching is the same and teachers continue to do an excellent job. However, advances in technology have influenced teaching methodologies. The numerous initiatives that have been introduced at government level as well as changes in examinations have also influenced what goes on in the classroom.

**What do you consider to be your greatest achievement to date, apart from becoming Headmistress of CHS?**

Raising a family whilst pursuing a career in education

**What were your first impressions of CHS? Strengths / Weaknesses**

Croydon High is a very successful school. It has bright, talented and happy girls, a skilled, dedicated and caring staff and supportive parents. The school has many strong points which impressed me; these include the high quality pastoral care, excellent academic achievements, the all-round education, successes in Music, Drama and Sports, the facilities/ grounds, and the support and expertise of the GDST.

**How would you describe your first term?**

Busy, interesting and thoroughly enjoyable.

**How do you see the school developing? What plans have you for CHS short term (this year) / medium (5 years' time) / long term (15 years' time)?**

I see the school moving forward from an already strong base and becoming even more successful. Following the recent ISI inspection we will work to determine how best the school can provide an even better all-round education for our girls so that they achieve their personal best and leave Croydon High as responsible, confident and caring young adults.

**What changes have you already made or are imminent?**

At present I am still getting to know the school and any changes will be to further enhance what we offer. I am also reviewing different aspects of the school in order to continue to make improvements. Since September we have increased the extra-curricular provision so that there is greater choice for the pupils. We have also extended the Parents' Evenings in the Senior School so that parents have more time for discussion with teachers.

**Miscellaneous**

**What do you think are the major problems facing girls today?**

In school it is probably to do with peer pressure and image and, if in a co-educational environment, the additional pressure of having to compete with the boys in the classroom. In the workplace, the challenge for girls is successfully combining a professional career with raising a family. For those who have chosen to work in organisations, it is also being properly recognised for their skills and abilities.

**What advice do you have to OCs on coping with a career and a family?**

My advice to girls would be to work out your priorities, manage your time well and do not be afraid to do what you believe is right for you.

**What do you think is the role of the OCs and how can the Ocs support you?**

The OCs have a very important and crucial role in maintaining the strong sense of community and promoting links between ex-pupils and the school long after the girls have left.

The regular newsletter is an excellent means of communication as are the reunions. There is a wealth of experience and knowledge within the OCs and I look forward to working with the committee to see how they can further support the school.

**What question that we haven't asked would you like to answer? !**

Croydon High is an excellent school and I look forward to leading it through the next stage of its development.