**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.

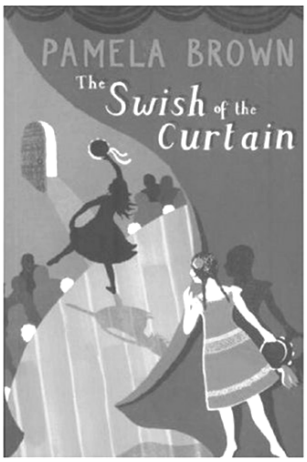


I met a family of four from a neighbouring farm and we became firm friends. We had favourite places to play and one of these was 'The Long Meadow'. This was part of my father's farm and was a dream playground. It consisted of a long narrow stretch of meadowland running alongside the railway line for 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

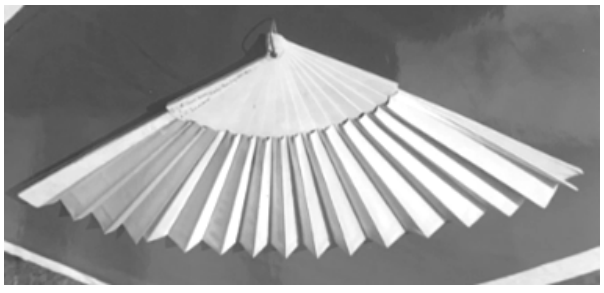
records these events *(left)* and decry those who place their discarded plastic coffee cups on the base of these commemoration figures.




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/