

An unexpected Bursary has been received from Mark Riches whose mother taught French at the school in the 1960's. We thank Mark for thinking about the school.

Edith Riches

Edith, known as Madame Riches to both Staff and Pupils taught French at Swaffham Convent (The Sacred Heart School) from the early 1950's to the mid 1960's. Whilst being small of stature she had a huge personality and long after she retired she frequently met ex pupils whilst shopping in King's Lynn who remembered her fondly.

Whilst many people thought she was French, in fact she was born in the Transylvanian town of Aiud then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and today in Romania. Her parents sadly died when she was young but she developed an early passion for languages. Whilst her first language was Hungarian, by her early teens she also spoke French, German and Romanian fluently. Later she added English, Russian and Italian - the latter 2 learnt in her retirement. Not only did she speak 7 languages she could also read and write in 7 languages!

A few years before the outbreak of World War 2 she moved to Paris to study at the Sorbonne. To supplement her income she became an au pair to a family in Paris. As the German occupying troops moved in the family fled to the Southern Alps where she remained until the war ended. These were difficult and dangerous years and although she was always reluctant to talk about it the escapades she

eventually shared with one of her inquisitive grandsons would have made compelling reading.

She came to England in 1947 and it was at Sacred Heart in Swaffham that she found a community that welcomed her and shared the same passion for education. She encouraged her pupils to give of their best and was most demanding of those who she could see had real talent and most supportive of those who gave 100% regardless of the final result - she always supported in every walk of her life the "underdog"!

She died suddenly in 2009 at the age of 93 and would have been thrilled to know that her legacy at the Convent would continue with an annual prize in her name.