

Gillian Townsend (Treasurer)

My History

I was born in 1943 towards the end of the war, grew up in south London (Norbury) and went to school in Croydon. I walked friends' and neighbours' dogs as soon as I was old enough as I "wasn't allowed a dog in London". My theme song was "Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow", for those of you old enough to recognise it! We had cats, mice, hamsters, etc. in compensation.

My main interests were sport and music. I played the flute in the school orchestra and in the Croydon Youth Orchestra. I played cricket for the school and for the county (Surrey) and spent a lot of time watching (and scoring for) cricket at all levels. Maths and physics were my main subjects at school although I went on to read P.P.E (philosophy, politics and economics) at St Hugh's College, Oxford. I played cricket and hockey at University, gaining a cricket blue in each of my three years. Possibly uniquely for a mother and son, my middle son 30 years later also gained his cricket blue three years running; and we were both Secretary, I of the OU Women's CC and he of the OUCC (his was a much more impressive achievement!).

I met Mike, my husband, a Yorkshireman, at Cambridge University where he was reading history with my brother and we made great use of the Oxford/Cambridge cross-country train. When we married in 1966 we agreed we would have a dog as soon as I gave up work to raise a family – and the one breed that we both agreed we would like was, of course, an Irish Setter. I taught briefly and then went into Operational Research (working on transportation problems). Four years later we bought our first Irish Setter from Margaret Boardman and produced our first son. Our love for the Irish Setter was born – we increased our Setters with our children; we stopped at 3 sons but continued to increase the number of Setters. We have been totally smitten with them ever since. The rest you probably already know.

I am thrilled to have bred, owned and handled my beautiful Sorrel (Sh Ch Follidown Red Hot Poker JW) to her title, but I adore all my Setters whatever they have or haven't achieved. I am also very proud of my 3 sons and their wives/partner and my two grandchildren; and especially my husband, Mike, who has made it all possible.