

Gladys Maud Sandes

According to the records held by Wimbledon High School:

Born 5 November 1897. Joined WHS 4 May 1910. Previously educated at home. Her father was John Sandes Esq, Barrister. Her address in May 1910: 25 Homefield Road, Wimbledon. This has been altered to 8 Bernard Gardens [this move must have happened before 2 April 1911, i.e. the date of the 1911 Census]. In January 1914 she took her 'London Matriculation Examination', Div II, in Maths, English, Chemistry, French and History. In September 1914, she was awarded the G.P.D.S. (Girls' Public Day School) Senior Trust Scholarship – 'awarded to the girl between the ages of 15 and 17 who takes the highest place in the examination' - an annual award of £15 [this would have been extremely prestigious]. In 1915 she 'Reached Surrey Major Scholarship Standard'. [I think this was worth about £60 a year, towards Higher Education]. She left the school on 28 July 1916. Place of Further Education: London School of Medicine for Women.

The record card has later had 'Mrs Alston' added to it, along with two further addresses – 19 Queen Alexandra Mansions, Judd Street, WC1 and 41 Devonshire Street, W.1 – but with no indication of dates.

The school magazine is usually a rich source of information but, because of the War, a very slim magazine appeared in April 1916, and the next was not published until April 1919, so missing any record of Gladys's last year at school. The 1916 magazine records her as being on the Editorial Committee of the Magazine, the Treasurer of the Upper School Library (it was a subscription library in those days) and there is a delightful piece written by her, 'The Pleasures of the Country', describing a holiday taken with her sister the previous summer at Corfe Castle, in Dorsetshire [sic]. Also in the 1912 magazine: 'A Day's Excursion Among the Maritime Alps' by Gladys M Sandes, Lower V.

There is a further card for her sister – Doris Aphra Sandes, date of birth 29 December 1899. She started at WHS on 21 September 1910, having spent one term at The Study [Wimbledon girls' school, still in existence] and she left on 3 April 1912 for a boarding school in Folkestone. I see from the 1911 Census that the two girls and their 7 year-old brother had been born in Dublin, although their mother came from Derbyshire. Their father spent the night of the Census in a private hotel in Jermyn Street. (I am sure you know all this – I am just going beyond my brief now)

In 1919, Gladys is one of five Old Wimbledonians reported to be studying at the London School of Medicine. In the 1920 magazine she has a fascinating piece published: 'An Insight Into Life on a Casualty Post' (3 months as a student in A&E!). She was by then working at the Royal Free Hospital for Women. In 1923: 'Gladys Sandes, who took her Finals last November, as will be seen in the list of University Honours [G.Sandes, July 1922, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.; October 1922, M.B.,B.S.], is now the Assistant Resident Medical Officer at the Mildmay Hospital, Bethnal Green. In 1924: Gladys Sandes is still Senior Resident Medical

Officer at the London Lock Hospital, and has recently been appointed Visiting Anaesthetist to the British Dental Hospital. In 1925: Gladys M.Sandes has been appointed Surgical Registrar to the Lock Hospital, and has now started in private practice.' In 1927: 'G Sandes is in private practice at 98 Portland Place, W.1, and holds, among other appointments, that of surgical registrar to the London Lock Hospital.' In 1930: 'G. Sandes (F.R.C.S.) has published a medical text-book, of which a notice appears under "Gifts to the School".'*(An Introduction to the Nervous System* by E.E.Hewer, D.Sc., and G.M.Sandes, M.B., B.Sc.,M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.) She served on the School's Jubilee Committee in 1930 – she was one of the speakers at the Jubilee Dinner, alongside Lady Carlisle, Lady Ewing and the Duchess of Atholl and others. The gist of her speech is included, and she is described later as 'Demonstrator of Anatomy, London School of Medicine for Women. Specialist in diseases of women, Joint author of book on Nervous System.' [I believe we have a photo of this dinner in the archive]. In 1932: 'We congratulate Dr. Gladys Sandes, F.R.C.S.(England), on her appointment as Surgical Registrar to the South London Hospital, a much coveted Staff post.

In the 1936 magazine: Marriages:

On August 16th (1935) Gladys Maud Sandes, B.S., F.R.C.S.(Eng) and James Maxwell Alston, M.B., M.R.C.P.(Edin)

(Was Lilac, mentioned in the obituary, actually her natural daughter? I cannot find any record of her birth online, and it is not recorded in the magazine, as I would have expected. I came across a picture of her online on the front of Country Life in 1963, and she certainly looks as though she could be Gladys's daughter. I know she married Patten Bridge in 1971.)

I have skimmed through the news of Gladys in the magazines over the next 30 years, and she obviously kept in touch with the WHSU (Old Girls) and with others she knew, often sending in news of them as well as her own. In 1952 she reported having spent six weeks in Africa the previous summer, during which time she caught up with several OWs. By 1954 she had been Vice Chairman of the Carshalton Group Hospital Management Committee for two years; in 1957 she had been elected Chairman of the St Marylebone Division of the British Medical Association; in 1958 now serving on the Board of the Friends of the GDST; in 1962 President of the Metropolitan Counties Division of the BMA, Chairman of the Old Students' Union of the Royal Free Medical School, and recently appointed to the consultant staff of the Mothers' Hospital.

Then, in 1968, her obituary: 'The school has lost one of its most distinguished O.G.s by the death in January of Gladys Sandes. During the First World War it took great courage and determination for a girl to enter the medical profession but, with Miss Gavin's [the Head's] help, Gladys embarked on her chosen career. She was made a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1930 and rose to great eminence in the profession. In spite of her many commitments she was a regular and faithful attendant at WHSU functions and derived a great deal of enjoyment from her connection with the school.'