

## **"Community" as experienced with DMJ (and after)**

My first contact with the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, then the Ladies of Mary, was in 1958 when, age 11, I attended St. Anne's College, Sanderstead.

(did my parents feel an affinity for this particular order as it's founder was a Belgian, as was my father's father?)



First school photo  
March 1959

The next seven years were formative ones as I learnt which "groups" I had things in common with - the scientific, and which I did not - the sporty.

Yet, also to recognise that even with difference we were members of one school. However, I have to say that I felt that the sporty ones were given more adulation and had more fun.



Now here is  
the leaving  
photo in 1965

I am still in  
touch with a  
number of the  
girls.

I entered the Order as a postulant at Forest Hill. I remember my parent's sadness as I left their family community for an as yet unknown community. I remember my eager anticipation at joining a group of like minded people. What did I come to learn or observe or appreciate over the next five years? That we can be different but have a common purpose. How very basic human needs of food, sleep, work and recreation bind a group together. Sharing comes to mind.



[Back Row      Katie, Jen Condron, Phil Lafferty (sitting. She later developed MS and has since died) Sheila Jerome (She left from the Novitiate) Jo Beebwa

Middle      Mary Gertrude (Eileen Davy), Pat Van der Veken, Paula Clooney (she left 1 month after making her final vows !) Anne Marsh (left before Final Vows)

Sitting      Celia Beale, Jo Palmer (left before Final Vows) Mary Lees]

Humour was important too and could be expressed in as simple a thing as referring to the corridor that linked the Novitiate to the main house as "Siberia". In winter at 6am it felt like it.



More humour.  
I attach here a photo of a "toy novice". I made one for each of the members of the novitiate from scraps. I wonder if any of them remember. As you see I still have mine



There were some things of that era that I never understood – frowning on “particular friendships” was one. In this community I did feel that everyone was valued. I learnt more about confidentiality, such that I did not have to know everything about my Sisters in order to have understanding and empathy. To me that was the formative step from natural family to adult community.

I have a life long appreciation of the practice of morning meditation in community. It is a very different thing from attempting it alone whether one falls asleep or not! Later, when I had three children and a totally different community, I did attempt it, to preserve my sanity, but it was not the same.

After profession and a happy time in community at “Merlewood” and Ladbroke Grove, (sadly no photos, but a lovely memory of the blue Persian cat) I started medical school and was put into a nearby bedsit. Alone!

Where was community? Was it to be formed among fellow medical students? That community was a lot harder than the religious one. There was far less tolerance exhibited.

I believe that I am now a member of a number of different communities. What they have in common is a common purpose, though each may have very different aims. So here are parts of my family community and my village community to name but two.



Village litter pick!

With very best wishes for the bicentenary,  
Pat Ancliff (Van der Veken) 2016