OLD GIRLS'/ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER – Autumn 2024

Editor's Notes

We have had a busy and entertaining year, thanks to Jean Johnson and her hard work for organising our very successful events. Again I must say thank you to Joan Gurney for yet more amusing articles and to Jo Edwards for her continuing scrutiny of local newspapers to find interesting stories relating to the School! However, I have had no other articles from OGA members.

The donation for receiving two OGA Newsletters each year is only £2.50 (free to those over 80!) but we must have your current address. If you have moved recently please send us your new address or the Newsletter could join the bags of undelivered post piling up across the country! I receive several returns each time but don't know what has happened to the recipient! The link to the Newsletter is, of course, sent by Tina Powell to all those who have given us their email addresses.

Please send your own memories and comments on the articles in this newsletter - any contributions are always very gratefully received! Old Girls enjoy reading your memories as they trigger their own but please give them to us!

Information, news, comments, photos and articles for the next Newsletter by 31st March 2025.

Contact details: Liz White: Tel: 01206 522713 e-mail: alangwhite187444@hotmail.com

Events

We have had another enjoyable year with all our usual events, plus an extra popular one - Breakfast at the Lexden Crown – see pictures below. In fact this was so well received that we have been persuaded to have it once more this year. **We have booked again for Saturday, 9th November, at 10 am**. Everyone to order on arrival, as before and settle their own bills. But, **if you wish to come, please telephone, text or email me by 4th November.** (Email: jeanjons@btinternet.com Text or phone 07799 525245)



(Above: recent Coffee Morning at Grey Friars)

Also this is advanced notice that first event of 2025 will be a Coffee morning at Colchester Officers' Club. Monday, 24th February 10am – 12 noon. Price £6. Please reply by 19th February. Guests are welcome. Please write the name(s) of any guests on the back of the **reply slip on Page 13**. (Remember to put this date on your new calendar!)

Jean Johnson



Exam results congratulations *(from Colchester Gazette)*

Ranita Ariyibu, 16. Young Engineer of the Year, said "Before picking up my results, I was a little bit nervous about what I would get, but after opening them, I've done so much better than I thought I would. I've got 9s in every subject, including the two 9s I received last year. I'm so thrilled with all the hard work that I've done over the past months and week. Everything has

paid off and today is a very happy day. I'm going to go out with my family later. I'll definitely be celebrating for weeks". Rebecca Balanescu, who achieved all grade 9s, said. "Before picking up my results I was very nervous. I didn't know how it was going to go. I had an idea for some subjects, but others were definitely wild cards and when I opened it...it was very gratifying for all of the hard work that I put in. I'm just speechless. I don't know what to say. My mum said if I get all 9s she would buy me these pair of shoes that I really want. I'll probably go and enjoy my free Nandos with my results.

Lyla Belshaw *(left)*, 16, was nervous waiting for her results but achieved top grades –better than she had hoped - with 9s in Science, Maths, Geography and PE and 7 for English Language and Literature. She celebrated with her friends and now attends CRGS Sixth Form. In addition to her studies, however, she is a member of the Colchester Harriers Athletics Club and in July represented Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the European Athletics Under 18 Championships in the 1500m sprint. The championships were held in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, and she reached the final heat, with the great time of 4 minutes 13 seconds and won gold! Combining studying and training was difficult but she succeeded in both and hopes to be in the under-20s Euros next year.





Niki Rao and twin sister Alvi *(left)* both scored A* in History and A in maths and economics in their recent A levels. They will also both study History and Political Economy at King's College, London. It was not planned and both of them are unsure what they want to do after finishing their degrees. However, they are not sharing the same accommodation, "There has to be a limit," Niki joked. Before they arrived at King's College they visited their family in Andrhra Pradesh, India, and we look forward to hearing about any changes to their similar paths!

Catherine Bullen *(right)who* attended CCHS from 1991 to 1998, was a dedicated medical student and travelled to Namibia, Zambia and Tanzania in 2002 to volunteer in hospitals. She was only 22 years old when she contracted and died from a very severe strain of gastroenteritis. Her parents, Roger and Linda from Mersea, set up a foundation to continue her work and donations have now reached £750,000. Linda is a registered nurse in UK, and Namibia, and spends some of her time there volunteering at the local hospitals.





Roger said: "We've achieved so much. Our original aims were to deal with health education and fresh water and with a board of eight trustees, we have now decided to concentrate on three schools and two clinics." All the money that is raised goes into our projects, one of which includes refurbishing an ambulance for the Catherine Bullen Primary Healthcare Clinic. The Bullens support the project in person and travel twice a year to Africa with their next trip scheduled for the end of September when they hope the new ambulance arrives. Roger added, "Catherine would have been very surprised, but it is something that we wanted to do in her memory. And it is also a positive thing for us as parents. We want to thank everybody for their continued support."

The charity hosts a number of fundraising events throughout the year and anyone interested in getting in touch can contact them on info@namibia-aid.org.uk

Rue Baldry (1981-88?)



Rue *(left)* has been selected as the 2024 Winner of First Novel Prize for her novel "Dwell". The competition has been run by the Literary Studio since 2016 and the judges this year said that Rue's novel was "Confidently written and tackling big themes with real sensitivity and care, Rue's writing pulls you along with assured ease. We both thoroughly enjoyed 'Dwell' and immediately felt endeared to its protagonist and setting". It has been described by Blake Friedman as "a moving coming-of-age and LGBT+ story, exploring themes of trauma, healing and belonging in the aftermath of World War One"

She also won the Canada and Europe regional category in the 2023 Commonwealth Short Story Prize for her short story 'Lech, Prince, and the Nice Things'.

Ruth Ellen Baldry was awarded a BA in English Literature from York University and then an MA in Literary Theory and Creative Writing from Leeds University. She is renowned as a fiction writer of novels and short stories. She is married and lives in York.

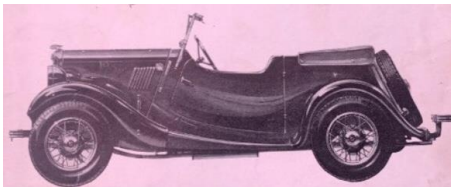
Joan Gurney (Appleton 1939-57)
Personal Transport over the Years

I have written so much about my school days at CCHS and my childhood in my parents' farm in Dedham. My parents, I remind the reader, did not have a car, and so most of my early journeys were either on foot, horseback, bicycle, pony and trap, or by an infrequent bus service and, sometimes, by steam train. My knowledge of buses was enhanced by my daily travel to and from CCHS by Beeston's School Bus, with its regular driver, Banger. And what an experience that was!

In contrast to a breakdown in the horse power which drove a pony and trap, the failure or malfunction of the bus could not be remedied by offering a juicy carrot, a piece of apple or a lump of sugar. But the school bus had other compensations. Amongst the passengers from CCHS, CRGS, the Boys High School, Endsleigh and St Mary's School and the additional encumbrances of hockey sticks, satchels, tennis rackets, violin cases and football boots, friendships were forged, some of which lasted for life, and even a few flirtations were followed by marriage. Miss King, the CCHS headmistress at that time, would have been horrified that school blazers were discarded, summer panama hats were squashed and homework was far from individually completed but had multiple authors!



All that primitive and nostalgic travel changed for me in the early 1950s after I had left school and when my father acquired a Daimler *(left).* I was just finishing university and teacher training college, but even though I had been exercising my brain for 4 years, the mechanics under the bonnet of this new beast were totally beyond me, but I did manage to pass my driving test very quickly and was allowed to drive the Daimler regularly. And so began the story of the cars in my life. It proved to be almost as interesting as the saga of the ponies in my life, but the former did need feeding with petrol regularly.



One day, in a quiet country road the Daimler broke down, and whilst I was frantically deciding what to do about it, a young man in an ancient Morris 8 *(right)* stopped and asked if he could help. He lifted the bonnet and tied up something with a piece of string. It worked. I thanked him and we went our separate ways. Five years later I married him! Throughout our married life and my sequence of second-hand, unreliable cars, my husband, Gerald, always ended the frequently told story of our first meeting with, "And I have been tying up her cars with string ever since".

This brings me back to my time at CCHS. In the last years of the 1940s and the first year of the 1950s, a very small group of girls who wanted to study chemistry exchanged with a small group of CRGS boys who wanted to study biology. Neither school, at the time, had the correct facilities to satisfy these needs and so I went to the boys' school for 2 sessions per week. This was considered a very innovative scheme by Miss

King who was allowing girls to enter the domain of the Grammar School boys. It was perhaps, in the corridors of CRGS that I might have seen, but not met, my future husband, and also, our paths might have been crossed at a local tennis club.



The two cars, Daimler and Morris 8, continued to be used by us before and then after our marriage. The Daimler's most outstanding story was one of ice skating. During the 1940s and 1950s when winters seemed to be more severe and prolonged and heavy frosts allowed the ice to stay on water for weeks, and the water meadows at Flatford were always deliberately flooded to provide skating *(left)*, often by moonlight. The water was shallow, and the ice thick and very safe – except near the edges, where Gerald fell through on a moonlight night. I need not relate the story of the journey home by car, wet clothing, hypothermic, warm blanket, spectators and subsequent humour!



I had many other adventures in the Daimler – driving down the Champs Elysées in Paris and getting stuck in circulation around the Place de la Concorde; and nearly missing the two wooden planks which were thrown in front of the car at the last moment as I negotiated a ferry to the West Isles in Scotland *(right)*.



The Morris 8 also had it days in the limelight. Not only did I have to get out and push it uphill when we went on a trip to Cornwall, but I also had to repair its canvas hood when it was chewed by a wild pony on Exmoor. It also provided considerable amusement to the villagers at Gt Bromley when we had a Great Dane. The dog had a fascination for the car, and whenever she was let out into the garden, she would immediately clamber into the car and sit in the driving seat with her paws on the steering wheel and always refused to be moved *(left)*. In our country lane she was only seen by passing walkers and cyclists, but the story was soon exaggerated into "the couple who own a dog which drives a car around their drive".

By 1960 I had been teaching full time for 5 years and I then decided to move from Harwich County High School to the Gilberd Technical School in Colchester which was then based on North Hill in the building which had previously been the Senior part of CCHS (now the Sixth Form College), and I was revelling in the fact that, once again, I was back in a building which I had loved as a schoolgirl - but perhaps not quite so much as I had loved Grey Friars, the Junior part of CCHS.

I was still driving the Daimler in the early 1960s when I started my new post at the Gilberd Technical School. One day it ran out of water in the back streets of Colchester near Trinity Church, which was still open to traffic, with steam rising from the bonnet. I stopped in a "No Waiting" area, ran into nearby Cramphorns hardware shop where, at that time, I was a well-known customer, and asked for a jug of water. On returning outside again I saw a young policeman standing with his back to me, looking at my car and writing in his notebook. "Oh dear", I thought. He turned round suddenly, and as he faced me I realised that, as an ex-pupil of Harwich County High School, I had taught him a few years earlier. "Will you be waiting there long, Miss?" he gasped. Needless to say, I escaped a fine.



After I moved to Gt Bromley the Daimler became less and less available, and I was more reliant on my husband's Morris 8, and so I searched around for a second-hand car which we would jointly own and would fulfil a variety of purposes, and eventually found a pale blue Morris Traveller with its exposed natural wooden features on the outside *(left)*. It was the best, most versatile car I have ever owned, and I wish I had one today. Its capacious space in the rear with the back seats folded down and the adjoining double doors, which opened

outwards, allowed bales of straw and hay, furniture, grass cutters, animals (including sheep, geese, ducks, dogs and children who had missed the school bus) to be transported with ease. But these were not the only things that it was carrying secretly all the time!



I must digress here because I had another accomplishment inherited from my schooldays at CCHS. I have always loved the physical process of handwriting since the early days of 'dip in the ink' pens in the Preparatory Department. In the later stages of the Upper School we were allowed to use a fountain pen as we neared the Sixth Form in the late 1940s, but it still used real ink and, and far as I remember, an 'ink monitor' was still appointed to refurbish the ceramic ink wells. A new fashion ballpoint pen invented by Mr Biro in 1945 was forbidden for use at CCHS, but I began to hear about a capsule pen called the Parker 51 which used real ink and appeared in 1941. As soon as I left school, I had to have one. Fortunately my husband-to-be shared this same passion, and so we each had one but with different coloured barrels *(left)*. Even today I hand write everything, and where possible with a real ink pen or a fibre-tipped one.

In the early days of our ownership of the Morris Traveller, my husband, Gerald, lost or mislaid his Parker 51. I declined to lend him my treasured one, in case that was also lost. We searched everywhere, but to no avail. My mother came to spend the day and offered to look in the Morris Traveller. She came back with two Parker 51s, having felt down the back to the car seats. Gerald looked at them and said, "I've only lost one, and neither of those is mine!" He eventually found his original Parker 51 and we secretly thanked any previous owners of our car for their unfortunate loss and ended up with four early Parker 51s! Now quite valuable.



In the late 1960s/early 1970s I changed my Morris Traveller for a pale blue Triumph Herald Convertible *(right)*. The seats were low-slung, and it was very sporty and impressive, particularly when driven on an open-topped summer outing. It was the envy of the village and people fell in love with it – especially the village shop keeper who kept begging me to take him for a ride in it. "One day, Ron, one day," I always said. This dialogue went on for months, if not years, and one day I visited the village shop and found his wife in great distress because Ron had cut his hand quite badly on the bacon slicer, and she did not know what to do. "Get in," I said to him indicating my Triumph outside. "I'll take you for your ride." I drove as quickly as I could to Colchester Hospital Casualty Department, pressurising his wound with one hand as I drove. His hand was stitched, but he never asked me for a ride again!



I had the Triumph for many years. It was another favourite of mine, but eventually we found a Vauxhall Dormobile *(left)* now that we had a son and liked camping holidays. We wondered at the folly of the compiler of a waterside notice at one campsite which read "The mill pond is 20 feet deep. Children should be accompanied by an adult." No health and safety regulations in those days! In addition to family use, the Dormobile became a regular transport of 5th form boys from CRGS to Wimbledon during the summer Championships and we never lost any in the crowds!



In 1974 after a break from classroom teaching I joined the staff (later to become Senior Tutor) at Grey Friars Adult Education Centre also later to change its name to Colchester Adult Community College. I stayed for 30 years, and during that time had several red Austin Maxi* cars *(left)*. Returning to Grey Friars was yet another return to the memories of my early schooldays there – the nature study lessons, the enjoyment of the beautiful building itself and, of course, the ghost on the top floor and the

fearsome headmistress, Miss King. One story which I have related many times before will always be associated with one of my Austin Maxis, and the gratitude I felt towards my early education and for the knowledge it gave me of toxic plants and the understanding of the French language.
**I always knew these cars as Maxis but it has been suggested that perhaps they were Maestros!*



One afternoon, when I was going to my car which was parked by the pedestrian gateway into Castle Road, I saw two French boys gathering yew berries *(left)* from the early autumn trees. They were chattering away in French, and I could pick out the word 'mangez' repeated often. I knew immediately that they were going to eat them. Gathering together my French knowledge very quickly, I shouted to them, "Non, non, non. Ne mangez pas." They looked at me with surprise, and one said in broken Engllsh, "They make you sick?" "No," I replied, "They make you dead." They threw down the berries and fled; I had saved two lives. I got into my Maxi and drove home, thankful for the knowledge implanted in my school days at that beautiful building, Grey Friars.



My final car was a Vauxhall Agila *(right)*, yet another car with an extensive adjustable space behind the front seats which were higher than most other cars, and gave an excellent view of the road. I did not have any spectacular adventures in this car, but it did seem to have a tendency to attract long-tailed field mice which are plentiful in my garden and garage. Children, in particular, could not understand why chocolate bars and fresh fruit, if left overnight in the car, would mysteriously disappear by morning – but then a mouse's nest was found under a seat and the story was out!

And so we come to the end of my tale of cars. There are many more but some examples of "double entendre" incidents in Ronnie Barker style would not fit in the 'slightly amusing but not shockable story line favoured by Miss King. What a shame that all these cars went for scrap metal when they had so many stories to tell of teaching, schools, social history, wildlife, humour and so much more. But I hope that I have not repeated tales which I have told any times before.

School Magazine 1946/7
From North Hill to Grey Friars

In 1919 the Colchester County High School, which was housed entirely in the North Hill building, was full to over-flowing. The Staff Room was taken over for a form room, there were classes in the corridor, coaching in every corner and even the gallery was used, a wooden trellis being erected to prevent those from above who were more interested in gym than geometry from joining the class below head first.

Great was the relief when the Essex Education Committee took over Grey Friars and it was decided to house the Junior School there, together with Miss Harris and the Preparatory which had hitherto been functioning in St Peter's Rooms. During the second half of the Autumn Term and all through the Christmas holidays we worked feverishly, under Miss Crosthwaite's lead, to get the building furnished and habitable. At last the finishing touches were put and we were ready. Imagine our horror at finding one Monday morning in the first term that the roof was on fire! The telephone had only just been installed and its first call was for the fire brigade, which turned out to be a mere hand-cart and hose. Imagine our dismay when the hose burst on the top corridor and water poured through the ceilings, down the stairs in a torrent and out at the front door. It meant a day's holiday for us and might have meant much longer. Face to face with impending disaster we realised as never before what a precious possession Grey Friars was to us.

M Collier and JD Thornberry - CCHS Mistresses

PS – We should like to tell of secret passages and nun-haunted rooms, but we must leave these to the imaginations of the Upper IVs! MIB and MMO

Can anyone give any help in identifying MIB and MMO?

Heritage Open Days at Grey Friars – Joan Gurney reporting

Grey Friars was open to the public again this year on the Heritage Open Days of Sunday September 8th and Sunday September 15th. There was an exhibition of the site's social and architectural history between 10.30am and 4.00pm and guided walks (of approximately one hour) around the original site at 11am and 2pm each day conducted by Alan Skinner and followed by a tour of the refurbished building by a member of the hotel staff.



The exhibition *(right)* contained many photos, documents and artefacts including items found under the floorboards during the building's transition from Colchester Adult Community College to Grey Friars Hotel. It was nearing the tenth anniversary of these Open Days at Grey Friars and Alan Skinner, the former Principal of the Adult Community College, had revised and extended the exhibition to include a folder for each era of the site's history from Roman times onwards and emphasising its links to education throughout the centuries. Amongst the visitors each year there are always CCHS alumnae, and the folder for that era was well thumbed!



The guided walks *(left)* which could be pre-booked, were once again well attended, and CCHS participants added little details of interest. There was much appreciation of the booklet which Alan Skinner had prepared, and distributed to all walkers before the tour began. His wife, Sylvia, who is also a well-known Town Guide, helped with the information.

Many more of those who came to Grey Friars on these days were men and women who had attended classes for adults when it changed its role to Adult Education in 1965. They came with a sense of gratitude that this had been an establishment which, for nearly 40 years when it rose from a Senor Evening Institute to an Adult Community College, had given them an opportunity to study again, enjoy activities and gain qualifications which, perhaps, had not been open to them at school. For some, it changed their lives.

The walkers were grateful that, although the skies threatened at times, the weather remained dry, and after the completion of each walk a guided tour, by a member of the hotel staff, took place showing how the building had been successfully and tastefully converted to a hotel, and bringing back memories of classrooms and blackboards to some, but typewriters and oil paints to others.

My duty was to look after the exhibition, answer questions and talk to visitors who came to view it, whilst the Guided Walks were taking place – and I had some interesting conversations. One lady was very interested in the 400 year old Holm Oak in the garden of Grey Friars and what an icon it was to CCHS Old Girls and later students of the Adult Community College. It had also been a popular nomination for impressive trees in Colchester and was mentioned in the award winners.

Another lady complimented all those who had researched the history of the site, and suggested that it was everybody's duty to make written memories of their past for the benefit of future generations and that the Grey Friars work was a model for others.

Hot on her heels came a CCHS Old Girl clutching the school reports of her mother (also an ex-pupil of CCHS from 1923) which were signed by the former Headmistress, Miss Crosthwaite (1913-1927) and wishing for them to be given to an organisation where they would be preserved as interesting documents from the past.

As the walkers returned from their exploration of the site and their tours of the building, there were many expressions of gratitude, either spoken or unspoken for the "Grey Friars Experience" and particular thanks went to Alan Skinner for his interest in recording the history of the site, his knowledgeable guided walks and his dedication to adult education during his years as Principal of the Adult Community College since 1981 to it closure in the early 2000s. There were also comments about how tastefully the building and its architecture had been restored in its transformation to a hotel, and obvious relief that it was still accessible to the public.

After a final cup of tea, or other refreshment, the Open Days eventually came to an end, and many satisfied people, some of whom had had their favourite happy memories (or even newly acquired knowledge of Grey Friars) enhanced by a few hours of bewitching nostalgia delivered so carefully, returned to their homes both near and far.

Obituaries



Beverly Hodgkinson was a teacher at Colchester County High School for Girls for more than 40 years, one of the longest-serving members of staff, and was greatly respected and admired by all. She cared deeply about her subject, Latin and the Classics, and her students and used her wicked sense of humour to import knowledge at the same time as fun. For the staff she was a valued friend and colleague and will be greatly missed. A memorial is planned in the school grounds and an online Book of Remembrance has been set up for students, parents, staff and past students to share their memories. email to BookofCondolences@cchsg.com. Her family suggests supporting the work of Macmillan Nurses through the Macmillan Cancer Support charity. Miss Hodgkinson's funeral took place on 10th July this year.

Christine Fox (Jones 1949-1956?)

Christine passed away on Friday 9th February 2024, in Bishop's Stortford, six years after a diagnosis of ovarian cancer. She was a primary school teacher in Essex and retired in 1997. She then enjoyed many years of travelling, playing bowls and welcoming five granddaughters.

Stewart Francis, Head of CRGS from 1985 to 2000



It was announced in the Colchester Gazette that Stewart Francis had sadly died aged 86 in May this year. Many Old Girls will remember fondly the joint CCHS/CRGS events that were put on under his headship.

Extracts from earlier School Magazines – The School Poets!

70 years ago

It was announced in the School Magazine 1953-54 that it had been decided to award a senior and a Junior prize for the best entry in prose or verse on any subject. The entries both at North Hill and at Grey Friars were rather slow in coming in but the standard of entries from North Hill as quite high and Jennifer Diner won the prize for her poem "Thoughts of Feared Winter" - below. Entries from Grey Friars, although more numerous, were rather low in quality and it was felt that no entry "quite justified a prize"!

Thoughts of Feared Winter

Thoughts of feared winter in the eloquent leaves,
Of early-summering mind awake my death.
Have I endured the joy of being born
In Spring's first shoot of fire and thudding blood:

Through the furled bud my finger-tips all shown –
Uncurled my green philosophies in faith –
Only that age may wear my love asleep?

No, says the zephyr frost-wind, no my delight,
Though you lose leaves and sunlight, shadow and sky,
Think not I take your glory but to death,
For, outward ecstasy unrobed, you know
The steadfast structure of what lies beneath,
And see the grave hearts of your love to rise,
Strong unclothed boughs, strong arms of black starlight.

Jennifer Dines (Upper V 22 – York House)

York House, (motto – *Nihil nisi optimum* (Nothing but the Best) - recorded that they "were third on the list for the House Shield, a position that might have been improved if there had been less order marks"! Remember those penalties for various misdemeanours?

60 years ago

A Schoolgirl's Dilemma

To work or not to work – that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler before the class to suffer
The threats and anger of outragèd staff,
Or to take heart amidst a sea of homework
And by our labours silence them? To work, to sleep -
Again; and by a sleep to say we end
The faults and many pangs of guilt
Schoolgirls are heir to. 'Tis an occurrence
Much to be desired. To work, succeed,
To pass exams with ease.
Yes, there's the rub;
For of the many hours of wasted time,
When we have failed every examination,
We needs must think. This is the aspect
Which makes calamity of our schooldays;
For those who do their homework every night,
Hand in their work on time, are never late,
And never feel the pangs of hidden guilt,
Deride the lazy and the conscience-stricken,

Can much amusement from us sinners take;
While we ourselves could their position gain
Through sheer hard work.

Linda Cousins (Lower VI 2, Plantagenet)

Plantagenet House had the motto *"We sweep all before us"* but in 1964 it was recorded that they had "neither shone nor disgraced themselves, either in work or in games. Several girls are to be congratulated on gaining points for the House. The netball teams, although enthusiastic, were not very successful. There was a marked lack of enthusiasm for hockey, there being hardly enough people for a team, and few attended practices. However, there was more enthusiasm for the summer games, although we were defeated in the first round of the Tennis Tournament."

50 years ago

"An Education"

It began in Lower 4 D
with Clark's shoes, and skirts
a precise two inches below the knee.
Seven years, twenty-one terms.
So, what exactly did we learn?

That some of us couldn't sew,
some couldn't bake, some couldn't sing
and some of us couldn't draw anything
other than an Ox-bow lake.

We learnt the Periodic table
from Aluminium all the way to Zinc
but we were sold a lie, it wasn't finished!
Tennessine, Moscovium, Nihonium
have all been added since.

We learnt that a Bunsen Burner,
when applied to a copper rod,
will make waxed-on, frozen peas fall off
and that a teacher with a passion
will make that seem like vital information.

We learnt that to love, in Latin, is
amo, amas, amat, and to war
is bellum, bellum, belli, maybe
we didn't need to know much more than that.

We learnt that you could be great at tennis
and be matched with a terrible partner,
that playing hockey, in mini-skirts, in minus 3
was great for building character.

That Rachel, Liz and Louise would
sweep up all the A pluses and A's
that Saimah, Trish and Ginny could make A minus
on a good day, and that Fiona was very hard to grade
so often did her homework go astray.

There were teachers we didn't understand,
teachers who gave us the creeps,
teachers who bored us, confused us,
ignored us, and those who instilled the belief
that every kid needs, and then there were teachers
who knew clever stuff, and generously shared it with us.

And then it was done.
And we were gone.
We carried off our bits of paper with strings
of letters, A to E or worse, but we took away
something so much better – a way to walk
through the world, to stand our ground,
look out for each other.

We learnt that a friend moving continents
is not the end of anything, and when life
is tough, friends-for-life, turn up.

So here's to us, where we've been,
where we are, wherever we are going,
but most importantly of all, a toast
to everything we've learnt
that they didn't teach in school!

Trish Bishop

Trish Bishop attended CCHS 1974-1982 and is now Trish Kerrison and for more of Trish's writing visit her website https://trishkerrison.org

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL thanks to Kate Stubbs, Marketing & Communications Manager

School's Aerospace Careers Programme – Roadshow at CCHSG

A dramatic expansion of the aerospace industry and related drone technologies is forecast over the next decade, potentially leaving us with a significant shortage of engineers. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing and virtual reality will also provide enormous career opportunities.

Keeping students up to date with accurate and relevant information about such a fast-changing industry can be a challenge for any school. The Aerospace Careers Programme charity is working to support young people, from any background, to access fulfilling careers in engineering based industries, especially aerospace, space and aviation.

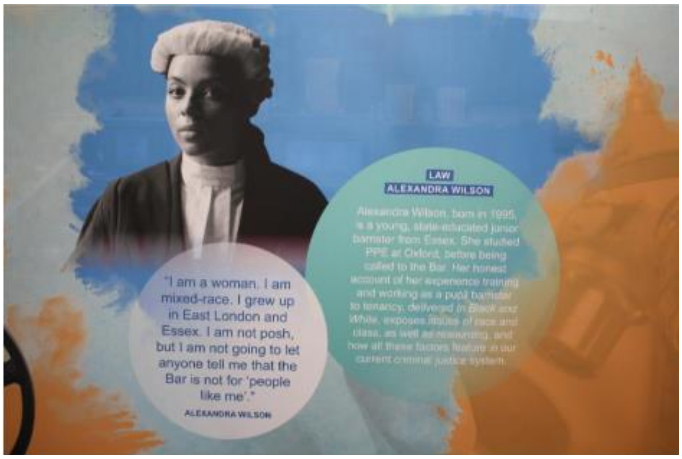


CCHSG was delighted to host a travelling presentation roadshow involving ACP personnel, industry speakers and role models. Alongside CCHSG students at the event were groups from other schools within the Alpha Trust; Manningtree High School, The Gilberd School and Trinity School. Students from Colchester High School also took part in the day. The star of the event was "Spot", a very agile, canine-like quadruped robot, developed by Boston Dynamics. As well as robotics, students had the opportunity to experience sessions featuring virtual reality, 3D printing and filming via a camera-equipped drone.

New "Inspirational Women" wall art installed in CCHSG dining hall

Over the summer holidays the artwork we had been planning for several months was installed in the dining hall. The mural celebrates just a few of the many women who have made a positive difference to the lives of others and in the wider world. The examples chosen were some of the most popular inspirational figures among those suggested by students and staff.

CCHSG has been educating aspirational young women for over 100 years and as our motto says we are both proud and privileged to be "Developing the leaders of tomorrow". While having a strong background of academic success can provide you with huge opportunities, very few people succeed without overcoming setbacks. Some of the most inspirational people are those who have the resilience and determination to persevere despite whatever obstacles are put in their way.





We are also currently celebrating the achievements of our own students by producing a series of posters featuring CCHSG alumni who are members of our CCHSG Connect alumni association. We are always delighted to hear from past students and any alumni interested in featuring in posters for the next stage of our project can get in touch via CCHSGConnect@cchsg.com

History Ambassadors Attend D-Day Ceremony – Year 8 Student report

On 6 June all the History subject ambassadors went into Colchester town to attend the ceremony commemorating the 80th Anniversary of D-Day. As we got into Colchester town, I was stunned by the number of military cadets there were. I was amazed to see them stand in such an organised, disciplined way. The Mayor of Colchester as well as other very important military figures were standing next to the magnificent statue which I found out was mainly used to hold war memorials. The statue looked like a queen with wings like an angel, holding a sword. I could see many young people (even people from our school) who were standing with the Air Cadets and the Sea Cadets. The Mayor gave a heartwarming speech about the people who have sacrificed their lives for the country. The level of respect that was shown by the military was on another level. The way they walked, the way they stood and the way they spoke. We could tell that this must have taken a lot of training. I was grateful to take part in remembering those who had given their lives in the war. I also felt I had a better understanding about what had happened because I had studied the topic in my history lessons."

2024 Reimagine Clean Energy Schools Competition

A CCHSG team *(right)* has been named as the winner of the 2024 Reimagine Clean Energy Schools Competition, held at The Tallow Chandlers' Company in London. Run by Ceres, a leading developer of clean energy technology, Reimagine aims to inspire the next generation of innovators and creatives to tackle the global climate crisis and mission for net-zero. The competition, led by Ceres in collaboration with Bosch UK and STEM Learning UK, saw teams of students submit a short animation explaining an exciting and original scientific concept relevant to the energy transition.



Entries were assessed on originality, creativity, depth of scientific research, the Einstein factor and impact. Watch the student's winning animation via https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo_DINJp10E&t=4s

CCHSG Connect – Alumni Workshops



On July 1 we were delighted to have a group of former CCHSG students, who are part of our CCHSG Connect network, join us to take part in progression workshops for Years 10 and 12. We are very grateful to all the alumni who attended *(left)*.

Students commented:
"I enjoyed talking to former students and hearing about life after secondary school and Sixth Form. It was helpful being able to receive advice that helped me think about my next steps and the interactive nature of the session with small groups made it easier to connect with the alumni and ask important questions."

"It was nice to hear personal experiences and to hear how even though some people didn't initially have clear outlines of their careers, they still feel fulfilled in their current roles."

"Talking to a former student who does the career that I want to go into and gaining valuable insight"

"I liked the personal nature of the workshop and the professionalism of the alumni, they gave very useful and confident advice that feels relatable as a person once in their shoes".

REPLY SLIP

COFFEE MORNING AT THE OFFICERS' CLUB, COLCHESTER

Monday, 24th February 10 am – 12 noon. Price £6.

Name: …… Tel: …… (Block capitals please)

I enclose a cheque for £ …….. (payable to CCHS OGA - £6 pp)

Please write the name(s) of any guests on the back of this slip and return it to:
Mrs J Johnson, 10 Landseer Rd, Colchester, CO3 4QR
