

## Dorothy Morris (née Cropper)

### Music

1949-51



1949



2014

### A Motley Group

When I became a student at Bretton Hall, I was an eighteen years old girl, fresh from Grammar School. The experience changed my life.

The 1949 intake comprised fifty-six students. We were a motley group: school leavers, National Service men, mature students, recent graduates, all teacher-training applicants, but we jelled as a family. We were all housed in the Mansion, which was a hive of activity, with work still in progress.



*Hans Feibusch*

Hans Feibusch, the celebrated muralist and sculptor, spent some time restoring the mural on the main staircase.

His work necessitated scaffolding, which we had to negotiate daily. Health and Safety would have a fit now.



*Mural over the main staircase*

1949 was still a time of rationing so we all brought our ration books. I remember being always hungry! It was cold, especially the Stable Block where we did our teaching practice preparation. I remember chopping off the corner of my college scarf on the guillotine one winter's day – I was so muffled up against the cold.



*The Bentley Springs Girls*

I shared a purposely-furnished dormitory with five other girls. We all became lasting friends, and I am still in contact with the remaining ones. I was one of the four who studied Music; the main study of the other two was Art.

Our room, which was called *Bentley Springs*, had furniture designed to give each girl privacy, but with easy access to each other's cubicle. My window looked onto the parkland behind the Mansion, and was a glorious view.

Some of the students were amazing musicians, particularly among the mature students. We thoroughly enjoyed the spontaneous concerts – you name it and they could play it !

There were visiting piano and singing tutors. We had to sign up for a practice room, hidden somewhere in the Mansion.

Mr. Roberts, one of the Music tutors, encouraged the student orchestra and with we singers and Miss Bird, we covered a wide repertoire in our two years of study, including Vaughan Williams' Serenade to Music for 16 singers and orchestra, singers having to double up, and Borodin's Polovtsian Dances, which was supplemented by Art students who could sing.



*Raymond Roberts*

A group of us went to Leeds to both see and hear Vaughan Williams' Pilgrims Progress, the composer himself being there for a first performance, which was thrilling.

Bretton also hosted important visiting speakers: Sir Gordon Russell and Bernard Shore, to name but two.

The Dolmetsch family also came and gave a recital.



*Pond in the Terrace Garden*

I have lovely memories of singing Stanford's Blue Bird with the Madrigal Group, directed by Miss Bird, around the pond in the top garden – a rehearsal for the first Open Day.

In the second year we performed A Midsummer Night's Dream there too, well bitten by evening midges! We had a lot of fun making our headdresses and wore the blue dance tunics supplied for Movement classes with Miss Dunn.



One of Miss Dunn's Movement Sessions



*Field Marshal Viscount  
Montgomery of Alamein*

One weekend, I was in the Bow Room, which then acted as a library, when we spotted Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, striding across the park towards the Mansion.

The Principal – Mr. Friend – was quickly alerted to welcome him . A surprise visitor, indeed!

It was only when I started teaching that I fully appreciated Bretton's innovative approach to Education, and I am so happy to have had that experience.

*D A Morris (Cropper)*

2015