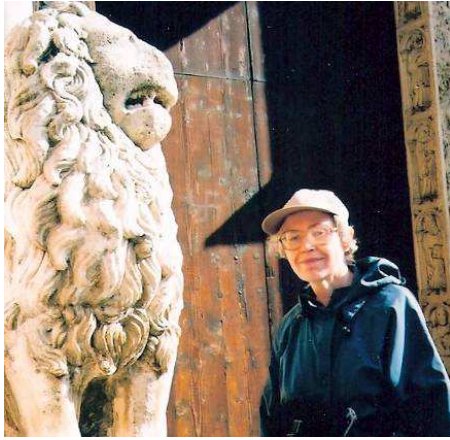


## SPOTLIGHT ON NEWNHAM US ALUMNAE

### A CLASSICAL CAREER



Rolly Phillips (N'65 Classics) lives in New York City. She says:

“The time I spent in Cambridge was essential in developing the skills necessary to pursue my lifework (the study of Greek and Latin). I did my undergraduate work at Bryn Mawr, a school with a fine tradition in the study of classics and with excellent teachers. The two years that I spent at Newnham (1965-67) were truly inspiring. While continuing to study Greek and Latin literature, I also learned much about ancient history and archeology. My distinguished teachers included Joyce Reynolds, Pat Easterling, John Crook, and Hugh Plommer. Thanks to a friend studying at Oxford, I was even able to attend Sir Ronald Syme's lectures on the first fourteen chapters of Tacitus' Annals. What a thrill!

“I will never forget the beauty of Cambridge and the good friends I made there. I was fortunate to spend a year at Wolfson College (1974-75) while doing research at the University Library. It was a pleasure to get to know the Master, John Morrison (of Athenian trireme fame).

“My entire career has been spent teaching classics, first at the college level, more recently in a high school. I continue to be inspired not only by the subject but also by the dedication of my students. My current plan is to teach for two more years; after I retire, I hope to be able to travel to Greece and Italy when the climate is agreeable rather than in the heat of summer. I also hope to pay a visit to Newnham, which I have not seen for far too long!”

---

### DESIGNING CONVERSATION

Silke Witt-Ehsani (N'95 Engineering) lives in Sunnyvale, CA. She writes:

“Speech and languages have been the dominant thread in my life. In 1995, I came to Cambridge for an MPhil and then a PhD in speech recognition. When I was done, I had had enough of research for research's sake but rather wanted to create things that people would use daily. I was lucky enough to find a job to build speech recognition applications.

“Almost anyone reading this probably has already called one of such systems where you're speaking to a computer instead of a person. While the technology has become powerful, only systems with a carefully laid out design, work well. And, unfortunately, there are still quite a number of awful systems out there. So, my work is focused on designing systems which people will enjoy using when making an airline reservation or checking their bank account balance.

“With my own family, language is important, too. We're teaching our two daughters three languages, German: my mother tongue; Farsi: my husband's, and English. It is my daughters, and also a house remodel here in 'sunny' Sunnyvale by San Francisco, that's keeping me and my husband busy, besides work.”



## WORLDWIDE ELECTION-WATCHING



Jane Jopling (N'51 Classics) lives in New York City. She tells us:

“In 1997, after a long career at the United Nations, I was wondering what to do next. The telephone rang and it was the Electoral Reform Society in London inviting me to serve on the Election Mission in Bosnia run by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. This was the beginning of a fascinating second career as an international Elections Observer in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Africa.

“Mostly I have served as a Long Term Observer which involves spending between five and ten weeks in the country where the elections are held, working with a partner of a different nationality, and often covering a large geographic area. Our mandate is to be strictly neutral and not to interfere with the elections in any way.

“Our first task is to meet all the main players – election officials, candidates or their representatives, non-governmental organizations and local administration officials – in order to find out whether the preparations for the elections conform to the national election law and international democratic standards. We make regular reports that form the basis for the final over-all assessment. Our second task is to prepare for and supervise the international Short Term Observers who visit the polling stations on election day.

“I have now served on 29 missions in 13 countries. It has been extremely interesting - and also a great privilege. I have made many new friends, particularly young people. And it has been satisfying to feel that one is contributing to an important international endeavour.

“One of my most vivid memories is arriving with my partner – a Dutch lawyer - at a polling station in Rwanda in 2003 as the sun was rising over the hills at 5.30 a.m. It was the first election since the genocide. Long lines of people were waiting patiently for the polls to open, probably having walked several miles to get there. I thought how much more this meant to me than going on a tourist trip.”