rsma newsletter

newsletter of the retired senior members' association
of homerton college, cambridge
september 2025

the history of Homerton's Horn

a degree for teachers

welcoming families seeking asylum

growing up in a haunted house

the accidental collector's tale

tributes ...

... and a whole lot more ...

a word from the editor

Dear Readers,

The Power of Three …

Oh dear, here I am again banging on about those buses that always come along in threes – but really, if you scour this Newsletter you will see threes all over the place. I cannot quite say scour the Contents table below as there are some short articles that could not be included, that are, as I wrote all of them, well worth reading! More anon.

The first three relates to the first three articles – all in various ways concern ethnic and religious minority communities, none as far as I can remember, having ever been written about before in the Newsletter. It is a welcome innovation illustrating the unbelievable challenges facing some members of these groups.

Another three relate directly to the 'administrative executive' for want of a catch-all phrase. David Bridges continues to share his experiences (in two articles) of how courses at Homerton changed over the years alongside Dhiru's account of being the person with the purse strings (my description) working in tandem with the changes.

A third three is three poems by Lizzie Madder – add to this a further poem by Carole Bennett and Nick Tippler's Accidental Collector's Tale and there you have it, another poetic three. East End Gangster, Haunted House and a Kentish Weekend Away could at a pinch represent another three.

Sadly, this year the number of tributes is also three – but what wonderful tributes, as ever, they are. As a consequence, Kate Pretty now knows who donated The Homerton Horn – and tells us.

I have left it until now to say what I usually begin with about bumper issues – well a record 52 pages no less – a page inflation which if we are not careful will be too heavy to handle. This year, Gabrielle & Nick have helped me out by looking at some of the articles as they arrived – my fingers are crossed for next year.

And these extra articles? I am proud that the Newsletter has an eclectic range of articles. Some could be deemed serious and 'academically' written, but to strike a balance some of us find the light-hearted and dare I say it 'chatty' easier to write. My offerings that have been squeezed out of the table of contents are: Further thoughts on 'sea' gulls (p.17); three (there we go again) of RSMs tales of Homerton's Tower (p.33); and the day we local maths people were reunited with a colleague who left in 1989 (p.47). Not to mention ***three*** *quasi RSMs meetings (p.11, p.46 & p.49) at talks in town!*

Happy Reading …

Libby

Cover photo: *'The Homerton Horn'– Stuart Bubb*
Acknowledgements: with thanks to the Proof Reading Team: Anne T, Gabrielle C H, Nick T.

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Chair's Letter: Value, Values, Valued

Libby Jared

One (and perhaps the only one) advantage of being both RSMA Chair and Newsletter Editor, is that I am privy to what is in the latter which can (sometimes) help me write the former's Letter. This is especially true for this year.

I am finding it difficult to comprehend much of the World News that seems to bombard us every minute of the day. Whenever I think it can't get any worse, it feels that there is yet another atrocity committed or a diminishing of democracy. The Old World Order appears to have been usurped by some who do not share my and I am sure, RSMs', values.

However depressing though these thoughts are, there has been much to celebrate during this last academic year, not least the ever-increasing vibrancy of our Association but also the many articles appearing in this Newsletter.

The theme for this year's Chair's letter came to me through reading Lorraine Bewley-Tippler's heart-rending article *Northampton Welcome Hub for Families Seeking Asylum.* It surely cannot be read without a tear creeping out of our eyes, whilst simultaneously recognising and valuing how lucky we are in our own lives. Furthermore, we are not in the clearly dreadful position of others who feel that they have no choice but to seek shelter somewhere else. Sadly though, many later find themselves subjected without so much as a by-your-leave to being 'moved on' and, indeed not wanted by some groups in our society. To me this is outrageous. My only wish is that all refugees should feel that there are some of us who do possess values that value them.

In last year's Newsletter at the bottom of The Principal's Message, I added a thank you to the always warm welcome RSMs receive when we come into College. Such welcomes make RSMs feel valued as part of the College community and as they are freely given are quintessentially free of the giver wanting 'payback'. But it seems to me that the amount of Homerton History that RSMs hold, I suspect sometimes unwittingly, filters through to so many of this and previous years' pages. It is one way of showing not only how we continue to value College but that we can help contribute materially to the College Archive.

By way of example, I will start with two small 'snippets' which I feel add, in their own small way to Homerton's History. The first is Trish Maude's account of her role as the first Lay Chaplain to Homerton's Charter Choir during the final eight years of her half century's work on the Staff at Homerton – surely a feat that would be rarely surpassed. The second lists three tales connected to Homerton's Tower. Some stories seem to have been lost, but if Homerton had not had the need for a new dining hall, the Tower may or may not have been given a new life. We seem to know only a little about it but it has its own valued secrets waiting to be discovered somehow.

Recounting the life and times of Dhiru Karia, Homerton's Finance Officer for some 29 years, could take the theme onto monetary value, but as three connected articles (pp.22-27) illustrate, money is only the start (and finish) of any major projects. Set down over these three articles are detailed accounts of how Homerton changed from 'simply' being a College of Education through to its students being awarded degrees, first by the University of London and then by the University of Cambridge, before becoming a full College of the University – incidentally along the way seeking monies to expand a wide range of Inservice initiatives, the development of overseas projects and sourcing research funding. There are no prizes for knowing all the acronyms banded around in these articles during this time, but as newer members of College academic staff may be seeing some for the first time, they are given with appreciation. Such histories are our own present to College in return for what we receive and I believe serve as a tangible example of how much RSMs and College are valued by each other.

Finally, for a theme of value, values and valued, this year's obituaries are no different than those in previous years. They lay down in print (and hence for posterity) lives which gave value to the College in a wide variety of ways (including how the history of the Homerton Horn can at last be revealed), exemplifying each individual's values for which they will remain forever valued.

But I see an opportunity, given my three-word theme, to place on record how much I value the work and support from my two fellow Musketeers, Anne Thwaites and Clare Ryan. In the work that they take on at a drop of a hat and with no problem too little or too large that it cannot be solved, they are, to mind, of truly outstanding value (two treasures) to both College and the RSMs and to whom I publicly need to say 'Thank You'.

Kind regards,
Libby

Principal's Message

Simon Woolley, Lord Woolley of Woodford

I very much like seeing our Retired Senior Members around the College – your presence enriches our community. Sometimes that is during the wider Homerton Alumni weekend, but more often it is when you gather for your book club conversations, coffee mornings or when you join us to listen to and engage with invited speakers. Either way, you are very much part of the Homerton eco-system that makes this College special.

That is why I am keen for you – and other groups within the College – to engage with the soon-to-be-launched *Homerton Way*. This is not just another College document, but a living expression of who we are and what we aspire to be.

At its heart, the Homerton Way is rooted in three guiding values:

Fairness	a commitment to equality, equity, and inclusivity
Openness	expressed through kindness, diversity, and friendliness
Excellence	embodied in integrity, ambition, and intellectual challenge

These values underpin a clear vision: that Homerton should be a place where bright people from all backgrounds realise their potential, feel they belong, and go on to make a positive contribution to society. We want every member of our community – students, staff, alumni, and indeed our Retired Senior Members – to feel part of that journey.

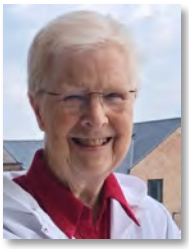
Alongside this, we are equipping departments and groups with a *strategy blueprint* that shows how the Homerton Way can be lived out in practical terms. The framework is simple: each department reflects on its vision, chooses aims that align with the College's six strategic pillars (from Inclusive Excellence in Education to Innovation in Research, Wellbeing, and Building a Prosperous Future), and identifies concrete actions that embody our values. In other words, it is a guide for turning vision into practice – in ways that fit each group's unique character.

For Retired Senior Members, this may mean reflecting on how your events contribute to Homerton's culture of openness and belonging. It may mean considering how your collective wisdom and scholarship can inspire our current students, support our inclusive educational mission, or enrich our "big conversations" about society's challenges.

Above all, the Homerton Way is an invitation. It is an invitation to help us shape a College that is fair, open, and excellent – not only in Cambridge, but in the contribution we make to the wider world. And it is an invitation that I hope our Retired Senior Members, with your deep knowledge of Homerton's past and your continuing engagement in its present, will gladly accept.

Simon

Simon pleased to be fully immersed with the alumni, September 2024



My role as Honorary Lay Chaplain to Homerton's Charter Choir

Trish Maude

It was a joy and privilege to complete my half-century at Homerton (1974-2024), including eight years as the Honorary Lay Chaplain to the Charter Choir.

Having no qualification to lead formal worship in a church, I qualified as an Authorised Lay Minister through the course provided by Ely Cathedral, specialising in Worship Leading. I wrote about this for the 2019 Newsletter (*Jumping off the Ledge* p.18).

Trish posing for one last time in her Lay Chaplain's robes which she affectionately calls 'her white pinny' on her balcony at her new home in Strawberry Fields

As Homerton has no Chapel, the partnership with James Shakespeare and everyone at St John the Evangelist Church, Hills Road, directly opposite College, has been hugely beneficial – not only as our venue for Services, but also as an outward facing activity for the College. It also enables the choristers and organists to take an active part in the Parish by sharing their music with parishioners and visitors as well as with College members.

You may be wondering what my role as Honorary Lay Chaplain involved, in addition to leading Services. Well … broken down into five areas it included …

1. Administrative activities included liaising with:
   Daniel Trocmé-Latter as Choir Director and the St John's Clergy, concerning service planning;
   their colleagues at St John's concerning communication,
   and the Homerton Principal, Fellows, staff, RSMs, HUS, students and Alumni, for example, to provide volunteers to read during services.

2. Being available as pastoral tutor to the choristers and organists in relation to the Choir, I was able to keep in contact, as appropriate, with College Directors of Studies, the Senior Tutor and tutorial team.

3. There were also external relationships, including:
   representing the College in the Diocese;
   participating in the Deans and Chaplains Group,
   and linking with the University Marshal when standing in for the Principal to attend University Sermons in Great St Mary's.

4. My involvement with Choir also enabled me to go further afield, whenever they participated in choral services at Coventry, Wells, Guildford, Norwich and St Paul's Cathedrals, and St Martin in the Fields.

5. And then added to all of the above, my position also saw me:
   assisting at the annual Organ Trials;
   holding a stall at Societies Fair;
   producing the College Act of Remembrance,
   and the Charter Choir Services Booklet.

So you can see there was never a dull moment during these eight years.

As I reflect on to the invitation by the Principal, Geoff Ward, to take on the role of Honorary Lay Chaplain, I am reminded of the words of Guillaume Apollinaire:

> "Come to the edge," he said.
> "We can't, we're afraid!" they responded.
> "Come to the edge," he said.
> "We can't, We will fall!" they responded.
> "Come to the edge," he said.
> And so they came.
> And he pushed them.
> And they flew.

Northampton Welcome Hub for Families Seeking Asylum

Lorraine Bewley-Tippler

The teacher training college in Salisbury, where I spent three happy and formative years, closed its doors in 1978. So it's been a great joy to get to know Homerton College as the wife of an RSM and to attend Alumni Reunion Weekends and RSMA coffee mornings.

Many of the talks I have been to have brought back happy memories of my own college days and professional work as a teacher, but last September one speaker in particular resonated with volunteer work I have been involved in since retiring. Professor Maha Shuayb gave a fascinating talk in which she described her work in the last twelve years, investigating education inequalities, the politics of educational reform and the evolving discourse around education of refugee children.

As she spoke, I was reminded of the experience we had in Northampton when Westone Manor Hotel, a hotel within our church parish, was requisitioned by the Home Office. They had entered a contract with the owners for a year's exclusive use of the hotel from November 2022 as accommodation for 40 recently arrived families and single women seeking asylum in the UK. A SERCO team was sent in to supervise. 170 people arrived at the hotel without any warning to the council, the community, or local education authorities. They were all either families, couples, or single women, mostly from Iran, Iraq and Syria. The first Sunday after families arrived at the Westone Manor Hotel, Christian asylum seekers found their way to the church which I attend, and other local churches, to practise the faith they had been denied in their homelands.

We came to know them as regular worshippers alongside us.

Our Church
https://s0.geograph.org.uk/photos/38/90/389073_b157c17f.jpg

Twenty volunteers from my own, and other Northampton churches, set up a weekly Welcome Hub, with members of the local Residents Association and advice from Welcome Churches UK. Guests of all faiths from the hotel came for coffee, cardamom tea, biscuits and fruit – fruit being greatly appreciated – and they brought their children to play.

They were able to choose much needed items of clothing for themselves and their children, donated by our local village community, and toys to take away and play with in their hotel rooms. At first, some Muslim families were reluctant to come into a church building but were encouraged by one of the younger husbands to do so. And, learning that we had no agenda but to give them a warm welcome and some practical help, the numbers of guests increased. Around sixty came weekly to relax, chat, and practise their English. Plans were quickly made for experienced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to come and run classes. Singing sessions, led by the church musical director (also a teacher with experience of teaching EFL in primary schools) were very popular with all ages. More activities which helped pass the time, and supported integration into the community were introduced. Many of the women were seen each week knitting baby blankets for the Northampton Baby Basics project for new, local, mothers in need. Some of the men made bird boxes for the church garden and they remain there, still.

Hand-knitted Baby Blankets!

Welcome Churches UK urges us not to ask too many questions, but stories began to be told, voluntarily. Many families had had very traumatic experiences in their homelands and during their journeys to the UK. One Algerian family, Christian converts, had escaped the young mother's violent father, who had beaten her almost to death, and were totally estranged from their entire family and village. Two eighteen-year-old women from Eritrea had escaped from conscription to fight in the war.

The hotel residents were given three meals a day at the hotel, without, seemingly, any attention paid to cultural dietary needs, and an ASPEN (Asylum Support Enablement Card) debit card on which was loaded £8 a week. Purchases could be government monitored. Consequently, the snack packs of biscuits, crisps, drinks and fruit we gave them to take away were very well appreciated.

The children were enrolled into local schools after eight weeks and Mums were eager to talk about how they were settling into their classes. Among the parents were doctors and nurses, dentists, a paediatrician, a vet, two journalists and a trainee solicitor. All the parents aspired to education for their children, but many were concerned as, in their homelands, the children would not yet have reached the age for full time education and the transition was enormously difficult for some. Though the schools, without any possibility of meaningful preparation or extra staffing, did their best to help the children settle, it took some months for that to happen. Northampton Quakers gave shoes and uniforms, hopeful of giving them a good start and to help their integration, but much more support for the children than clothes to help them "fit in" was needed.

With much effort and good will on all sides, the children began to settle and make friends, acquiring English very speedily. The parents had made good contacts in the community, local mosques and churches, and were applying for Leave to Remain. So it was an enormous shock when word came, exactly a year to the day since they arrived, that, with only a few hours' notice, the hotel was being cleared and the families taken away in taxis to unknown destinations. Nobody knew until the hotel was cleared that the contract was for a year, and indeed neither the residents or the local community were ever informed how long the hotel would be used for.

Welcome Hub volunteers arrived at the hotel to find scenes of confusion, distress and disarray. The only way we could help was by providing suitcases for the families to pack and exchanging phone numbers. Nobody was available for comment at SERCO or the Home Office. By five o'clock that evening a string of taxis had arrived. Their drivers had been told their destinations but given instructions not to reveal the information to anyone. Children arrived home from a normal day at school and were bundled into the taxis with any belongings their parents had managed to pack. Toys, bicycles and scooters were left behind, as were the friends and teachers to whom they had been unable even to say goodbye.

We spent the following days trying to ascertain the destinations of the families who, it appeared, had been dispersed to other hotels in Birmingham, Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Lancashire. Two of the single women and one family were offered homes by members of our volunteer group who had come to know them. We subsequently made contact with as many of the families as we could track down and telephoned local organisations and Welcome Church UK branches who we thought might support the arriving families. We were able to visit some in their new accommodation. Their original trauma seemed to have been compounded by the hasty uprooting. The process of applying for school places for the children had to begin again.

It was difficult to keep track of the families, as they were subsequently moved repeatedly and with each move the children's school experiences were interrupted. The Algerian family is one I have been able to keep in touch with, write supporting statements for and help, remotely, to find a church where they can be welcomed and baptised, as is their strong desire. Last week, after almost two years in the UK, they had their Home Office interview which would decide on their eligibility for refugee status. They, and I, await the result of that application.

It seems to me that the research of Maha Shuayb on the educational needs of refugee children should be valued and applied. Our experience in Northampton shows that a society which claims to care for the stranger should find better ways to integrate and educate refugees.

The RSMA Interval Club

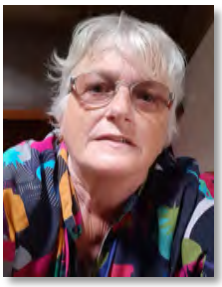
Sue Conrad not only came up with the fine idea for The RSMA 'Interval Club' but has also agreed to co-ordinate it for its inception. That's just what we like from our members.

As Sue said: I am quite happy to go to the cinema, concerts, the theatre, etc, on my own, except when it comes to the interval, when it really is rather nice to have someone to talk to, have a drink with and perhaps also meet up with before or after the event.

We are sure that some other RSMs may like feel this too. The Club itself will be self-sufficient, communicating directly to others via some form of an email group. This then allows any member of the group to let others know about events they plan to go to, and so see if anyone else would like to go too. Arrangements can then be made to meet up during the interval, and/or before and after the event as well, perhaps go for a meal, travel together and so forth.

For any event where it is necessary to book a ticket, for simplicity each member would need to book their own. Of course, if people wanted to sit together, they could use the Interval Club group list to make arrangements to do that.

Do please get in touch with Sue (details in the RSMA Contact List) if you are interested in joining this group. Hopefully there will be events that others suggest that you wish to join or, even better, you will be sending messages about an event you wish to go to.



Teacher education and the ‘study’ of world religions in Leicester

Mary Earl

“I just wanted to say a huge thank you for organising such a fantastic weekend. I think we all took so much from it, and had a lot of laughs along the way! It really is incredible you've kept such strong connections with so many places in Leicester. I've learned more in the past couple of days than any of the books I've been reading!”

(Kate, 2010)

The ‘Leicester trip’ was well-established as a crucial part of teacher education and undergraduate studies when I came to teach at Homerton in 1992. I had always run ‘field studies’ trips in the schools I’d taught in which was unusual in the 1970’s but I was deeply committed to it not only because I’d been taught by John Hick, one of the first ‘world religions’ scholars in this country, but also because I’d done my degree in Birmingham, and knew what ‘multi-culturalism’ (as it was then called) looked like. By the time I started to work with Religious Education (RE) trainee teachers and undergraduates studying world religions and began to run the Leicester trips I had developed three convictions which proved to be very helpful: firstly that just sitting around ‘feeling guilty’ about colonisation wouldn’t actually help me (or anyone else) move forward in building understanding of what might need to happen in order to break its hold on “British values”; secondly, that accepting I didn’t understand ‘the other’ (and possibly never could or would), could be the first, indispensable, step into achieving some kind of (limited) understanding; lastly, that religions are deeply encultured which meant, among other things, that I have never seen religions as belief systems separate from the cultures they exist in. That is one reason why I was able, in the 1990’s at least, to accept, happily, RE’s (then) two attainment targets as useful. They committed students to learning not just about world religions but also from them.

I’ve never known any educational activity I’ve run which always, always, seemed to work as well as the Leicester weekends did. I know I found it hard, sometimes, to keep my own narratives about religious traditions, citizenship, migration, racism and colonisation ‘recent and relevant’ enough to enable successive generations of students to grasp the implications of the visits. But the fruits of ‘just going’ were often profound – and I knew that too. Post 9/11, for instance, we arrived at the Keythorpe Street mosque fairly full of trepidation about how we might be received and were greeted by a Muslim community who felt exactly the same as we did. This resulted in one of the deepest and most peace-generating conversations, across faiths, I’ve ever experienced. One young man, for instance, thanked us for coming as he’d felt sure that, given what had happened, we would hate him. Several of our students confessed similar fears. Then there was the time we went out, at night, onto the streets, with a local imam and were shown how the communities were operating together (Muslim and Sikh), to keep their children safe from drugs (with walkie-talkie based patrols of the streets at night). Celebration-wise, little can beat being, as we were one year, in the middle of Europe’s largest Diwali celebrations, just off the Belgrave Road.

Diwali Street Decoration

Overall, the biggest learning curve was always with Sikhism. Few graduates had learned about it at all at their universities and even fewer had Sikh friends, family or neighbours. (It would be different now). But a two-hour visit, including a visit to the little Punjabi school in the gurdwara, changed all that. Talking to young people in the Punjabi school encouraged Cambridge students to widen the university expectations of some of the older students in the school too, and I know that one or two visited Homerton and saw a university for themselves as a result. Our students also learned from difficult situations which arose. For example, an uneasy part of our visit to the Jain temple was when a young woman saw, and questioned, a notice saying that anyone with a period shouldn’t enter the inner temple.

A large part of my job seemed to involve ‘filling in the gaps’ between the Cambridge students’ hopes and expectations about their being able to ‘heal’ differences across diversities and mediate the curriculum. The ‘learning from’ they were doing in Leicester was so often a challenge to the ‘learning about’ they had done at their respective universities. For example, we went, each weekend, from Friday night services at a Jewish synagogue to a Pakistani heritage mosque. Then, on Saturday we went to a Saudi heritage mosque, a Hindu mandir, a Jain temple and five family homes. On Sunday,

we had our highlight visit to the Meynell Road Sikh gurdwara.

The communities were brilliant. They welcomed us to Sikh weddings, to shops where kind locals taught the students how to put on a saree or shalwar kameez and where they could and couldn't use credit cards. But the best visits were always to the five families who regularly welcomed us to their homes. These fabulous families were already long-established participants in the Leicester visits by the time I came along and I will never forget or have enough thanks to give to those who opened their homes to us and for their believing so strongly that it was only such an experience which would truly educate. They were right. I remember, for example, one particular man's endless enthusiasm for our visits, the way he involved his whole extended family in them, the openness with which he talked about culture, faith and the tensions between them, and the sheer stubbornness with which he ignored my pleas, every year, for him not to keep the students for more than two hours at a time. Once, when I was wondering how he felt about our visits (and the Leicester trip) carrying on, he said: "Mary, you have to. It's so desperately important. How else will they learn?"

Students were always tired by Saturday night but they knew they were about to be dropped off on the doorsteps of between five and seven family homes, all over Leicester, for another two-hour visit. Knowing how nervous many were, we'd nevertheless wave them goodbye (though in some cases, we did go in with them) leave them to it and then pick them up, buzzing, and bursting with excitement. It is these families we needed to thank most. They brought out family albums, talked openly about migrant journeys, the Hajj, race relations, assisted and forced marriage, their fears and hopes for their children, inter-marriage, religious education, their faith, culture, religion and politics, birth control, abortion and euthanasia, medical ethics generally, philosophies. Everything. They also encouraged their children to talk about their own experiences of school, fed us, allowed us to sit in on family weddings, family rituals surrounding the Guru Granth Sahib and openings of new buildings important to their communities

These, as Kate says in her email, are not experiences you'll find in books. After the visits there were the responses and reactions: a combination of shocked silences, the raising of hundreds of questions and, sometimes, a 'taking of sides' (theologically, politically and educationally), too. Up until around 2008 or 2009 few of the Homerton students either came from similar backgrounds to those of these families we met, or knew much about the world their largely white, middle class backgrounded study of world religions had taught them to see. It has been very different, thankfully, since then.

The differences but similar diversities between Leicester and Cambridge (according to the 2021 census, 89 languages were at that time spoken in Leicester, 88 in Cambridge) made Leicester a very good place for students to visit during the time when I worked at Homerton. The Leicester visit marked a big difference between studying and understanding world religions and for that I was, and am, grateful. My job would have been far harder without it. If the point of being human, an educator, a citizen, in a society as full of difference and diversity as ours lies, as Dewey suggested, in knowing that 'we do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience', the Leciester visits always helped us all to do just that.

We must pass on a huge thank you to Clare Ryan for all the many tasks she does on behalf of all of us to ensure that everything works out so smoothly.

It says something when struggling to get some close-up photos of Homerton's Horn to accompany Kate's article (pp.34-37), I decided to call on Clare's help one August Friday afternoon.

Within minutes I received this reply:
Can you let me try and find someone who has the key to the cabinet and is prepared to stand on a ladder to get the Horn out of its box before I commit to a day next week please?
Hopefully I'll have an answer by Monday.

Clare, I think that is what one would call amazing support. How can we properly thank you?

Duplicated from last year's Newsletter:
Clare constantly watching over us – remotely or otherwise

Reconciling principles and practice: perspectives on a Multi-Academy Trust

Molly Warrington

Like many of us, I was fiercely opposed to Academies when introduced by the Labour government in the early 2000s. Taking the oversight of England's schools away from local authorities and handing control to unaccountable bodies seemed an ill-conceived plan, whatever the poor record of some local education authorities. Likewise, I thought the introduction of Free Schools by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition completely misjudged. Why allow and subsidise groups of parents and others with no educational background to set up schools in locations where there were already sufficient school places? Furthermore, a decade ago I believed that schools set up by religious groups had no place in a modern, increasingly secular, Britain.

Yet here I am, for eight years now, a trustee of a multi-academy education trust with a religious foundation encompassing several free schools. Have I, as one long-standing teacher friend believes (probably alongside some readers of this Newsletter) 'sold my soul to the devil'?

When Mike Younger suggested I might join him on the Board of a Hindu Trust, I immediately declined – not having to go to meetings was one of the joys of retirement. But Mike is nothing if not persistent, and eventually I gave in because I could see by then (2017) that academies were here to stay. I satisfied myself that the schools in Avanti Schools Trust were inclusive in their intakes, outlooks and curricula, and I found I quickly warmed to the people who were to become a new set of colleagues.

My role as a Trustee

So what does my role entail? As a trustee I am responsible, with colleagues on the Board, for developing and monitoring strategy and for holding leaders to account. We have to ensure financial accountability and good governance, but although there are clear rules set out in the annual Academies Handbook, there is a considerable amount of freedom in how we accomplish our various tasks. Though Mike originally sold the job to me as 'only five meetings a year', I now find that those Board meetings have expanded to include away-days and weekends, as well as committee meetings and school visits.

School visits apart, the preceding description makes my role sound dull, routine and somewhat tedious. For the most part the opposite is true – the Trust has provided me with variety, intellectual challenge and connection with communities I would never otherwise have had the opportunity to get to know. I am not a convert to Academies as a way of organising England's education system. I do not believe that all Academy Trusts operate well; indeed, I have come across many which do the opposite. I agree with many of the issues succinctly summarised by West & Wolfe (2018) in their paper. Yet my experiences of one Multi-Academy Trust have given me some alternative perspectives.

Developing through community

When I first joined Avanti Schools Trust, there were six Hindu faith schools, mostly around London. Two years later we were asked to take on three former Steiner state schools. Since then we have built another all-through Hindu school to form part of a Leicester hub and were also asked by Hertfordshire to partner them in building a secondary and two primaries on a huge new housing estate on the edge of Bishops Stortford. After subsequently re-brokering one of the former Steiner schools, we now have twelve schools,

Every school I have encountered has a set of values which are taught to the children and young people in their care; all have principles under which they operate, even if they are not always clearly articulated. One of the key challenges of the Trust has been to create an identity around '12 schools, 1 Trust' whilst encompassing both Hindu and non-Hindu schools. It has been about which aspects of schools to align whilst also allowing Principals sufficient autonomy to innovate.

Spiritually compassionate changemakers

We are now at a stage where all of us, whether employed or voluntary, whether senior leaders, members of local advisory committees or catering staff, are aware, at least to some extent, of the way in which the Trust seeks to embody a spiritual dimension. This is distinct from any religion and has become one of the three pathways around which our philosophy and curriculum are based: educational excellence; character formation and spiritual insight. Staff and student retreats are held to offer all of us the opportunity to explore spiritual aspects of our lives.

The day before writing this piece I attended a moving and meaningful ceremony where, using an ancient Vedic ritual involving fire, fruits, flowers, herbs,

incense, bells and chanting, the mantle of 'guru' was passed from the outgoing CEO to the incoming one. Inevitably a delicious lunch followed and I reflected afterwards about how much I, personally had gained by joining this community. Although I grew up surrounded by the Christian faith (my father was a priest in the Church of England), I feel more comfortable than I ever have in voicing those aspects of myself which I have always kept hidden. I am enjoying being part of a community embracing those from several different faith traditions and none, especially at a time in my life when one is more conscious than ever of one's own mortality. Most of all, it is exciting and intellectually challenging to help translate the rhetoric of Avanti into reality, so that Avanti's schools do indeed meet our simple but profound quest to educate children who have the potential to be 'spiritually compassionate changemakers'.

Reference

West, A. and Wolfe, D. 2018 Academies, the School System in England and a Vision for the Future, Clare Market Papers no.23, Education Research Group, London School of Economics and Political Science.

New on the Bookshelf

Nan Youngman and Pictures for Schools by Robjn Cantus

Early in June RSMs received information via the list of a forthcoming talk at the David Parr House (Gwydir Street, Cambridge) about Nan Youngman, by which time there was limited ticket availability, those left seeming to be going quickly. Robjn Cantus would be speaking about his book *Nan Youngman and Pictures for Schools*.

Anne (Thwaites) and I got to hear about this talk from Peter Cunningham who, a couple years or so ago, had himself given a talk at the David Parr House. Peter commented that "The book and talk look fascinating and reflect such an important period in education particularly in Cambridgeshire and indeed Homerton". I remembered that Nan Youngman's name had cropped up in a previous RSMA Newsletter and there was some sort of connection with Homerton.

Tickets or no tickets, I knew that annoyingly I would not be able to go as I was 'out of town'. But after the event I had my ears open and heard that the Rundalls had been to the talk.

A brief email to Philip resulted in the following reply just two and a half hours later. [Speedy reply or what?]

Yes, Patti and I attended the Nan Youngman talk at the David Parr House, at which [Angela & David] Bridges, Jane Edden and Kate Pretty were also present. It was an interesting talk and afterwards I had a chat with the author of the book on Nan who gave it.

Both David Spence and I were members of the Cambridge Society of Painters and Sculptors, the society that Nan Youngman formed as she wished to create something different to represent Cambridge professional artists rather than the Cambridge Drawing Society which represented mostly amateurs. She was very much the grand dame, but modest with it, when I was a member and meetings were held in her house out on the Ely Road. I was originally proposed for membership (there was a limit of 20 members) by Alec Pearson, the tapestry designer, who did teach for a time at Homerton, I believe. Both he and Nan were enormously supportive towards me, and Nan's contribution to art education both locally and nationally was immense.

I'm not aware that Nan ever taught at Homerton but she was certainly the Cambridgeshire art advisor and a close colleague of Henry Morris, who created the Village Colleges. Her partner, the sculptor Betty Rea, did teach for a period at Homerton.*

Homerton has a wonderful Welsh drawing of Nan's, and I think, an oil still life. I inherited a delightful small drawing of hers from my mother, who purchased it at one of the shows the Society held at the Fitzwilliam Museum.
Philip

*Philip was correct. Had I re-read the article on Betty Rea on pages 29 and 30 of the September 2022 Newsletter, I would have known Nan's precise link and avoided making my error of thinking [as I wrote in my initial email to Philip] that she had taught in Homerton's Art Dept.

Libby

Botany Lessons

Lizzie Madder

I have recently been looking through my collection of botanical art books, collected over many years since I studied botanical painting with Anne-Marie Evans MBE in the mid 1980s. It's now time for a 'what shall I do with all these books?' – a decluttering, but also considering where would be a good home.

Book Covers – not to declutter

I have a three-volume set of books on blackboard teaching, 'Nature Teaching on the Blackboard' by W.P. Pycroft and Janet Harvey Kelman, dated 1910. They have black pages with chalk illustrations. The blackboard was introduced as a main teaching tool at a time when children would not have had individual books (as I remember we had during my schooldays but apparently that no longer happens). Children were writing on slates, I believe, until the 1930s. So these books were designed as a teaching aid for teachers, although they make clear that teaching botany had to include the actual plant specimens for close study. Vols 1 and 2 are devoted to plants (including trees and vegetables). Vol 3 is devoted to animal life.

I would have liked to include some images but, as Kelman died in 1957, the books are still in copyright. However, I'd be happy to bring the volumes to a Friday RSMA coffee morning.

It was the 1880 Education Act that established compulsory education for children between the ages of five and ten, though by the early 1890s attendance within this age group was falling short of 82 per cent (parliament.uk). There must have been misgivings in many families where children were expected to pull their weight around farms and in factories. Big families meant that the older girls would have been expected to look after the youngest children.

I also have four small books on teaching botany in schools.

'A Textbook of Botany for Students' by Amy F.M. Johnson, published originally in 1922 (my copy is dated 1936).

'A Textbook of Botany for Families and Schools (published under the direction of the committee of general literature and education, appointed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge) published in the 1860s.

'Elementary Botany for Beginners' by Vincent T. Murche, dated 1919. The introductory chapter begins: "What a glorious morning! Come with me, boys, into the garden, and while we enjoy the fresh air and warm sun let us look about us and see what we can learn" (p.5).

This would have been the forerunner of the nature table I had at primary school (Stoke on Trent, 1950s), where I remember the occasional walks down a nearby lane to collect pussy willows, pine cones and wildflowers to take back to the classroom. It was not unusual for pupils to bring frogs, twigs, tree bark, birds' nests and eggs to 'show and tell'. I know I was delighted to find my daughter's primary school continued the tradition by keeping chickens and rabbits, and in the pond were frogs and spawn to examine. There was also a donkey!

A (much) later botanical painting of another pine cone which made its first appearance in the previous Newsletter

My favourite book of this quirky collection is:

'The First Book of Botany – designed to cultivate the observation powers of children' by Eliza A. Youmans, dated 1880.

To quote a part of the introductory text:
"The book … develops a new method of study which is designed to correct that which is confessedly the deepest defect of our current education. This defect is the almost total lack of any systematic cultivation of the observing powers … We train in mathematics and cram the contents of books, but do little to exercise the mind upon the realities of Nature, in respect to the order of the surrounding world … On purely mental grounds, therefore, and as a means of attaining the most needed of educational reforms, Botany has a claim to be admitted as a fourth fundamental branch of common-school study …" (pp.iv-v).

I have mislaid another book on botany teaching. But I remember it stating that children from poor rural areas being taught botany in village schools were brighter and had better concentration than those pupils who had come from more advantageous backgrounds.

All these books make wonderful reading.

And I realise I'm no further on with my decluttering!

The Accidental Collector's Tale

Nick Tippler

Edward Bawden's work has for a long time held a soft spot in my wife, Lorraine's, heart. In early 2020, the University of Winchester offered her, and others who qualified to teach with a Cert.Ed. at the College of Sarum St Michael, an honorary B.Ed. More than 400 former members of the College attended the graduation ceremony in Salisbury Cathedral. Including Lorraine, the 1973 cohort was one of the largest. I cast about for a Bawden print to commemorate her graduation.

Alas, though his signed prints are not necessarily expensive, they're almost impossible to come by, and only appear at auction occasionally. Clearly, I set my sights too high. Training them lower, I discovered a booklet which purported to be a first edition with illustrations by Bawden to a poem by W.H. Auden, called *Mountains*.[1] The seller, Between the Covers Rare Books, of New Jersey, happily entered into a conversation about the booklet – a proof copy of the first volume in a series called *Ariel Poems*. For $85, a more modest sum than for any signed print, it became mine briefly, then Lorraine's.

I knew of Sylvia Plath's *Ariel: Poems*, and of T.S. Eliot's *Ariel Poems*, though I was (and am) a fan of neither poet. But this newly discovered *Ariel* needed investigation.

As Britain emerged from postwar gloom, and rationing faded, publishers began to print on good quality paper again. In 1954, Faber decided to reinstate a previous project, from nine years after the First World War (a coincidence?) to produce a series of booklets, intended to be given as Christmas cards. Printed in runs of about 2,000, each booklet contained a poem specially written for the series by a leading poet of the day, illustrated by an equally eminent artist. The cover price would be two shillings. For your money, you would get a first edition with no distracting commentary: just poem, pictures and an envelope in which to post it, all available from the W.H. Smith & Son kiosk on the platform at Waterloo, before you fell asleep strap-hanging on the stopper to East Coker after a hard day at the bank.

Though information about the booklets is scarce, we might assume that T.S. Eliot, as a director of Faber, and a contributor, had some influence over their publication. A brief entry in *Poetry*, introduced them:

> Eight new titles have been announced in the *Ariel Poems* series published by Faber in London, each illustrated with auto-lithographs by English artists. The booklets are *The Cultivation of Christmas Trees*, by T.S. Eliot (ill. David Jones); *The Winnowing Dream*, by Walter De La Mare (ill. Robin Jacques); *Prometheus*, by Edwin Muir (ill. John Piper); *Mountains*, by W.H. Auden (ill. Edward Bawden); *The Other Wing*, by Louis MacNeice (ill, Michael Ayrton); *Sirmione Peninsular* [sic.], by Stephen Spender (ill. Lynton Lamb); *Christmas Eve*, by C. Day Lewis, (ill. Edward Ardizzone); and *Nativity*, by Roy Campbell (ill. James Sellars).[2]

The Auden/Bawden booklet arrived. I dressed it up with a ribbon and presented it to Lorraine, who was dead chuffed. Though quite plain on the outside (see Plate 1) the title page is a monochrome linocut by Edward Bawden, and the frontispiece an exquisite colour piece depicting an artist's easel before a mountain gorge, perhaps a glacial river running through, and on the easel, Dracula. The text extends across two-and-a-half sides, and another Bawden monochrome completes the third

side. The booklet is slim – the cover and three octavo sheets hand stitched with cotton.

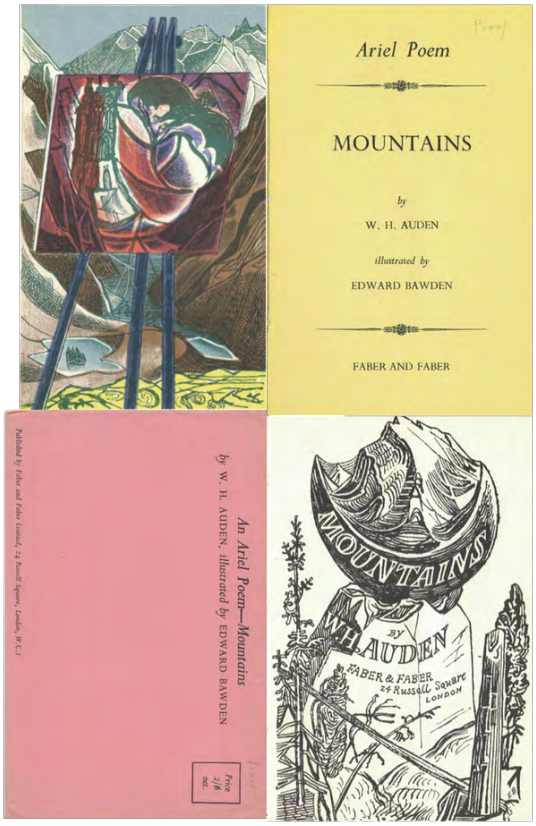


Plate 1

*Pages from Lorraine's proof copy of Auden's and Bawden's "*Mountains*" Ariel booklet,*
From top left: the colour frontispiece (© Estate of Edward Bawden), the cover, title page, and proof envelope.

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Being a proof copy, it had the wrong price on the envelope (2/6 net. instead of 2/-) and there are several minor textual variations in the poem, compared to the first published version.

Sixty-six years after the fact, Faber had me hooked. I imagined infinite COVID-19 isolation days, absorbed in the hunt for more poetry, stretching out before me.

My imagination does tend to run amok. Many copies were still wandering between antiquarian bookshops and private sellers, often complete with unused envelopes.[3] In one go, I acquired Lewis, MacNiece, Muir, and Spender (see above) all in good to fine condition, and a particularly tatty copy of Eliot's *The Cultivation of Christmas Trees,* all from eBay private sellers. This wasn't as much fun as dealing directly with a bookshop. Soon to follow was a de la Mare (from Australia), but that was rough, too.

Returning to the chase, I discovered a near fine de la Mare for only fourteen pounds and a similar condition Eliot for (shhh …) nine times that. A week later, Roy Campbell's *Nativity* appeared on Abe Books: a snip by comparison. Our collection was complete by the middle of June 2020. Back to the niceties of Covid grocery shopping as a hobby!

A few months later the itch needed scratching again: my intention, to undertake some research to preface our small collection. Google disgorged Blackwells' *Modernisms* for Spring 2017,[4] which listed a complete *Ariel Poems* first series – thirty-eight booklets – and another thirty-eight of larger, stiff-board versions, all in fine condition, and bound. To set off this rather splendid collection, came Faber's 1932 *Autumn Catalogue*, with full *Ariel* listing.

Only £9,500.

A first series! There must have been others, not quite so fine, but looking for a home.

Perhaps I should begin at the beginning. In 1925, Geoffrey Faber took an interest in the Scientific Press, run until then by Sir Maurice and Lady Gwyer. Renamed Faber and Gwyer, the company moved away from the publication of weekly magazines to the heady heights of such works as *Spain in a Two Seater* by Halford Ross. In short order, the Gwyers left and Richard de la Mare (Walter's son) became Production Director, E McKnight Kauffer designer, and T.S. Eliot also a director.[5]

In 1927, Richard de la Mare decided to commission a series of booklets – the first *Ariel Poems*. His proposal was to use major writers of the time and yoke their verse to "decorations on the cover, and an appropriate illustration (printed in three colours) by a well-known or especially talented younger artist." De la Mare wrote to all potential contributors, referring to his father as "Daddy" when trying to entice poets, and citing Eliot's involvement. This seems to have been largely successful but didn't persuade Rudyard Kipling to join the gang.[6]

Faber's 1927 Autumn Catalogue announced:

> This series of little booklets consists of single previously unpublished poems each suitably decorated in colours and dressed in the gayest wrappers. It has been designed to take the place of Christmas cards and other similar tokens that one sends for remembrance sake at certain seasons of the year. Some of the poems have Christmas for their subject: but a genuine poem is not a thing appropriate only to one season of the year, and any one of these poems with its attendant decorations would be a joy to read and to see at any time, whatever the season might be … For collectors of first editions it is worth remembering that most of these poems have been written specially for the series and that all of them appear here separately for the first time and are thus 'first editions' – and first editions that have been printed at the Curwen Press![7]

The contributors and illustrators for the first year's set included: Thomas Hardy (Albert Rutherston), Walter de la Mare (Blair Hughes-Stanton), G.K. Chesterton (Eric Gill), Siegfried Sassoon (Paul Nash), and T.S. Eliot (E McKnight Kauffer). Eliot requested Kauffer as his illustrator, but all the other pairings were Richard de la Mare's choice.

The first series booklets were smaller than the 1954 edition and printed on thinner paper. With their accompanying envelope each cost 1/- net (see Plate 2). While I admire the second series very much, I think that the first are little jewels, and worth every penny of the £1

18s that a set would have cost. Those by Siegfried Sassoon, Edith Sitwell, Thomas Hardy, and Wilfred Gibson (and their respective illustrators) are particularly pleasing.

Plate 2

Selected covers of our copies of the first Ariel Poems series, clockwise from top left: Nos. 6, 7, 9, 15, 38, 26, 23, & 19. Bottom: the envelope for No. 9.

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A shilling wasn't cheap. For a glorified Christmas card, it was at the top of the scale. In 1927, 2d would have got you a copy of The Times.

Then, male agricultural labourers earned on average 31s 8d per week, and female workers 5⅓d an hour.[8] Unlikely, I think that they would have been the target market! In the 1930s, my paternal grandfather worked as the clerk to a market garden in Lincolnshire, with responsibility for managing the accounts, dealing with suppliers and customers, and planning. His wage was £3 a week, almost double that of a labourer. But not likely to put him in a position wantonly to splash out on little poetry booklets at Christmas, even though he travelled to Kent via London main line rail termini, and likely passed one or two W.H. Smith & Son kiosks on his journeys. I think Faber's expected market was probably urban or suburban, possibly living in their own semi-detached villas, or splendid Kensington apartments.

We do know that the 20-year-old Imogen Holst – daughter of Gustav, and second year student at the Royal College of Music – put a copy of Hardy's and Rutherstone's booklet, *Yuletide in a Younger World*,[9] into her scrap book in 1927.[10] How did she come by it? Why did she keep it? A trip to the Britten Pears Arts Archive, where it resides, might provide an answer.

The Spectator's columnist, "Lemon Grey" reviewed the first issue in September 1927, and made one or two acerbic comments about the style of some of the poets and artists, though overall gave the booklets a warm welcome:

> HERE are little sample packets (if the term may pass) of contemporary poetry and draughtmanship [sic.]: and though the price of a shilling seems high to pay for twelve lines of Mr. Siegfried Sassoon, Mr. Paul Nash's two drawings may make up – especially as in this case the frontispiece has colour. … Anybody who buys this handful of booklets may find plenty to quarrel with: but there is live stuff in them, and that is what really matters.[11]

I came by our first series set in a more prosaic way, I suspect, than Imogen Holst or Lemon Grey. Having begun again with the intention of gradual accumulation. I discovered a job lot at Kirkdale Bookshop in Sydenham. They held, and were selling off piecemeal, what had been an almost complete set. I invested my new year's overdraft and bought all twenty-eight of their residual stock. The remainder took longer to come by, though I found some at William Reese Company of New Haven, (Specialists In Rare Americana, Travel, & Literature: Visits Available By Appointment).

Those left were either scarce or expensive. Vita Sackville West's – one of only two women invited to contribute – *Invitation to Cast Out Care*[12] seemed to be non-existent. A while after my previous purchase, William Reese advertised a copy. I imagined booklets queueing outside the shop in the February Connecticut snow, awaiting an appointment to visit and to be entered in William's antiquarian catalogue.

Eliot's *Marina*,[13] the last to be acquired, proved altogether more remarkable, though it hasn't changed my mind about his poetry. Who would buy such a poem as *Marina* as a Christmas gift?

An Oxford bookseller advertised on AbeBooks:

> Proof copy [of *Marina*] from the library of Richard de la Mare, Eliot's fellow-director at Faber's, the text printed on pp. [2-3] rather than [3-4], with four textual variations from the published text, and the words 'Datta Dayadhvam Damyata' from 'The Waste Land' incorporated into Kauffer's illustration, subsequently removed at Eliot's request; the wrappers are also a different shade of blue. Pictorial wrappers. Wrappers lightly marked, some light offsetting.[14]

How many proof copies were produced? Had Richard de la Mare handled this? Had Eliot? I inquired about provenance. On inspection, and comparison of the seller's photographs with the facsimile of Eliot's *Ariel Poems*. I gambled. Fortunately, some savings supplemented the overdraft.

With our collection completed by a sapphire among the rubies, and each of the booklets inspected and read, that seemed to be that.

Every now and then, we get them out and browse. Lorraine has read *The Journey of the Magi*[15] at midnight mass on several occasions, and I like to pick a poem at random and read it aloud, often to myself but, as we did earlier this year, with several, to each other. Poetry spoken and heard, rather than analysed, is our preference. Many of the *Ariel Poems* speak very well, though their Christmas connection is often tenuous. Perhaps they'll make a visit to our U3A poetry group soon.

I mentioned earlier that Faber published the first series in two forms. Booklets for public consumption, and large paper limited editions of 250-500 (sometimes signed) for their senior staff and others to give to colleagues and associates as gifts. The latter are octavo, bound in board and printed on rough-edged, hand-made, watermarked paper, and quite scarce.

Now there's a thought …

References/Footnotes

1. Mountains, accessed 4 January 2025. This was also included in Auden's Selected Poems (1979), Ed. Mendelson, E., pp.206-208, as the third of seven poems, under the heading of "Bucolics", with a dedication to Hedwig Petzold.
2. Poetry Chronicle", in Poetry, vol. 85, no. 5, 1955, pp. 304–07, accessed 6 June 2020.
3. Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue suggest in their Notes on the Text to the 2014 facsimile edition of Eliot's Ariel Poems that this Ariel venture was unsuccessful, which might explain its easy availability even now. (See T.S. Eliot, The Ariel Poems: Illustrated Poems for Christmas (2014), Faber and Faber Ltd, London)
4. Blackwells Rare Books Catalogue, Spring 2017, accessed 21 January 2021.
5. Synthesised from Robert Brown's Journal "From the Faber Archive" , accessed 6 January 2025.
6. Quoted in their Notes on the Text to "The Journey of the Magi" in *The Poems of T.S. Eliot: Volume 1: Collected and Uncollected Poems* (2015), Edited by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue, Faber and Faber Ltd, London.
7. Quoted in their Notes on the Text to "The Journey of the Magi" in *The Poems of T.S. Eliot: Volume 1: Collected and Uncollected Poems* (2015), Edited by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue, Faber and Faber Ltd, London.
8. Hansard wages statistics, 1927, accessed 20 December 2024
9. Yuletide in a Younger World, Accessed 6 January 2025.
10. Britten Pears Arts Archive for Imogen Holst**,** accessed 6 January 2025.
11. "Lemon Grey", "The Ariel Poems" in The Spectator, p.24, 3 September 1927, accessed 4 January 2025 now behind a pay wall.
12. Invitation to Cast Out Care, accessed 4 January 2025.
13. Marina**,** accessed 7 January 2025.
14. Descriptive text displayed on abebooks.com by Paul Rassam, bookseller, up to 12 February 2021.
15. The Journey of the Magi, accessed 7 January 2025.

"Many hands make light work" & "The more the merrier" …

We have been lucky this last year to have 'secured' two RSMs who have allowed themselves to be co-opted to the committee, and their hands have made our work lighter.

You will be able to read about the plethora of activities that we have been able to put on this year. The momentum that currently abounds could be further increased, not by our waving a magic wand, but by our asking if there are just a few (or even lots) more of you in a position to offer **to do just one thing** to help out!

As always, the list of tasks includes:

- organising a talk by a colleague;
- hosting an 'outside' speaker;
- co-ordinating a 'do-it-ourselves' favourite session – e.g. books, poems, artists …;
- being the liaison person for the RSM termly formal hall;
- welcoming members at a coffee morning and tidying coffee mugs at the end;
- setting up a group visit to a concert, museum, exhibition, garden … ;
- organising seasonal events (Christmas, Summer Picnic) ;
- suggesting and leading a gentle walk in your nearby locale.

We can continue to ease you in gently as we have already organised (in draft form) most of events for this coming year (2025-2026).

To help you take on a task we can provide a written guide for the organisation of different aspects of the RSMA programme.

Rest assured, we won't abandon you taking on any task – the committee and College staff will always be there to help.

Anne & Libby

You may have no idea where calling a bird a seagull may lead you

Libby Jared

For last year's Newsletter I felt 'secretly' very pleased with myself for having the cover page (first) picture to include a seagull on a chimney near to Homerton's tower (*Gull 1 below*) and the very last photo on the back page depicting a seagull at the seaside. But I couldn't resist sending an email to Steve (Watts), whose article on Birdwatching had given me such 'cleverness' and inspired the title *Spreading our Wings* for my Chair's letter just in case it all went by unnoticed.

Oh dear, I felt I had been hoisted by one's own petard when Steve sent an immediate reply:

Thanks for this Libby. I will forgive the birdwatching error of referring to "seagulls". When I joined my group, I was often castigated for use of the term to describe the usual gulls we see on the coast or inland. Seagulls may better describe those gulls who venture further out; shore gulls those like black-headed and herring gulls which we can even see in Cambridge. Now, how's that for pedantry!

And then, a couple of weeks later, at Sally Nott's leaving 'do', Stephen Tomkins' first words to me were about the 'seagull' on the top of Homerton's roof/tower.

I had by then become slightly obsessed by gulls and had taken a photo of one at Edinburgh's Botanic Garden (*Gull 2*) debating whether given Edinburgh's proximity to some 'water' it would be 'shore' or 'sea'. If only Holly (Anderson) had already told me that I should just call them gulls there would have been no call for any anxiety. Although it is not possible to tell from the photo, there were actually lots of these gulls around making their 'squawking' noises as the building shown on the right is the West Entrance Café. There were many people guarding their scones, crisps etc.

I did send a further message and a further gull photo to Steve which explained that I had had a difficult debate with myself as to which of two seagull photos to choose for the final one in the Newsletter. Had I chosen the other one (now *Gull 3*) I had more to say personally. For if you could peer a little further round the cliffs in the background you will come to the part of the coast that I used to walk down through the marshes from the village where I grew up. When I took Graham (aka Mr Jared) on it (just once) he said gosh this must have seemed a long way for little legs. (It was a *very* long way). Not only that though: sometimes a small group of us from about eight years old up to the grand old age of eleven, would take ourselves there without any adults – and it did include crossing the main railway line to London (Stop, Look and Listen!). Would this adventure be allowed today?

And now into the finishing straight.

But somehow the conversation turned to marshes, railway lines et al, (definite shades of *Great Expectations*) when Steve asked if I was talking about Kent. Yes, but the Isle of Thanet if you please! This led to Steve mentioning that although he had not read it – a rare occurrence I imagine – he thought he could recall being told about a detective novel of some sort. I have never read any detective novel set in the area, but I was once given a non-detective novel about some 'odd' people talking in an 'odd' dialect, based I was reliably informed about Isle of Thanet people in ages past. 'Google' can work magic. Yes, Steve thought he could recall reading *Riddley Walker* by Russell Hoban many years ago, or at least remembered author and book after my 'googling'. I must have my copy somewhere but have never opened it and do not have a clue where it may be hiding. Don't worry, I won't be suggesting it for the book club but then again perhaps someone will?

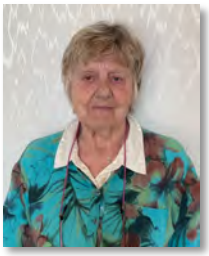
The End?

Well almost. My story of potato picking out on the marshes with hordes and hordes of crows(?) circling overhead, reminding me of Alfred Hitchcock's film *The Birds* can wait for another day – even though the national dailies the next day all mentioned the similarity too!!!

Gull 1 Chimney Top

Gull 3 Westgate-on-sea – please peer round beyond the cliffs

Gull 2 'Spotted' squawking at Edinburgh Botanic Gardens



A Special Poem for Scrabble players

Carole Bennett

You may not know that, at the last count, there are 124 acceptable two letter words that can be used in Scrabble. They are really useful to know but very difficult to remember. In a poetry writing challenge, I decided to compose my own aide-memoire to help.

Many of these words will be the subject of a challenge from your opponent, but these are all taken from the official scrabble word guide. Indeed, new words may also have been added since I wrote this poem three years ago.

A-I is known as the two toed sloth
Bi can mean two but may also mean both

CH's short for 22 yards or a chain
I use this in scrabble again and again

DA, **DE** (Dee) and **DI**, and don't forget **DO**
All are accepted when it's your time to go

12 useful words, all start with an 'E'
They finish at **EX** meaning "no more to be"

FA's the short word when singing a song
Add **FE** or a **FY**…you cannot go wrong

GU's part of a problem, a new one to me
But add **GI** and then **GO**, a total of three

A giant shouts out "**HA HI HO** and "**HM**"
When smelling the blood of an Englishman

IS, **IT**, and **I-D** and finally **IN**
Are all little words that will help you to win

JA comes from German and simply means 'Yes'
JO's a Scot's Darling to love and caress

Chinese for 'plant' is the meaning of **KI**. (Pronounced 'Key)
KA the spirit of little old me

LA, LI, LO sounds like French for a bed
But **LI** is a measure in metres instead

M's a great letter with six words to try
MA is the first, and the final is **MY**

NA NE and **NO** are listed with **NY**
The first three mean "No", and NY means nearby

O is quite clearly the best tile to draw
Sixteen small words and possibly more

O-E is an island, another new word
OI, OW and **OH**, shouts of pain when they're heard

Next is **P-H** with a **PA, PI** and **PO**
Reminders of words I already know

Q-I a TV programme we already view
A lone word in scrabble not needing a 'u'

For **RE** we say "Ree" but this is quite wrong
Julie Andrews sings "Ray", a note in a song

SI is silicon's chemical name
SH, SO and **ST** (Saint), are okay in the game

Eight little words all start with a "U"
UG, UM and **UN** and **UP** is there too

No two letter words begin with a 'V'
I think it's the worst tile when picked up by me

We all know a **WE** but **WO** gives us doubt
It's simply a short form of "going without"

With a **XI** ("ksee") and a **XU** ("zoo") you cannot go wrong
XU meaning part of a Vietnamese Dong

Three legal words all begin with a "Y"
YE, YO and **YU** - give them a try

ZA means a pizza and **ZO** "Holy Cow"
Surely, it's time to finish right now!

Hope they help you win… Good Luck!

Lizzie recalled that some poems read at last year's Summer Picnic were those that people had learned in childhood, and it reminded her of some of the poems she had written about her own childhood.
On the next page are the three that she read at the picnic.
One is about her memories of the dreadful, travelsick journeys from Leicester to Stoke on Trent along the old A50,
one is about her early teen years attending the church Bible Class, and
one is about the question her daughter asked when she was about five years' old.

Three Poems about Childhood

Lizzie Madder

The Bible Class

It was an escape from
the deadliness of sunday afternoon black and white films
freedom from a household fractured like splinters
where threadbare nerves were patched with best behaviour
I was afraid to open my mouth
in case the words iced over

radio london jangled with family favourites
and the summons of the bells at two thirty
no longer sunday school sunbeams
in our american tan cuban heels
orange frost lipstick
we were the first to wear
twelve inch skirts
I was afraid to cross my legs
in case the world iced over

my father's fearful memories
forbid me the friday night youth club
the bible class was where we met boys
with woodbines and incompetent moustaches
where we had a crush on the curate
drank bright orange squash
that left sticky orange rings on our skirts
spilt custard cream crumbs inside our blouses
we sharpened our flirting skills
on their blushing innuendos
words I was afraid to use
in case my mouth iced over

behind the thin-lipped primness of the church hall
the girls reassembled a holy communion piety
we left the sticky fumbling kisses
and futile hands groping the solid padding of our first size bras
"show us your knickers" one boy mouthed
"before you go home"

Lizzie Madder *September 2001*

The blue van

My dad fixed two leatherette seats in the back
after we were too big to be sardined
in the sidecar. A blue morris van,
it's dark interior deep-rooted with cigarette smoke,
petrol, bile rising in my throat, we could shuttle the old A50 to Stoke,
in my imagination no one had ever reached the source
of our private river, I was never more seasick
than on this voyage, my brother and I picking,
kicking, blaming our sister, anything to take our minds off
the bumps and lumps, mum and dad's nerves,
the swerves, our unread books slipping sliding,
crayons hiding, rolling under our seats out of reach,
my skin bleaching, the sick growing heavy
as we navigated the Ashby roads,
a straight run by the water tower sentry
that saluted the halfway signal, on to Blythe Bridge
where my friend Cheryl had gone to live,
although I could never see what was so merry about it
and I never saw the bridge, and repeating my mantra
we're nearly there we're nearly there,
nausea rising in waves, stomach lurching,
searching for signs for the Meir and Trentham,
the dark potted streets of Longton, the gulp of relief
disbelief I hadn't thrown up as we parked
disembarked behind my grandma's house,
oh the pleasure of a cold flannel of rain on my face and
on my strange legs shivering down the dark entry
to a cup and saucer tea, the sickness sipped away,
washed and wiped like daylight's perspective
on a bad dream.

Lizzie Madder *November 2001*

Conversations

My daughter phoned to tell me about last night's
dream and what the barman had said to her
and how she was studying the hairs on the legs
of fruit flies and the pink shoes she'd seen in town
and how one of the boys had left black dye
in the wash basin and she thought she might
drive to Ireland in her car and how I ought to see
the film of the book and, yes, it was still snowing
in Sheffield.

And I remembered when she was small,
she had asked me about conversations, as in
how do you have one, who starts it and what
do you talk about, how do you know when
you've finished, and how do you have
so many things to say, and everybody drinking
lots of wine, and laughing until you cry.

Lizzie Madder *February 2005*

Growing up …
… in Cambridge's 'most haunted' house

John Gray

This contribution to the Newsletter was stimulated by Peter Cunningham's excellent talk earlier this year at The Museum of Cambridge (previously The Folk Museum) about Leah Manning's time at the New Street Ragged School. I went to its successor school, The Brunswick, played football a hundred yards away and lived nearby in the Old Abbey House.[1]

Once a house starts to get a reputation for being 'haunted', it is difficult to shake off. So it is with the Old Abbey House. In the early 1900s, for example, there was something of a revival. New residents, the Lawsons, reported seeing various 'ghostly' apparitions.

New Sightings?

The children of Dr Lawson, a Fellow of Pembroke College, were reportedly nursed to sleep from time to time by the ghostly figure of a nun sitting at their bedside. On other occasions these same children reported playing with a small dog that emerged from a blank wall. As chance would have it, the dog resembled one that was a companion of a previous resident, one Jacob Butler, who owned both the house and the land on which Stourbridge Fair, one of the largest in Europe, was held. Butler was a larger than life character, both physically and by reputation, so naturally enough and in the course of time, he too became a talking point who ought to have a ghost – even if he didn't. Reports of a nun in particular are recurring, lending further credence to the stories.

The Old Abbey House was built on the site of Barnwell Priory, which was a monastery. In the cellars of No. 1, the oldest part of the house, was a passageway that went in the general direction of St. Radegund's (now Jesus College) which was a nunnery. History teaches us that Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in order to seize their wealth. What is less well known is that he was equally concerned with the licentiousness they fostered, especially of a sexual nature.

The passageway was supposedly an underground tunnel which joined the two institutions. It is difficult to verify this because it is bricked up after about thirty feet. But it is easy to imagine that the tunnel was used for illicit assignations of which Henry would have disapproved. An unfortunate nun was discovered by the authorities, doubtless up to no good with her lover. She was bricked in for her sins! Hence the ghost.

Further information would be helpful but the case is not well-documented. We don't, for example, know what happened to the offending monk. Nor do we know whether Jesus College has ever discovered their end of the tunnel. There are 'secret' tunnels all over Cambridge but this would have been one of the more spectacular examples of medieval engineering, tracking Newmarket Road for the better part of a mile.

Scientific Interest

Since then there have been numerous reports of one kind or another about the house. As a blogger on the *Paranormal Database* remarks: "While I am not a fan of 'most haunted' titles, when you look at the number and type of ghosts (a poltergeist, ghostly echoes of chains, a butler, a woman in white, a grey lady, a squirrel, a dog and a hare are all amongst the entities that have popped up) one can understand why the title has been applied here". Repeated often enough, such 'sightings' can acquire a life of their own. Indeed, the house has even made it into *The Penguin Book of Ghosts: Haunted England* and now commands its own Wikipedia page as well.

Post-WW2 interest in the paranormal experienced something of a resurgence and the view began to prevail that more serious (scientific) investigation was needed. Members of Cambridge University (mostly but not exclusively made up of students) took an interest. One group set up sophisticated recording equipment and infra-red cameras in the oldest parts of the house, then did their best to stay awake and observe. They continued their nightly watches for a whole week but without anything very specific emerging!

This research prompted further investigations. In 1955 a major project was led by the eminent Cambridge scientist Professor FJM Stratton, Professor of Astrophysics, President of the Psychical Research Society[2] and ghost-hunter-in-chief. He told *Varsity* that he was conducting 'an experiment of great importance' and that he might be 'on the verge of a great psychic discovery'.

Prof. Stratton rented No. 1 for a month (we lived in No. 2 and we could hear his team through a connecting door). They seem to have had slim pickings however. Apparently, all they picked up were mutterings and singing coming from an empty room.

But Stratton's researches should possibly be taken seriously. He was, after all, pretty prominent in the Cambridge scientific world at that time and was, I suspect, a Stephen Hawking kind of figure. He had a distinguished war career, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and held the chair of Astrophysics for some twenty years. Clearly an investigator of considerable stature, he even persuaded the University

Library to create an extensive archive of his papers (and those of the Psychical Research Society) covering the whole of the 1950s.

While we lived there

Up until 1950 we lived at No. 48 Hartington Grove just opposite Homerton. My family then moved to the Old Abbey House when I was just two. We stayed there for 12 years which coincided with the height of this 'scientific' interest. The house had been bought by Lord Fairhaven of Anglesey Abbey in 1945 and gifted to the Folk Museum. It had been divided into three parts and we occupied the middle section (No. 2). It has a very prominent Dutch gable, tall and distinctive chimneys, extensive gardens and is surrounded by walls partly rebuilt from the abbey's ruins. We had a sizeable bakehouse off the kitchen with a huge (pizza-type) oven and a four-seater lavatory just outside our back door (don't ask!). The rent was £2 a week.

Old Abbey House

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbey_House,_Cambridge

Most years a bunch of schoolkids would assemble on the pavement outside the front gates. They had usually come straight from a local history lesson doubtless embellished by talk of ghosts. After dallying a while one or two of them would run into the garden and approach the coal-hole of No. 1. This was the sort of place a ghost ought to occupy. They would stick their heads into the darkness, shout out if there was anyone there and then run back to report their findings to their mates.

In 1963 a lengthy article about the history of the house appeared in *Country Life*. Predictably, along with the history, it reported on ghostly matters. A resident of No. 1 was reported as saying: "so, in the end, two or three clergymen came. They exorcized the place with prayers and holy water. Now it seems alright. But sometimes I wonder. Certainly the children of my neighbour, Dr. Gray, who has the other end of the house, complained, after the clergy had done their best, that they were no longer tucked up in bed at night by the kind lady".[3] (The 'kind lady' in question was presumably the unfortunate nun who had been bricked in some 400 years previously.)

I have no memory of saying this and, when I asked my sister about it some years ago, she didn't either. But then we are talking about events that supposedly happened almost 70 years ago. On re-reading the family copy of the article, I noticed that my father had annotated the text with the words 'not true'. Once in print, however, fictions have a habit of becoming 'facts', and especially so when they appear in a respectable journal of record, much loved by the landed gentry.

A solid witness?

Parapsychologists, of course, become skilled at sifting through such accounts. In their search for 'reliable' witnesses the testimonies of children, the elderly and the slightly demented are handled with suitable caution. In the case of our neighbour Miss Young, however, they struck gold.

Miss Young was a district nurse of the no-nonsense variety – in short, the perfect witness. She said that she had gone to bed and started to fall asleep when, to her considerable dismay, the blankets had been whipped off her bed. When she reported this the next morning she was clearly quite alarmed. She had no explanation for it and had seen no-one. But she wondered whether it might be the nun; her bedroom was, after all, immediately above the part of the house where the tunnel was located!

A new lease of life

The house was in need of considerable repairs but the Folk Museum lacked the wherewithal. In the early 60s they arranged a long repairing lease on nos. 1 and 2 with a Professor Danckwerts, bankrolled, we believe, by his wife who was heiress to a biscuit manufacturer's fortune. After his death the property was eventually put on the market and sold around the millennium. It was bought for £700,000 by a Buddhist charity who undertook extensive renovations and opened up a 16-man Buddhist community.

Given the sympathy Buddhists are reputed to have for spiritual presences, this may well have been the most satisfactory outcome for the house as well as its longer-standing 'occupants'. Sadly, I have heard no stories of ghosts for a good long time now.

Footnotes

1. If you were to drive down East Road and could continue in a straight line over the roundabout at the junction with Newmarket Road you would land in the house's front garden.

2. The Psychical Research Society was set up in 1882 'to examine without prejudice or pre-possession and in a scientific spirit those faculties of man, real or supposed, which appear to be inexplicable on any generally recognised hypothesis'. Its journal still continues to provide 'a peer-reviewed forum for communication and critical debate'.

3. The house was also exorcised in the 1980s.

A Degree for Teachers: Homerton College 1968-72

David Bridges

The period 1968-72 was a turbulent one for Homerton (and many other teacher education institutions) as it sought to implement the plan signaled in the 1963 Robbins Report for teacher education to be upgraded to a degree level qualification, the BEd, completed as part of a four year educational programme.

The problem for Homerton was that the University of Cambridge had made it clear (albeit by a very slender margin in the vote of the Regent House in 1966) that it did not wish to offer such a degree. This was a huge disappointment not only to Homerton, but to the other regional colleges of education which at that time fell under the accreditation arrangements of the 'Area Training Organisation', the Cambridge Institute of Education. The Cambridge Institute was itself kept firmly at arm's length from the University, unlike all the other Institutes/Area Training Organisations, which had been incorporated into universities.

Happily, the London Institute of Education came to the rescue and all students who had passed at a certain level in their Certificate of Education examinations (at the end of their third year of study) were able to continue to a BEd awarded by London University, taught for the first time in the 1968-69 academic year.

[My own appointment in September 1968 was indeed mainly to teach on the new London BEd programme, and this is when I came onto the scene.]

The London BEd was, however, very firmly what it said on the label. Homerton staff had no part in the design of the fourth year of the course, and indeed the key lectures were given by London Institute staff in London. It was not practical for all our students to travel up to London for the lectures, so we hired a minibus to take a group of 12 or so up to the lectures. These made notes which they then reproduced using a Banda copying machine and distributed to their fellow students. Homerton staff then led seminars on the topics of the lectures, which in my experience often involved explaining all over again the content which had been only half understood. In the Philosophy of Education component, this was not difficult, because both Charles Bailey and myself had studied philosophy at the London Institute and were very familiar with what they were teaching. Indeed, I don't think I had properly understood R.S. Peter's 'transcendental deduction' until I heard Charles Bailey explain it – Charles was a superb teacher. It is a credit to Homerton students' resilience, hard work and determination that they achieved very creditable results in these first BEd years.

This pattern continued for two years, but clearly it was not a very satisfactory way forward. Intense lobbying by friends of Homerton in the University finally led to the Regent House supporting the introduction of a BEd degree in Cambridge, for which teaching began in September 1970.

By no means did this mean that life was now simple.

For a start, to study for a degree of Cambridge University, students had to be members of a constituent college; but Homerton was not a college of the University – it remained a 'direct grant' institution directly funded by the government Department for Education. It was Dame Beryl Paston Brown who persuaded Newnham (a college of which she was a fellow) to make an arrangement under which Homerton students would matriculate as members of Newnham and be presented for their degrees by Newnham, but for every other purpose be the responsibility of Homerton. I think that in the early years of the Cambridge BEd this meant that Homerton students were only members of the University in their fourth year. It was only in 1977 that Homerton became an 'Approved Society', able to present students for a degree in its own name.

If this was a complicated arrangement for Homerton, it was even worse for students of other colleges in the region. Cambridge insisted that all students taking the degree were resident in Cambridge. No problem for Homerton students, but this meant that students from Keswick Hall in Norwich, Bedford PE College and Bedford College of Education, Hockerill, Balls Park, Wall Hall, St Osyth's and Saffron Walden, all had to find a Cambridge College to accept them (and if no one else would, Homerton would take them in) and to take up residence for the year in Cambridge. I remember Homerton gaining some formidable young sports women from Bedford PE, including one who came to see me because she was not sure what to do since she had been invited to play lacrosse for Cambridge University, hockey for England, and also to ride in a three-day event – all in the same weekend. (Not the sort of dilemma with which many of us are faced!) And this was someone who was never late with an essay! For the staff of these colleges it meant losing their students for the final year of their degrees, so, unsurprisingly, they set about finding alternative validation arrangements.

Cambridge could occasionally show a humane and creative side. I recall a mature student from one of the other colleges who had a family living in a house in Watford. The University, in its wisdom agreed to 'deem' something like 15 Station Road Watford (I cannot now vouch for the precise address) 'to lie within the precincts of the University'. Bravo – a wonderful thing 'deeming' – gets you out of all sorts of silly situations.

Then there was the problem of 'the professional degree'. There was a strong opinion that a BEd degree should reflect practical teaching competence as well as appropriate academic capability. In order to protect the 'professional' character of the degree it was determined that a pass in teaching practice (TP) should be a *sine qua non* of the award. For most students this was not a problem, but a small minority left without a degree because they had failed teaching practice even if their academic work was well up to degree standard. The number was very small, partly because as a supervisor of a student, perhaps retaking TP in their final year, one felt under great pressure to secure a pass. I recall one student who finally scraped through on the third attempt (the head teacher of his practice school agreed that he should) but then went, not to a teaching post, but to a post in the Department of Education and Science – a happy outcome!

There was intense debate in Homerton as to the structure of the degree. It was assumed that, for a degree in Education, the final year should include ample provision for the study of Education which in those days meant some combination of Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology and History of Education and, at some point, Foundations of Curriculum Development. But there was also a strong opinion that it did not make sense to arrange the final teaching practice more than a year before students went off to positions in schools. The implication was that there was not time to continue the study of students' Main Subjects (i.e. English, Mathematics, Biology etc.) into the fourth year. In this way, for the most part, Main Subject lecturers lost *their* students in their final year in which they might have hoped to see their most mature work.

Then, there was the question of who was going to teach the courses in Education. Were Homerton staff up to the task? Until Paul Hirst arrived in the Department of Education in 1971, this question was answered rather negatively by the then Head of Department. Professor William Arnold de Gorges Lloyd (to give him his full name), had an extremely condescending view of Homerton staff (of whom he knew nothing) and their suitability as degree level teachers. The University Department was itself thin on specialists in the foundation disciplines, because staff were appointed mainly as specialists in different school subject areas. It began to make good this deficiency through new appointments. One consequence for the Homerton philosophers was that for the first two years of the Cambridge BEd Professor R. S. Peters from the London Institute of Education was enlisted to give the main course of lectures in Philosophy of Education. Charles Bailey, Peter Scrimshaw and I were allowed to give one lecture each and we were to run seminars after Peters' lectures. Peters was already labouring under an overwhelming load of teaching and committee work at the London Institute, which finally brought him to the point of breakdown, but he agreed to do the lectures (in the Mill Lane lecture rooms as I recall) on a Saturday morning at 10.00. My 1970-71 academic diary confirms that the first was on 19th October 1970. After the lecture, Peters would head off promptly for a round of golf at Saffron Walden where he lived, while we ran follow up seminars. The Homerton team were slightly miffed at Peters (who was supervising both Charles' and my PhD) colluding with Cambridge in placing us in this subordinate role, but he insisted that this was the only way to get the BEd ship afloat.

Homerton staff continued to live with condescension from some in the University, some of it embedded in our idiosyncratic institutional setting and the fact, as we were frequently reminded, that with a small number of exceptions we were not 'members of the University'. I remember another member of the philosophy team, Peter Jackson, new to Cambridge, went to the University Library to borrow a book. You would have thought, as he did, that this was not a remarkable expectation, but on trying to leave he was told he could not because he was 'not a member of the University'. He protested that his students could borrow books, so why couldn't he. The exchange (on his own account) became quite heated and he was finally escorted from the building by porters!

But gradually, Homerton staff came to be accepted and respected not just in the Department of Education (where Paul Hirst treated us as valued colleagues) but across the University. I remember a conversation with an old friend, Ken Edwards, who was the Secretary General of the Faculties at the time, about Homerton becoming part of the University. He said that the problem about creating a merged faculty was not so much with Homerton as with the Department of Education, which was poorly regarded – a sentiment later echoed publicly (and shamefully to my mind) by its new Head of Department, David Hargreaves.

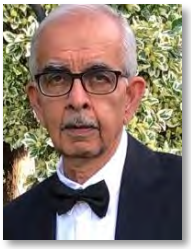
Homerton students too experienced some of this condescension and for some time appeared rather low in the tables of degree classification awarded to the tripos papers taken alongside other undergraduates. But there came a year in the second iteration of the Cambridge BEd [and I wish I could remember when] when the University decided no longer to include a student's college at the top of their submitted exam papers. This was the only change between this year and the previous one – and in this year the grades awarded to Homerton students rose by half a class! Until then Homerton students had received hardly any firsts, a small number of 2:1s, a bulk of 2:2s and 3rds. Following the removal of the college identification, Homerton students received several firsts, a more or less equal number of 2:1s and 2:2s and a small number of 3rds. This change was never explained or indeed commented on officially, though it remained a stable feature of Homerton students' performance.

But to return to the period on which this article is focused: by 1972 we had achieved and taught the first round of a Cambridge BEd degree; Homerton had taken

its first step towards college status as ‘an Approved Society’; our students were (for some of their time at least) ‘members of the University’; and they received a Cambridge degree.

But much remained to do. The first part of the four-year course still fell outside the auspices of the University and so, for this period, did our students. Unlike their colleagues in the Department of Education, Homerton staff were not (for the most part) members of the University, nor did they enjoy the privileges attached to such membership. (This had implications too for expectations that their role required research activity and outputs – something which became increasingly significant at a later stage, when consideration turned to a possible merger of Homerton with the Department of Education.) Nationally, the requirements that had dominated early discussion of the BEd for it to demonstrate the degree level academic character of its courses were being overtaken by demands for its professional relevance to the practical task of teaching, and the requirement for teaching staff to demonstrate through ‘recent and relevant’ school experience, their capacity to provide this kind of training. This was a requirement which would lead over the next decades to: an increasing role for schools in the provision of teacher training; a corresponding reduction in the role of the universities and, finally, the disappearance of the BEd as a form of the professional education of teachers. But that is all another story!

Clearly, you could not stand still for very long if you were in teacher education in the second half of the twentieth century!



Dhiru Karia
… in conversation with …

Anne Thwaites

In early May, Dhiru gave up his lunchtime to have a conversation about his career. It is important to note that this meeting had taken some time to arrange because Dhiru is a busy man – more of that anon.

We started talking about his early life. His father left India in his early 20s to start a new life in Uganda. Originally, he had thought he would build a career in the railways but once he was in Uganda started working in a tea plantation. He was ambitious and ended up as a plantation manager in Kakonde. He returned to India for his marriage and his wife eventually joined him in Uganda during WWII. They had four boys – Dhiru being the youngest. Later in his working life, Dhiru’s father started a business with a printing press and as a major seller of schoolbooks. This was in a small town called Mbarara, which had an army barracks, and a few schools run by Christian church organisations and others run by the government.

Once Dhiru had completed his schooling in Uganda he worked for his father before he was encouraged to spread his wings. In 1970, at the age of 22, he moved to the UK to enrol at Cambridge College of Advanced Technology (CCAT) to work for a Diploma in Business Studies, and able to take his A level exams at the same time. One of his brothers was studying in Cambridge too, so it become a home when the family were deported from Uganda under General Amin’s dictatorship. Then followed time qualifying in Accountancy and Business Administration at Moorgate, City University. He sought an articleship with city firms. One enquiry was to what he thought was an accountancy firm but he learnt that a ‘Turf Accountant’ was a rather different type of accountant! His search was successful, working in London and Croydon, although finding anywhere to live was difficult. Racism was rife with ‘No black – no browns’ signs on doors of properties to let. He took on various part time jobs to supplement his income including being a Christmas postman.

In 1972, the horrific expulsion of the Asian community from Uganda occurred. Dhiru’s parents suffered very badly before they managed to get to England - one of many families who went from ‘riches to rags’. They came to Cambridge to be with their family, but this was a very difficult time for them – they had lost everything. It wasn’t just their home and possessions, it was his father’s career, their standing in society, their social life. In order to help, Dhiru managed to get a job/articleship transfer to an accountancy firm in Cambridge. Neither of his parents lived for very long in this country, never having settled here properly and refusing to accept government benefits.

The firm that Dhiru was working for, audited the accounts of about twenty of the Colleges in Cambridge. The very first college where Dhiru was part of the auditing team was Kings. He didn’t find things had been done in the ‘normal’ way, but he was told firmly that this was how it was done there … One of the other colleges was Homerton. In 1984 a vacancy for Finance Officer was advertised at Homerton and following an interview

with the Principal, Alison Shrubsole, her deputy, Hilary Shuard, and the bursar, George Hubbard, he was appointed. This was a shrewd career move but others were quick to comment that he was 'game keeper turned poacher'. There had been an internal candidate for the role, and it wasn't an easy start.

When Dhiru joined Homerton, the College was funded by a direct grant from the Department of Education as a Teachers' Training College. The annual grant had to be spent in that year and there were penalties for both deficits and surpluses. The College was not allowed or encouraged to generate income through conferences or other commercially viable ventures. So, although Homerton was not bound by the traditions of the long-established Cambridge colleges, the accounts had to be compliant with government requirements. These included a full set of accounts and a balance sheet which revalued buildings and any investments – very different from other colleges! Dhiru says that his success as a Finance Officer at Homerton is all attributed to good leadership by the three Principals and the three Bursars under whom he served and who gave him freedom to manage college finances. He is most appreciative of the support he received from Jim Morris, his deputy, and the rest of the Finance team who worked as a unit, supported by the Bursar. Their single aim was to expand and prosper as any other Cambridge College…with an Endowment!!

Over a period of time, the funding had come from different sources – the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), the Polytechnic and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC) and ultimately the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). Initially all the accounting was on a manual system – pay slips were written by hand on carbon duplicates showing an individual's pension, tax and National Insurance deductions. All accounts, cash book, purchase and sales ledgers were manually produced, as were the year-end accounts. However major changes were coming. Firstly, all the accounting systems were computerised – this was at the time that Jim Morris (now the Finance Officer) was appointed (1991), then a young man bringing with him many timely skills. Secondly under PCFC, a group of teacher training colleges (including Homerton) made representations to Department of Education and Science (DES)/PCFC to enable these colleges to generate external income.

Dhiru recalls some lively debates in the 1980s with Sylvia Williams (appointed in 1964) and David Bridges (appointed in 1967) who were instrumental in raising income from self-funding and Inservice Training (INSET) courses. Amongst these were Cambridge Overseas Development Education (CODE) and Homerton Inset and Vocational Education (HIVE), self-balancing projects where any surplus went to College. Ultimately a new company, Colophon Ltd, was set up which managed all commercial activities. In 1991, Kate Pretty came to Homerton as Principal and, a year later, Tim Everton as vice Principal. The target of growing an endowment to enable Homerton to be considered as a full college of the University was firmly in place.

Support staff were accustomed to clocking in and out. Sylvia Williams introduced the use of Excel to monitor the number of teaching hours each member of teaching staff was doing. The use of rooms was scrutinised and time tabled, and all departments were under the spotlight. Dhiru remembers that he and Sylvia were not very popular at this time. Another major change came with the decision to utilise the teaching rooms and accommodation for conferences – the catering and housekeeping staff had worked in term time only, but that was all to change!

There was further diversification: the Principal, Kate Pretty, and Gale Bryan the new Bursar (who joined Homerton in 1993) were backing the College tendering for the training of nurses at Homerton. Dhiru remembers that the School of Health Studies, funded by the NHS, had all the bad habits and non-cost-effective procedures that seem to characterise government funded organisations. He says it was hard work to streamline their financial structures, but it was a success and ultimately contributed to the well needed endowment of the College. It is clear that Dhiru's knowledge of how government departments are under the same strictures (no deficit or surplus at the end of the tax year) has, on occasion, enabled him to be very persuasive with at least one department.

In 1994 Homerton embarked on another innovation with the appointment of two research directors – Prof. Jean Ruddock and Prof. John Gray. Their endeavours not only brought extra income but also made Homerton an active research institution, ultimately contributing to the 'count' in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) for the University. These Research Projects made a reasonable contribution to college overheads – again there was debate about the level of this contribution, primarily between Dhiru and John Gray.

One of many meetings between Dhiru, Jim and John …

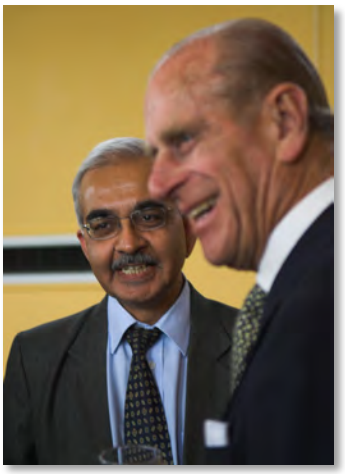
At this point in our conversation, Dhiru was quick to point out that Homerton's fortune really turned with the success of its conference trade and the School of Health Studies (Nurse Education) – where he left his mark! College finance became a successful business, producing substantial surplus from both its conference trade and then the Nursing School, Colophon Ltd and Homerton School of Health Studies (HSHS) Ltd.

Through all of this, the buildings were a major concern. The black and white buildings (the Faculty of Education building was built on part of their footprint) were in a

poor state of repair and the roof of the Victorian buildings needed major work. Dhiru was involved with other officers in negotiations with HEFCE to convince PCFC that demolishing the black and white buildings and building new (the Mary Allen Building) was the best policy. Initially a Priority One Repair Grant was allocated as a part contribution subject to college funding the balance. Many RSMs will remember the fierce debate on whether to sell land to Tesco or Waitrose!!!

Dhiru attributes Homerton's success to all the staff, including the College Trustees, whose final goal was for Homerton to be a well-recognised college within the University of Cambridge and to shine. To do that, the University required an endowment of over £50m – quite a sum. He has compared the accounting data for the period he joined in 1985 and at the time he retired as Finance Officer:

Investment income received:			
1985	£10k	2012	£1,222k
Accom/catering/conference income:			
1985	£59k	2012	£1,105k



Dhiru with the Chancellor, HRH Prince Philip at the official opening of MAB 1997

Dhiru considers himself a very small cog in a big wheel in sharing the achievement of sufficient endowment to gain full college status. Some of the biggest drivers in the College's finance were: income generation through conferences in vacations and utilising the support staff's contribution; maximising VAT recovery on conference trade and major building work and, finally, managing HSHS, the nurse education contract.

In 2013, Dhiru stood down from his role as Finance Officer, at the same time as Kate Pretty and Peter Warner (Senior Tutor) retired. Gale Bryan had retired as Bursar a year earlier and Dhiru felt this was the time for him to 'retire' too. He was delighted to see Jim Morris being appointed in his place. Dhiru says that whilst the work was interesting, challenging and fulfilling, at times it was testing. Regularly he was working a 10-hour day which took a lot out of his family. He is most appreciative that the Principal (Kate Pretty) and the College Fellowship kindly offered him an Emeritus Fellowship.

However, Dhiru was immediately offered a new role in college as Financial Tutor. Over the past ten years or so, he has been helping individual students with any financial concerns. Some may be relatively minor (help with budgeting for example), for others they have been major life changing situations. Some students have suffered the type of catastrophe that Dhiru's family experienced in Uganda. He is given a pot of money to help students by offering means tested grants: his motto is to be fair and firm and he works on trust with the students. He attends the fortnightly tutor meeting when all the tutors, welfare team, porters' representatives and student representatives meet with the Senior Tutor. He has a sense of pride in being able to help.

I asked Dhiru about retirement. With no hesitation, he said that retirement was not part of the culture he was born into. He says that he has never thought about pensions and retirement. He worries that we can become dependent on the state whereas he was brought up expecting to look after his parents and other family members, making the family unit very strong.

At home … at last

I knew that Dhiru has been volunteering with the East Anglia Children's Hospice (EACH) at Milton and the Addenbrookes Charitable Trust. He says that he has cut back a bit on these and U3A work but has been invited to join Papworth Hospital Charity. Somehow, I am not surprised, and it explains why it has been so hard to find time to talk with him!

Anne knew of David's involvement in Homerton's Teacher Training histories and that he had written an article "A Degree for Teachers: Homerton College 1968-72 for this Newsletter. Aware also of David's somewhat encyclopedic knowledge of all that went on in Homerton during his time in post, she decided to send her draft of her conversational piece with Dhiru Karia to check one or two dates. In return, David decided to add a little more on the subject – deserving now of its own standalone piece – a personal account of Homerton in the 1980s.

It seemed fitting that these three articles should (loosely) form a threesome. Thus the third follows … *Libby*

David Bridges continues the account of the 1980s

Until the late 1970s Homerton had, for all practical purposes, a single source of income in the form of the annual grants that it received from government for initial teacher training. But towards the end of the decade government decided that the system required provision for the in-service education and training of teachers (INSETT) funded first directly through the Colleges of Education and then through local education authorities (LEAs) through Grant Related In Service Training (GRIST) and Teacher Related In Service Training (TRIST).

Keen to benefit from this new source of income and to widen the College's engagement with schools and local authorities, Alison Shrubsole appointed me as Director of In Service Education. Courses had to be negotiated with LEAs and schools, and in some cases bid for from regional funds channeled through HMI. Homerton's provision included a programme for: secondary headteachers and deputy heads run by Ray Dalton and Alison Shrubsole; a popular sequence of modern language courses run by Barry Jones, and contributions on multi-cultural education and anti-racist education by Jan Hardy. Sylvia Williams was developing her interest in vocational education and training (prompted not least by government investment in the major Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI)), which was later consolidated in her establishment of Homerton Inset and Vocational Education (HIVE).

The 1980s saw a number of other initiatives which paved the way to the diversification of Homerton's sources of income. I had been part of the research team, led by John Elliott at the Cambridge Institute of Education, in the Cambridge Accountability Project. Following this he pursued a number of opportunities for contract research, bringing in Dave Ebbutt, who had been Senior Research Associate on the Accountability Project, to form the Homerton Education Research and Development Unit in 1985.

This carried out a sequence of contract-based research and evaluation, mainly for regional LEAs. This included: evaluations of the Suffolk and Norfolk GRIST and TRIST programmes; evaluation of the Suffolk Record of Pupil Achievement project, and of the Sainsbury/Suffolk Schools and Industry Project (see these and other reports in Homerton Archives). Dave and I were also members of the Police Training Project directed by Barry MacDonald, Director of the Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) at the University of East Anglia (UEA).

As well as paving the way for future research development when Jean Rudduck and John Gray came to Homerton as Research Directors in Kate Pretty's era, this experience also required new thinking about the financial systems which underpinned this work. As indeed did the ventures in the late eighties into work in international development, in particular in cooperation with Cambridge Education Consultants, a wing of Mott MacDonald Engineering directed by Perran Penrose. It was my visit to Ethiopia in 1986 that led to the Homerton/Kotebe link, directed by Sylvia Williams from 1990, but also to consultancy in Ghana, Guyana, Belize and elsewhere which partly set the scene for Sylvia Williams' establishment of CODE (Cambridge Overseas Development Education).

None of these initiatives of the 1980s generated the kind of surplus that was to be required if Homerton was to become a full college of the University. That would have to await Kate Pretty's arrival, in 1991, and the next decade. But these earlier activities did perhaps open the College to more entrepreneurial thinking – the College was after all grant holder for a £1 million per annum project under the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) Enterprise in Higher Education Programme – and the diversification of its sources of funding, and the development of financial systems that could cope with the requirements of these different income streams and (not without controversy!) the ownership of funding developed in these ways.

The trees which appear in the left hand photo appear again as reflections in the dining hall wall!

My Daughter is an East End Gangster

Chris Doddington

When I was first appointed as a lecturer in Homerton I had been covering for members of the Philosophy team while they took sabbaticals. I covered the teaching of Charles Bailey, David Bridges and Michael Bonnett amongst others. But in 1984, the post I applied for was for a part-time Drama lecturer. With two small children, part-time was just about manageable. I remember Charles being rather taken aback but he encouraged me to apply. I was interviewed by the deputy principal, Hilary Shuard, who again, rather puzzled, asked how I managed to link expertise in both drama and philosophy. I think I probably said something about the Greeks and the work of Aristotle who appreciated and theorised about the significance of drama. In truth, I see both as studies of the human condition and a form of exploration into what it means to lead a meaningful, or even a 'good' life.

My daughter, Laura, was introduced to Homerton from the very beginning when she was 3 years old. She and her brother attended Trish Maude's Saturday morning Gym Club for youngsters and on the occasional days when she was not well enough to go to playschool, she came with me into college – reading or playing quietly in my study up ABC staircase, while I gave supervisions or worked. I have a vivid memory of her dancing along the corridors towards the combination room. I felt a little embarrassed by this unusual exuberance in such sedate surroundings and asked her to calm down a little. I was immediately chided by a grinning Morag Styles who said we needed to dispel the stuffiness in College: as educationalists we should all try dancing along the corridors!

Laura performed from an early age and despite my suggestions to study Theatre Studies at university, which would give her, perhaps a 'safer', more academic career, she was adamant she wanted to act. So, as a compromise she took a degree in acting at Queen Margaret's University in Edinburgh which was an accredited drama school. This meant she left with her Equity Card and a degree. There have been high points in her career. She won the Carlton Hobbs scholarship straight out of university, a six-month contract with the BBC Radio 4 drama department. She has also performed various roles in theatre over the years, including working extensively with Alan Ayckbourn. Her last theatre appearance saw her in a small west end theatre performing in two seldom-produced plays, including an early Caryl Churchill play, *Owners*. Caryl, now in her 80s, came to rehearsals and to see the show twice she enjoyed it so much. After the last performance she told Laura she was 'made for' the main part of 'Marion' in the play.

Of course, I knew a fair bit about theatre work, but I learnt a great deal more through Laura's early career. Professional actors are a breed unto themselves but are usually a joy to spend time with. However, my knowledge about soaps was very thin. I was delighted when I heard she had auditioned and got a part in the long-running TV soap, *Eastenders*. Regular money in her chosen industry is an absolute rarity and this began to feel like her well-deserved, but overdue, acting 'break'.

Laura began filming in August 2024 but only actually appeared on the screen last November. Since then, my awareness and appreciation of the technical production of soaps has helped to dispel my rather snooty thoughts about this form of television. Over 250 cast and crew help to get 4 episodes a week to the screen, there are half a dozen writers and a similar number of directors. They write and direct overlapping, different storylines: each chunk of the writing is known as a 'block' and storylines can be slow-burning or develop swiftly. It must be a mind-blowing, heady process keeping everything on track with good continuity. The actors are faced with considerable demands, often learning lines for the next 'block' while filming an earlier sequence. Each scene is filmed with multiple cameras, the final scene then constructed in the editing suite. For the actors, this means when they shoot the scene, they are most likely to be in some sort of shot, so unlike any other type of filmed drama they have to be 'in the moment' for the whole take. It can be very intense and much like theatre all day long with very little rehearsal!

It appears it all involves a high degree of creative and technical collaboration. There is usually good communication and some influence between actors, directors and writers to make the content of the episodes work. Fight scenes, for example, are impeccably choreographed and unlike some of the quieter exchanges, are carefully rehearsed. But for all the care and effort involved, and unlike theatre fight scenes, they are just performed once and are then 'in the can'.

Although *Eastender* audiences have dwindled from 30 million to an average of 3 - 5 million viewers for a normal episode,[1] it is worth considering why television soaps still have some appeal. Strong features that distinguish the genre from other kinds of drama include its on-going domesticity and local news-sharing – reminiscent perhaps of the timeless interest in 'gossip' across the garden fence. Its roots really lie in melodrama and 'kitchen-sink' drama with a sprinkling of comedy. Yet soaps also serve to shed light on the human condition

and other ways of living and can be used directly to try to educate or cover health issues.[2] In the case of *Eastenders*, the BBC seems proud to enlighten us and humanise current issues that can arise in a resolutely diverse, working-class community. Themes covered include crime, poverty, gender identity, and race as well as the universal joys and tragedies that beset humanity more generally, such as friendship, celebrations, illness, loss or betrayal. The programme has been likened to the serialised release of sections of Dicken's novels, with his evocation of social issues and tantalising 'cliff-hangers'.[3]

However, today's soaps demand a heightened increase in driving up tensions as they compete with the costly, high production values and casual availability of streamed entertainment. There are those who will find some events excessive, and you need to suspend disbelief at times. Nevertheless, as with all the main stage parts Laura has taken on since she began her career, I do watch my daughter. The character she plays echoes the cliché of an East End matriarch. She is quick with her scathing, one-liner put-downs and is fiercely passionate about protecting her two sons – her 'family' at all costs. The character is indeed a gangster but can also be seen as being in a long line of feisty and vengeful women from history and fiction, stretching maybe from Boudica to Lady Macbeth. Her ability to bring a persona so far from her own, to life on screen, impresses me. But it is taking me a little time to get used to this strange world and new relationship to her. I must admit, I still get a jolt when I switch onto BBC iPlayer and see, amongst everything else on view, my daughter's face staring out at me advertising an episode of Eastenders. With such regular viewing, it is easy to see how viewers begin to invest in the characters' lives on screen. After the first few weeks of having this rather brash, dangerous and devious woman beamed regularly into our living room, I asked Laura if she would meet me at King's Cross. Much as I had enjoyed and appreciated her performance, I just needed to put my arms around her and hold her tight. I realised that, basically, I had to bodily reclaim my own daughter from this, all too vivid, screen version!

'Gangster' Laura and Mother!

Footnotes

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EastEnders
2. https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA550300526&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=01444646&p=AONE&sw=w&userGroupName=anon%7E9940e3cd&aty=open-web-entry
3. https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/features/tony-jordan-i-turned-down-the-chance-to-research-charles-dickens-for-a-tv-series-nine-times-then-i-found-a-kindred-spirit-9695398.html

Acknowledgement

This article is published here for RSMA Newsletter readers with kind permission from the BBC '*Eastenders*' management team

'The Proof is in the Pudding'

At the very start of this year's Principal's Message, Simon writes about his pleasure at seeing us around the College at various events. In return, I would like to say that it is always a delight to see Simon dropping by, whenever he can, when we are in College for that cup of coffee, or event that forms part of our 'social' programme.

The proof of this lies in the accompanying photograph – Simon adding his own thoughts about Homerton during Kate Pretty's RSM's talk earlier this year. *Libby*

A Weekend on the Kent Coast

Philip Rundall

It was on a Friday morning in March that we sped down the M11, the sun shining, the sky blue and not a cloud in sight. The air was cool, coats still required, but this mattered not a jot, we were on our way to the seaside!

Dover until now had been a place we merely passed through to reach a ferry, usually at night, but Patti had been invited to give a talk in Deal after a Sunday showing of *Tigers*, a movie she was involved in some years ago, produced by Andy Patterson, the producer behind many major films including *Girl with a Pearl Earring* and *Hilary & Jackie*. The weather being lovely, we decided to make a weekend of it, and to explore Dover before moving on to Deal, a place totally new to us.

The trip down was remarkably easy with no hold-ups, and we soon found the Best Western Hotel right on the sea front at Dover. We had a nice room with the largest and clearest TV we've ever had in a hotel, and the price was very reasonable. We found the town centre uninspiring, but we did enjoy walking along the sea front towards the ferry port. We crossed the road to a narrow street lined with houses on one side, backed by small gardens directly beneath the White Cliffs of Dover, something that must take a bit of getting used to!

Rooms with a View?

We passed The First & Last pub (the last pub in the 'civilised' world). At the end of the street we discovered the Dame Vera Lynn Way footpath that takes you up to the top of the cliffs, cared for by the National Trust. We passed a car park and nearby found a tea room, where we stopped for a break. There are several walks along the cliffs at different levels. The views are wonderful. There in the distance we could just see the white cliffs in France.

On Saturday morning we drove up to Dover Castle (an English Heritage property). We spent the morning exploring a place where you could easily spend a whole day. I had seen a TV programme about the castle a while ago, and so was keen to visit it.

The castle is not the first structure to be built there, and it is thought that there may well have been an Iron Age hill fort on the site before the Roman invasion. The Romans built a lighthouse there, which still stands. The Saxons built a church and added some fortifications. After the Battle of Hastings, the defences were strengthened by the Normans. In the 1180s Henry II remodelled the castle and created the large tower, making it a palace fit to entertain and accommodate important visitors. King John and later Henry III continued to develop the castle and completed further rings of defence. In 1216-17 these defences were twice put to the test when Dover was put under siege by the French. From the 1740s onwards the banks and ditches were reshaped in line with developments in artillery warfare.

During the Second World War it became the HQ for the Admiralty's regional command, and it was where Vice-Admiral Bertram Ramsay organized Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk in 1940. The castle has been a military garrison continuously from the Middle Ages until 1958, longer than any other castle in the British Isles.

One thing I had learnt from the TV programme was that hidden beneath the white cliffs lies a network of tunnels. These were first excavated over 200 years ago when the country was threatened by a French invasion and money was poured into fortifying both Dover and its castle. The tunnels were dug to provide barracks for the thousand troops stationed there. There was a precedent for this as tunnels were first dug beneath the castle during the French siege in 1216, and afterwards underground passages were excavated to reinforce the northern defences. The history of the castle is long, complicated and fascinating.

The first thing we did when we arrived was to book in for a tour of the tunnels. We walked from the visitor centre to the tunnels' entrance via the flat area above the cliffs where the statue of Admiral Sir Bertram Home Ramsay, mentioned earlier, stands on the site of the 19th century garrison hospital. The surviving structure here was based on Hospital Battery, one of four batteries of heavy guns added to the seaward side of the castle. In 1905 the battery was converted into a Fire Command Post to

monitor naval movements in the Channel, In 1914, the Admiralty extended the structure with an upper floor to create the Port War Signal Station, from where ship movements in the harbour were controlled. The concrete platform above the station was added in 1941 to protect the building from aerial attack. From this platform we had splendid views of the ferry port below, and to our right, our hotel far away in the distance. The information display boards up on the platform included reproductions of drawings made in the interior of the Fire Command Post by the war artist Anthony Gross in 1941. It was wonderful to see one of them with even the French white cliffs represented on the horizon!

During the First World War the garrison in Dover increased to around 16,000 troops, the HQ still based in the castle. On 21st December 1914 the first recorded German bombing raid on Britain took place, the bomb landing not far away from the harbour. This led to Dover being one of the first towns to be equipped with anti-aircraft guns and searchlights.

During the Second World War Dover and the castle were in the front line with German occupied France just 22 miles away. When Patti and I joined the Tunnels tour we saw a large projection of a photo of Hermann Goering with a long line of senior German officers looking across the Straits of Dover, the cliffs clearly visible in the distance. Chilling.

The tour was excellent with a guide and lots of audio-visual material, projections on the white carved out walls, rooms furnished, in what was a perfect, safe environment to establish war time command posts. It was to here that Rear-Admiral Ramsay was recalled from retirement to re-activate the Dover command. He played a pivotal role in organizing the Dunkirk evacuation and then later, the allied landings in North Africa and Sicily. He also masterminded Operation Neptune, the naval side of the D-Day landings. (Quite extraordinary what a retiree can get up to!)

Out in the sunshine again we walked away from the cliffs towards the Great Tower, passing through Colton's Gate, an octagonal gate-tower thought to date from the early 13th century. To our right we could see the Roman lighthouse and St Mary in Castro, the Anglo-Saxon church. This area is the site of the original medieval castle, which pre-dates Henry II's work and is surrounded by a 13th century earth bank. We did not explore this area but proceeded straight towards the curtain walls and towers of the inner bailey, the strongly defended gateway facing us with the massive keep beyond. The inner bailey has 14 rectangular towers dating back to the 1180s. The walls were built of rubble masonry and faced in Kentish ragstone, with fine dressings of cut Caen stone, a light-yellow limestone from Normandy, much of it having been replaced in later repair work.

We only had time to explore The Great Tower, built by Henry II in the 1180s. It is massive. The original surface has been patched and refaced many times and for a long period was covered with render until late in the 19th century. Most of the windows have been recut and relined, some greatly altered in the process. There are four storeys, although there are only three with interiors, the fourth being a dummy, which screens a countersunk roof. Climbing up the stairs to the entrance we found a decorated lower chapel, which opens off the lower vestibule. In 2007 English Heritage made the decision to present the interior of the keep as if Henry II and his court were in residence, so we enjoyed a fully conceived evocation of a 12th century palace, something we had not expected at all.

English Heritage's Sumptuous (new) Interior

As few furnishings from the period survive, all had to be made based on surviving examples or on manuscript illustrations. The wall decorations had to be hangings rather than painted murals and many small objects had to be commissioned, most based on contemporary evidence. The result is very impressive and relieves the austerity of the stone interior. We made our way through the many rooms and halls, large and small. In one small room we could look straight down the brightly lit 122 metre well excavated into the chalk. This was quite something! We loved the richly decorated Chapel of Thomas Becket. Eventually we climbed the stairs up to the roof from which we gazed in all directions. We then descended many steps to the huge kitchen area packed with cooking pots, bread ovens and more. We could have spent all day at the castle, but we wanted to move on to Deal, so left before lunchtime!

We had never been to Deal before and soon after the invitation to visit had arrived, the town cropped up in the TV crime series *Unforgotten*, and it looked rather nice. It did not disappoint!

We stayed at The Royal Hotel which is right next to the beach and close to the attractive modern pier. We discovered that Nelson had made use of the hotel, when he made it his headquarters during preparations for what turned out to be a disastrous attack on Boulogne Harbour. Despite this, he continued to stay there for a few weeks

and was joined there by both Emma Hamilton and her husband. Our room on the third floor, was not one of the two rooms used by the trio, but I should perhaps record that the TV in ours was a fraction of the size of the one in Dover, and colour-wise a bit off, the Welsh rugby team appearing to be wearing pink rather than red. However, despite this, we were very happy with our room.

The only real fly in the ointment over the weekend was the fact that one of my hearing aids packed up, so my ability to understand what was being said was severely tested. However, the sunshine and blue sky encouraged us to explore beyond the hotel. Deal is a pretty town that stretches alongside the pebble beach, the houses attractive, many painted white. The place felt airy and clean. Every so often we found useful information signs that provide historical background. For example, one informed us that the High Street had been an area that at one time was not built on at all as it was regularly flooded. Eventually it was reclaimed from the impact of the sea and the town spread. From the High Street we walked along Victoria Road, that also runs parallel to the sea, a road with some very attractive houses in it. At one time there was a shipyard on the seaward side. The Time Bell Tower, hidden from view from Victoria Road, is the only remaining evidence of its existence. At the end of Victoria Road is Deal Castle Road, where we turned left towards the sea, the castle on the right. We decided to give this Tudor artillery fort a miss and to visit Walmer Castle instead the next day.

Despite having a portion of chips while out on this afternoon walk, we returned to the hotel where we had an excellent dinner. After Sunday breakfast we walked to the end of the pier, discovering a cafe and lots of people fishing from a platform below. It was a relief to walk down a pier that is not full of stalls selling trash, and to stand above the shimmering sea and look back at the pretty town. It was delightful.

We were finally drawn back to the Time Bell Tower which was closed to visitors, although a man inside noticed us and kindly came out to chat.

Distant View of English Heritages's Walmer Castle looking down the Long Borders from the Lower Terrace

Later we drove to Walmer Castle and Gardens, adjacent to Deal, one of the three coastal forts in East Kent created by Henry VIII in 1539-40. It was built to guard the Downs anchorage, offshore from Deal, and the long beach between Kingsdown and Sandown, vulnerable to landings. It is another English Heritage property and well worth visiting. I never knew until making this visit that the Duke of Wellington died there; his room is furnished as it was at the time of his death. I was intrigued by this as I discovered only a few years ago that he was the godfather of one of my ancestors, most of whom were in the military in India, as was the great man long before he became famous.

Back in Deal the showing of *Tigers* went well and I got to hear the questions after Patti's talk, having walked back into town for more chips! I am amazed how she can still hold an audience's attention and again I was struck by the welcome we received from the people of Deal. Sitting in the car afterwards we looked at each other and in unison said, "Let's go back to The Royal Hotel and have a meal!" Thus ended a lovely weekend.

Panoramic View of Deal from its Pier

Tower Tales (Three)

Somehow, the 'seagull' photo on the front cover of last year's Newsletter has miraculously generated not one but two short further articles for this Newsletter. Elsewhere (on p.17) you will see a return of the gulls, but here it is The Tower which takes centre stage (but not in the photo)! Several RSMs mentioned it, mainly in terms of how it is now 'out of bounds' but there are clearly a few tales to tell. To begin the search for such tales I sent an email seeking them out in written form.

The tales may continue next year …… but for the time being here are three. The first and by far the longest is by Geoff Ward, Principal Emeritus, who most impressively managed to send it within about two hours of my asking.

Next year? It seems that '*I need to talk to Kevin'*. According to the second and third messages below, Kevin may well have a tale to tell. There could also possibly be a further promised tale from an RSM who has been unable to meet this year's deadline. Any further tales would be most welcome … *Libby*

From Geoff Ward

Thank you for mentioning The Tower, which brings back some vivid Homerton memories. When I was not long in post, probably sometime in 2013, I asked the then Director of Estates to accompany me on a climb. It was quite unsafe in places and I had to proceed with the utmost care, but I was keen to do it. From memory it is a hexagonal or octagonal room, with stained glass windows. These are not works of artistry, but they are of differently coloured glass which creates a constant play of light and shadow as clouds go about their business overhead. It was very atmospheric and the fact of being at what was then the tallest point on the College's grounds set thoughts moving.

My own inclination was to propose that a camera obscura be installed. Anyone who has seen one of the greatest British films, Powell and Pressburger's *A Matter of Life and Death,* will remember the actor Roger Livesey tilting the glass disc set in a round table to capture different views of the surrounding landscape and human scene. At a later point I broached this to Richard Hickman who introduced me to an artist friend of his, Issam Kourbaj, who thought it perfectly possible.

I did not proceed because we had major and much more important Estates projects on the go throughout my period in office, culminating in the New Dining Hall. (I have also stood on the highest point of that building but will save those thoughts for another occasion.) I was also reluctant to propose to the Fellowship a project which some might well have considered a Principal's Folly. We had a mass of more important changes to introduce and I wanted to keep the Governing Body with me. Lastly, and this would still be a consideration now, I am not sure that the Tower could be made useful in any new way that could guarantee complete physical safety.

If you go back to the original architect's drawings for the never quite completed late Victorian Homerton, it was one of two towers. We built some consideration of this into our discussions with Feilden Fowles while designing the new Dining Hall. After all, the life of the College goes on, in every sense, on many levels.

From Richard Hickman

Regarding the Tower, I haven't much more to add [to Geoff's message]. I have been up there a few times, including the occasion with Geoff when we discussed the idea of a camera obscura (suggested by Issam Kourbaj). I have actually been on the very top of the tower (you need to go up some additional ladders) and could just about see Ely cathedral. It had an old fireplace and was clearly someone's study, complete with clothes hooks. The redundant water tank is on the floor below. It's a desirable space and I spent 25 years trying to get successive bursars and estate managers to renovate it! The person who knows most about it is Kevin from Estates …

From Philip Stephenson

My only rooftop story about the Great Hall is that in 1999, one of the Blaggards shinned up to the apex of the roof and put a Blaggards tie around the neck of the griffin on the pinnacle. It was there for a couple of years before the estates manager sent Kevin up there to take it down!!!

Yes! There is definitely a need to talk to Kevin. (Ed.)

Missed the deadline?
Why not write an article for the next RSMA Newsletter?

The History of the Horn: a mystery revealed

Kate Pretty

On 5th September 1991 at 11.00am, very soon after I arrived at Homerton as Principal, I had a visit from Pauline Curtis, Keeper of the Homerton Roll, and one of her committee members, Ann Muston, who had been very active in the Homerton Boat Club. Their errand was mysterious. They had been charged with delivering an astonishing artefact, now known as the Homerton Horn, which was a gift to the College from an anonymous donor or donors. I was asked to formally accept it for the College and to promise to use it on suitable occasions, whenever the College was dining formally at matriculation or graduation dinners, and at feasts. In a special wooden box were the instructions for use and the formulae to be used in toasting which were Anglo-Saxon. My own College, New Hall, had a loving cup, used with a Latin formula, so I had a little experience of the process and I was delighted to introduce the Horn at Homerton. I didn't press Pauline and Ann to reveal the donor and assumed (wrongly) that the donors were members of the Roll and that the Boat Club might be involved. It just added to the fun. Both Pauline and Ann are now close friends and somehow the issue was never raised again in the last 25 years.

The horn in its home cabinet in the Griffin Bar with the motto (see later) inscribed on the glass door "FRID AND FREONDSCIP SIE DE"

We used the Horn a lot in the years before Covid. Not everyone enjoyed it and quite a lot of senior members, and later the Fellows, felt it was deeply insanitary and perhaps too medieval in concept for a non-conformist institution. But the undergraduates loved it and its use at matriculation, particularly when we were back dining in the old Hall, fitted their feeling of entering the once-medieval world of Cambridge. Huge queues would develop at the dinners as each new student went through the routine. In years when we needed to take special care, when for instance swine-flu threatened, we taught the students to use the formulae while drinking from their own glasses, bowing to each other and greeting each person in friendship.

In recent years the Horn has lived in the Griffin Bar and is only used at matriculation. Most Fellows have never seen or used it – which is a shame given the care with which it was created by its original donor.

For yes, his name can now be revealed....

In February this year we heard of the death of Dr Grahame Miles, formerly a Lecturer in Religious Education at Homerton, until he retired in 1996. As an undergraduate he had read Geography and then Theology at Corpus Christi where he had been a choral scholar. Shortly after his death Pauline came to deliver a package with which she had been entrusted by Grahame at the time of the Horn's donation. She had promised him that its contents would not be revealed until after his death when the package and its contents should be deposited in the College Archive.

Grahame had not asked to remain anonymous after his death and, after checking with his sons, we have decided to break his cover and as far as possible tell the story of his commissioning of the Horn and to honour him for his gift.

The papers reveal a characteristic, quirky correspondence partly with his old College, Corpus, and partly with the craftsmen making the Horn. Through it all he went to enormous lengths not to draw attention to himself although in the end quite a lot of people needed to be involved in the secret. Some of the exchanges were by phone but most are letters painstakingly typed with all Grahame's habitual care about protocol. For he wanted to do things properly and to have his ideas approved and indeed sanctioned.

The earliest letter is dated 28th March 1991 and is a follow-up to a phone call Grahame had had with the President of Corpus Christi, Sir Barry Cross. (The Master, Michael McCrum, was not to know about this for political reasons related to his Chairmanship of the Faculty of Education which, in Grahame's eyes, made him too close to any action at Homerton and possibly to

Grahame's identity as a donor.) In his letter to Sir Barry he introduces himself, saying 'a series of events over the last thirty years have led to the idea of a "Dame Beryl Loving Cup" loosely based on the idea of the Corpus Goldcorne Horn.'

The Goldcorne Horn, called the Great Horn is possibly an aurochs horn and is discussed in detail in Oliver Rackham's Treasures of Silver at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge[1] and also by Alexander and Binski in their catalogue The Age of Chivalry[2]. The Corpus horn and one at Queen's College, Oxford both predate 1349 and are described as Wassail horns. At Corpus the horn was used 'at high table for feasts and at the degree day lunch, when each undergraduate drinks from it before taking his (sic) degree'. Grahame would have done so as an undergraduate and indeed I've drunk from it myself when a guest at High Table. Oliver Rackham describes it as 'the oldest and most romantic treasure of either Oxford or Cambridge' and, as an archaeologist, I have to agree.

Clearly Grahame wanted us to have something romantic of our own. He wrote to Barry Cross, using what he described as 'the royal we' and associating his wife Barbara with the gift in an attempt to cover his tracks, but really the inspiration was purely Grahame's from beginning to end. He goes on to explain to Sir Barry why he wanted an Anglo-Saxon formula which was to be a tribute to Dame Beryl who was herself an Anglo-Saxon scholar:

> "This little ceremony we hope recognizes the scholarship, compassion, dignity, sense of fun, sense of corporate identity and sense of the classroom which are characteristics Dame Beryl shared with her two successors. Conjoined with the Corpus ceremony it should be fun."

Again covering his tracks, Grahame goes on to say that he had obtained Pauline Curtis' approval to introduce "the idea of a loving cup" at the Homerton Roll Dinner due to be held on 26th August at Homerton. Pauline didn't quite know what she was approving but the date indicates some pressure to get the idea accepted and the horn commissioned and made within five months between the March letters asking permission to copy the idea of the Corpus horn and its first use in Homerton in late August.

He had already contacted the only horn works in Britain (est. 1749) where his contact was Paul Cleasby of Abbey Horn of Lakeland who had selected a suitable horn. (Pauline had pointed out to Grahame that the horn should not be too massive because so many of the Homerton students were female.) A year later Grahame sent Paul a picture of the completed Horn with a letter of thanks for his work in choosing the horn and an injunction:

> "Please forever conceal my identity! You can display or advertise using the horn as much as you like: just keep my name out of it!"

In this first letter to Barry Cross Grahame asked for "The Master to smile acceptance" and welcomed Sir Barry's advice to consult Oliver Rackham on the design and Ray Page to look over the Anglo-Saxon wording to check on the characters and the pronunciation. Both Oliver and Ray were Fellows of Corpus.

Grahame had it all worked out. The Corpus contingent, Cross, McCrum, Page and Rackham, would be invited to the August dinner where "there will be no members of the College staff or the Trustees in attendance nor will the Clerk to the Trustees get to know of this gift." The idea seems to have been that Sir Barry Cross would present the Horn to the College as a gift in recognition of the work of the three distinguished Principals concerned with the successful incorporation of Homerton within the University (as an Approved Society). Grahame adds "You could end with a throwaway comment that while it is officially called the Incorporation Loving Cup (purposely horrid name!) you know that it will always be known affectionately as 'the Dame Beryl loving cup'".

As we know now it isn't and has always been known as the Homerton Horn.

As we can see, this was all getting very elaborate and just three days later Grahame wrote again to decline a meeting with Oliver Rackham and Ray Page because of Michael McCrum's tenancy of the Faculty Chairmanship and said that instead he is consulting the Fitzwilliam Museum and 'a middle English expert' (the archaeologist Audrey Meaney). Moreover, to preserve his anonymity he won't be at the dinner.

Heaven knows what Barry Cross made of all this. I knew Oliver, Ray and Michael well and I think they would have enjoyed the whole thing. Grahame clearly admired the Master, Michael McCrum, very much and in his original design the horn was to have had a lid, inscribed with Michael and Christine McCrum's names, which would be made later and added to the Horn as a tribute to Michael when he finally stepped down as Chair of the Faculty of Education. This idea seems to have got lost as impractical and indeed the Horn's current design has a slightly everted rounded lip which wouldn't easily permit a lid to be used.

Two weeks later in a final letter to Barry Cross he seems to have abandoned naming the cup and deals more generously with Dame Beryl's successors, Alison Shrubsole and Alan Bamford who are also named on the Horn. After that there are no further references to any contact with Corpus, no more attempts to draw them into the conspiracy to suggest that Corpus, not Grahame, had been involved with the gift.

I knew nothing of this early part of the Horn's history. When I talked to Pauline recently, she remembered discussing the Horn with Grahame but nothing about a grand unveiling at the Roll Reunion Dinner. I now know why she was so hazy about that particular memory and will return to it later.

Meanwhile the design and commissioning of the Horn were well underway. Grahame had contacted A.F. Kelly –Tony Kelly, a silversmith working in Kendal in the Lakes, and had sent him drawings and photographs of both the Corpus and Queens, Oxford horns. Tony's original drawing, dated March 1991, shows his first design with spectacular splayed birds' feet for the legs and an elongated finial at the tip possibly inset with an

en cabochon coloured gem. This version has a lid, surmounted with a pelican plucking her breast feathers and has three bands of decoration, one under the rim, another on the band supporting the feet and a third towards the tip of the horn above the finial.

In a long reply dated 28th April 1991, two weeks after his last letter to Barry Cross, Grahame replies to this design in detail: “I have now consulted all the people I need to consult – these discussions concluded a few moments ago.”

Grahame's notes on the March sketch reveal how his thinking has changed over the ensuing month. He is firm that the design of the Cup, as he calls it, should be that “it has no traces of the Corpus cup about it” and goes on to deal with the idea of a lid, saying “keep it in cold store – I may want to revive it in four years’ time.” That meant that the words WES HAEL would be on the cup and not on the lid as in Tony's original design. This request for difference from Corpus makes me wonder whether he had had some sort of rebuff from Corpus at this point.

The letter is effectively the commissioning document for the Horn. It agrees on the materials – firstly the horn itself which, as we have heard, needed to be a bit smaller than Tony's first choice, to suit female hands, then the sterling silver lining with the interior silver-gilt and the external bands and crests all in sterling silver.

Grahame goes on to discuss the design – the slightly everted lip, the bands of decoration below it and on the band supporting the feet which were to bear the greeting WES HAEL and the motto or response FRID AND FREONDSCIP SIE DE. The birds’ feet of the original design were rejected and also the bejewelled finial in favour of simple pillared feet and a flattened finial, to be shaped like a griffin although eventually it was shaped like a book, a glancing reference to the books on the Homerton crest. On the breast of the horn itself were four shields, one bearing the College crest and the others named for each of my predecessors:

Dame Beryl Paston-Brown DBE
Alison Shrubsole CBE and
Alan Bamford CBE

Note the band, one pillared foot and the open book finial

After some discussion about costs and estimates, there are elaborate arrangements for a possible meeting with Tony and Paul, who was providing the actual horn, and, as usual, much emphasis on secrecy. Grahame could be rung at any time, but preferably at home in the evening. If a message had to be left at College “the only message you should leave me is to ring you: no content please. Remember the matter is highly confidential” … and he asked for Tony's drawings with his annotations to be returned to him in due course, which is why they have survived.

Tony Kelly wrote back on 15th May with a second coloured draft of the design, and the remark “I feel that the overall effect is rather pleasing” commenting that Grahame might like to consider an option of using silver-gilt throughout “which is the norm for such horns” though he notes that Grahame “wants the Homerton Horn to be different.” He also comments that it would make cleaning easier and urges a final decision as “time is beginning to press.”

Grahame responds in a handwritten letter on 18th May 1991, returning Tony's drawing and more or less handing the final decisions to Tony. He thought the design was “quite magnificent” but didn't like the finial nor the decorative band near to it. By this time the greeting had been demoted from the collar to the band supporting the legs which he and Pauline thought should be more upright. The longer motto now forms the collar below the rim. He outlines his idea of making the finial into a book.

His final letter to Tony, as late as 7th July 1991 confirms the names and 'civic honours' of the three principals and the wording for the Anglo-Saxon lettering together with details of how to contact Audrey Meaney about the script to be used.

And after that the file is empty save for a couple of rough road journey plans, familiar in the days before Satnav, to and from Kendal, presumably in preparation for collecting the Horn in person. In his earlier letter Tony

says “I look forward to meeting you in person sometime, hopefully at least at the handing over of "the Beast".” Alas there is no record of that meeting when Tony could have encountered that flaming enthusiasm so familiar to all of us who worked with Grahame.

And alas, the grand dinner never took place. An explanation comes from the Roll News of 1991-2. Following a disappointing turnout for the Reunion Dinner of 1990 and an equally disappointing response to an invitation for August 1991 the event was dropped and replaced by a barbeque held at Ann Muston's house in late August. Hardly the grand occasion to introduce the Horn.

The same Roll News carries a picture of the Horn together with an explanation that it was to celebrate the College's entry to the University during the time of the last three Principals. It was further explained that the horn itself is African in origin and “will help us remember that Alison Shrubsole held her first post as Principal of an African college. The inscription and greeting is in English and recognizes that Dame Beryl had been an English don at Newnham. The English selected was Old English because Alan Bamford had been Principal of Westhill College in multi-cultural Birmingham” (Roll News 1991-2).

I feel that this rather bland explanation does little justice to Grahame's wonderful gift and I am sad that he never got to explain and celebrate his attachment to both his colleges, Corpus and Homerton. I would have liked very much to salute him at a dinner in the Hall and to take him through the ritual he laid down for its use.

Let us imagine such an event …

Kate holding the Horn bows to Grahame

Grahame bows to Kate

Kate says the greeting WES HAEL
meaning may you be whole, be healthy, be fortunate

Grahame responds FRID AND FREONDSCIP SIE DE
meaning Peace and friendship to you

Kate passes the Horn to Grahame

Grahame drinks and wipes the lip with a napkin and bows again to Kate who bows once more
before Grahame turns again, to greet, in turn, the next Fellow in line

The sentiment in 1991 and Lord Woolley's emphasis on friendship now show how much can be shared across the generations. I hope that we can use the Horn more and in doing so can implicitly or explicitly drink a toast to Grahame's memory as well as to each other.

References

1. Rackham, O. (2002) Treasures of Silver at Corpus Christi, Cambridge

2. Alexander, J. & Binski, P. (1987) The Age of Chivalry. Weidenfeld & Nicholson.

Grahame Miles

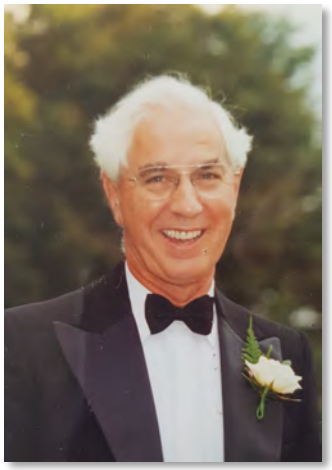
19th July 1934 – 10th February 2025

I am very grateful to Julian Miles, for providing his father’s obituary. This is followed by: Janet Scott, Grahame’s last Head of Department, recalling their time working together; Alison Wood, a dear friend over many years, shares a personal account which exemplifies the kindness that Grahame and his wife showed to anyone in need, and finally my own account of ‘attending’ Grahame’s Thanksgiving Service online. (Libby)

Grahame was born in Shiphay, Torquay, to Will and Ruby and was the first of three sons. Will was a Methodist minister and Ruby the daughter of a farming family. The idyllic early childhood years in Torquay were followed by Grahame’s secondary education at Ashville College in Harrogate as a boarder. He thrived in that environment and capitalised on the many opportunities available, notably in sport and music, not neglecting his academic focus of course! Ruby had carefully coached her three boys in their choice of instrument and, by taking up the viola herself, was able to convene the family string quartet in the school holidays. But although Grahame was a competent cellist and pianist, it was his singing voice which enabled him to gain a choral scholarship to Corpus Christi, Cambridge and he would sing in the chorus at Sadlers Wells Opera during academic interludes. His love of music, and particularly opera, never waned.

A photo of a younger Grahame taken during the sailing trip on the Norfolk Broads

Whilst at Cambridge reading Geography and then Divinity, one of Grahame's Methsoc friends, Michael Horrell, organised a sailing holiday on the Norfolk Broads. They needed another girl for the girls' boat: Michael brought his sister. Barbara's initial impressions of Grahame were not favourable "he was too loud and confident!" but eventually she began to see the warm, generous, compassionate man behind the ebullient exterior. At the time she was studying medicine in London, so their courtship involved weekends in the city as well as holidays with friends and family. They were married in August 1962 in Rilla Mill, Cornwall, where Barbara's family were farming.



The auto generated label for this image was "a person in a suit and bow tie"

They rattled out three sons in as many years while Grahame taught at grammar schools in Cleckheaton and then Letchworth before they moved to Cambridge in 1968, for Grahame to take up his post at Homerton. There followed almost three decades of geographic stability, while Grahame developed his career at Homerton, Barbara took on a partnership of a GP practice near Cambridge, and the "three boys" enjoyed their years in the local schools.

Grahame loved teaching and was fully invested in his work at Homerton and his students. His ability to analyse and communicate were manifest in many other forums: he qualified as a Methodist lay preacher at the age of 22 and preached regularly for five decades; he instructed at residential sailing courses, and he taught his three boys and some of their friends to drive.

He was committed to family, the church and the wider community. Grahame and Barbara were always arranging family events, throwing parties for the church or Grahame's students or colleagues. We had many wonderful holidays, often with the wider family and usually involving boats or tents! In addition to his involvement with Wesley Church, he enthusiastically developed the multi-faith dialogue and community in Cambridge.

Golden Wedding Anniversary – medals awarded

After rich, fulfilled working lives, Grahame and Barbara retired and moved to Devon in 1996, which located them closer to Barbara's parents. They took Grahame's parents with them. They immediately engaged with the local church community to which they remained fully committed and involved. In addition to ongoing family and church activities, they enjoyed travelling and, for ten years, invested themselves in transforming a small paddock into a landscaped garden.

In 2009 Grahame was diagnosed with dementia which gradually progressed until, in 2018, he moved into a care home. Barbara died a year later. Despite his declining cognitive function, the essence of Grahame remained: the ready, infectious smile; the animated facial expressions, and the instinct to engage with the person in front of him. He received wonderful care throughout and died peacefully on 10th February 2025.

His influence, values, insights, compassion and enthusiasm live on in the family, friends, students and communities for whom he cared so much.

Julian Miles

My main memories of Grahame are of his great generosity and extreme energy. He and Barbara were generous in inviting the students of the RS department to their home every year for a Christmas party. Grahame had been acting head of department for three years since Jean Holm left the College. When I was appointed as Head of Department he welcomed me and did everything he could to make sure that I knew what was going on. He introduced me to the Divinity Faculty, took me to meetings, seminars and lectures, and took on

looking after the Secondary PGCE course so that I could concentrate on BEd and primary courses.

Grahame's energy was extraordinary. He liked teaching at 9am on Monday mornings! The other member of the Department was recovering from a debilitating illness. We arranged all their teaching for 11am so that they had time to get to College or to let us know if they could not come in. Grahame was happy to stand in if needed, though in fact it never was. After Department meetings when the three of us went for coffee or lunch, Grahame would be bounding ahead. I was always grateful that the need to walk more slowly with someone else gave me useful practice at resisting keeping up with Grahame.

He taught his three sons to sail and one year two of them were in the Round the World yacht race. I came into College one morning to find Grahame white-faced and very shaken. Two young men had been lost at sea from the yacht on which one of his sons was sailing, and he did not yet know who. Later that day he heard that his sons were safe, but his sense of panic and distress led him to write straightaway to the parents whose sons had been lost.

One job was not enough for Grahame. He was very active in Wesley Methodist Church and as a trustee of the church was involved in selling part of the site to a developer to raise money to refurbish the church. I remember him saying one morning that he had a bill for a million pounds due to come in, and so far no money to pay it. I now live in Epworth Court which was built on the site, so every day I have reason to remember Grahame with affection.

Janet Scott

The first time I really had anything to do with Grahame was in my second year at Homerton. I had a first-year student, who found herself pregnant. Dame Beryl clearly thought having an illegitimate baby was catching so, in her first term while still pregnant, she was excluded from College and went to live with her parents. I was asked to visit her each week and teach her what the other students were being taught at College.

In the student's second year, her mother sadly died and shortly afterwards I found her, homeless, with the baby, in the corridor by the Porters Lodge in the black and white building at 8.45am one morning just as I arrived to start a lecture at 9.00am. Of course, I hadn't a clue how to tackle this emergency so went to the Combination Room to seek help. There, by the pigeonholes, was Grahame. I asked him if he was very busy, he wasn't. I told him the story and he accompanied me back to meet the tearful student who had never met him before. By the time I'd finished my lecture at 10.00am Grahame had instigated a plan as to what to do next. By the end of the week Grahame's wife, Barbara, a local GP, had organised accommodation for the student and the baby in the 'Hostel for the Unmarried Mother and her Child' in Harvey Road, where they stayed until the student gained her BEd.

Over the many intervening years that have passed, we have all stayed in touch. The last time the (then) student and I went together to visit them in Plymouth, while I went on my own to see Grahame, the forever grateful student stayed with Barbara taking her out in a wheelchair.

Grahame and Barbara were always very caring friends whom I relied on a lot while they were in Cambridge and living near me. I am sad that Grahame's final 12 years were so hard for him – he, of all people, didn't deserve it.

Alison Wood

I am sure that there were other RSMs besides Anne and myself who watched the live stream of Grahame's Thanksgiving Service. This was a new experience for us both, but with the sunshine streaming into my front room as we sat (very comfortably) one on the sofa the other in an armchair watching, it was lovely to hear so many of Grahame's family (sons, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, brother, nephew ....) and friends talk about their many memories of Grahame, clearly a special person to them all, evoking much laughter at so many points.

When the vicar asked those present to turn to someone nearby to give a personal memory of Grahame, I immediately said to Anne that my everlasting memory is thinking of Grahame, in the nicest sense of the words, like an overgrown schoolboy always bounding up and down Homerton's Victorian staircases taking the steps two at a time. To me he had such an endearing enthusiasm for everything and apparently far more energy than we younger lecturers appeared to have!

Listening into the service, Anne and I discovered so much more about Grahame that we didn't know – his love of music and sailing to name but two. All the accounts offered so many 'gems' about Grahame though they are difficult to remember them all. The one which has stuck in my memory (with apologies if I have misremembered parts of it) is the occasion when one of his sons took a girlfriend home to meet his parents for the first time. When they arrived, Grahame was sitting on a sofa listening to an opera with the score by his side. At some stage, his son left his girlfriend sitting in the armchair opposite to go and have a few words with his mother who was preparing Sunday lunch in the kitchen, nervously asking her how well she thought everything was going on in the other room. When he returned to see for himself, his girlfriend (who was not musical) had moved to sit next to Grahame, who was pointing out each note on the score. This might have been somewhat of a baptism of fire, but she did become Grahame's daughter-in-law.

Libby Jared

Derek Johnson

6th February 1939 - 4th February 2025

Derek grew up in Birmingham. He attended the King Edward VI school where he excelled both academically and at sport. He was Head Boy and captained the rugby and cricket teams. He opened the batting and at one time batted with Dennis Amiss who went on to open for England.

Graduation Day: Derek in front of an urn on the Senate House lawn

Derek came to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge to study Natural Sciences specialising in Chemistry. He then worked for GlaxoSmithKline carrying out research in the development of vitamins. He also completed a part-time Post Graduate Certificate in Education. In 1966 Derek was appointed by Homerton as a Science lecturer specialising in Chemistry. He gave Chemistry lectures to BEd students and Curriculum courses in Science Education as well as Chemistry to Secondary BEd and PGCE students preparing them to teach in middle and secondary schools. During the 1970s, Derek studied for and successfully completed a PhD in Science Education at Kings College London

The changing nature of teacher education led to Homerton staff expanding their activities to work with serving teachers. In the 1980s College provided a range of courses: a two-week residential course in Physical Science for middle school teachers; a one term Physics course for secondary science teachers and a two-year Secondary Science PGCE course.

This was at the time of the introduction of the National Curriculum. Derek's own undergraduate course in Cambridge provided him with the necessary broader physical science background. In all of these courses, Derek taught with energy and enthusiasm, occasionally overwhelming some of the students!

Derek in full teaching mode

Derek did not drive, so either his wife, Enid, accompanied him on school visits or he used public transport. Somewhat differently, a group of Homerton lecturers led by Ray Dalton and including Derek, went to Peterborough on Friday afternoons to work with secondary teachers preparing for the Advanced Diploma in Education.

Derek was a very supportive colleague. His roots in the Labour Party in Birmingham naturally led to his membership of the union branch at Homerton. He was the chairman of the NATFHE branch from 1985 until 1993. In 1994 Derek took early retirement and spent much of his time enjoying travelling with Enid. He worked for the British Council in Turkey, based in Ankara, where his role was to help with the development of Chemistry Education in Secondary schools.

Derek in retirement in his & Enid's beloved garden

In the mid-1970s Derek and Enid moved from Shelford to the South Cambridgeshire village of Newton where they were very much involved with life in the village. Derek enjoyed playing cricket for the village team, captaining the side and later becoming its President. Derek was also church warden of the village church for many years. He had a large garden and in the summer he and Enid would entertain friends to afternoon tea in the sun. Derek was an enthusiastic gardener, often giving out its produce to visitors. On my last visit in the autumn of 2024, he gave me a large bag of Bramley apples. They were lovely. Thank you, Derek.

Ian Morrison

On a just becoming dry and sunny March morning, five RSMs – Ian (Morrison), Mike (Younger), George (Hubbard), Anne and I – gathered to join family and village friends to attend Derek's funeral at the village church, a stone's throw from the house where Enid and he had lived for many years.

Derek had served his community well – both as a Church Warden and as a most valued and longstanding captain of the cricket team. How apt it felt to see a simple bunch of daffodils, which we suspect were picked from his garden that very morning, on top of Derek's coffin.

I had only been to Newton a couple of times (that was to the pub) and had never visited its comparatively small Church. Its setting was just so idyllic – not many churches we imagine have sheep grazing and bleating in the field abutting the churchyard. I found the service in such peaceful surroundings, so simple and so moving. It must have brought back memories of Enid's funeral held less than one year earlier.

Afterwards we walked a short distance up the road to sample an amazing, tasteful (in other senses of the word) wondrous spread in the Village Rooms. Derek's son, Simon, later wrote in an email to me: "Yes – the church has a unique character and was an important part of who Derek was – though he didn't always agree with some things the PCC did! I will pass your feedback onto the ladies (and it was just ladies) who prepared and presented the food – a large part of which was homemade. We wanted to keep everything in the village and they were very helpful in organising things".

I was hoping that Simon could help me out with sharing some extra photos to go into the Newsletter. But as he explained, they had very few photos of Derek. Just finding one to be on the front of the order of service had been challenging as Derek was notorious for always looking away from the camera or pulling a face just as the shutter clicked.

Anne and I had a lovely conversation with Dominic, his grandson. We hadn't realised that Derek had been somewhat of a 'firebrand' in the nicest sense of the word. It gave us the opportunity to tell Dominic about an exchange I had with his grandfather in April 2020 (early into lockdown). In it, Derek was suggesting a short 'snippet' for the Newsletter. It was headed "Politics" which, as I explain later, always causes me some angst.

Derek started his message with:

One of the delights of ageing is that my grandchildren now educate me. Fenella (York, English) tells me to do the following. Find the poem on the web *1919* by Yeats. Towards the end find the line beginning, "There lurches past" and continue until you get to "fiend" then add your own next line.

So far so good, but as I still shy away from putting anything 'political' in the Newsletter, Derek put me in a spin with the next part of his message: "Surprise, surprise my line is: "The lying king, Boris Johnson" (remember Derek is writing this early on in our first pandemic lockdown). He explained his choice, naming in most unflattering but deserving terms another prominent government minister who " …. is a reincarnation of a Dr Who Dalek, "Isolate...isolate ...isolate"" – which I have to admit, given what we were living through, was very witty. The message concluded "So, add your own line and raise a glass (or two) to absent friends".

I explained my mouse behaviour over anything political, throwing making a decision whether to publish or not into the long grass as it were. Derek was understanding but suggested "Thank you for your reply. Aware of the problem/issue. A letters to the editor column might resolve the dilemma". Possibly a way out, but still I didn't feel totally happy with it. I sought the advice of the RSM committee, the result of which as we recounted to Dominic that Anne was, in his Grandad's words, 'given the short straw' to tell him that we couldn't put it in the Newsletter!

We (Simon, Dominic, Anne & I) all had a good laugh at the memory of a 'typical Derek episode'. I feel sad now that Derek will never know about our laughing over his message or that I have recounted, as best I can, the message that he would have liked all RSMs to have.

Libby Jared

Morag Styles

19th September 1947 – 29th December 2024

How do you cope with someone like ~~Maria~~ Morag? Or more strictly: How do you cope compiling an obituary for someone like Morag? For Morag was indeed a larger than life figure who drew so many people towards her, be it either in her professional or social worlds. Everyone knew her and everyone would have something to say about her. This tribute begins with two of her close colleagues, David Whitley and Holly Anderson, reprising the speeches that they gave about Morag in The Great Hall at her wake. These are followed by a different perspective from Anne Thwaites, her closest – literally a few doors up the road – neighbour. But it wouldn't be Morag with only a few contributors so space has gladly been found for many other RSMs to share a short memory or two of a very dear and inspirational member of Homerton. What a 'girl'! (Ed).

My Colleague Morag

When Morag was offered the opportunity to work on the Caribbean Poetry project in 2010 she leapt at the chance. She'd loved Caribbean poetry since the late 1970s, when she'd started going to some electrifying readings and performances by poets including Kamau Brathwaite, Mickey Smith, John Agard and Lynton Kwesi Johnson. In 1984 she'd published the first of her influential anthologies for younger readers (*I Like that Stuff*) which included many of the Caribbean writers she admired.

The project was funded for 5 years by the Centre for Commonwealth Education and its main mission was to promote the teaching, dissemination and understanding of Caribbean poetry both in the West Indies and the UK. One of the most significant things it did was to set up a series of inservice events for teachers, led by poets, many of whom were on the equivalent of the GCSE syllabus in the West Indies. The team went out to the smaller Caribbean islands, where teachers were often poorly resourced, as well as Jamaica and Trinidad. We ran sessions for teachers in the UK too. Morag also edited a book, *Teaching Caribbean Poetry*, with Beverley Bryan. The book was really important in forming bonds between the two teams and most of the chapters were co-written with colleagues from University of the West Indies and the UK, who became friends as a result.

I remember vividly those early planning meetings in Barbados with poets, scholars and educators (largely from Jamaica) whom we barely knew initially. Things rapidly relaxed and became less formal at the meetings. As a rather shy Englishman, I was quite discombobulated at first by the force, directness and passion with which our Jamaican colleagues expressed themselves. Morag, however, was in her element – a happy dolphin swimming in that sea of impassioned and highly energised debate.

And she enabled so many good things to come out of it: lasting friendships, of course; two books, in addition to the teaching poetry book, there was a wonderful anthology, *Give the Ball to the Poet*, which she co-edited with Georgie Horrell and Aisha Spencer, with a forward by Grace Nichols; two dedicated collections of journal essays; the most amazing conference at Homerton that brought a dazzling array of Caribbean writers from the UK and West Indies together, and a still ongoing schools poetry recitation competition in Jamaica – 'Talk the Poem' – that Aisha Spencer started after conversations with Julie Blake here.

Travelling with Morag was always an adventure. Loving her clothes, she used to take far more luggage than she could carry on her own, so friends were recruited to help her get onto various forms of transport. I became adept at managing the extra luggage when I was with her and used to describe myself – half-jokingly – as her laptop wallah. I knew my role. In truth, though, I was probably more like Sancho Panza to her Don Quixote. Not that Morag wasted much time tilting at windmills in terms of things that were illusory or unachievable. Her idealism was mixed with down-to-earth pragmatism, and she nearly always brought to fruition what she set out to do. But there was a corner of her heart where she believed that what was over the rainbow could actually be reached. I think that spirit of hope touched everyone she worked with and made us believe that the loveliness inherent in all things might indeed be realisable.

David Whitley

My Language Team Leader Morag

Just before she died Morag asked me if I would say a few words at her wake about the language team, first at Homerton and then at the Faculty. This is based on what I said that day, at what was an incredibly sad event

which was full of love, tears and shared memories. Morag would have loved it, not least the tea that Homerton provided, I'm sure she had given Ross, her son, very explicit orders for every canape and éclair we were served.

Morag was the team leader when I joined in the mid 1990s, working in Initial Teacher Education, firstly the 4 year Bed programme which changed to the BA in Education and the PCGE.

Morag with Helen Taylor in one of many meetings

Under Morag's vision the courses were inspirational, both for us tutors and for the students. Love and knowledge of books were central to our work. The BEd first year exam was to write and produce a book for a specific child. These were displayed in the Great Hall and the students wrote a critique of why they had chosen to write the book, what had inspired them, and how it had been received by its young reader. High quality picture books permeated the course and the students quickly appreciated that picture books were not just for the youngest readers. When we moved into the Mary Allen Building Morag made sure that one of the seminar rooms was designated "the Language Centre" with children's books displayed all round and a comfortable reading corner with cushions where students could curl up with a book.

Morag's energy and delight in sharing and exploring all aspects of language was boundless, her enthusiasm captivating. Her deeply held principles meant she was never afraid to stand up for what she felt was right. As the curriculum became more prescriptive she ensured the students still had the richest experiences, although she sometimes became exasperated with the 'naming of parts' – "Holly what IS a ⋆⋆⋆⋆ing phoneme" she once shouted across the corridor as we each taught our seminar group. Knowing a '⋆⋆⋆⋆ing phoneme' alone would not enable the students (and subsequently their pupils) to find their voices and to love the written and spoken word. *(To add some contextual information, Holly tells me that 'f' and 'ph' are the same phoneme. Ed.*)

However, beyond being a wonderful teacher and researcher there is so much more, and I feel inadequate in trying to convey the joy, passion and zest for life that Morag brought to all her work and her relationships. Morag formed deep friendships with so many of us, both colleagues and students. She was loyal, supportive and encouraging. When I looked round the Great Hall at her wake, I could only guess at how many of us were helped by her. My life certainly changed because of Morag. Indeed, without her, I would never have co-edited a book, applied to become a senior lecturer and subsequently been able to afford to take early retirement. I owe ten years of birdwatching to Morag.

As a colleague she was a joy to be with (although exhausting at times!) always up for a laugh, a song, and a party. And Morag could party like no other. From her Hogwarts Formal Hall for students (where a live owl flew the length of the Great Hall), to Burns Suppers at her home or in College (complete with piper and a ceilidh band), to Christmas dinners with the Language team (present giving obligatory) where we consumed large quantities of food and wine, played quizzes and laughed until it hurt. These dinners continued long after we had all retired. Morag just loved hosting and organizing gatherings. Once we were invited to her house for a meal on the evening she was due to fly back from Scotland. She arrived home at 5 pm and by 8 had produced not one but two pheasant dishes for the large group gathered round her table. She also loved to sing (as do I) and many times coming back from in-service training sessions in her car we sang our way through Everly Brothers songs or old musicals at the tops of our voices.

Our dearest pal has been taken away from us far too soon, I am just grateful to have so many wonderful memories. It has been a joy and a privilege to know Morag for over 30 years and I shall miss her more than I can say.

Holly Anderson

Morag's 2018 Birthday Celebration
L to R: Ruth Kershner, Helen Taylor, Morag, Mary Shemilt, Holly Anderson, Frances Sword

My Neighbour Morag

Some thirty, or was it thirty five, years ago, Morag asked me a hard question: "What was it like living in my street?" I sensed that this was a loaded query, and I was a bit guarded in my reply saying that I really enjoyed it, that our neighbours were friendly and supportive, that we knew quite a few people in the street and that there was a good community. It was a loaded

enquiry! A short time later, Morag and her son, Ross, moved into a house about half-way down the street.

This was when Morag was incredibly involved with teaching and research and yet within a short time of moving in, she was appointed as a governor of the primary school in the adjacent road. I suspect that our county councillor may have encouraged her to take this on. But this was indicative of the way that Morag was ready to get involved.

The Millennium provided the impetus for the first of our annual street parties. The road is shut to traffic, everyone moves their cars and there are activities all day and evening long. Unsurprisingly, food, music and dancing are central to the day and, of course, Morag was contributing along with other neighbours. One of the new additions to the day's programme in recent years is an informal open gardens event. This was Morag's initiative – it has been a great success and this year we will continue to mark where the group will be visiting with a Morag style pink 'item'.

This interest in gardening was one that Morag embraced in her 'retirement' and she shared ideas and plans with others in the street gardening group. She joined several other local groups – the book group, a singing group and learning languages amongst them. Latterly Morag was keen to walk regularly and called on a small group of us to take turns to go for a 'walkette'. Thank goodness too that she was ready to ask for lifts or help and was careful to ensure that she shared those requests around.

However, the thing that most neighbours will remember is Morag's generous hospitality: whenever there was a chance for her to host she did; whenever there was a street clear up, Morag was cooking; at the post carol singing party – Morag's goodies were there. Her friendship and generosity will be remembered up and down the street – a much loved member of our community.

Anne Thwaites

Photo (Sept 2023) from Fran Christie, now living in California, a friend since they were both 'wee girls'

Holly explains that she took this photo (on the right) of Morag in October last year when she treated herself to new clothes (after her diagnosis and having lost weight).

"We chuckled soon after when she said she didn't want to spend money on a new vacuum cleaner as she wouldn't get the benefit of it. I said it was ok to spend loads on clothes and shoes but not ensuring her house was clean!"

Anne Thwaites kindly informed RSMs of Morag's passing by emailing the list with this message:

Dear all

Morag's son Ross sent an email to her friends yesterday saying:

"I am so sorry to tell you that Morag died peacefully in her sleep early this morning.

In her last days [at home] she sang, listened to poetry, laughed, drank proper tea and said goodbye.

She died as she lived, surrounded by love."

Morag's cancer had returned earlier this year and she and Ross knew that this time there was no treatment. She had a stay in Addenbrookes earlier this month but thankfully was able to be at home for her final days. She and Ross had agreed to have Christmas together (he lives in Hong Kong) and they had a wonderful day with her immediate family – his care for her has been immense.

With profound sadness, Anne

Within minutes, messages started to arrive to the list with each sharing their own sadness at the news and often adding their own memory of Morag, some replying as it were to Ross, others to RSM members. We have collated a mixture of some of these messages to include here: from her time at Homerton as a PGCE student; many memories from both her close working colleagues and others more on the periphery and even from some RSMs who not only were acquainted with Morag but also Ross – as a baby, a primary school pupil and a secondary school pupil. Morag's inspiration knew no bounds, including it would seem putting one small boy on his journalistic path. *Libby*

Allow me to add my memories of Morag. She brought me to Cambridge, and the circumstances of this were quite amusing and very Morag-y. We were at a conference in Barcelona, and since the first dinner was scheduled, as they are in Spain, at 10pm some of us, including Morag, made some lame excuse and went out earlier. After a few glasses of wine I mentioned in passing that I wasn't happy with my current position in Stockholm and was looking for another job. To which Morag said: "You wouldn't by any chance consider Cambridge?" I thought it was a joke, but a few weeks later she sent me an email: "The position has been announced, make sure you apply". While preparing my application, I was taking my grandson to London as a birthday treat and mentioned it to Morag, asking whether it would make sense to come to Cambridge to get acquainted with the place and the people. Half an hour later, she sent me a poster saying: "MN will give a talk..." That's Morag!
She was exceptionally supportive during my years in Cambridge, both academically and socially, not least during the initial period when I was confused about Cambridge jargon and ways of doing things. Our offices were across the corridor in Mary Allen building, so we would constantly go over to each other to chat. It was a pleasure setting exams with Morag – she was so inventive. Watching her enthusiasm and her dedication, her approach to teaching, her involvement with students made her a role model for me.
In short, without Morag I would have never experienced the joys of our profession.

Maria Nikolajeva

Thank you for sending the sad news about Morag. She was always very supportive and encouraging to me and I have the happiest memories of her. I hope her family and friends will find it comforting to know how much she meant to many people.

Janet Bottoms

I recall Morag being a great enthusiast for life and poetry, a significant presence at Homerton.

Jill Waterhouse

Dear Ross, all I could think of yesterday was the sad news about Morag. And it's hard to imagine my life without her in it. The next few weeks will be hard for you, but you've been *brilliant* in the way you've ensured the kind death she wanted.

Victor Watson

Yes, Morag will be much missed. When I took up office I found her to be welcoming, wise, and – best of all – always upbeat.
This is sad news but it's good to know she had a last hurrah at home.

Geoff Ward

I consider myself very fortunate to have known Morag. One of the many wonderful people I got to know during my most enjoyable six years at Homerton.

Michael Reiss

A wonderful message from Ross but very, very sad news; a life well lived but cut prematurely short.

Mike Younger

Sad news indeed, a much-loved Fellow who contributed immeasurably to the academic and cultural life of Homerton for so many years.

Peter Warner

This is such sad news. Morag was a luminous figure in Homerton, loved and admired equally. She was warm-hearted and hospitable and an enormous inspiration to students. Not many Cambridge academics have an entire shelf of books to their name but she was always modest about her work.
And she had a great collection of shoes.
One of Homerton's legends. I miss her.

Bobbie Wells

Sorry to have this news of Morag, though I knew she was not well. She was an admirable person in many many ways, always fun, but also careful and considerate and very talented in driving forward her interest in Children's Literature. She gave a lot to Homerton.

Stephen Tomkins

Ross
So sorry to hear of your loss, particularly for it to happen at Christmas. Your Mother was an excellent colleague and students were inspired by her love of poetry and the teaching of it to young children. I am sure many teachers will continue to be inspired by all they learnt from Morag.
We had a further link when you were at St Paul's when my husband Keith was your head teacher …

Carole Bennett

Dear Ross,
I was so sad to hear about your Mum passing. She was very proud of you. She always introduced me as your science teacher at Parkside.
Morag will be sorely missed by all of us who were fortunate enough to have known her.

Elaine Wilson née Marchant

This is very sad news. Morag was always such an enthusiastic educationalist. The news came through while I was with my nephew. When he was six he wrote a poem that Morag put in one of her books. He is now 43! But still remembers this event. He went on to be a journalist. Thank you, Morag. You will be greatly missed.

Lesley Hendy

I was very sad to hear the news of Morag's death. I hadn't realised she was so ill. I remember her first year at Homerton well and have always had a soft spot for her. She was a student on the PGCE course and I taught her maths. She was, to say the least, by far the most challenging of the group, ensuring the lectures were useful, accessible and interesting and I think she was a big influence on my subsequent teaching of the PGs. Please pass on my sympathy to Ross who I knew as a baby.

Alison Wood

This is sad news – compensated in part by the picture of her last days and also by the knowledge that Morag had lived life to the full.
I first encountered Morag way back when she was a PGCE student in Helen Arnold's group at Homerton. Helen was the perfect mentor for Morag (as Morag often acknowledged) a colourful character, full of warmth and fun and with a passion for literature and language which she spread to all who fell under her influence and which found an immediate response in Morag. She would have been very proud of all that Morag became and all the students and children whom she in her turn enthused and whose imaginations she extended.
Morag was far ahead of her time in engaging with poetry not just from home sources but internationally, and, especially perhaps, from the Caribbean and in securing a place for it in the school curriculum. She loved its sounds and rhythms and did a quite passable West Indian style rap! Her commitment won her international standing and appreciation.
Our paths crossed again more recently when we found ourselves singing with Sing Cambridge, which met in the Club Polonia on Chesterton Road under the brilliant direction of Roger Jackson. One of our favourite songs was an arrangement by Roger of 'Fly me to the moon' which begins:

Fly me to the moon
Let me play among the stars

So, there you are, Morag – wish granted! Bon voyage!

David Bridges

Peter's Talk: Thursday December 5th, 2024, at The Museum of Cambridge
Leah Manning's Legacy: Cambridge, Women's Rights, and Spanish Refugees

This was the title of a talk given by our very own Peter Cunningham to accompany the exhibition *Educating Cambridge* that was currently on at The Museum of Cambridge (previously known as The Folk Museum). It felt too good an opportunity to miss and several RSMs made it to the 1pm lecture and as Peter afterwards described, "swelling the crowds to the fullest house I recall in the Enid Porter Room".

Of course, the name Leah Manning is well known to many people at Homerton, and her extraordinary life and work rightly recognised, so going along and hearing Peter's talk was a pleasure for the RSMs who were able to make it. During questions to Peter at the end of his talk it became clear that amongst the 'crowds' there were several other people who were specifically interested in and knowledgeable about her time in Cambridge and her connection with the Basque community.

It was a pleasure to not only hear Peter's talk but to realise the recognition and admiration that others, not connected to Homerton, hold for her.

Gabrielle, Anne, Libby, Tim & John by the Christmas tree before Peter's talk. Angela & David Bridges arrived later.

It is always good to be reminded about the legacy and life of Leah Manning, so included here is Peter's 'abstract' taken from The Museum of Cambridge's website.

> An outstanding personality born in 1886, Leah Manning came to Cambridge in 1906 to train as a teacher at Homerton College. She caught the attention of Principal Mary Allan who persuaded her to teach at the 'Cambridge Ragged School' (founded 1854) in New Street, a building now housing Anglia Ruskin's Music Therapy Department. She is now remembered there by a Blue Plaque, for her "pioneering struggle" as a "lifelong champion" of women's and children's causes. Homerton College is also recorded as funding renovation of the Ragged School.
>
> Miss Allan and other Homertonian women joined the suffragette movement. Leah herself was politically active as a member of the Fabian Society in Cambridge and aligned with trade unions and the Social Democratic Federation to support the emergent Labour Party. Leah herself in 1919 became Cambridge Chair of the National Federation of Women Workers, campaigning against low pay and conditions of female 'bedders' in colleges. She went on to be one of the first women Labour MPs for Islington East, and after World War 2, she won Winston Churchill's former seat as MP for Epping.
>
> Meanwhile, as a campaigner against the Spanish Civil War, in 1937 she used her political skill and experience to persuade the British government to provide a ship for evacuation of 3,888 children from Bilbao following the bombardment of Guernica. She then oversaw the placement of these evacuees in various parts of the UK. A plaque can be seen on a house in Station Road, Cambridge, where Jesus College accommodated 29 Basque refugee children.

It was just a short time after Peter's talk that our January 2025 coffee morning presentation continued the theme when Eddie Akinrinmade, (Homerton's first Art Curator) presented his session: *Echoes and Arrivals: Leah Manning & Coqué Martinez's stories on migration* to RSMs (see p.48).

Mathematicians Reunited

Libby Jared

Philip Rundall sent me an email last September saying that he had eventually persuaded a particular RSM to make the journey south to stay for a few days in November. To misquote 'this wasn't any RSM it was Richard Light RSM' for Richard was a member of the 1980s Homerton Mathematicians contingent. We will gloss over the fact that not yet having advertised the RSM social activities for that term, Richard had unknowingly managed to book his return home to The Lakes the day before the November coffee morning.

Never mind, at least the remaining old-stagers of Richard's time here were able to congregate for lunch in the dining hall, followed by a very long coffee session in the Combination Room. Richard had miraculously brought the sunshine and his camera with him – the results of both provide the opportunity to resurrect the Photo Competition.

(Anne, Rex, Richard, Tim, Libby)

Question One:
What do you call a collection of Homerton Mathematics Lecturers?

No answers on a postcard are necessary – just email me to enter the prize draw.

Richard, please do not leave it so long before you make your next visit ….

Question Two:
What are the rest of us are looking at on the phone in Richard's hand?

Clearly it was Anne who was taking this photo and we can assure you we are not studying the sequence of a second order differential equation

Stuart Plunkett

In January this year RSMs heard the news, from his son (Oliver), that Stuart Plunkett had died a week earlier at the age of 82. Stuart had been a member of Homerton's mathematics department from 1973 to 1979, and incidentally a near neighbour of Philip and Patti Rundall. According to Oliver his father apparently referred to Homerton as his best job!

Tim Rowland arrived at Homerton just after Stuart left but talks about him in the recently recorded departmental group interviews now lodged in the Archives. Tim talks of the times around The Cockroft Report (1982) not only in terms of Hilary Shuard's work but also of Stuart whose work was: "very much in the same line".

Tim continues: "The paper for which he's best known, in a teachers' journal [*Mathematics in Schools* vol 8/3, 1979] was titled *Decomposition and all that rot*, – decomposition referring to the subtraction algorithm. [Stuart] argued as to why there were better ways of going about arithmetic most of the time. His name would become known among educators around the world". *Libby*

Social Activities

Libby Jared

In summary: Anne & I believe that, whilst we have not managed to keep you fit through offering you any walks this year, we still managed a good sized collection of events with an even larger number than last year's 'large number' of attendees.

And all this in spite of the fact that the position of Social Secretary continues, technically, to remain vacant, though we have noticed that several people have volunteered help in myriad ways – for which we are very grateful.

But instead of dwelling on a role to be filled, let's celebrate all that has been achieved by presenting a summary of all the many events we have had.

It feels that the year has flown by so there must have been many 'goings-ons' contributing to RSMs' full diaries.

The AGM starts the year off in true fashion. After dealing with the business agenda, we were able to enjoy tea and cake and mark Trish's retirement from her role as Honorary Lay Chaplain after eight years of Evensong services (see also Trish's article on p.5 of this Newsletter). Many members have attended Evensong and have read lessons at the services that Trish has organised over the years and she will be greatly missed in this role

The rest of the activities are recorded somewhat in the manner of a countdown list …

Five Talks at Coffee Mornings
(with on-line access available)

November 15th 2024:
Dr Alison Wood: Homerton Fellow and Founding Academic Director Homerton's Changemakers Project: *Changemakers*

Alison's talk was precisely what it says 'on the tin', or in this case, its title. We learnt so much about this innovative and indeed 'change making' project, in turn changing the lives of many current Homerton students. What is being undertaken seems far different from our now distant time at Homerton, both impressive and invigorating even if a little, to us, unconventional.

February 21st 2025: (Hosted by Steve Watts)
Dr Louise Joy (Fellow and Former Vice Principal): *University Governance: Some Personal Reflections*

Louise planned the session to be highly conversational: a chance for those present to share their thoughts on the University's direction of travel, on some of the governance challenges facing the University (and the sector more widely) right now, and on the role that Homerton can play in the coming years. Chatham House rules applied!

May 30th 2025:
Dr Kate Pretty (RSM & Former Principal)
The relationship of the Colleges to the University and vice-versa

A fitting, very informative and companion piece of sorts to Louise's talk above.

January 17th 2025: (Hosted by Peter Cunningham)
Eddie Akinrinmade, (Homerton's Art Curator):
Echoes and Arrivals: Leah Manning & Coqué Martinez's stories on migration

Eddie had joined Homerton as its first professional art curator, mid-way through the last academic year. By September's Alumni weekend he had been instrumental in enabling all Coqué Martínez's paintings currently at Homerton to be exhibited in the square outside of the Drawing Room, writing concise informative labels attached to each one.
The talk was in two parts: a formal, introductory talk followed by visiting the Drawing Room Square where Eddie talked more specifically about individual paintings.

March 28th 2025:
RSMs - Jane Edden, John Finney & John Hopkins:
Perspectives on Poetry

John, Jane and John each gave their different perspectives on how they had been inspired by Poetry, as well as taking a brief look at how Poets perceive their own art. They also introduced some poems which have been significant to them at various stages in their lives. Not unsurprisingly music played some part in all of this.

Three Formal Halls
November 26th 2024; March 18th 2025 *('postponed' from March 4th)*; **May 13th 2025**

The Lent Term postponement was due to hearing a week or so before our planned date that a theme had suddenly emerged. It was to be a pyjama wearing Formal Hall. We thought it would be 'diplomatic' to beat a retreat – our nightshirts, pyjamas and negligees were probably best worn only at home!

Easter Term is the one Formal Hall each year that is open to RSMs bringing partners and other guests. It was a pleasure to see three partners, two friends and Revd Ceri Payne, Homerton College Choir Chaplain (Trish's replacement) joining our table. I had read the Second Lesson that evening!

Two Twos

Two Do-it-Ourselves (DIO) book clubs - sharing a favourite read

	October 18th 2024		**April 25th 2025**
Steve Watts	*Cahokia Jazz* by Francis Spufford (Faber, 2023)	Philip Rundall	*The Printmaker's Daughter* by Katherine Govier (Harper Perennial 2011)
Anne Thwaites	*An Evil Cradling* by Brian Keenan (Hutchinson 1992; Pbk. Vintage 1993)	Mary Earl	*The Noise of Time* by Julian Barnes (Jonathan Cape 2016)
Gabrielle Cliff Hodges	*Wilding: The return of nature to a British farm* by Isabella Tree (London: Picador 2018)	Steve Watts	*James* by Percival Everett. (Doubleday 2024)

Two Books Anne

Comment Stage Right

Steve – mid-reading

By the way:

Anne managed to buy Gabrielle's choice as Xmas Presents for her three siblings and a birthday present for me. Mary's choice was languishing in my pile of unread books; with prior warning, it was a delight to have the opportunity to read it before the session.
After Steve's introduction to *James*, Gabrielle found herself reading Huckleberry Finn for the first time.

The April date coincided with The Cambridge Literary Festival. At the coffee morning, I found that Gabrielle, Steve, Peter C (& Carey) had all booked to go to listen to Rob Cowan talking about his latest book *The North Road*, hosted by Robert Macfarlane, at10am the next day. I had thought of about going but having not done anything about it I was galvanised into action, getting two tickets. Hence a mini RSM gathering of six the following morning – all, I think, thoroughly enjoying the session. Well, we did all buy the book except for Steve who was already reading it on his kindle. He would, wouldn't he!

One Xmas 'Gathering' - Mince Pie Friday
December 20th 2024

As has become our custom the Michaelmas term's social activities concluded with our usual well attended Xmas 'Gathering', though this year with appropriately sized mince pies (finger small, making eating somewhat easier) and coffee. It was good to see that the numbers included some friends and partners to enjoy the themed readings (an extended number of male readers adding to regular participants) and to join in, with gusto, the singing of carols. This year's grand themed *diaries reading* event was again organised, down to the minute, by Jane and Kate, and with Roger's piano playing keeping us in tune (sort of), people left to celebrate their own Christmas, either with a boisterous family gathering or quietly by themselves.

It felt a fitting and spirited end to a busy term.

Lift monitor Steve with thumb poised over the button

Look here comes Father Christmas

Who is dreaming of writing something for this year's Newsletter?

Carol sheets at the ready

Carol's own stuffed ptarmigan (so no need for a pear tree)

One Summer Picnic (with Poetry Readings)
Friday June 27th 2025

After a full of chatter coffee morning, most of us decamped to the nearby College Marquee. With fingers firmly crossed, the Marquee has become the picnic's new venue rather than the Orchard, lovely though that is, but weather dependent (risky) and a reliance on self-removal for tables and chairs, life is made far easier in the Marquee!

Over our customary individual picnics and cold drinks (soft or a touch alcoholic) and with no set order of play, many 'attendees' read a poem or two or in the case of our in-house poetess, Lizzie M read three of her own poems (see p.19). David B reminisced about B&B holidays which, when he was growing up, were just that – come rain or shine there was no stopping in your B&B during the day. At least two rewound the season to Spring and invoking Chair's Privilege, one person's reading was neither a poem nor about Summer. We left on a high (or maybe a low) note by listening to two slightly 'risqué' but very clever endings.

Same time, same place (hopefully) next year!

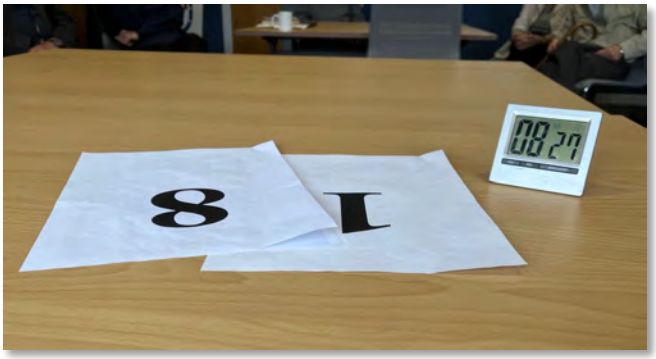
Rapt attention

Anne taking a rest

Ruth listening. Steve reading

Waiting for the main event – a deluge of poems …

Presenter instructions for the DIO book club (accidentally renamed by Steve W "the occasional book club (OBC))



Referee's clock and time elapsed sheets - resurrected from mathematics curriculum days

"Each of the three slots can have an allocation of 15 minutes maximum; with a suggestion of 10 minutes to present and a further five minutes for any discussion. Curtains definitely after 15 minutes.

Just bear in mind that the longer you present the less time there will be for discussion (which may be a good or a bad thing, who knows!). During the time you are presenting I will indicate when 8 minutes are up and stop you at 12 minutes.

I am hoping that about 10 minutes are left at the end where anyone might like to share the title of any books that they are currently reading or enjoyed recently."

(Springtime tulips at Homerton photo (p.48) was taken after the end of the April DIO/OBC book club (Ed.))

Three coffee morning snapshots …

… three pairs in animated conversation

Conversation paused to pose for the camera

Careful what you say to the "gangsta's mother!"

So that's that for the year … one that's been both busy and we hope successful

We have lost count of how many times we have found ourselves like this, that is, Anne always the driver, Libby always the passenger, to come across town to Homerton, for RSM related events. Some trips are for business (work), some where we can enjoy a cup of coffee and a natter before 'worrying' about how a session will go (generally excellently) and a few where we can put on our glad rags and relax at a formal event: with fine dining and conversation.

But remember this time next year we will be 'driving off into the sunset' and passing the baton on to 'you'!

Anne & Libby

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