



**UK COMMITTEE DR GRAHAM'S HOMES**

*Charity Registered in Scotland SC 016341*

## **Annual Newsletter**

**For the Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021**

## **Homes Birthday and Founder's Day – 24<sup>th</sup> September**



**Celebrated Annually, World-Wide, No Matter What, No Matter Where!  
Bring On Those “Buns and Jalebies”!**



**St Andrews' Colonial Homes Birthday Party – 24<sup>th</sup> September 1921**



**Dr Graham's Homes Birthday Party – 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**Pandemics May Try To Dampen That Homes' Spirit, But “Homes' Birthday” Will Always Be Celebrated!**

## **UK Committee Dr Graham's Homes, Kalimpong, India**

Charity Registered in Scotland SC 016341

Registered Address: 44 Aytoun Road, Pollokshields, Glasgow G41 5HN

[www.drgrahamshomes.co.uk](http://www.drgrahamshomes.co.uk)

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### **AGM and Curry Lunch**

**The Royal Scots Club, 29 Abercromby Place, Edinburgh EH3 6QE**

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

We invite all our Members, Supporters and Friends to join us for an informative day of fellowship in Edinburgh at the UK Committee's Annual General Meeting and Curry Lunch

**Coffee served from 10:15 ahead of AGM at 11:00**

**Curry Lunch at 12:45**

You are very welcome just to turn up for the AGM, but please reserve your place for the lunch afterwards through our Committee Secretary, Frances Dent.

e-mail: [drgrahamsuksec@gmail.com](mailto:drgrahamsuksec@gmail.com) Tel: 01382 668700

Lunch cost £15 payable on the day

## Honorary Presidents

The Moderator of the General Assembly  
The Church of Scotland

The Primus  
Scottish Episcopal Church

Honorary Vice President      Rev John G Webster

## The Board of Trustees 2020–2021

**Chair**      Margaretta Purtill  
(Retired,  
26<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021)      67 Brangwyn Crescent, Merton Abbey, London SW19 2UA  
Tel. 020 8715 0929      e-mail: purtills@btinternet.com

**Vice-Chair**      Anne Hoggan  
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**Committee Secretary**      Frances Dent  
12 Glamis Drive, Dundee DD2 1QL  
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**Treasurer**      James Gibson  
44 Aytoun Road, Pollokshields, Glasgow G41 5HN  
Tel. 0141423 8290      e-mail: treasurer@drgrahamshomes.co.uk

## Other Members of the Board of Trustees

John Ball      Frank Dunn      Aileen Fraser      Shona Hume  
James Simpson      Jim Simpson      Pat Simpson

From 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021:

Michael Jefferson      Diana Owen      Esther McCabe

**Joint Sponsorship Secretaries**      Ian and Angela Russell      e-mail: sponsorship@drgrahamshomes.co.uk  
Hazelgrove,  
The Common, Cranleigh, Surrey, GU6 8NS  
Tel. 01483 272108

## External Appointments

**Independent Examiner**      MILNE CRAIG  
Abercorn House  
79 Renfrew Road  
Paisley PA3 4DA

**Solicitors**      BALFOUR & MANSON  
54-66 Frederick Street  
Edinburgh EH2 1LS

**Bankers**      BANK OF SCOTLAND  
75 George Street  
Edinburgh EH2 3EW

## Message from Retiring Chairman, DGHUK, Margaretta Purtill



**Colleagues, OGBs, Sponsors and Friends**, the continuing Covid-19 pandemic really has turned everyone's lives upside down. Life in this Covid era has been traumatic for many, challenging for most of us and certainly a threat to life. Through it all, we have all tried to stay safe and make the best of our 'new' world. We now look forward to better and happier times by celebrating that most powerful of all Festivals: "Christmas". Christmas is about the child in us all! The Child of God (Our Lord Jesus Christ) Whose birth we celebrate at Christmas is all about Love and Hope. It surely is about God bringing out the best in us, as He created us in His own Divine Image as His beloved children, world-wide. We are challenged to

believe in transforming, transcending love. Yes, the 'child' in each of us loves Christmas! The effect of the pandemic shutdown during the last 24 months has plunged many of us into darkness. It has shrunk our spirit even if it has also challenged our lifestyle. It revealed how deeply connected and how vulnerable we are due to our nearness link with each other. Therefore, we celebrate His Birth with all the people and respective families God has gifted us. Christmas is a unique time to share, hug and respond to the great love we have been given as God's children. "A people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (*Isaiah 9:12*). Would this not apply to us all who, through their devotion to the UK Committee, strive to meet the needs of the needy and deprived children in Dr Graham's Homes, Kalimpong?

As you will observe our UK Committee Newsletter has a new Editorial team, long-serving UK Trustees, James and Patricia Simpson. As Jim and Pat take over, UK Trustees offer their heartfelt thanks as they bid farewell to our outgoing Editor, Alistair McCabe, who has so diligently produced our UK Committee Newsletter over many years, generously providing the resources of his own business to ensure deadlines were met and quality was assured.

I too must bid all Trustees of the UK Committee "Farewell" as I step down as Chairman of the UK Committee. My heartfelt thanks to all our Members for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your Chairman over the last 29 months. My Chairmanship has, I must admit, been somewhat eventful dealing with the several 'highs' and many 'lows' which go with the territory. I do want to thank very much all those who have given their unstinted support throughout these turbulent times; you have proved yourselves time and time again to be my stalwart and inspiring supporters. However, let me just add that all is not lost as I remain a Trustee/Director of DGHUK Committee as well as a member of the Kolkata Board of Management representing all International Committees. My present Vice-chairman, Anne Hoggan, has kindly undertaken to act as caretaker Chairman until our AGM in May 2022.

The UK Committee will continue its support for the Homes as before and, of equal importance, will continue to raise funds for the nurture and education of children living in poverty. We thank all our Supporters for their total commitment to our cause. All that is left for me is to wish you a Happy Christmas and may God's blessings be with you.

**Margaretta Purtill (OGB)**  
**Retiring Chairman DGHUK**



## **Anne Hoggan, Vice-Chairman, DGHUK (*presently, Caretaker-Chairman DGHUK*)**



You will have read that Margaretta Purtill has stepped down from the Chairmanship of DGH UK Committee. This is a great loss to us as Margaretta has such a wealth of knowledge about the Homes. I have agreed to act as Chairman until the May 2022 AGM. I appreciate the support of all sponsors and supporters. I am delighted that we have three new Trustees on the committee, all of whom have some sort of connection either to Dr Graham's Homes or to India in general. They introduce themselves in the pages which follow my report. We look forward to the additional contribution they bring to our Charity as they join our established team of hard-working Trustees. Together we will continue to strive towards

aiding the Board of Management and Homes staff in leading their recovery from the effect which the pandemic has had on all aspects of The Homes.

Turning to my role as Safeguarding Trustee, there is little to report. The Sponsorship Secretaries and I have begun a review of the Joint Safeguarding Policy, and we hope that, with the return of the pupils, the Policy Guidelines will be fully implemented at Kalimpong.

**Anne Hoggan**

**Vice-Chairman/Caretaker Chairman DGHUK**

## **DGHUK Welcomes Our New Trustees**

**Esther Anne Pears**



Dr Graham's Homes was my first home and has been an integral part of me and my family, all my life. My father, George McCabe, was the farm estate manager of The Homes in the 1950s. My elder brother Alistair was born in Kalimpong, and I was born in Darjeeling, but as babes in arms Dr Graham's was where our parents first took us home. I have no childhood memories of Dr Graham's Homes, but I grew up knowing the place intimately, the Homes holding that same special place in my heart as it did in the hearts of my parents. As an adult I have been back to the homes several times and I have the great pleasure of sponsoring a child.

I have recently retired from a wonderful career in nursing - caring for those in need has always been at the core of my life's work. Latterly this included leading a specialist nursing Hepatology service at Manchester Royal Infirmary where my role was not only to care for my patients but also to raise awareness, and funds, to ensure the longevity and to drive forward the service and the support networks around it. These are skills that I hope to

continue to use as a new trustee of DGHUK. Like everyone here, I am incredibly moved by the individual stories of these children; how fortunate we are to be able to make it better for every child, every day.

### Diana Jane Owen



I have known of Dr Graham's Homes all my life as I was born and brought up in Assam where my father was a tea planter. Many of my friends were from the Homes and fund-raising for the Homes was a regular event in my upbringing. The skills I bring to the Board of Trustees include fundraising and buildings conservation and repair from twenty years working with The National Trust together with charity governance, education, and marketing. In addition, my ten years in my role as CEO of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford upon Avon, together, and more recently, as Director General of the Royal Over-Seas League.

Dr Graham's Homes is needed today just as much as it was when it was first established, so I very much look forward to supporting both our UK Board and the Kolkata Board of Management as well as the Principal of The Homes in Kalimpong, meeting the challenges of the future and delivering lifelong opportunities for the children and young people whom The Homes support in North-East India.

### Michael Jefferson



I joined DGHUK as a Trustee and, being the great-great-grandson of Dr Graham on my mother's side, am naturally delighted to be involved in the work of DGHUK. Along with my cousins, I sponsor a child at the Homes and have been lucky enough to have visited Kalimpong twice – once for the Centenary Anniversary back in 2000 and again in 2015.

I live in London and work for a major technology company, having previously worked in the Civil Service on trade issues including some six months at the High Commission in Sri Lanka. More recently I worked in the City for several financial services firms. I am looking forward to bringing my financial skills in support of working with the Trustees to deliver on the aims of the UK Committee - providing support for needy children. I look forward to meeting those with similar ideals and with links to the Homes at forthcoming events.

### *A Preface to the Report from our Sponsorship Secretaries.*

*In their Report, our Joint Sponsorship Secretaries, Ian and Anji Russell, have referred to the importance of "hearing the voice of the child". They have included several comments and quotes from our sponsored children and students within their Report, and, in addition, we have interspersed others throughout this Newsletter. We hope you will enjoy "hearing" their news, and reading of their deep appreciation for all the support and care they receive from you, their supporters.*

## Message from Shane Calvert, Chair, Board of Management



Dr Graham's Homes, with its uniqueness, has its own distinct challenges and yet is endowed with so many strengths and blessings. These come from the people who have vested their love and concern for the institution through their time and commitment.

We are living in very difficult and very challenging times. There is no point in trying to underscore the situation about the Pandemic because we are inundated and well informed of all that is happening. This Board took charge a little over a year ago, against the backdrop of uncertainty and doubt, with the pandemic impacting our institution in more ways than one.

I am happy to say that while we were, and are still as yet, unsure of what the future holds in store, members took up the reins and commenced dealing with issues in right earnest. There were many little fires that needed to be doused and we went about doing just that.

Since then, there have been several changes. We have taken measures: some minor and some major, some stringent, some austere, which, we are certain, will bear fruit in time to come.

From restructuring the Board to include stake holders to forming a School Managing Committee; from forming effective sub-committees to constantly interacting with stakeholders and well-wishers, from seeking reports from the ground to holding those in positions accountable and a host of other constructive engagements.

As daunting as the challenges are, the more determined the members are, to work together, as a team, looking ahead, and building on the foundation, in pursuit of continuing the legacy of Dr Graham's Homes: a legacy of love.

Our concern remains the students, both supported and fee-paying.

The questions that confront us are:

How do we continue to provide them with quality education in the virtual mode, which has its own set of demands and limitations?

How do we deal with the children having to adapt to a new way of learning?

And yet we have to find measures to continue students learning during School closure.

How do we deal with poor collection of fees? And the fallout of the Court Orders restricting fee collection to a certain percentage?

How do we deal with statutory payments with an income which is far less than our payouts?

How do we meet the needs of our Staff who also have families to take care of?

How do we generate revenue from the given resources we have?

These are the myriad questions that weigh down heavily on us. But make no mistake, they do not deter us nor hem us in.



The BOM is constantly deliberating, considering, reviewing, and reflecting over viable options and solutions. We have a dedicated team of members who bring to the table skills of value and spend hours dwelling on and finding solutions for the improvement and advancement of the Homes and the children we support.

As a Board we have reached out to all stakeholders; teachers, employees, cottage staff, parents and guardians, benefactors, OGBs and the Overseas Committees. Their response has been very promising and encouraging.

As a Board, we appreciate that this is a time of worry and anxiety for everyone, and yet throughout these unprecedented times we continue to deliver our service of support to some of the most vulnerable in our society. As a Board we continue to work closely with all members and the leadership team up at the Homes, to ensure we deliver our duty of care to those we support, while protecting the long-term future of our organisation.

As the landscape changes, and when we are required to make difficult decisions about our services, or the way we work, please be reassured that these will be guided by our values.

And when things return to normal, or we find a new normal, the contribution of those across the organisation will not be forgotten.

The beneficiaries will always remain the children of the Homes who, with their winning smiles, give greater courage and conviction to all those who work for their well-being.

The Board of Management remains steadfast in its resolve to tackling the issues at hand and planning for long-term solutions to enable the Homes, not only to sustain itself, but to stride into the future as 'a school of choice'.

The Board of Management has resolved to explore avenues and develop the infrastructure and assets which could generate income to sustain the institution, develop the Homes, make it self-reliant so to grow in years to come, as a Charitable Christian Minority Educational Institution in accordance with the objectives as laid down in the Memorandum of Association.

I am happy to inform you that on the 14th of November, we were able to send 44 of our supported children back to the safe confines our Homes. We hope that over a period we will be able to bring back the remaining children.

I am confident that there are better days ahead for this marvelous Institution.

On behalf of the Board of Management, I take this opportunity to wish you and your families, a blessed and joyful Christmas.

May God continue to shower His blessings on our Homes.

**"May this Christmas end the present year on a cheerful note and make way for a fresh and bright New Year. I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!"**

**Michael Shane Calvert**

**President, Board of Management,**

**Rebecca** (graduated from DGH in 2019):



*"I am currently in my 5<sup>th</sup> Semester at St. Xavier's College. Classes are held in the offline mode. By mid-June next year, I will have completed my undergraduate course, I cannot wait to get over with it. I am still deciding on what to take up once I finish my Political Science Honours, but for now I am taking it one day at a time. I will do my further studies, that's definite, I just have to decide as to what that will be. So far, the year has been good, I've learned so much more and I hope to keep learning."*

### **Message from Principal Neil Monteiro**

*"What seems to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise." – Oscar Wilde.*



It is with a sense of very deep conviction that I believe that the trials that we have been put through during the pandemic will finally be our "blessings in disguise".

The year began with a visit by our President and Chairman Mr. M S Calvert who set the tone for things to come. Indeed, it was wonderful for all to see him back on the campus taking charge of all things, big and small, possible and impossible. All at DGH put their shoulders to the wheel to ensure that, pandemic or no pandemic, the children would not suffer. We probably hold the distinction of being one of the only schools to have large numbers of boarders living happily on campus whilst the world was in lockdown.

Finally, academic year 2020 was concluded with assessments for Class 11s and Pre-Board examinations for Classes 10s and 12s being held from 5<sup>th</sup> February through to 17<sup>th</sup> February.

The 2021 academic session for LKG to Class 9 started with on-line classes from 20<sup>th</sup> January. Eventually School re-opened for face-to-face classes for 9s and 10s from 15<sup>th</sup> February and, later, for Class 12s from 1<sup>st</sup> March. To follow COVID protocols and maintain social distancing, students attended classes on alternate days based upon odd/even enrolment numbers.

First Unit Tests were held from 17<sup>th</sup> March to 9<sup>th</sup> April for classes 3 to 9, with the Half-Yearly examination being conducted on-line from 7<sup>th</sup> through to 17<sup>th</sup> June. Second Unit Tests were conducted between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> August.

Again, due to the rise in the COVID 19 cases and to the increasing levels of infection in West Bengal and across the country, lockdown was re-imposed and physical classes were suspended from 19<sup>th</sup> April. However, on-line classes continued for all until the end of the session. Only Classes 10s and 12s (Board Examinees) were called again to attend physical classes from 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

The ISC (Classes 10+2) Semester 1 Examination started from 22<sup>nd</sup> November and the ICSE (Classes 10) Semester 1 Examination from 29<sup>th</sup> November. The School's Final Examinations for KG to Classes 9 were conducted between 26<sup>th</sup> November and 7<sup>th</sup> December.

Our teachers conducted and organised many online activities and large numbers of children participated.

The English Elocution Competition was conducted in three phases: for Classes 7 and 8, Classes 9 and 10 and Classes 11 and 12.

The Birth Anniversary of Bhanu Bhakta, renowned Nepali poet, was celebrated and, on The International Yoga Day, both staff and students participated in performing Yoga.

Despite the fact that we could not have any full-fledged Birthday Celebration during September, the Art and Craft exhibition was organised for Kindergarten and Junior School, and an Art and Photography Competition was held amongst the students of the Senior School. Instead of the customary May Queen celebrations, this year an Autumn Queen was crowned, and a musical entertainment program was put together to celebrate The Homes 121<sup>st</sup> Birthday. The Home Science Department also prepared a video in which students participated in preparing various dishes and floral arrangements. Our NCC boys also participated in some off-line social activities.

I am happy to report that training sessions for the Cottage Parents have also been conducted. We had hoped to do these training sessions in person but had to settle for an on-line version.

We continue to pray in gratitude for all the support rendered by the U.K. Committee and our Committees and Associations around the world. May Dr. Graham's Homes grow from strength to strength and may we continue to strive for excellence whilst teaching our children to Walk this Earth with Dignity.

**Neil Monteiro**  
Principal, Dr Graham's Homes

**Anahita** - Graduated from The Homes in 2019



*"I started my college in 2019, pursuing Education Honours in Loreto College, Kolkata. What I learnt and experienced in my 1st Year was that college is one step higher than high school and is therefore a bit higher on the difficulty ratio. But it is fun too. We get a chance to meet new people, make new friends and expand our knowledge immensely. Not only that, it helps us to become much more independent and responsible, but we also get a chance to study and fulfil our dreams and grow up to be a successful person. Therefore, it plays a very important part in shaping our future."*

## Committee Secretary's Report for Newsletter December 2021



You have probably just read the message from Margaretta Purtill and I'm sure will have been surprised and saddened to read that she is stepping down as Chairman. It has been a pleasure working closely with Margaretta over the last two and a half years. She has worked tirelessly for the Homes despite having had two bereavements in the last year; she lost her husband, Vince, and her only sister, Patsy, within a few months of each other. I'm pleased to say that Margaretta is continuing as a Trustee and as the representative of the International Committees on the Board of Management. Her background knowledge is invaluable.

Anne Hoggan has very ably stood in for Margaretta when needed. Her experience as Vice-Chairman, and previously as Committee Secretary, has stood her in good stead to chair our Committee and to attend BOM meetings, when necessary.

The other change to our Board of Trustees is that we have appointed three new members. We were delighted that Michael Jefferson, Diana Owen, and Esther Anne Pears joined us in October. All three have longstanding connections with the Homes and, as you will have read earlier in this Newsletter, each bring valuable skills and experience to our team.

Over the last twenty months or so, we have all been worried about the effects of the pandemic on the children and staff of Dr Graham's Homes. Fortunately, it appears that no one at the Homes has been seriously ill with Covid-19, but there have been serious 'side-effects' from the lockdowns, mentioned later in other reports. In the face of these issues, we continue to remember, in our deliberations and in our prayers, all the children, the students and their families as well as the staff and Board members.

One positive outcome from the pandemic is that communication with Kalimpong and Kolkata has become progressively easier as we have all become gradually more used to virtual meetings. The AGM of the UK Committee took place by Zoom in May this year; you may have attended it. We had professional technical help from Church of Scotland's IT arm, *Sanctus Media*, to set this up and I hope that technical problems did not prevent you from being with us. There were several advantages to this enforced change: no one had to travel, nine members of the Board of Management could attend and key people in India could address us. Despite our success with this format, we still hope to have an 'in-person' AGM in 2022.

If you were able to attend the last AGM, and the EGM the same day, you will be aware that we were in the process of transferring from the *UK Committee Dr Graham's Homes, Kalimpong* (an Unincorporated Association) to *Dr Graham's Homes UK* (a Charitable Company limited by Guarantee). The transfer is now almost complete thanks to the Governance Working Group, led by Frank Dunn, and our Treasurer Jim Gibson; they have worked long and

hard for nearly two years. For several months, all our meetings had to be split into respective meetings of the old committee and of the new company. Thankfully that is now all at an end!

On Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> October we had the big excitement of a 'real' meeting, after working by Zoom for so many months. The new Trustees were able to join the 'old' ones for a productive meeting in St Columba's Church in Knightsbridge. Following the meeting we were joined by some DGH friends and supporters, and even some OGB Old Girls. It was a chance to chat over some wine and Indian snacks and to hear a DGH update from Ian and Anji Russell. Some of us had met a few weeks previously at the very enjoyable Birthday Lunch arranged by James MacHardy and Anne Hoggan.

Lastly, his fellow-Trustees would like to congratulate Professor Sir John Ball on being elected President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. We wish him well in this prestigious role.

I hope you will all have an enjoyable Christmas.

**Frances Dent**  
**Committee Secretary, DGHUK**

### **Change in Status in Our Charity; formerly "UK Committee of Dr Graham's Homes, Kalimpong", now "Dr Graham's Homes, UK" (DGHUK)**



Our 2020 Christmas Newsletter reported that "the UK Committee has decided to change status from that of an Unincorporated Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee". It was my hope that this year we would be reporting that transitioning to Dr Graham's Homes Kalimpong (UK), hereinafter referred to as DGHUK, had been completed. Regrettably, we are not quite there yet, even although all the necessary regulatory steps to effect the transition have been met as detailed below:

- 19 August 2020 - Trustees of UK Committee approved transitioning to a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee.
- 23 December 2020 - The new company, DGHUK, registered with Companies House.
- 12 May 2021 - At a Zoom EGM, Members of the UK Committee approved transitioning to DGHUK, subject to consent from the Office of the Scottish Regulator (OSCR).
- 20 May 2021 - DGHUK was granted charitable status by OSCR.
- 25 June 2021 - OSCR gave consent to wind up/dissolve UK Committee Dr Graham's Homes Kalimpong.
- October 2021 - HMRC recognised DGHUK as a Charitable Company, able to reclaim Gift Aid.



The next logical step was to set up a bank account in the name of DGHUK to allow transfer of funds and investments held by the UK Committee to DGHUK. Setting up the new account however has turned out to be a cumbersome and frustrating process; there have been delays outside our control and it is not yet possible to say when the account will be operational. Soon, we all hope!

Once bank account arrangements are finalised, the only steps which remain are:

- Transferring all assets and liabilities of the UK Committee to DGHUK
- Contacting supporters to encourage transfer of standing orders, etc. to DGHUK

after which DGHUK will be fully operational as the dominant Charity.

However, the UK Committee will remain as a charity to ensure legacies and standing orders in its name will not be lost to the Charity. In time, the Constitution of the UK Committee will be changed to reflect its new purpose as a dormant Charity that exists for receipt of legacies designated for the UK Committee and their onward transfer to DGHUK.

Whilst we have yet to reach our goal of having DGHUK fully established as the dominant Charity of Dr Graham's Homes, we can claim that the end is in sight. DGHUK conforms to best charity practice, offers security of limited liability to trustees and, as a Company, is much better positioned to be a serious contender for possible future support through corporate funding.

Our Articles of Association, the legal rules under which we operate, have remained true to the Charitable purposes of the UK Committee: the relief of poverty in needy children, the provision of education and care within a Christian ethos at the Homes, and the opportunity for supported higher education.

The Articles also contain clauses that recognise that:

- our purposes will only be achieved if the standard of accommodation and classroom facilities, including internet, are compatible with the expectations of modern India.
- working closely and constructively with the BOM, Kolkata and Principal and senior staff at the Homes is essential.

The last few years have been very difficult for many charities world-wide. They have had to learn how to adapt to the effects of the covid pandemic and Dr Graham's Homes has not been exempt from these difficulties. Today, as pupils return once again to the Homes – West Bengal Government has named 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 as the start of a phased re-opening of schools - it is our hope that, by the Grace of God, and through the opportunities made possible by the Articles of DGHUK coupled with the measures being taken by the BOM, and, of course, your continued support, the future of the Homes will be secured for many decades to come.

Thank-you for that support!

**Frank Dunn**

**Trustee DGHUK – Convenor, Governance Sub-Committee**

## Sponsorship Secretaries Report



**Latest News ...** As we write this, India, like most of the world, is still recovering from the pandemic. Schools and colleges remain closed, and both schools and colleges are teaching via online classes. Despite this, most of our sponsored children and students have done very well in their studies. There are just a few children who are currently struggling with online learning whilst at home, however, the School and Board of Management are finding ways to support them.

Currently, DGHUK is sponsoring 159 children at the school and 31 students in colleges or further professional training. Only 22 children are currently at the Homes, all others being at home with their families. The good news is that we have just heard that the West Bengal Government will allow schools to re-open, albeit in a phased manner, after the 15<sup>th</sup> of November. We will let you know as soon as we hear more about your sponsored child; of course, by the time you read this, we may already have been in touch.

To those who sponsor or correspond with a child, we send information whenever we have news - for example, when someone goes home or returns to school. If you do not hear from us, please assume that the status of your sponsored child has not changed. However, you are always welcome to e-mail us with letters for your child or to ask any questions you may have.

Of the sponsored children, 117 receive some level of financial support from personal sponsors, as do 25 college students. The rest of the children and students are sponsored from DGHUK funds, which also makes up any shortfall in personal sponsorship funds donated by individuals and groups. It currently costs £1500 to sponsor a child or a student. However, all sponsors, whether full or part-sponsors, are very much appreciated by the UK Committee. (If you would like to start sponsoring, or increase your existing support, please do contact us.)



*Looking forward to this year's Birthday Party!*

*Jesus showed how much He loved and valued children when He said:*

**“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them.”**

In 1900, a young Scottish missionary, Reverend John Anderson Graham, had the same attitude to children as had Jesus. He recognised their importance and their need. Welcoming children was an important aspect of the ministries of both Jesus and of John Graham. Sadly though, in many situations in today's troubled world, this is not always the case. Many children are not treated in a caring way and are not valued or looked after as they should be. Such was Graham's care for young children in India that he started a Home where some of the neediest children could come and live, feel safe, be valued, and have an education. That same ethos of love and care continues there to this day and many, many children have benefited from this wonderful provision during the past 121 years.

**First – some history.** After the events of World War 1, Eglantyne Jebb, an English social reformer who co-founded Save the Children with her sister, Dorothy Buxton, also recognised the need for children to be valued. Eglantyne argued that children needed special protection. As a result, in 1923, the International Save the Children Union published the 'Declaration of the Rights of the Child'. This was the first time that specific rights for children were recognised. The document discussed children's well-being, recognising their right to development, assistance, relief, and protection.

Three of the five aspects of this Declaration stated that the child must be:

1. given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually
2. fed; the child that is sick must be nursed; and the orphan and the waif must be sheltered and succoured
3. the first to receive relief in times of distress.

In 1959, 'The Declaration of the Rights of the Child' laid down ten principles addressing two rights: to **provision** and to **protection**. Among others, these included the right to:

1. provision of adequate nutrition, housing, and medical services.
2. protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty, and exploitation.
3. be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, and universal brotherhood.

This was further strengthened in 1989 when the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' (UNCRC) was accepted by 196 countries. It not only outlined the rights that children must be **provided for** and be **protected**, but also added the right that children must **participate**. One part of allowing children to participate is to allow them to speak, to be heard, or as it is often known - to 'have a voice'. No longer are 'children to be seen and not heard'!

It is a joy and a responsibility as Sponsorship Secretaries, through the generosity of your giving and your care, to be able to help and support the sponsored children of Dr Graham's Homes and to ensure that they are **provided for, protected, and heard**. We know that this would have been what Dr Graham wanted, not just in 1900, but also were he still alive today.



*Some of the boys at DGH in September 2021*

**What our students have to say ...** In our role as Sponsorship Secretaries, we have had the privilege of hearing the voices of the children through many of the letters and emails sent by them to their sponsors. We are also in direct correspondence with all our 31 extended sponsorship students, and we asked some of them to write something for this Newsletter so that you could hear their voices too. They all have so much to say that is positive about the education and care they have received from Dr Graham's Homes and about the support given them by DGHUK. They have also written about their experiences as college students – particularly during this difficult time of Covid. Throughout this Newsletter you will read some of their articles, as well as excerpts from letters they wrote to us before they graduated.

**Rinky, Christina, and Eva** - have just enrolled at Duncan Teaching Hospital, Bihar



*"The name of our new college is Duncan School of Nursing which is situated in Bihar, India. This School of Nursing was founded by Mr C. Duncan in the year 1955. It is a very old school and only 20 students are selected every year.*

*This is the most unique medical institution we have ever seen because this college or School of Nursing not only gives us an education, but also spiritual growth. In this nursing school we are also getting the best practical experience, with theory when compared to the other nursing colleges."*



**Natasha left school this year. She wrote to us during her final term at DGH:**

*"I have spent 15 years of my life in the blessed school, Dr Graham's Homes. When I leave here, I have a goal to achieve – I want to become a university lecturer. I am very grateful for those who sponsored me through school, and who will now sponsor me through college. Thank you for everything. I will surely give you the best result. May God bless you abundantly."*

Natasha is now in her first year at Loreto College in Kolkata studying for a BA. She hopes to go on to study a B.Ed. after that. During her time at school, she was sponsored by the Canadian Committee, but will now be sponsored by DGHUK while she is at college. She doesn't have a personal sponsor and so is sponsored from DGHUK funds.

**Irene left school in 2020 and wrote this to us recently:**



*"Hello, I hope you are in good health. My first year is finally completed and I am eagerly waiting to receive my results. The teachers of my college are polite and good to us. I have visited my college campus and my teachers. My college is quite big, and I am happy to be part of that college. This is a picture of me in my village. My grandmother lives there. I love animals so I thought this would be a good picture to send. I will be soon starting my 2nd year and I'm looking forward to writing to you again soon."*

*With regards,  
Irene ☺*

**Ongdup, a Day Scholar, left school this year. He wrote to us during his final term at DGH.**

Ongdup is a young man who lives close to the school. His father had broken his leg and was unable to work so he had to work in the fields with his mother to make ends meet. Because of this he was struggling with his learning and risked not being able to attend college.



*"I learnt so many things in DGH. It is because of the generosity of the DGHUK Committee that I have had this opportunity. My parents cannot afford for me to study in college. (While my father is off work) I have to work in the fields during the day to help feed my family. I have many dreams, but I am not sure now if they can be fulfilled."*

We are pleased to say that his father has now recovered and Ongdup has begun his studies with Loyola College in Chennai studying Sociology. He is being sponsored from DGHUK funds. He calls us regularly.



**Rachel left school in 2019:**



Rachel (centre) and friends

*"Freshman year, the year of many firsts; the first time living away from home, the first time being away from friends, the first time a student has control of their own learning. Freshman year requires a lot of discipline, but a lot of students do not possess this trait. The factors that contribute to the success of first year college students are social support, comfort within the college environment, self-control, responsibility, and a positive self-concept. When joining Loreto College, it was very hard to adjust to the change and the environment, but we got used it and I participated in activities too. So as my college comes to an end, I will carry many memories and experiences."*

**Michelle has just finished college after completing her further studies for an MA:**

(Note: She contracted both typhoid and chickenpox during the last year and was quite seriously ill for a while.)

She wrote these thoughts to us recently:

*"Thank you for keeping in touch with me, I am doing well as of now. I had fallen sick and was down for the past two months but thankfully I am doing okay now.*

*I just received my final results for the last Semester, and you'll be pleased to know I have completed my POST GRADUATE PROGRAMME successfully. I'm awaiting the final marksheet so I can send you a copy of that. I'm so blessed and grateful for my sponsor as well as the entire committee.*

*I am preparing for the government's national eligibility test (NET) in order to be able to pursue a PhD in my subject. I hope to do well and make everyone proud.*

*I would like to thank you for taking care of me and I send you all my gratitude and warm regards."*

**Thank you to all Sponsors, Correspondents, and Supporters for all you do to make it possible for these Children and Students to be *Provided For..... Protected .....* and ..... *Heard!***

**And Finally .....a quote from former Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks**

*"If we make a positive difference to one other person, that is enough. One life, said the sages, is like a universe. Therefore, if you change a life, you begin to change the universe in the only way we can: one person at a time, one day at a time, one act at a time."*

*(Sacks, Johnathan: 'Lessons in Leadership')*

**Ian and Anji Russell  
Joint Sponsorship Secretaries**

## Treasurer's Report, December 2020



### **A different way of operating**

"The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there." LP Hartley's quotation is particularly relevant as we reflect on how much things have changed since the Covid pandemic struck in March 2020. Lockdown has severely reduced the number of children who can be educated on the Homes' campus, and the Board of Management is making strenuous efforts to ensure that children who are staying at their own home have access to online education - and even food parcels where appropriate.

No one from the UK Committee has been able to travel to India for almost two years now, but on the positive side we have been able to conduct business and keep in touch with each other on our committee and with colleagues in India by Zoom and other virtual platforms. The new subcommittee structure set up by the Board of Management last year has been beneficial in ensuring that we can keep in touch with what is happening "on the ground" as we continue to seek to ensure the welfare of our sponsored children.

Maida and I continue to enjoy the interaction with our supporters, and we have greatly appreciated the support and generosity of so many people towards the Homes, as well as the liaison with Ian and Anji Russell our Sponsorship Secretaries as together we seek to keep our finances on a sound footing.

### **Income boosted by special events**

Our income for the nine months to 31 October 2021 is £227,000 consisting of:

Donations plus tax recovery - £99,000

Income from sponsorship - £96,000

Legacies - £6,000

Investment income - £26,000

This is £49,000 more than the corresponding total last year of £178,000, largely because of around £40,000 received from supporters of Ian and Anji's highly successful Big Tea Party in February. In addition, we have received £15,000 in respect of our Honorary Vice-President, John Webster's Birthday Appeal, the funds from which, however, will be held in suspense until a comprehensive review of the Homes' Management and future financial position has been undertaken. Whilst there has been a drop of £2,000 in sponsorship income as well as of £14,000 in legacies, there has been an encouraging number of new sponsors and we greatly appreciate donations from whatever source. We are, however, also aware that our sponsorship income reflects an ageing demographic.

I would remind supporters that the sponsor payments which we make to the Homes include an allowance for pocket money. Should we receive any such sums they will be treated as general donations rather than being attributed to any specific child.

### **Expenditure reduced but annual deficit expected**

Despite the drop in the number of children at the Homes, I believe that we should continue to send funds at the rate we have in previous years, leaving the Homes to spend the money as they consider appropriate. Our ordinary expenditure for the nine months to October 2021 has been £194,000; it was £235,000 to this time last year. The exchange rate has improved to around 98 rupees to the pound - 92 last year. Our support for Extended Sponsorship students has increased, as after the pandemic there are more students in college, and we are also more in touch with their needs. I reported last year that we had experienced problems with the arrangement which we had begun with Mission of Mercy India. In the end the problems were such that we had to withdraw from the arrangement, so we have since adopted a new procedure whereby our Sponsorship Secretaries access funds from our foreign exchange brokers and send money direct to students or to their colleges. This arrangement allows Ian and Anji to have a much closer relationship with the students and is proving very beneficial and should ensure that our students receive the support that they need.

As with most charities, our income is relatively fixed, but predicting income is tricky, and we expect to end the year with a deficit of around £20,000. This is manageable in the short term given the size of our reserves, but since we are in the business of providing long term support for the Homes and the children whom we sponsor, we do wish to reverse the trend.

### **Investments performing strongly**

Stock market volatility continues, especially in the light of geopolitical uncertainties and the response to Coronavirus. As of 31<sup>st</sup> October our portfolio was valued at £1,185,000 compared with £1,045,000 on 31<sup>st</sup> January, having continued to recover across most sectors. We are guided by our stockbrokers, Killik & Co, and, on their advice, several sales and purchases were made in March with a view to diversifying the portfolio further; this has brought benefits, but we well understand what goes up can come down. The portfolio is of good quality and well diversified, and we adopt a prudent approach to investment. The yield on the portfolio is 2.5% and our investment policy is to achieve a balance of income and capital growth.

### **Your support is vital**

The amount we ask of our sponsors for full sponsorship of a child is £1,500 per annum (£1,200 per annum or £100 per month, plus Gift Aid). We fully accept that for some this amount will not be possible or appropriate, and our present level of reserves is able to top up the finance required to fulfil our commitment to the Homes.

Even without Covid, keeping the Homes running from day to day remains a challenge; the combined effect of the political situation in India in general and in Kalimpong in particular, as well as poor infrastructure in the Hills, makes everything difficult. We continue to work constructively with the Board of Management and the Homes' Senior Management Team to ensure that our sponsored children receive the best education possible, only too aware that our primary aim is to care for children who otherwise would have very little chance in life.

Coupled with Fund-Raising projects which are referred to below, a key element of our strategy is to increase our sponsorship income; your support in helping us in these roles is vital!

**Jim Gibson, Treasurer DGHUK**

## Fund-Raising and Events in 2021

During the past two years the U.K. Committee has been obliged to spend much time in bringing its ways of functioning up to date in accordance with current charity legislation. However, our Constitution clearly states – and as written and approved by our Trustees - that Fund-Raising must remain our *raison d'etre*, thereby fulfilling our mission to provide support for needy children, largely from the most deprived areas of Kolkata. Despite the constraints placed upon us during the last twenty months, the Fund-Raising efforts – not to mention the ingenuity – of our supporters has continued unabated!

## Arran Curry Supper - Celebrating The 121<sup>st</sup> Birthday of Dr Graham's Homes

Rev John Webster's latest idea for fundraising took the form of hosting a Birthday gathering at which there would be a box wrapped in birthday paper for donations for Dr Graham's Homes' 121st Birthday. John soon translated the idea into reality by hosting a Birthday Curry Supper at his home in Arran on Thursday 23rd September, to which Arran Friends of Kalimpong were duly invited, our first get together since Covid restrictions.

John's two helpers were Margaretta Purtill and Aileen Fraser. Margaretta had spent the day in the kitchen making the most delicious dhal and buttered chicken, accompanied with rice and poppadom, complemented with a wee glass of wine or juice. The aroma of curry on arrival at John's house was lovely, and we were not disappointed with the flavours of the dishes, some even asking for seconds!



All sat and blethered throughout the evening, some reminiscing on our 3Ks Tours to India and especially on visits to The Homes. Margaretta told us her story of how she arrived at Dr Graham's Homes, the part it played in shaping her years ahead, and the love and kinship that has remained with her to this day. We were all truly inspired by her journey and her involvement still that lies deep.

Aileen then brought in a gifted Birthday cake, blew out the candle and, singing with everyone "Happy Birthday Dear Homes", made a splendid finish to the evening – and by then a MARVELOUS £1,033 filled the Birthday Box!

**Shona Hume Trustee DGHUK**

**Kyra (graduated from DGH 2021):**

*"I have finished my high school and I have decided to do cosmetology in Lakme Academy in Kolkata, as I am very much interested in hairstyling, skin care, etc. Taking cosmetology has been exciting so far. The teachers are skilled, and my getting better every day gives me joy. A lot of events and competitions take place in our institution, especially for our seniors. The people here are good and helpful, and I have made a lot of friends. It has really been great experience and I can't wait for more to come."*



*Kyra and friends on leaving DGH*

## The Great British Tea Party

This fundraising event was held at the start of 2021 at a difficult time during semi-lockdown; indeed it represented a response to the constraints of lockdown! The purpose of the event was primarily to raise money for the children; however, it was also an opportunity to bring the global DGH family together to have a little 'zoom' fun whilst drinking tea!



We were delighted that so many people entered into the spirit of this event with enthusiasm and resourcefulness, showing that a variety of fundraising exploits, loosely based around the theme 'tea party', could raise so much money. We are grateful to everyone who took part in whatever way and helped to raise the grand total of over £46,000.

**Ian and Anji Russell**  
**Joint Sponsorship Secretaries**

## 2021 Homes Birthday Curry Lunch in Edinburgh

After nearly two years of enforced inactivity, supporters of Dr. Graham's Homes gathered in Edinburgh to mark the 121<sup>st</sup> Birthday of the Homes, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Fifty people attended the lunch, held at the Royal Scots Club, Edinburgh, at which our principal guests were Lord Wallace of Tankerness, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and Honorary President of the UK Committee, and Lady Wallace. It was a very happy event with supporters, donors, sponsors, friends as well as Trustees both past and present.



A quote from the Homes' Founder, *"as long as there are needy children, so long will the Homes in Kalimpong be needed"*, preceded the cutting of the Birthday cake by long-time supporter Averil Hope-Smith ably assisted by OGB and ex Trustee, Ken Hammond.

Mr. Clive Moore of Croy, Inverness-shire, toasted the memory of John Anderson Graham with a brief history and some reflections of his own involvement with The Homes. He noted the close friendship between Sir

Alexander McRobert of Cawnpore and his first wife Georgina with the Graham family and the gift of the McRobert Clock Tower in her memory.



Anne Hoggan, Vice-Chair of DGHUK, proposed the toast to the memory of Mrs. Katherine Graham, noting that, sadly, her memorial building, the Katherine Graham Chapel, still awaits restoration following the structural damage suffered in the earthquake of September 2011.



Our new Sponsorship Secretaries, Ian and Anji Russell, were able to join the lunch and together provided an update on sponsorship and the effects the virus was having on the Homes and the children both in Kalimpong and Kolkata. All present appreciated their informative presentation, in particular the quotations from letters received from students.

There followed an appreciation for the nearly sixty years of dedication given to the Homes by Reverend and Mrs. John Webster. This outstanding record can be summed up in the words of James Minto, a former Principal: *"There are men whose genius is prompted to fulfilment not by an inward urge or direction, but by their ready response to the calls which reach them and the needs which they encounter on their way through life"*. John was thanked for his work in the farm, dedication in the Chapel and then his many activities after leaving the Homes: his 3K Tours, his Kolkata (more recently Kathmandu)-to-Kalimpong Bike Rides ("K-to-K"), his Jars for Change and his many other fund-raising activities.

The group wished his wife, Jennifer, well and asked John to take back with him to Arran the very best wishes of the gathering. The Birthday Lunch donation boxes raised £230 for the Birthday Appeal, inspired by John, and our grateful thanks go to all who contributed.

The Moderator was invited to close the proceedings with a prayer which he did after thanking everyone for attending and remarking that he had learnt a great deal about the Homes and our founders, John and Katherine Graham.

The organisers would like to record their grateful thanks to all who attended and helped to make this a great success. It was a pleasure to see so many Supporters, Trustees, ex Trustees and Friends joining together in fellowship and celebration.

**Anne Hoggan**  
**Vice-Chair, DGHUK**

**Christina** (graduated from DGH in 2021):



*Christina and friends whilst at DGH*

*"I recently passed out of school and after that I really wanted to do a hotel management course. I am currently studying in the International Institute of Hotel Management. My college course started in August and first we had our induction classes online and it went really well. The teachers and students are really helpful and interactive. The subjects are new and intriguing and it's really nice to study something different. I am looking forward to physical (face-to-face) classes as it will be more helpful for my studies and for the orientation as well."*

## **Homes Birthday Appeal** **by Reverend John Webster, Honorary Vice President**

*"For more than 50 years now, each year, along with you all, I have celebrated the Birthday of our Homes on September 24<sup>th</sup>. Recently, it struck me that, in all these years, I have NEVER given a Birthday Present - and, of course "Many Happy Returns" for The Homes is very much dependent upon our generosity today!" My observation, above, introduced a letter which very many of the wider Homes community received earlier this year.*

Attending a Birthday Party customarily means bringing a gift – a thought which quickly became the basis of a Birthday Appeal! I had planned that my appeal should trigger a great response from all former students (OGBs). However, unbeknownst to me, "GO", the OGB Global Association, had launched their own independent Appeal specifically for the renovation of classrooms. The product of that particular initiative can be found later in this Newsletter. Notwithstanding, Anirban Bhattacharyya, the "GO" Chairman, kindly agreed to dispatch 700 of my introductory Appeal Letters with a follow-up immediately before the Birthday on 24th September. Understandably all OGBs supported their own Appeal.

Despite these appeals running in parallel amongst Homes supporters, a total of £16,922.50 was donated to the Homes Birthday Appeal, alone – a truly magnificent response. That money will be held until the Independent Review, now well under way through a professional consultant, has been completed and presented to the Board in Kolkata, after which a decision as to an appropriate application of these funds will be made.

I must express a very sincere "Thank You" to everyone who donated to the Birthday Appeal. I'm very much aware that many of those who contributed already give to the support of children being cared for in the Homes – their extra donations are particularly appreciated.

I am also hopeful that, in future, celebration of 24th September by ALL former students, friends and supporters will be marked with a spontaneous Birthday Donation!

**John G. Webster**  
**Honorary Vice-President DGHUK**



**Soma** (Graduated from DGH in 2020):

*"My college year had started in the month of October this year very successfully. I am enjoying my classes through an online mode with full concentration. All the teachers and friends are friendly with each other.*

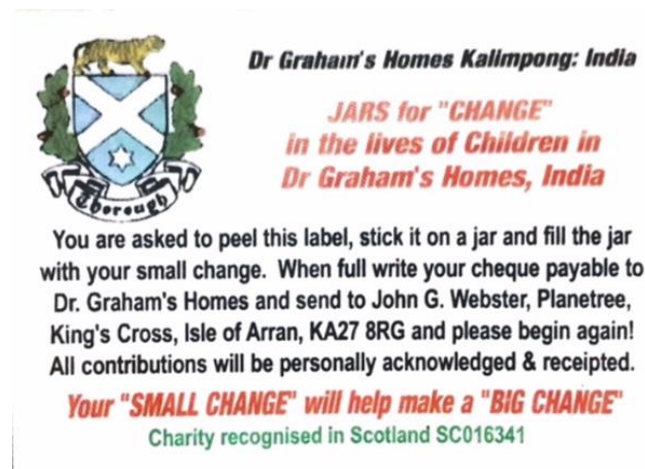
*I hope to do wonders in this three-year college course (at Loreto College) and make you all proud.*

*Thank you for sponsoring me."*

*With gratefulness, Soma.*

## Jars for "Change"

All good things must come to an end – no matter how good they may be!



The "Jars for Change" fund-raising idea, launched by John Webster some twelve years ago, has now run its course and John has asked that its closure be brought to the notice of our supporters through our Newsletter. The final Donation Receipt, No. 116, brought the grand total raised up to a closing amount of £3,583.92 pence!

A very big thank-you is due to everyone who, with their "small change" helped

bring about a "Big Change"! A very big thank-you, too, is due to our Honorary Vice-President, John Webster, for coming up with the idea in the first place!

**Pat Simpson**  
Trustee DGHUK

## Open Garden Weekend

On a wet weekend in October, my husband, John, and I welcomed visitors once again to our garden in Dundee for a Scotland's Gardens Scheme event in aid of Dr Graham's Homes. The hardy souls who came enjoyed wandering, first among the autumn tinted trees and shrubs and then among the floodlit water features.

Margaretta was a good salesperson for torches promoting DGH and she, Anne Hoggan and Janice



Dewar were on hand to serve Indian snacks. They were also kept busy answering questions raised by a rolling slide show of the Homes. For some visitors it was a chance to renew friendships, but for others it was their first introduction to Dr Graham's. We hope the publicity will have been beneficial, as well as the £520 raised for the Homes (and £300 for other charities supported by the Gardens Scheme).

*Schoolfriends from Homes' days -  
Margaretta Purtil and Vanda Campbell*

**Frances Dent**  
Committee Secretary, DGHUK

## **"The New Normal": Adaptation to New Times**

*(An article written by **Shirley**, who has just started her third year at Loreto College, Kolkata, studying BA (Hons) in History. Of her college, Shirley writes: 'I am fortunate to study in such a prestigious institution which not only teaches us the syllabus but also moral values to be a better human being in the outside world.')*



The beginning of the year 2020 brought people wishing each other Happy New Year and exchange greetings for betterment and opportunities further ahead. However, little did the world know about the upcoming horror show - a global pandemic. Pandemics have played a key role in shaping human history throughout the ages. However, given today's clueless nature of humans, no one could have envisaged one lurking close to the globe, even in their wildest dreams. It's been several months now that the world has been fighting the COVID-19 crisis, which slowly gave birth to the concept of 'the new normal'.

The new normal is what each one of us are adapting to in present times. The world went from already being tech savvy to taking technology to the extreme use for undertakings related to schools, offices, and classes. The present times, what we can also call the 'virtual age', is what we're all adapting to. With the shutdown of all work institutions, schools, and universities for quite some time, we finally got introduced to the digital form of classes, making best use of the internet as well as our time at home. Just like all institutions our college also took on the measure of moving on to a basis of a "new normal". This was quite a task to get used to in the beginning but with practice as well as lack of options I got used to it too. I personally am not a very tech savvy person, so I had a bit of difficulty in adapting to this sudden change but with time, just like all the others, we eventually accepted and moved on with this method. The whole world went from teaching in classes to teaching and learning digitally. It was just as the saying goes: 'difficulties are trigger points for change'.



There were several other challenges too because the onset of these myriad changes was extremely sudden. There were several problems related to internet connections, cellular recharges, and sometimes even weather conditions that determined the broad bands. Everyone isn't as privileged to always have a quiet and calm environment at home while classes are on. Sometimes timings of other family members working from home clashed and thus there was an unpleasant or rather not peaceful atmosphere to learn or do any studying.

These challenges I faced were, however, stepping-stones for a better time ahead as it took some getting used to and, very soon, I started seeing the bright side to this. We were completing our degrees and attempting huge examinations all in the comfort and much



required safety of our homes. What more could one expect during a global Pandemic? Earlier times when the world faced epidemics and pandemics, the situations were far worse than now. We in a way are still being able to do things that we do despite the global pandemic. People are working from homes, students are graduating etc. The pandemic also brought so many families together and created a closer bond. We realise the value of our loved ones and the fast-paced life that we were living in. Animals and the environment in total also got a breath of fresh air when there was an absolute cut-off of pollution. All these bright factors were very heavy and dominant over the little challenges that one could face with the new normal. The pandemic was a disaster, the worst anyone could imagine, but it did teach us lots as humans and I'm sure we've all learned something from it and hopefully we will all emerge safe and victorious, and people will return to their safe lives.

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### **Abhishek left school this year. We received this from him on 10<sup>th</sup> October:**

I'm Abhishek (OGB) - it's an honour and privilege to pass out from such a good school Dr. Grahams Homes. I still reminisce about each, and every bit of my time in Dr. Graham's Homes. I wouldn't say it is my second home - it's my first home and always will be.

I was three years old when I joined Dr. Grahams Homes and thank you for God's favour in my life, for the opportunity I got in such a recognised and good school, for my sponsors and all the good things provided for me from Dr. Grahams Homes. It's not where I belonged - but where I still belong.



After completing my school, I have even got an opportunity to join a recognised and good college, one of the top colleges in Kolkata, with the help of the UK sponsorship committee for which I continue to this day to be very thankful and grateful.

I am who I am today all because of the love and support I get from my sponsors and from the institute I have passed out from. Not just that, I have been provided with every bit of what is required for me, like college fees, travelling fares and pocket money.

The college which I have got admission to is Bhawanipur College, where I have been studying. It provides us with so much extra activities which opens a lot of opportunities for its students: activities like quizzing club, sports club, debating club, NCC and much more. I have recently been for my first orientation programme in the college. The campus is fabulous, and people around are very friendly. The Bhawanipur College even stretches out to the needy when in times of various disasters, medical need such as blood donations and the like.

Thank you so much to my sponsors and to Dr. Grahams Homes. As said, "You can take a boy out of Dr. Graham's Homes, but you can never take Dr. Graham's Homes out from a boy".

**HAIL DGH!!!** - Thank you and regards, Abhishek.



## Article by Arannya - Graduated from DGH Class XII in 2019



I was privileged to have a wonderful education from Dr. Graham's Homes for which I am immensely grateful, and I can never thank DGH enough for taking me in like family and to God Almighty, for sending me there. I studied there from the year 2014 - Class 8, until 2019 - Class 12.

I was happy with my results as I passed both ICSE and ISC exam with first division. My creativity had spread its wings, as I was able to write songs and perform in Jarvie Hall, make portraits for art exhibition, and I was even privileged to be the first student to preach on "Principles of Faith" in more than 50 years (according to Homes' Pastor, Henry Simon).

When all was said and done, it was quite heart-breaking for me as I met all the teachers and Principal Monteiro before leaving the campus and beginning a new life in Kolkata. That last meeting was filled with congratulations and good wishes for the life ahead.

**College:** A couple of months later I got into St. Xavier's College, Raghavpur Campus, and there my college life began. Although my college was quite far, it was better than going to the city in extremely crowded trains. I chose to follow the B.A General course as I wanted college to be as light as possible because I was also admitted to "Alliance Française Du Bangle" in Park Street to learn French. And soon enough, I fell in love with that language.

I had to work very hard, to keep up with my college studies along with learning a whole new language. Three days a week, my whole day and evening used to be spent in attending both college and French classes. I used to return at night at around 11:00pm. But thankfully, I was able to thrive and prosper in both fields, and the professors were very helpful and skilled in teaching. The campus was wonderful, and I made some very good friends. But due to being overloaded with studies, my time spent with them was less than I would have liked.

The only downside was that the professors used to make a scene and complain whenever I used to fall asleep in class. It was quite hilarious for most of my friends and professors. But my results were quite good and as I am an OGB, my English is very good too. I have participated in various extracurricular activities and had good times - until Covid lockdown! College was totally closed for almost six months before the commencement of Online classes. During that time, I started spending more time learning French, but unfortunately, due to financial issues I couldn't continue it officially anymore.

The college started in August 2020; it was very awkward for me to continue my college online at first, but I soon became familiar with it. Meanwhile, due to my emphasis on multi-tasking, I started drawing again. This time I started with digital art. Soon I became good with it, well, not very good to be honest, but good portraits followed as I experimented with colours.

From the year 2021, I started working on a project named "FLFC"(French Language Foundational Course). I was also doing my college as well. But I still chose to work on this project anyway because it is my wish to work in the domain of francophone. I want my career to be built around French. The goal of my project is to make French easy enough to be learnt from Middle School. Whilst in Alliance Française, I soon realised that it is hard, even for college students. I have seen numerous dropouts as a result.

The foundation of a language is the most important part of learning a language. I wanted to make French easy to be taught in schools. So, I am preparing a course which specialises in teaching the foundation of French with an aim to prepare students of classes 7-10 for DELF



*Arannya – Digital Sunset!*

A1.1 exams. For that I am preparing special books and also keeping a healthy liaison with Alliance Française. After explaining the project, Alliance Française has happily agreed to let those school students come and give DELF in their institution. I am making three books (one already done) to be taught from classes 7-10 and then those students are to be sent to Alliance Française to take their DELF A1.1 exam. They will then soon get an official certificate from the French Government coming straight from Paris.

Regarding this project, after it's been completed, I plan to run this project in different schools, establish a proper liaison with Alliance Française and the school administrations, teach French to the students, send them to Alliance Française for DELF, and then get the certificates from the French government and distribute them via the school. According to my estimation, it will bring both prosperity and honour to the school.

#### **Future: -**

And to talk about my future, I plan to move ahead and get a job, and finish my French course. Besides that, as the books and study materials are made, I'll be running this project in different schools to gain more experience. It is my dream to run FLFC in Dr Graham's Homes one day. To make the Homes the only and best school in North Bengal which teaches the French foundational course, connected with Alliance Française and French Ministry of Education.

Once again, I am extremely grateful to Dr Graham's Homes and UK Committee for supporting me throughout my college life.

Best wishes - Arannya

## GO – “Adopt a Classroom” Project

In July 2021, under the leadership of Anirban Bhattacharyya, Chairman of GO – the global organisation of Homes' former pupils, OGBs, launched their “Adopt a Classroom” initiative:



Mission – to raise sufficient funds to support the refurbishment and equipping of classrooms throughout the School. GO reached out to over 650 of its members, worldwide, and were delighted with

the response which, from a standing start, raised some £30,000 in the space of just a few months; a significant launch-pad for the entire project!

With the full backing of the Board of Management, a feasibility study providing an assessment of the scope and budget costs had been undertaken by local professionals associated with GO. Taking account of available resources, materials, and workforce requirements, together



*Classroom 1 – from this ...*

with time constraints, it was concluded that refurbishment of the Junior School Block be designated as Phase 1 of the entire project. As a Phase 1/Part 1 stage of the works, the completion of a model classroom – Room 1, currently accommodating Class 6A - in time for Homes' Birthday celebrations, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021, was set. The scope of



*..... via this ...*

work included remedial works on floors, walls and ceilings, electrical upgrading, decoration and equipping with new classroom furniture. “Thorough” application of multiple layers of PU wax polish brought the finished article up to traditional Homes' standards. Following this initial handover, a further six classrooms have since been brought up to “model” standard. Next comes Phase 2 of the Junior School programme in which all the remaining classrooms will be similarly upgraded throughout January and February next year.

GO is very conscious of the enormous input of funding, of professional and of voluntary effort given by so many Homes supporters across the world and is most appreciative of that support. Fuller details of all aspects of the “Adopt a Classroom” Project can be found in GO's own Newsletter via [www.dghogbs.com](http://www.dghogbs.com)



*..... to Class 6A's new home!*

*pp* **Anirban Bhattacharyya**

**Chairman GO Association**



## Memories of Kalimpong - My Time at The Homes

**John G. Webster, (Chaplain and Farm Manager, mid-60's to mid-70's)**

I "did" Agriculture before Divinity at Glasgow University and had visions of a Ministry in a farming parish in Scotland. But God's plans are not always our plans! Instead, my Ministry began in Church House, Youth Centre, attached to St. Francis in the East Church of Scotland in Bridgeton, East End, Glasgow - as far from the countryside as one could be!

At that time a colleague and friend of mine, Reverend John Cook, was Minister in St. Andrew's Church, Calcutta. He also served on the Board of Dr. Graham's Homes, and they were searching for a Chaplain and Farm Manager!

In 1964 after four challenging and relevant years in Church House, my wife Jennifer and I, along with sons Gordon, nearly three, and Calum, nearly one, set sail from Liverpool for India and Dr. Graham's Homes.

To minister to 500 or so children proved to be thrilling and rewarding. The Homes Chapel overlooked the school campus, and the school day began with worship in the Chapel and it was there in a real way that Life of Dr. Graham's Homes found its true expression in worship - and worship found its expression in School and Cottage Life.



Sunday was a fulfilling day. Church Service in the morning with a full Chapel and the singing of the pupils was amazing and inspiring. How the children SANG! Each Sunday afternoon, we held an informal Meeting in the School Hall for the Middle School - we sang, said our prayers, read our Bibles with a few short talks then sang a lot more! In the evening,

with the help of three Senior Members of Staff, four individual Youth Fellowship evenings were held for the Senior Pupils. Then, on a Monday morning, I was back on the Farm for "muster" at 7 a.m. for around sixty workers - Vegetable Gardeners, (there were four separate terraced gardens), Dairy Cattle Men, Cheesemakers, Poultry Girls, Piggery Man, Handyman and "Departmental" Clerks and Dindayal Pradhan, Head Clerk.

My love and respect for these Nepalese workers grew quickly and continues to this day. On one occasion Dindayal shared a letter written by the Farm workers to send to the Local Advisory Committee (of which I was a member), requesting a much-needed pay increase. I suggested that I write my version which Dindayal copied and signed on behalf of the workers and sent to the Committee. My delight, and embarrassment, were considerable when the letter was very favourably received, and the increase granted.



It was about two months after my arrival at the Homes before the existing Farm Manager retired. The Farm was desperately run-down, and change was needed! I was aware that the two Night Watchmen slept overnight, and I felt that first impressions were of great importance! In pursuit of this belief at a minute past midnight, on the day of my appointment, with headlights beaming I stormed out to the Farm in the old Land Rover which I had inherited from my monthly visits for Church Services in the nearby "Dooars"

(Tea Gardens). I roared to a halt outside the cow shed, descended from the Land Rover, slammed the door and planted my leading foot, ankle deep, into the contents of the channel taking the cattle effluent from the byre! Thus, fired up, I stormed shouting round the Farm Buildings eventually to be greeted by two yawning Chowkidars armed with ancient rifles and sticks! Confident that my shouting had made sufficient impact for the two offenders to communicate to the morning muster that this new Manager meant business. I stormed back to the Land Rover, splashing my other foot in the same "Nullah" which I had stepped into on my arrival! As I left, I discerned, in the darkness, the fear of the Chowkidars had deteriorated into much laughter! The message they gave about the new Sahib to the morning muster I know not. But over the years with cooperation of all the Workers we were able to achieve a great deal and for me it was a very sad parting farewell when I left.

I end this story on a trivial but amusing incident: Phulmaya, one of the Poultry Girls agreed to take the calves to a grazing patch on the hill above the Farm. Her shepherding was essential to prevent the cattle straying on to the local Busti Land. An hour or so later I noticed the calves wandering all over the hill with Phulmaya lying fast asleep in the grass! Two workers were dispatched to quietly round up the wayward herd and bring them back to the farm buildings. Sometime later, to the amusement of all watching, Phulmaya jumped to her feet to find her charges nowhere to be seen! The laughter of all who watched was in good faith as was the ready forgiveness offered to the unfortunate offender!



Unforgettable and wonderful years in Dr. Graham's Homes!

**John G. Webster**  
**Honorary Vice-President DGHUK**



## From the Archives – first of a series of articles we plan to bring you in future Magazines

### “Sponsorship” - a Recent Innovation?

Saint Andrew's Colonial Homes Magazine – April 1915

There is frequent debate - albeit with little evidence - concerning the origins of “sponsorship”. Occasionally, that is vaguely dated as “sometime in the mid-Sixties”, possibly attributed to the Canadian Overseas Committee of the time. Perhaps we are all wrong – here's an article from the St Andrew's Colonial Homes' quarterly magazine of April 1915! (*The original, reproduced here, is somewhat difficult to decipher so we offer a re-type here!*). If the truth be known, the present approach to sponsorship can probably be linked back as an unattributable development from the post-WWII revenue-driven, and locally beneficial, need to start enrolling Day Scholars.

### Specially Supported Children

62 SAINT ANDREW'S COLONIAL HOMES MAGAZINE. [APRIL]

**Specially Supported Children.**

Sometimes special contributors desire to have special children allotted in whole or in part to them, and we desire that this kind of interest should exist in many



SUPPORTED BY DARJEELING BRANCH OF THE MINISTERING CHILDREN'S LEAGUE.

other cases. To give an indication of such help, we print a photograph of a boy and a girl whom the Darjeeling Branch of the Ministering Children's League have under-

two are orphans—one from Assam and the other sent by the Society for the Protection of Children in India. The cost of supporting a child in the Homes is Rs. 15 a month. We can recommend the investment and trust that many others will follow the example of a member of the Indian Civil Service who wrote shortly and to the point a few days ago: “I enclose a cheque for Rs. 180 for the support of a child for one year.” We shall gladly send a photograph of such a “special” child to the supporter.

As regards support our children are divided into three classes. Some parents or guardians pay the actual cost of the bread and butter, others cannot afford more than a part of this cost, but they are called upon to contribute to the full extent of their ability as it would be wrong to them and unfair to the public to allow them to shirk their natural responsibilities. But in the case of a large number of children, the whole of the expenses has to be met by the charity of willing friends.

—o—

**New Workers.**

Our indispensable and indefatigable Scottish Committee send us the cheering news that they have appointed two new ladies for the Homes. Miss Thomson of Aberdeen shire comes out to be with her aunt in Woodburn Cottage, and Miss Carswell who becomes House Mother of Elliott Cottage on its opening is to have the assistance of an old friend, Miss Edith White, the daughter of Captain White, formerly of the P and O Steam Navigation Co., and now Harbour Master of the Broomielaw Glasgow. Miss White is a trained nurse. Mr. Paterson writes that he expected the ladies would leave Liverpool by the “City of Benares” on 1st May. At least one other lady has been secured for the Cottages to be built in cold weather and the Committee are in correspondence with other likely helpers. Miss Counsell, Calcutta, has been appointed as a Teacher in connection with the

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Jim Simpson – Trustee DGHUK

## Editorial



Several years have passed since we last compiled and edited UK Committee's Annual Reports and Newsletters; somehow that privilege (!) has returned; maybe we were the first to blink when the challenge was thrown down recently! Still, we're happy to take on that challenge and hope that you are happy with the spread of articles which we've pulled together for you, our supporters.

The aim of our Annual Newsletter, and, too, of our Annual Report, is to bring you the latest information about developments throughout each year at The Homes and, indeed, across the wider DGH community. But over-riding that, we are anxious that all who read the magazines are kept well-informed about DGHUK's fundamental task, the provision of a safe, nurturing environment of education for needy children through the medium of sponsorship. Hence you will have noticed, perhaps, the emphasis throughout this Newsletter on the benefits which sponsorship has brought to so many of our children, illustrated by the numerous snapshot articles from college students and those now in good jobs throughout India and beyond. We are all very proud of their achievements and hope that these stories inspire our supporters to encourage others not yet associated with the Homes to consider how they too might invest in a needy young life.

It is no secret that, for a wide variety of reasons, both good and not so good, Dr Graham's Homes is very much under pressure these days, indeed, its very survival today is at risk! It's not as if DGH is in a different situation from most of the other old schools founded by the British a century ago. Nowadays, most don't have their troubles to seek, and the Homes is certainly not immune from this common crisis. From earthquakes to political unrest, from general strikes to local employment norms, from pay disputes to lack of the skills necessary to best utilise the facilities with which the Homes was equipped in the early days; all seem to have come together to form the perfect storm. Now the pandemic, lockdowns, on-line teaching have all added to the problems. The one saving grace is that the standard of teacher, of education, of extra-curricular provision, of nurture and of care all remain first class.

This is why DGHUK, working alongside the Kolkata Board, is commissioning an external Independent Review of the entire Homes operation in a once-and-for-all effort to turn the tide. The answer must surely lie in increasing the number of boarders, both private and sponsored. To this end however, as we are all aware, the Homes needs major infrastructure improvement reflecting 21<sup>st</sup> Century expectations. But this is about more than mere cosmetic change. Root and branch change must be considered and that is where the Independent Review comes in. Our website, [www.drgrahamshomes.co.uk](http://www.drgrahamshomes.co.uk) provides links that will allow all our stakeholders to participate and contribute. Hopefully by the time our next publication comes out – our Annual Report next May – the way forward will be becoming clearer.

Now it is almost Christmas, so we are delighted to greet all supporters of Dr Graham's Homes to wish you and your loved ones a personal Happy Christmas and a safe and more straightforward New Year.

**Jim and Pat Simpson - Trustees DGHUK**



**DR GRAHAM'S HOMES, KALIMPONG, INDIA  
1900 - 2020**

**OVER A CENTURY OF CARING FOR CHILDREN**

Founder -The Very Reverend John Anderson Graham DD, LL.B, CIE  
Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1931

