

# Save the Children UK

## Alumni Association – Seven Days Later

The end of the centenary celebrations...the start of the next era. There has this week been a huge amount of enthusiasm for the Association. Our social side is clearly strong, but there remains a desire to do more. Nothing confirmed yet, but we are trying to find a way to tie the Alumni Association to the various archive initiatives. The personal insights in last week's centenary newsletter perhaps show a way forward. And if you haven't read it already, it really is a great read. You can find it [here](#).

There are a few loose ends from the newsletter, and Mike has written a really interesting piece about his centenary week. And **please** click the link for the little video of Alison Pavier's speech at the picnic outside the Albert Hall! You will almost feel as if you were there!

### The Magnificent Eighteen

In case you were scratching your head on this one from the Centenary Newsletter, here is everyone's name ...



Hussein Mursal, Gilly Usborne, Ann Mulcahy, John Parry-Williams, Mark Bowden, Douglas Lackey, Peter Poore, Alex Gray, Mike Edwards, Antony Echel-Thompson, Mike Aaronson, Alain Pillet, Steve Cavell, (front row, from left) Jane Sparrow, Eban Taban, Martina Bazigaga, Mike O'Dwyer, Ben Foot.

### **Mike Aaronson - My Save the Children Week**

I thought I would share some personal highlights from this last very special week marking Save the Children's centenary.

**Sunday, 19 May** – 100 years exactly after the launch of the organisation in the Royal Albert Hall. Up to London

from leafy Surrey for a Picnic in the Park organised by Alison Pavier – meeting, appropriately enough, at the

Albert Memorial opposite the Albert Hall.



Many alumni friends are there (about 50 in all), there's a touching toast by Alison, and some stoical resistance by all of us in the face of an offending rain shower. Here is that great little [video!](#)



Claire Mulley is marketing her book (royalties go to Save the Children) and I am marketing the Alumni Association, as not everyone present has yet signed up!

**Monday lunchtime**, 20 May. Back to the Albert Hall for the [unveiling](#) of the new bronze bust of Eglantyne sculpted by Ian Wolter.



*Natasha Kaplinsky and Ian Wolter*

There's a nice welcome from SC UK chief executive Kevin Watkins and an excellent speech by Claire Mulley reminding us of the foundation story and the part played by the Albert Hall gathering. Ian Wolter explains the challenges of sculpting someone whose face you've never seen, and Natasha Kaplinsky, Save the Children Ambassador, speaks from the heart as she performs the unveiling.



*Natasha and Claire Mulley*

The original bronze bust is going to Lady Margaret Hall, Eglantyne's Oxford college, and a stunning bronzed plaster replica was unveiled later the same day at SC UK HQ in Farringdon.

**Monday afternoon**, 20 May. This time to a different royal hall - the Royal Festival Hall - to be interviewed by

Toyin Oyekenu, Knowledge Manager at Save the Children Nigeria, at the suggestion of Ben Foot (Country Director). Toyin is putting together a podcast on the history of Save the Children in her country to coincide with the centenary. As my memories go back to the Biafra relief operation I can talk to her about that. However she was surprised (as was Ben) to learn that SC UK was already in Nigeria when that conflict erupted, at Ilesha in the then Western Region working on a mother and child health programme. Turns out that Toyin's Mum's home town is...Ilesha!

**Wednesday, 22 May.** By train to Birmingham to do some research on Ilesha in the [SC UK archives](#), housed in the Cadbury Research Library (CRL) at the University of Birmingham.



Wonderful to read meeting minutes and field reports from over 50 years ago: a blast from the past. Also to come across a July 1969 memo from Overseas Personnel Officer Eileen Watson to Chief Accountant Tim Phipps authorising an initial contract of 6 months at a rate of £896 pa for a Supply and Maintenance Officer in the emergency relief programme; name of Michael Aaronson...

Wednesday evening, 22 May. To the Midlands Art Centre, Edgbaston, for a [performance of "Eglantyne"](#), a remarkable one woman show lasting 75 minutes, written and performed by Anne Chamberlain. She is on tour; this performance was organised as an outreach activity by the Save the

Children Archive Project to mark the centenary. Anne manages to create an entirely plausible Eglantyne – like Ian with his sculpture, she has had to imagine something she has never seen. Even if you know all the famous Eglantyne quotations this portrayal has you on the edge of your seat. An idea hatches in my head: could we ask her to put on a performance for Alumni?

**Thursday morning, 23 May.** Back to the archives to introduce Toyin, who has come up by train from London, to the material on Ilesha I have found. She is looking for names of people in Nigeria who might still be available for interview to talk about their experiences of those early days. She becomes excited when she sees the name of one of our Health Visitors – who might turn out to be the mother of a good friend of hers! Then to the first meeting of the Steering Group for the Archive Project, to receive a report on progress and to discuss the way ahead. I raise the possibility of using the Alumni Association as a platform for gathering stories about the organisation's history, and get some good advice.

**Thursday afternoon, 23 May.** By train to London to attend a celebration at Farringdon of Bill Bell's 30 years service at Save the Children.



It's a surprise for Bill (he thought he was having a 1-1 with his line manager...) and he is overwhelmed by the numbers who have turned out, by the video and other tributes from

across the world, and by the various gifts and mementos that have been assembled.



Kevin Watkins makes a presentation, we all drink some lovely bubbly and there is lots of food – and birthday cake!



### Plugs and Adverts!

- Alumni members living in South West England will be meeting for lunch at Drogo Castle on Thursday 18th July at 12.30pm. Anyone is welcome to join us and if you wish do send a private message to David Wright.
- [Clare Mulley's biography](#) of Eglantyne has been reprinted to coincide with the centenary, a new [biography of Dorothy](#) by Peta Dunstan has just come out, and next year sees the publication of [Emily Baughan's history](#) of the first fifty years of Save the Children.

**Friday, 24 May.** Back to the Festival Hall for a coaching meeting as part of my contribution to Save the Children's global coaching network, which is curated by Leonie Lonton (in the second zero!).



A rewarding conversation as always with my coachee; a great way to end an enjoyable if somewhat hectic Save the Children week!