COLCHESTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
OLD GIRLS'/ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER – Spring 2023



Editor's Notes

I hope you have all survived the worst of the winter – and the rain! The Committee was busy and Jean Johnson organised some events which were enjoyed by all who attended. Jo Edwards took some photographs of our latest lunch at Colchester Institute and delighted in sending this particularly appalling one of me! *(left)* I am pleased to say that I have received some very interesting articles which I am sure you will enjoy. Jo Edwards has been particularly fluent on different subjects, as has Joan Gurney. Joan told me that this "Epilogue" will definitely be her last article but having typed it I am glad to say there is hope for one more!

Please send your own memories comments on the articles in this newsletter - any contribution is 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 October 2023.

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

EVENTS

Fifteen members met for lunch at the Balkerne Restaurant at Colchester Institute in March. Everyone seemed to enjoy the event, although we all mourn the loss of the Colne Room which was cheaper and more informal.

Two more events have been arranged and details have been mailed to those who have previously expressed an interest. There is a Coffee Morning at the Colchester Officers' Club on Tuesday, 18th April, and a Chinese Lunch at Bamboo House on Wednesday, 10th May. If you are interested but haven't received details please contact me.

Jean Johnson
01206 579688

Tina Powell (1968-75)
The wonders of the Internet!

Have you ever wondered how your Newsletter gets to you? For those few who receive a hard copy, it's arguably more straightforward: Liz collates the various items she's been sent for inclusion and puts a Newsletter together; she sends that to the printer, who duly produces the finished article; a box of newsletters is delivered, to be posted off, as needed. What of the many who, instead, view their Newsletter on line?

That's where I come in!

When Liz sends her file to the printer, she also sends it to me. I then set about converting the Newsletter to an online version. As well as ensuring all the words and pictures are there, and will be accessible on a screen, I also have to put in the various links, which enable the reader to move swiftly to where she wants to be. I have to check each link is working correctly, before "publishing" the finished item online. Obviously, though, there's no point having it there, if no one knows about it, so the final part of my job is to e-mail everyone a link, which will open the latest Newsletter. Given the need to protect people's data (which includes their e-mail addresses), those e-mails have to be "blind copies". As many e-mail providers reject anything which is being copied to a large number of people, I can e-mail only 10 people at a time. With a large number of Alumnae on our data base, that's a large number of e-mails to send. Add into the mix that e-mail providers will pull the plug, when they spot multiple e-mails being sent (necessitating my waiting an hour, or two, between batches) you can appreciate this can be a time-consuming exercise.



Last time, there was an added complication. I was in India, for all of October, volunteering at the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts world centre, in Pune *(left)*. Internet connections can be a tad variable in India. Electricity supply can be unpredictable. I managed to publish the online version of the Autumn, 2022 Newsletter, but was concerned I would face challenges getting the e-mails out.

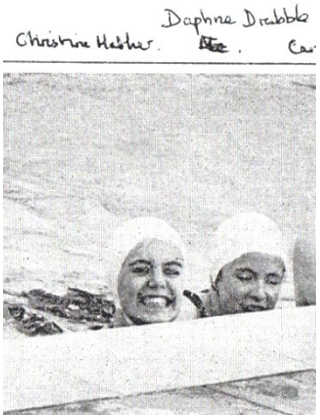
At this point, some of my fellow committee members stepped in, to help. I sent them an e-mail, setting out what needed to be done, but it seemed the task was not as straightforward as I imagined.

As a result, I ended up sending out all of the e-mails: in very small batches, over a couple of days, and seated as close to the wifi router and generator as possible!

Thanks to Tina for her knowledge and ability to do this for us poor less computer-literate souls!

Daphne Jones (Drabble 1958-1965?)

Memories



I noticed that the photo in the last Newsletter was the one from "Colchester Gazette" with our form in 1961 in the new school swimming pool, and the names of the girls written at the top by me *(section right)*. I was then Daphne Drabble. I am sad to report that the girl next to me, Christine Mather, died on 25th April 2021. She joined the CCHS a year or two after the Lower IV from Cleethorpes Grammar School when her father got a new job as manager of a Colchester furniture shop. My mother got friendly with her mother as they were both members of Shrub End Townswomen's Guild and its drama group. At school Christine (Chris) was bright and always achieved good exam results. She was also known for her rather quirky sense of humour. She studied Mathematics at Royal Holloway and later became a Computer Programmer at Draka Kabel in Amsterdam and learnt to speak Dutch fluently. I lost touch with her, but sometimes received news of her through our two mothers. Like me Chris was an only child. I think her husband followed the same career path as she did. They had no children and I think that was their choice. Sadly he died in his fifties and I believe Chris returned to live in Britain around that time. Chris lived in Banbury, although she visited her parents who were still in Colchester. I had left Colchester in the early 1970s and my mother retired in 1974 and came to live near us.

In 2008 Brenda Green arranged a get-together of our year group from CCHS and over forty Old Girls attended. I returned to Colchester for the first time since 1974 and spent a few days in the town and looked around. We also had an evening dinner out with several Old Girls including Chris. I think soon afterwards she was included amongst my friends on Facebook, so I did keep in touch with her then. When she was in her late sixties she married Mikey Walters - maybe at Lexden Church? Tragically just a few months later he was involved in a car crash and died from his injuries. Chris's parents lived until their nineties and one hoped she would live as long, but she was 74 when she died. Stella Christie (Browne) was another girl in our year at CCHS and I believe she will know more about Chris. I don't know if she is a member of the OGA.



To return to Liz's article and sports at CCHS, I will add a few more memories. I started at CCHS in September 1958 when the building in Norman Way had only been open for a year *(left)*. The school playing field was across the road opposite the school for a year or two before the playing field at the side of the school opened. The first playing field then went to the Technical School who travelled to it via a bus. At that time Norman Way had no other buildings apart from the CCHS. Very few teachers drove cars and those few who did parked in the small car park just in front of the main entrance *(see picture above)*. There was an enormous cycling shed just beyond the caretaker's house and few girls travelled to school in parents' cars - most walked or cycled. Several buses brought pupils from further afield and they parked just before the school where Norman Way was a bit wider. There was rough ground in the first stretch by Norman Way and no houses were built there at the time. Beyond the school there were agricultural fields.

I agree about hockey – hanging around on the field and getting cold. Some girls must have liked it and played well enough to form school teams. After a year one could choose between hockey and netball, so I chose netball even though I was not good enough to be picked for a school team. However, later I played netball with Barclays Bank, Colchester. We met every week in the playground of Hamilton Road Primary School (formerly my Infants' school). Some weeks we just made two teams and played each other, but we also played other teams. Cullingfords, the printers and stationery shop in High Street, had a team which we played regularly. We also played the Gilberd Technical School team. That school was then in the building in North Hill that CCHS used until the new school in Norman Way was built. We couldn't play Marks and Spencer's team. They had many young women staff to choose their players from, and were far too good for us! I don't suppose the staff of many places these days plays netball in the evenings.



In my first two years at CCHS we did cross country running once a week. We had a set route. We went off Norman Way on the footpath to Bluebottle Grove *(right)* and then made our way through the path between the Boys' Grammar School playing field and the Education Office, on to Park Road and back to school. The eight school houses each had two teams (Lower and Upper School) of ten per team, and competed each year. It was hard to persuade so many girls to form the teams! I enjoyed it though. In the first year (L IV) I ran the race in time to gain a point for the house. In my second year (U IV) I was pleased to come 17th (out of 80) and earn 3 points for the house. If I could have tried again in a third year and still in Lower School maybe I could have done better, but I never got the chance. The girls voted to abandon cross country running, so it was never done again whilst I was at CCHS.

I did enjoy the gym, especially climbing the ropes, which I could do at speed. The new gym was one of the things which tempted me to choose CCHS.

The swimming pool I loved. I had learnt to swim in my last couple of years at primary school (Years 5 and 6 now). My mother was a non-swimmer and was determined that I should learn. She enrolled me into Colchester Swimming Club, where I joined a class at the Boys' Grammar School. The pool was old, built soon after WW1, and was very gloomy and cold in the evenings. Lessons began with "duck your heads right under the water" - scary. However I did stick at the classes. I also went to the large open air swimming pool (lido style - *left*) on the river by the by-pass. I walked there with a friend from my class at junior school every Saturday in summer - via Balkerne Hill. Primary school age children would not be allowed to go on their own nowadays, but in the 1950s it was not unusual.



At CCHS I swam in a backstroke race for our house - not that I was very good at backstroke, but the others in Plantagenet House were worse. (Yes, I was in Plantagenet House, too). I always went in the pool when there was a chance, whatever the temperature, sometimes very cold. The showers were embarrassing to use. Why did one have to strip naked to go in the shower instead of just rinsing off in a costume and then

change more discreetly in the changing room? I don't think anyone was used to showers in those days. We only had baths at home, and that meant taking one's clothes off. We always missed the showers out at school if we could get away with it. We always hoped that having a school swimming pool meant extra swims in summer evenings after school and also at the weekends and school holidays, but of course that was not allowed. We could not swim without a lifeguard somewhere on the premises.

As an adult our children learnt to swim earlier and better than we could, so my husband and I went to adults improvers swimming classes. Our children's swimming progress depended on length of swims rather than style or stroke. All three of our children swam well (and still do) and our grandchildren have learnt to swim better. The national swimming courses insist on swimming all strokes well. They can all swim butterfly stroke (which we can't) as well as freestyle, breast and back strokes. I continued to swim regularly and more recently did water aerobics, both shallow and deep water. It is only my stroke (I don't mean a swimming stroke!), broken ankle and broken leg which have stopped me. However, I won't go on about that, so I'll stop there.

Diana Childs (Pennick 1953-60)
In praise of Miss Nordquist

You may have read an article by me about Miss Nordquist in a past Old Girls' Newsletter. Miss Nordquist, the fierce gym mistress of the early 50s with white hair, cut in a severe "short back and sides" style and wearing below the knee, navy pleated shorts, which rose up when she bent down and exposed navy directoire knickers, secured firmly to her knees by strong elastic.



It was she who would run down the lined up pupils, ready to begin their gym lesson, rub their backs and shout at some, "you are wearing your liberty bodice *(right)*, go and take it off." She also tied my ankles together with a coloured band, so that my feet stayed together and then made me do bunny hops over a bench in front of all the rest of the class: and showed no sympathy when I fell off the wall bars whilst trying to do a reverse hanging. My goodness, no one would be allowed to attempt such a dangerous thing nowadays, let alone be ordered to do it!

However, I believe that I have a lot to thank Miss Nordquist for. Every girl who entered the hallowed portals of Grey Friars was subjected to a physical assessment and those that were deemed to have problems with their feet were called for remedial exercises with Miss Nordquist. Now, this wasn't an invitation, it was an obligation! It was held during the lunch hour and Miss Nordquist dealt with flat feet, pigeon toes and fallen arches by making us pick up small bean bags with our toes and throw them into a bucket, pull the arches up and pick up pencils with our toes. We were expected to do "homework" on this by practising at home what we had learned.

She also ran posture classes during the lunch hours and this required our walking with books on our heads to make us straighten our spines and walk tall. Debutantes at finishing schools could not have had better instruction. After I completed this course, I was awarded a posture badge, a bar of navy blue enamel with a gold edging and POSTURE written along its length. I wore this with pride on my tie for the rest of my time at CCHS!

Some 70 years later, I am still grateful for these remedial lessons. Although with the passing of time, we are not able to determine how our bones will change in shape, I do believe that Miss Norquist's intervention and remembering to put it into practise, has kept my feet and frame in better order. I don't imagine that she was rewarded with any extra payment for the time that she had to put into this extra work, but I am sure there are others who are truly grateful.

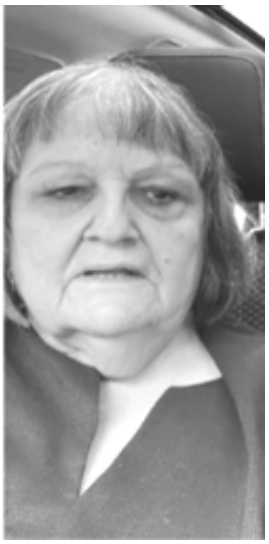
Can anyone else let us know about their time at the Norman Way School?

Jo Edwards (Mabbitt 1960-67)
ROOM WITH A VIEW

Life in Priory Street is rarely dull and what I see from my windows, the front overlooking the street and the back with wonderful views across the valley of the River Lose as far as the University Towers, never leaves me short of subject matter for a regular article in the Civic Society Newsletter. However, this time I am going to tell you about my view from another window, that of the Rose Room at Grey Friars.

A few weeks ago, I was minding my own business, doing some paperwork, when my phone rang. I answered it and a voice said, 'I am sorry to trouble you. My name is Liz. I work for a company called Topical Productions and we would love to come and film you doing the Civic Society survey of BT telephone kiosks. It's for the BBC's One Show'! My immediate reaction was laughter. For goodness sake! It is not long since Toby Walne from the Sunday Mail came, with a photographer, to talk to us about our kiosk surveys.

Perhaps I'd better give a bit of background. In 2018, at one of the Civic Society monthly Coffee Mornings, somebody raised the condition of telephone kiosks in the town. We went to investigate and were horrified to find that 27 out of 44 didn't have working phones. Some didn't have phones at all! We contacted BT, found a wonderfully helpful man who came to Colchester to look for himself and were thrilled to bits when he immediately found a team of engineers to come and sort the problems out. In the two weeks either side of Christmas 2018, the phones were mended, missing glass and Perspex replaced, kiosks were thoroughly cleaned and 3 of our (listed) red K6 boxes were painted. A door was ordered for the fourth, the original having been damaged beyond repair. BT don't check kiosks so we promised to keep an eye on them. Two further surveys were done and faults reported before Covid intervened. I told Liz that we hadn't done one since the end of 2020 but she was not perturbed. Rather caught on the hop, I found myself agreeing. It wasn't until I put the phone down that I really took in the enormity of what I had done!



I found, to my horror, *(left – trying to get my own back on Jo!)* that Civic Society Committee members were either otherwise engaged on the day proposed for filming or camera shy. I was on my own! Luckily, Bob Russell agreed to help me. He was happy about being filmed. I certainly wasn't. The expression 'Hoist with one's own petard' sprang to mind.

Several conversations with Liz followed. We agreed that filming on a Sunday would be sensible and I offered to send her photos of the kiosks I thought would be best. These were chosen for a reason, particularly the two outside Lloyds Bank, opposite the Town Hall, where BT had just applied for planning permission to install a massive, illuminated, BT Street Hub. The film crew were coming from the other side of London ready to start filming at 8am, as was the presenter who, I discovered, was none other than Brian Conley, currently playing the role of Rocky in East Enders. I realised that we would need to meet and sort out what we were going to do first, preferably over coffee, so I spoke to Grey Friars who, extremely kindly, booked us into the Rose Room and agreed to allow us all to park in their car park. What a blessing that was, because the weather on the day was absolutely FOUL!

And so it was that Bob and I found ourselves at Grey Friars with Steve, the cameraman, at 8am on a Sunday, waiting for Richard, the Director, and Brian. The minutes crept by. Steve made a phone call. Disaster had struck! Richard had gone in search of Brian, who, at the last moment on Saturday evening, had decided to stay overnight in Colchester. Easier said than done because all the hotels were booked but he managed to get a room at the George. He likened the experience to a night in Beirut! Getting ready in the morning, he switched the hairdryer on and it blew up! Finding a replacement took time but there was no way he was going to leave his hair unstyled. I chuckled. I had towel dried mine, only remembering to run a comb through it as I drove into Grey Friars' car park!



Once Brian and Richard arrived, the fun began. By this time, the rain had really set in. Grey Friars had given permission for filming inside, so they seated me in the bay window (yes, this was to be my temporary Room with A View). From the window *(right)* there is a lovely view of the red K6 box that stands against the front wall of the hotel. This was to form the backdrop to the later interview. A camera was set up to film me, sitting at the table with my notebook open in front of me, pen in one hand and mobile phone in the other. Another camera, on a tripod, was set up by the kiosk and Bob, coins in hand, was taken outside to be filmed using the phone in the kiosk to call me to tell me that it was working and to describe the general condition of the kiosk. Well, that was the plan. Unfortunately, the phone didn't work and Bob was forced to ring me using Richard's mobile. A rather surreal conversation ensued. I can't imagine that there are many people about who have been filmed, early on a Sunday morning, having a conversation with a rain drenched Knight of the Realm about a urine drenched K6 telephone kiosk!



Eventually, the crew were satisfied and they returned to the warmth of the Rose Room *(left)*, ready to interview me about the Civic Society's phone checking project, our views about BT kiosks and also our views about the new street hubs. I had particularly asked for that

question. Brian interviewed me, having questions fed to him by Richard. Brian is a genuinely nice man, incredibly easy and fun to talk to. The whole interview was very laid back and stress free, in fact, really enjoyable. I have little recollection of what I actually said but, as I was with them for over 7 hours and I doubt that our segment in the programme will be longer than 2 minutes, it really doesn't matter that much!! Following the interview, Brian and I were both filmed having somewhat random conversations in a role play exercise as filming outdoors was not going to be viable. The rain was sheeting down. Bob had to leave but not before he and I had our photo taken with Brian.

Once Bob had gone, we were off to film Brian checking other kiosks and supposedly reporting back to me as I sat in my Room with a View. Actually, as I drove them, I watched from my Car with a View! First to



the (non working!) K6 kiosk in Abbeygate Street *(left)* where, once there was a short break from the downpours, we caused quite a stir. A woman spotted Brian and yelled 'It's Bobby Davro!' He laughed, corrected her and agreed to a selfie with her and her son, who looked slightly bemused! It was here that the crew stopped a couple of women to ask them about the need for public phones these days. One said that they are a lifeline for her as she is in a refuge and has no mobile.

Finally, we went to those kiosks in High St. By this time, the men were asking about a Starbucks. 'No Starbucks', I said, 'What about Greggs?' The reaction was all I'd expected - and more. They flew out of the car as soon as I pulled into a parking spot (I am so pleased I have a blue badge!). Brian returned with sausage rolls (what else??) for me - and yes, for those concerned about my poor Jack Russell, Cooper, abandoned at home, some for him, too! Having eaten their sausage rolls and drunk their coffee, cameras, etc, were grabbed and off they went to film. The heavens opened again. Boy, oh boy, did it rain! The nearest shelter was White Stuff where they were welcomed with open arms as they increased the footfall in the shop hugely! Whilst there, Brian, again, was grabbed for a lot of selfies. More of that later. Eventually, the rain eased off and Brian found his first working phones in the kiosks opposite the Town Hall. As I sat in the car, several people passed me, looking over their shoulders. 'That was Bradley Walsh!' Poor Brian!



We eventually returned to Grey Friars where I left them to make a Zoom call. They had intended to continue on to Enfield for more filming but the rain had caused so many problems they abandoned that. The day that I had been dreading was actually huge fun and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. Steve and Richard (sitting in the back of my car in the photo *(right*) were delightful and Brian was, as I said before, utterly charming. He really went out of his way to make people happy. Whilst he was chatting to three women staying at Grey Friars, who were unbelievably excited to meet him, I noticed another who was sitting with a man who was speaking to someone on his phone. She was also very excited to see Brian so I drew his attention to her. He bounded across the room to say hello. Her companion told the person he was speaking to that Brian Conley was standing in front of him. It was obvious that they didn't believe him, so Brian took the phone from him and introduced himself! It caused great amusement and such joy.

Back to the selfies. That evening, Bob's daughter sent him a photo. 'Look who I met today!' It was one of the selfies taken in White Stuff and was a brilliant photo of her with Brian. She had absolutely no idea that Bob had been with him that morning. He sent her the photo of the three of us. 'Me too!'

The One Show hoped that we could check at least some of the remaining kiosks in Colchester before the programme was aired. During the following week, members of the Civic Society, Sheila, Ged Dickinson, Richard Arnopp and I blitzed the town, checking every kiosk. Our report is winging its way to BT as I write this. It does not make easy reading. Only 18 of the 31 kiosks have a fully functioning phone and most are absolutely filthy. Let's hope that BT respond quickly!

Joan Gurney (Appleton 1938-51)
What Joan did next - Epilogue

I recorded so many memories from my life and schooldays in the last six episodes of "What Joan did next" that I am now attempting to write an epilogue in order together it altogether and to illustrate that often, before realising it, a series of threads or links exist which do not always become apparent until the events are scrutinised some years, or even decades later, and that there are also certain object, buildings, people, animals, trees or music which trigger this chain of memories.



My chain of memories, with its many links, started behind a Doric doorway in Dedham High Street *(right)*. From then onwards, art, Dedham, events of war and authors came together to dominate my life. This doorway marked the site of my first school, a Dame School, run by two sisters, both called Miss Saunders. This school was one of the last survivors and precursor of infant schools which existed before the sixteenth century and survived into the early 20th century.

I first went to school just before the age of 5. There were only about 7 or 8 children in one classroom at the front of the house. I learned to write in a neat "copperplate" hand, and read Beatrix Potter. I do not like "Alice and Wonderland" – it was too fanciful. How could a young girl get down a rabbit hole? I even tried it! My life has always been based on reality not fantasy. Art was my favourite subject and we were all encouraged to paint subjects from natural history – wild flowers, frogs, butterflies and birds.



I was told that John Constable went to school in the building opposite – the Old Grammar School *(left)* having walked there along the river bank from Flatford each day, and returned to his home in East Bergholt the same way at night. A few years later, in my teens, I would make this same journey on foot or bicycle, to join my friend, the late Ruth Wheeler, meeting half way for a swim, or in winter, to skate on the frozen water meadows.



I do not think that I really knew who John Constable was at that early stage in my life, but the Old Grammar School was certainly one of the links in the chain of my artistic interests. Just around the corner from my first school, opposite the Marlborough Head pub in Dedham was the site of the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing, set up by Cedric Morris and Lett Haines in 1937 and which burned down in 1939, *(right)*, set alight by Lucien Freud (so rumour has it) from a discarded cigarette when he was a student there. I do not remember this, I was only 7 at the time – but I can recall my father talking about a fire in the village on that night which would have been this epic event. The School was relocated at Benton End in Hadleigh, Suffolk thereafter, where other attendees were to become famous.

I later discovered that Sir Alfred Munnings, who also lived in the village, disliked most 'modernist' styles of painting and drove past the remains of this building in his recognisable yellow car shouting, waving and rejoicing at its apparent destruction.

I did know about Sir Alfred Munnings, however, and appreciated that he was a famous painter of horses and gypsies (as they were then called and much respected). He lived at Castle House in Dedham during the time that my parents were farming there (1932-1958). I often used to meet him riding his horse when I was out on my pony in the country lanes, and he always raised his hat to me.

My mother used to take me to school on the back of her bicycle when I first started. It was all downhill from Bargate Lane near the Dedham/Lawford boundary, but harder work on the way back. On each journey we would pass Sir Alfred's house and sometimes see Lady Violet with her Pekinese dog, Black Knight. Later, of course, when he died, she had him stuffed and could be seen carrying him on the front of her saddle as she rode past.

All this early artistic activity made me appreciate what a very special place Dedham was. Much later on in my life, Tom Keating, the faker, arrived to keep the stories alive and add a new dimension to the scene. By this time I was married and living in nearby Great Bromley, but still shopped at the well-known grocer's shop in Dedham called 'Spearings'. Tom often used to greet me with a "good morning" as we passed each other. I was in the shop the day of his funeral (Feb 1984) which had been kept very secret because of the publicity surrounding his trial for forgery. From inside the shop and through its windows I had a first class view of the arrival of the coffin and its passage into the church. I cherished this advantage point.



My time at the Dame School was very short. After I turned 6 years old and was coming up to 7, I transferred to the Preparatory Department of Colchester County High School for Girls in Colchester at Grey Friars, another building with a similar Ionic doorway *(left)*. I had to travel there by bus. The involved a short walk along the lane from the farmhouse with my mother each morning to catch Beeston's school bus coming from East Bergholt and Manningtree. A senior girl who was already on the bus took charge of me, delivering me to school safely, and repeating this care for the return journey, where my mother would meet the bus and walk me home for tea and 'Children's Hour' with Uncle Mac on the radio.

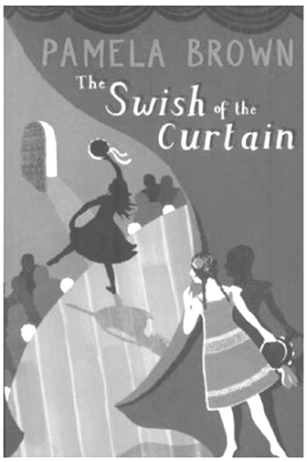


I met a family of four from a neighbouring farm and we became firm friends. We had favourite places to play and one of these was 'The Long Meadow'. This was part of my father's farm and was a dream playground. It consisted of a long narrow stretch of meadowland running alongside the railway line for one mile between Manningtree and Ardleigh stations *(right)*. The meadow's other boundary was Shir Brook alongside a slope of woodland. I used to race the steam trains on my pony and all five of us used to dam the stream, swim in it, and use a plane's discarded petrol tank as a boat. We gathered wild flowers, ate hazelnuts and frolicked in the sweet smelling hay as we helped my father to gather it in during late summer. This family of five was also responsible for changing my reading habits from Enid Blyton to Arthur Ransome and developing an enduring love of Pin Mill near the estuary of the river Orwell, where Ransome captured the plot for "We didn't mean to go to sea." Close to the Long Meadow in my teenage years, I discovered the declining black poplar tree, and was able to research its rarity and relate this to its representation in John Constable's rural landscape paintings.



This dreamland of so much childhood pleasure was shattered much later in life when I discovered (from the records of Nicholas Winton's life and his rescue missions) that the trains carrying the Kindertransport escapees from Nazi threatened and occupied countries of Europe, passed along this track. The children occupants might have enviously watched us through the train windows, enjoying our freedom and unrestricted pleasures as they travelled from the port of Harwich to Liverpool Street station where unknown volunteer strangers were waiting to welcome these parentless youngsters with an unknown future. With this knowledge today, every time I pass through Liverpool Street station I pause to stroke the statue which

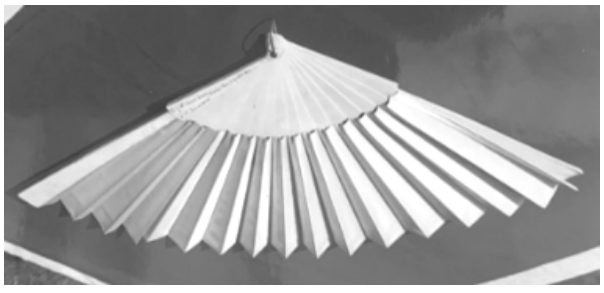
records these events *(left)* and decry those who place their discarded plastic coffee cups on the base of these commemoration figures.



My early years at CCHS did not always have distressing memories of wartime. There were also recollections of friendships which lasted for life. Consideration for others, compassion and co-operation were essential in those difficult wartime days. Bullying was unknowns. Two other pupils, who I do not remember very well because they were several years older than me, found fame in different ways. One was Pamela Brown (1924-1989) who wrote (The Swish of the Curtain" *(right)* whilst she was still at CCHS and followed this with several other books. I had almost forgotten about her when many years later – probably in the 1990s – I was browsing in a second hand book shop in Cambridge when a lady came into the shop and said to the shop keeper in a loud voice that she was looking for a book called "The Swish of the Curtain" by an author who was at Colchester County High School in the 1930s and did he have it. I could hardly control myself! I called out "It was Pamela Brown and I was at school with her". We both looked at each other in astonishment and the conversation flowed for another hour. I do not know if she eventually found it elsewhere, but the coincidence was eerie.

The other pupil was Beth Chatto (then known as Betty Little). I came across Beth again when, in 1960, she moved to Elmstead Market in the same year that I moved to the adjoining village of Great Bromley. Many times over the years I have visited Beth Chatto Gardens and noticed that several of her plants bore the name "Cedric Morris", indicating her friendship and cooperation with this artist when the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing moved to Hadleigh after the fire at Dedham and after he began to specialise in irises – another link to my schooldays in Dedham when Cedric Morris was next door.

The links to Dedham and artists had not yet finished. When I was in the VIth form I would often, after school, search various art shops for reproduction art and postcards. One such favourite shop was "The Crescent Moon" in Crouch Street. In the window one day was a framed print of a deer which I fell in love with. It was beyond my spending money but I kept an eye on it for weeks, and eventually I succumbed to temptation and purchased it. I only discovered several years later that John Skeaping, the artist, also had connections with Dedham. Previously married to the sculptor, Barbara Hepworth, he finally came to have links with Dedham through the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing.



Another very curious link to a famous plantswoman came via a fan *(left)* and tennis – not a very usual combination. It happened that one day in the late 1990s Gerald and I were at an Antiques Fair in Suffolk and spotted an outstanding cream satin lady's fan. It had an even more intriguing inscription long the guard stick which read EAW Lawn Tennis and ETC Warley Place July 29th 1882. Gerald, of course, immediately decided that one set of initials must stand for ..... Tennis Club. After much research along these lines with no conclusion, he turned to Great Warley in Essex and almost immediately he found books on Ellen Willmott who was a contemporary of Gertrude Jekyll and both were, in their time, famous plantswomen and writers. The fan turned out to be a trophy for a mixed doubles tennis tournament at Warley Place, Essex, her home at the time and the initials along the guard stick were hers, Ellen Anne Willmott, and her match partner's. Gerald and I, of course, visited the site in 2000. The house had sadly been demolished and the garden abandoned, but we established the positions of various features which had been well recorded.

And so my many links between art and authors were nearly over. Much later in my life when I was teaching swimming to small local groups of children, I taught two who had the surname Pissarro. They must have

been descendants of Camille Pissarro, the French Impressionist, who visited and spent some time in Langham in 1870 and 1890 visiting his son Lucien Pissarro who settled there between 1892 and 1944. Here, I thought, my chain had eventually ended, but as I write this on Friday 20th January 2023 an obituary notice jumps out at me from the local newspaper. Ronald Blythe has died aged 100. Was this really the young man with the wayward hair who worked in the Reference Department of Colchester Public Library in the 1950s? Here, at the end of my CCHS school days and the early part of my student years, I used to come to research local history and other projects which I was working on at the time. The network widened; Ronnie's associates included Ralph Currey, Head of English at CRGS and Tony Doncaster at the Castle Bookshop where an hour spent browsing or buying was an enduring experience. All these memories came back to me when Ronald Blythe's "Akenfield" was published in 1969 and no doubt many more will emerge when I get a little further into "Next to Nature" published on November 6th 2022 as a celebration of his 100th birthday.

I have barely touched upon the events of WW2 and their influence upon my later life, including my addition to the television programme "Dad's Army", but perhaps there is one more episode to follow next time!

Jo Edwards (Mabbitt 1960-67)
The Royal Visit to Colchester

On 7th March, King Charles and Camilla, Queen Consort, visited Colchester to help us celebrate becoming a city. The date had been sprung upon the majority of Colcestrians. With little warning, we were told that they would visit the Castle and the Public Library but that was about all. City centre roads were to be closed between 7am and 2pm and from that we deduced that they would be arriving soon after 10am and leaving no later than 1.30pm. All vehicles, including buses, were excluded from the city centre.

Unfortunately, I had already organised a sizeable event at Grey Friars that morning. I realised that I would have to postpone it and notify everyone due to come. However, on the big day, worried by the number of people who might not have picked up their emails or phone messages, I decided to drive to Grey Friars to apologise to anyone who turned up for the event and to tell them to return the following week. It wasn't fair to leave that to the reception desk staff.



Arriving at the roadblock on East Hill, I turned right into Roman Road and Grey Friars car park and didn't see this wonderful banner *(right)* across the front of East Hill House, opposite Grey Friars, a building owned by the company who also own the hotel, until I sat down in a very comfy chair by the window in Reception.

The sun was streaming in, my coffee arrived (I hadn't ordered it but they know what I like!) and I relaxed. I couldn't go home until the roads reopened so I set up my iPad thinking I might get some emails done - or, on the other hand, I might not! I watched people hurrying by to take up their places against the crowd barriers in High Street, hoping to catch sight of the royal couple. I didn't envy them. It was freezing out there! Sometime later, the hotel manager, Glen, appeared. He came over for a chat. I commented on the banner opposite and discovered that there was also one on the front of Grey Friars. We decided that the chances of the King and Queen Consort coming up East Hill were infinitesimal but the banners were rather nice anyway so it didn't really matter. He got me another coffee (my third) and returned to the kitchen.

By this time, the street outside was empty. Everybody was already by the barriers outside the Park. I looked at my phone. It was 11.47am. I realised that our royal visitors must be thinking about leaving the Castle. I thought about wandering up to join the rest of the crowds to see them drive up High Street but quickly decided to stay put! Suddenly, there was the sound of pounding feet and Glen appeared, running full tilt across reception towards the main door, other staff in hot pursuit. As he flew past me, holding his phone in one hand and a small Union Jack on a stick in the other, the most incongruous sight imaginable, he yelled, 'They've only just arrived! They're coming up the hill!' I swivelled round in time to see him dashing across the road, narrowly missing the first police outrider at the front of the cavalcade. As he reached the kerb the other side, he pirouetted and held up his phone to take a photo whilst waving his little flag as they went past. I, of course, had a grandstand view! The King was on my side so I saw him pointing at the Grey Friars banner as the car swept by. He had a huge smile on his face as he read it.



'Grey Friars welcomes King Charles and Camilla, Queen Consort!'

Glen came back in like a dog with two tails. He came straight to me and showed me his photos. He was thrilled with them. I asked whether he would allow me to share them with you and he told me that he would love it if I did.

Why were they so late? Apparently, it was so cold that their helicopter wouldn't start! How very pleased I was that I wasn't with my little grandson, Jimmy, *(right)* and his Mum, who had been standing at those barriers for over three hours. I missed out on the freebie Burger King cardboard crown, though! Shame!

OLD SCHOOL MAGAZINES

You can read some of the old magazines on this site set up by the school.
https://www.cchsg.com/school-magazine-1914-1929
Copies can be found by clicking on "School" and scrolling almost to the bottom of the menu and click on "History of the CCHSG and archive". It will bring up a list of old magazines available on the site.

Browsing through the old School Magazines of 60 and 70 years ago is a fascinating diversion from more pressing tasks but I was taken by several entries - all approved, of course, by the Magazine Committee. Entries from students in the Magazines were called "Literary Efforts". Below are two of them.

A SCHOOL GIRL'S DILEMMA School Magazine 1963-64

By Linda Cousins (Lower VI 2, Plantagenet) with apologies to William Shakespeare

To work or not to work – that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler before the class to suffer
The threats and anger of outraged 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.

In the 1952-53 School Magazine J Clibbon, who left CCHS in 1949, wrote about her job in London.

Joan Clibbon was head girl in 1948-49 and was awarded a major scholarship to read English at St Mary's College, Durham University. Her younger sister, Mary, also went to Durham to study French and Ann, the youngest, became a teacher. The company Joan worked for is now an imprint of the publishing company Pan Macmillan. Not knowing what an imprint was I googled it - straight from Wikipedia: "An imprint of a publisher is a trade name under which it publishes a work. A single publishing company may have multiple imprints, often using the different names as brands to market works to various demographic consumer segments".

On Working for a Publisher

My Romantic Illusions about publishing were shattered a year or two ago when the university Appointments officer observed gloomily, "It's strange, but *all* English graduates, without exception, seem to want to Get Into Publishing," and tried to guide me into the more secure professions like teaching and the Civil Service. But even after no less a personage than Michael Swann, the critic, and novelist, had impressed upon me that publishing was only a business like any other and not a vaguely literary occupation it still seemed that to publish books – and *different* books all the time - would be more interesting than marketing a *very* popular commodity like Bovril or Persil.

So having equipped myself with the minimum of shorthand-typing I obtained through the Publishers' Association a post as secretary to a director of a small but well established firm (Sidgwick and Jackson). Although there was the chance of a post in one of the really big firms, with a much higher salary, I am glad I did not take it as one gets a far clearer idea of the general set-up by beginning work in a small firm.
In publishing by far the largest department in accounts and distribution (not as some imagine reading manuscripts all day long), so I was fortunate to break in on the productions and publicity side. Each book is our responsibility from the time the firm decides to publish and we get the author's manuscript. The format has to be decided months in advance and one learns much by merely typing all the varied correspondence with the printers. The director I work for is quite a well-known typographer, and one needs a thorough training, preferably with a printer to be able to do anything on the actual production side, so as far as the technicalities go I am at present an interested observer only.



But on the publicity side there are more opportunities for the inexperienced. Someone has to write the blurb for the jackets, for the showcards and for printed or duplicated leaflets which are sent out to the trade. My first attempt at writing blurb was a little chastening. The book was a novel which had already been published in America. We had some copies of the American edition, and the jacket blurb read like something out of *Home Notes (left)*. "Can it be as awful as all that" I wondered aloud. "Hell, it's a *good* book; if you can improve on that go ahead", said

the director. I began to read the book with great ideas of showing off a literary style and writing some really subtle praise. But I discovered that what was really needed was good salesmanship! Me miserum, the book was hard going, a little drama of domestic life (American too – one had a vision of the chromium kitchen and the kids in jeans), well-written of its kind and sure of a good sale. But how difficult to enthuse over it without being hypocritical. So I concentrated on giving a reasonable summary of the plot and praising the author's characterisation – the first I think is important with a novel; a mere collection of superlatives, whether the publisher's or culled from the best reviews, has often put me off buying a book entirely. Although my blurb will appear on the inside cover next month, I still wish it was the review I had had to write! But perhaps that will come one day.



With a non-fiction and technical book author-publisher, co-operation can be very valuable. One author of a recent travel book wrote all his own blurb and an article for *The Bookseller (right -1949)* too. Even if one is not in the editorial department and so has not the romantic hope of discovering the work of some new genius among a mass of mediocre manuscripts, one has at least the pleasure of meeting the author in the flesh in the publicity department. They are the most amiable of creatures in general; they will make long trunk calls in the middle of the day to enquire about the progress of their precious offspring, and offer suggestions for reviews, and say that we should send many, oh so many, complimentary copies out! One pernicious habit they have is to wander in, engage some unsuspecting person in general conversation about the new books, and having extracted an opinion from you, remark in an elaborately offhand tone, "Oh, yes, I'm the author of that little thing".

Tact is indeed rather essential, especially in dealing with the charming young men who "call about advertising" in obscure magazines and journals. Space merchants we christened them, space being an operative word in this firm, which is doing a great deal of the new "literary" science fiction and really scientific books on interplanetary travel. One embittered author (we suppose) of a space opera, whose magnum opus we had rejected, took to sticking offensive labels over our window during the dead of night!

My job takes me all over town (London) and brings me into contact with all kinds of interesting people, even when I am only acting as a kind of odd-job-boy. One afternoon I had to rush round all the more important Fleet Street dailies with late review copies, and was alternately impressed and disillusioned by their facades. "Printing House Square" always sounded so austere and right for *The Times* but it appeared to be only a curious jumble of nineteenth century buildings. However, the interior was suitably imposing, as I discovered when I took my book to four wrong entrances before finding the right department. Other small "jobs" included going to the huge central offices of W H Smith to collect a subscription order, meeting the editor of *The Bookseller*, the most important of the trade magazines, about an article by one of our authors, and hunting for suitable photographs to accompany an article for our book club magazine at the Royal Astronomical Society's headquarters at Burlington House. The book club is a new venture and we run the editorial side –answering member's queries and criticisms of books is one of the more interesting aspects of my job.

Advertising has to be very carefully planned, as most publishers cannot afford to spend vast sums and advertising in the newspapers, particularly the more literary papers like *The Observer* and *The Sunday Times* is extremely expensive, though rewarding. The trade journals of course are very important and much cheaper to advertise in and one has also to look out for interesting points which can appear in the editorial part. One of the cheapest and most profitable ways of advertising now is on book jackets. Quantities of advance jackets are sent out to travellers and agents with the paper bound proof copies of the book, and certainly an attractive jacket can help to sell a book. I have decorated the walls of my own rather drab office with a great variety of jackets and they are extremely liveable with!

Booksellers, in London at least, seem to become more aware of the potentialities of window display. Instead of the usual jumble of titles in a window one does frequently see very effective displays of a single book, a best-seller like *The Silver Chalice* or *The Sea Around Us*. We had a model space-ship built for window displays of one of our books on interplanetary travel. Compton Mackenzie had the brilliant idea of persuading his publisher, Martin Secker, to advertise his first novel in underground lifts *(left)*. Four were carefully chosen – Leicester Square, Piccadilly, Earls Court and Hampstead, and this was immensely successful. "We can't get away from your name" said his friends, and thought he must have a philanthropic publisher. But I suppose that panels in the few remaining lifts cost considerably more than the 10/- each at the time of "*The Passionate Elopement*" (1910) though book advertisement might make a welcome contrast to the brassieres and Hollywood musicals one has to gaze at in one's progress up the escalators.



I never thought to write so much about publicity and advertising, which is only a very small part of the work of a publishing firm. But a pleasant enough part to have broken into, much less sordid than one could imagine and sometimes rewarding when one reads the occasional book review which is apt, critical and yet quotable.

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

This term there has been progress with the development of our Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) curriculum. CCHSG recently hosted a visit from Dr Michael Smith from the Sandy Gunn Aerospace Careers Programme (SGACP). CCHSG will now be working in partnership with SGACP, across the Alpha Trust, on our Tech Curriculum, with visits to Cranfield and linking with Californian and Asian tech programmes. The school has been selected to host a two-day engineering, aerospace and STEM careers workshop, for up to 300 students from Years 11-13, in July. In addition, ten students have been invited to attend one of the Spitfire workshops where they will also receive information on STEM, engineering and aerospace careers.

Students have enjoyed a range of co-curricular opportunities this half term including visits to Bletchley Park for Year 8, 'A' level Physics students attending lectures at Cambridge, Year 10 Psychology students visiting the Freud Museum, Year 11 History students visiting Sheffield Manor and the Library hosting visiting writer Alexandra Sheppard. 90 students also took part in a very successful ski trip to Austria during the half term holiday.







World Book Day was celebrated with a new initiative this year – a competition for Form Room Doors *(above)* decorated to represent favourite books. The CCHSG judging panel, drawn from staff across the school, were highly impressed by the creativity enthusiasm shown, particularly notable was the standard of the designs created by the Year 11 Form Groups.



This half term we congratulated our **European Youth Parliament team**, *(left)* who having completed competitive debates around such challenging topics as toxic masculinity; the plight of refugees and the importance of reducing the digital divide between Europe's younger and older generations; have been successful in progressing to the National Finals in Liverpool in July.

CCHSG has always prided itself on the range and quality of our extracurricular opportunities. This term over 150 members of our extracurricular choral groups received additional tuition in a workshop delivered by world renowned choral conductor Tori Longdon and, supported by Mrs Jefferies, took part in the Charter Hall schools prom concert.

(right) Tori Longdon with Sixth Form Choral Leaders



Current lunchtime and after school clubs are now listed on the website for student reference and it is very pleasing that data shows 92% of students are attending at least one extracurricular activity each week.

You can read more about events and activities at CCHSG in the half termly e-newsletter at:
http://www.cchsg.com/news/latest-e-newsletter/