

rsma newsletter

newsletter of the retired senior members' association
of homerton college, cambridge
september 2024



archive histories

ivory towers & pearls of knowledge

higher education policies

my great-great-great-grandfather

art, music making, walking

tributes ...

... and more ...



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a word from the editors



Dear Readers,

Heroes – Unsung & Sung ...

I've come to realise that I find it easier to write this (and the Chair's Letter) if I dream up a title first. The above is no exception to this and yet again RSMs have come up with another eclectic mix of articles for yet again another bumper edition. Actually, if each year we have a bumper edition, then perhaps the bumper word is now redundant.

Reflecting on heroes unsung Gabrielle Cliff Hodges three times great grandfather Thomas Raffles (related to but not the most famous Raffles in History) is well placed to be in the list. Likewise, so is geographer John Jones 'dug' out from the College Archives by Peter Cunningham following a RSM tour of the revamped Ibberson's building realising that footsteps in the new auditorium had once been footsteps in a newly built Geography Room. Add to these Etheldreda, maybe Hereward (the Wake?) but probably not Samuel Morton Peto who all appear in Linda Hargreaves' brilliantly detailed account of the walk she devised for RSMs last March. The time and care that Linda gave to the tasks of devising, leading and writing about the walk definitely places her in the unsung category. Then again, there are the artists from the Dutch Golden Age mentioned in Philip Stephenson's article – paintings that give pleasure to many people centuries later (as Lizzie Madder's will!). But perhaps the zenith of unsung heroes must go to teachers and ITE institutions working against a mountain of difficulties, so passionately described in Elaine Wilson's data driven article.

Sadly, but all too predictably Obituaries of RSMs appear each year, providing the opportunity for their many achievements too often unsung in their lifetime to be finally sung. I am sure that is very true for those whose obituaries appear in this edition. That said I would like to believe that David Male may well have realised our gratitude for the part he played in the formation of the RSMA, and hopefully found pleasure in our praises during his last few years.

There are plenty of singing heroes dotted around too, not least The Charter Choir with their Evensong at Hampton Court who earlier in the term had sung Roger Green's canticles at one of College's Evensong, Philip Rundall's account of morphing to a mandolin player, our own 'carol singing' mince pie event plus Olga's talents so fondly recounted by her daughters.

In fact, there are too many heroes for the space allowed – so I leave it to you to find them for yourself in all the pages that follow.

Happy Reading ...

Libby (on behalf of us both)

Cover photo: 'Spot the birdie' – Philip Rundall (an addendum, welcomed or not, to p.5)

Acknowledgements: with thanks to the Proof Reading Team: Anne T, Peter C & Gabrielle C H.

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Chair's Letter: Spreading Our Wings

Libby Jared

This year's title popped into my head as I was down on my hands and knees involved in a 'painting the Forth Road Bridge' type of task of pulling out the annoying weeds (dandelions in particular are extremely stubborn) that had raised their heads in our gravel garden paths. Not needing great powers of concentration for this task, my mind wandered to the much more difficult annual challenge of writing this Letter; having a title, helps me to find the focus. Famous (in my mind) for always wishing to embrace the (in)famous "why do buses always come in threes?" - there is a mathematical explanation to this phenomenon - I thought of three ways for this to have become a 'wing spreading' year.

Firstly, the lockdown years are now receding with the passing of time, although, with so many lives turned upside down and, in some cases, continuing to be so as a consequence of Covid, they are never lost from our memories. That said many of us are lucky enough once again to be able to continue to embrace the pleasures of being retired and - if we live locally - meeting in the Combination Room on the third Friday of the month during term time. However, more than that, with an added determination to make up for lost time. As a result, we have been steadily spreading our wings, building up an increasing range of activities that we can engage in. New initiatives have included: two of our coffee morning talks being delivered by College members about exciting new developments (structural and student course) currently being undertaken by the College; our first hybrid talk that extended the invitation to College fellows and staff to join; an almost spur of the moment 'do it ourselves' book club; the summer picnic gaining the reading of some favourite poems to add to the mix; and two short expertly guided RSM insider knowledge walks, the first with a coffee shop breather, the second ending with a pub lunch – another first.

Secondly, although we have for some years been attending one Formal Hall each term, this year we found ourselves choosing occasions that each had a theme including the wonderful Doctor Who dinner. Unlike many participants, we could of course remember the very first, scary episodes. The tables were turned the next time with the first ever Vegan only menu Formal Hall – definitely for many of us a true spreading of our wings.

Thirdly, each year we inevitably find ourselves saying a final farewell to some RSMs who are no longer with us. Just as I was preparing to write my Chair's Letter one

eagled eyed obituary column reader noticed that a recent edition of The Times mentioned 'our' David Male (aged 96). He is often credited as being the instigator and a founder member of the RSMA who was still in contact with Anne Thwaites when she sent him messages through snail mail. Earlier in the year we had similar news of Bob Burn (aged 89). The reason I have singled out David and Bob here is that each in their own way enabled (at least) two current RSMs to spread their wings.

In David's case, it was Pat Cooper. Having met David earlier in "the heady days of the early Seventies" when she had worked in another institution, at some later stage when David had come to Homerton, "[he] was instrumental in my appointment initially to the Language and Literacy in a very part-time capacity and thanks to him I eventually achieved full-time status in the Drama Department. I owe my ten-year career at Homerton entirely to him."

In Bob's case, it was me! I had been teaching Secondary School Maths for 15 years and had reached the heights of Head of Department and Acting Deputy Head, when in 1988 I saw an advertisement for two posts at Homerton and was subsequently interviewed by Bob and his then colleague Bob Hall. More experienced applicants were offered the posts, but it turned out that Bob had just accepted a new post at Exeter and he wondered whether I would like to have a secondment from school and contribute to the department's work until a new Head of Department had been appointed to start in January. To cut a long story short (or not) that one term turned into 24 years! I had the pleasure of mixing undergraduate mathematics and mathematics education. Bob gave me the opportunity to pursue a career that I never dreamt of when I started my probationary year as a young teacher. More than just spreading my wings, Bob absolutely changed my life. I would like to think that he knew this, but sadly I never told him face to face.

Spreading of Wings should really end here having enumerated one, two and three. But when I mentioned to my husband that I had the 'strapline for this year' as someone who knows all the details of what is going in each Newsletter, he immediately connected it with this year's front page photo and Steve Watt's Bird Watching article. Oh well!

*Kind regards,
Libby*





Principal's Message

Simon Woolley, Lord Woolley of Woodford

This past year has been significant for me for many reasons including becoming Deputy Vice Chancellor for the University, but it is Homerton student leadership that we've witnessed in many guises that stands out for everyone in and around our wonderful College.

The end of this academic year was particularly poignant both for me and the undergraduate students that graduated. The end of term marked a remarkable three-year academic journey that began with their start at Homerton as students and mine too as Principal. The world was gently coming out of Covid lockdown with many restrictions still in place. But we got through that along with many ups and I guess a few downs over the three-year period.

So, on their sun drenched graduation day I reminded them that we all embarked on this journey together. Furthermore, I enquired, "if we are all honest, we all probably felt like imposters; asking the question - how did they let us in?" But on this day, I witnessed before me a group of about 200 graduands who couldn't be more

confident in their ability, and their self-awareness in regard to how they might use all the skills they've learnt in wonderful ways.

Over these years, and especially this year, I've watched in awe how these young men and woman quickly moved from surviving Cambridge to wonderfully thriving here, and I'm sure the Homerton experience added a great deal to that.

However, I'm under a little bit of pressure to finish this piece by noon today, partly because the lovely Libby is waiting and I'm a bit behind (not for the first time!) but also because it's the staff party this afternoon. Food vans, games and perhaps a glass of wine or two - a chance for me and the senior leadership team to say thank you. To remember that every cog in the wheel is as important as the next. Homerton is a global beacon for academic excellence and diversity but without the "background team" none of that would be possible.

And as the reigning cornhole champion, I welcome all challengers!



A welcome visitor to our now usual jam-packed coffee mornings



Photo call for the "background team"



Reigning cornhole champion

RSMs are very grateful for the always warm welcome we receive from everyone in College, helping us to continue to feel very much part of Homerton life. Thank You.





Birdwatching for Beginners

Steve Watts

One-up from trainspotters, bird watchers haven't got the best reputation for being cool. We do wear knitted hats and clomp about in green waterproofs; and have been known to congregate with binoculars and 'scopes gazing into a field for reasons quite opaque to passers-by. To set the record straight, though, we aren't all 'twitchers' (jumping into a car at the drop of a hat to see rare birds in faraway places), nor do we neglect the other delights that a walk in the countryside offers, from glorious views to excellent cakes in reserve cafes. Truth is, it's a sociable hobby, as much about the people you watch with as the birds you watch.

After a few years enjoying walking for its own sake, I became interested in the fleeting glimpses of birds I passed by. Vague recollections of knowing more about them when I was a youngster, even, shameful to admit, collecting their eggs, encouraged me to find out more. In turn this led to the great moment for all 'birders', buying a pair of real binoculars. There's nothing like spending money to forge a commitment, and to be fair, the gear doesn't come cheap, so committed I was. Walks with 'bins' are definitely more rewarding than walks without them. Not only can you see the birds close up with their astonishing arrays of colour and form, but also watch their behaviour, going about their bird lives quite apart from ours.

So, a great pleasure gained, and one easy enough to maintain. Covid lockdown revealed just how much life was available on your own 'patch' as the daily hour's walk could take me to Coldham's Common and the brook that runs through it. Already by then, however, I had had the good fortune to join a birdwatching group, and, after lockdown ended, we began again to go and see birds together. Most of you will know Holly Anderson from Homerton; she turned out to be a fine birder who was able to introduce David Whitley and myself to the group she was in. Richard, our leader, turned out to be married to someone who had been part of the Homerton School for Nursing, and another member was revealed as Harriet Allen, now of Girton, but for years a colleague at Homerton. So, something of a home from home. Birdwatching with the group was an education in itself. Not only did Richard lead us to superb places for catching sight of interesting and unusual birds, but he and the group generously shared their knowledge, experience and interests, making each trip richly pleasurable (even when wet and cold).

How to describe the pleasures of watching birds? Nature writing is full of examples to avoid, though my favourite

remains Evelyn Waugh's version from his nature-, soon to be war-correspondent, Boot, in Scoop:

"Feather-footed through the plashy fen passes the queesting vole."

But birds have often found writers who do justice to their special qualities. Hopkins' vision of a kestrel in the 'Windhover', Yeats' 'Wild Swans at Coole' (and more particularly his 'feathered balls of soot', moorhen chicks in 'Meditations in Time of Civil War'), Hughes' 'Thrush', all come to mind. It doesn't take a poet, though, to admire the flash of orange and blue as a kingfisher darts past, or the elegance and ferocity of a hunting heron, or the astonishing variety and musicality of sound produced by an otherwise nondescript nightingale. Even the humble house sparrow (not as common as it once was) is a joy to watch on a garden feeder, displaying its complex gradations of colour and pattern. In short, they are magnificent creatures.

Like many birdwatchers I have been enticed abroad by the chance of seeing more and different birds, or the same birds in different circumstances. These trips, usually with specific providers of specific interest holidays, are in danger of seeing the world through overly specific eyes. And, indeed, I have been in groups where the idea of visiting a famous historical site, for example, has been met with a question as to what birds are we likely to see? Mostly, however, I have found that those who want to look at birds are also pretty keen on better understanding history, culture, art and food. I suppose this is where we might differ as a breed from trainspotters (with apologies to those who are and remain unblinker). As exemplary of the combined pleasures of such journeys I should mention the way a small, elusive and very beautiful wallcreeper refocussed our attention on the arches of the resplendent Pont du Gard in Provence.

I mentioned above that bird behaviour, even when we think we understand it, marks them as distinct and different from us. Sure, we can always find ways to see them as exhibiting or mimicking human attitudes and actions and can enjoy the cuteness while the image lasts. But soon after that fades, we begin to see them as distinct, as different, as other. It seems right to me that we recognise and enjoy their non-humanity, just as we should look at ourselves and recognise all that we share with other animals. Both may also allow us to see this difference as having its own value and these other animals their own right to share in a world we complacently call ours.





Electronic Gas Detection – BEd Project January 1982

Anne Thwaites

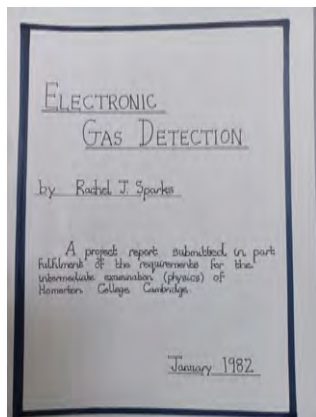
Several months ago, my friend and ex-colleague Rachel Linfield (née Sparks) asked if the archive might be interested in some of her files from her time as a student in Homerton (1980-1984). I contacted Svetlana Paterson (the College’s archivist) and she was happy to receive them. As yet I haven’t handed them over as I wanted to read them.

Rachel was a physics main student, gained a first in her finals and went on to teach at St Paul’s Primary School in Cambridge where Carole Bennett’s husband, Keith, was the head teacher. In 1992, Rachel was appointed to the full-time staff at Homerton as a member of the primary science team. During the previous three years she had taught one group each week whilst Homerton funded a supply teacher to teach her class. Subsequently she took on the role of co-ordinating professional studies for the BEd, working with many current members of the RSMA.

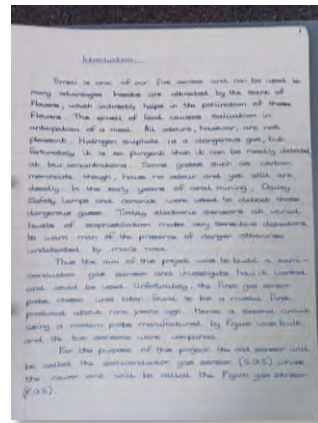


After a period of teaching reception classes at St Johns School, she moved with her husband Edmund and their daughters to Leeds. Rachel remains involved in initial teacher education on the staff at Leeds Beckett University.

Back to Rachel’s files. One of these was a project report submitted as part of the Intermediate Examination for physics and is about electronic gas detection. The report is handwritten, includes hand drawn diagrams, tables and graphs and includes some photographs of the equipment she used. The detectors are particularly useful where the



gases are odourless and the detectors are able to give an audio signal and quantify the level of gas present. In the project, Rachel used a commercial probe to collect the gas and built that into a circuit including an audio component and a gauge to measure levels of gas.



Various odours were tested including UHU adhesive, perfume, nail varnish, alcohol, tobacco smoke and methylated spirits. Initially this was to test if the detectors picked up an odour, but later stages involved taking meter readings over a time interval to gain a quantitative

picture. It’s interesting to wonder how some of these were generated – tobacco smoke in particular! Imagine trying to do that today.

The next experiment (it made me raise an eyebrow) was investigating alcohol retained on the breath. A volunteer was chosen (in the acknowledgements she is said to be ‘willing’; sadly, Rachel doesn’t remember her name!) who used Rachel’s form of breathalyser. An initial reading was taken, then she drank 100cm³ of cider and her breath was monitored, with alcohol still being detected an hour later. In the conclusion to this part of the project, Rachel notes ‘until recently, all breathalysing of motorists by the police was by chemical methods. Now however, tests are being carried out by various police forces using “alcometers” - electronic alcohol detectors which incorporate a means of calibration on the spot.’

This ability to quantify the alcohol in someone’s breath led to a major change in the law. In 1967, the then Transport Minister Barbara Castle had seen through an Act of Parliament which introduced the breathalyser as a way of testing a person’s blood alcohol concentration level at the roadside. The first home office approved breathalyser started to be used in 1968 and it was designed to detect if a person was over a set limit in their blood alcohol concentration. This was superseded by the Transport Act of 1981 which introduced evidential breath testing although this was not put into practice until 1983. The machine introduced at that time (which Rachel called



an 'alcometer') provided more accurate and reliable results that could be used as a basis of prosecution.

Rachel went on to test the sensitivity of her equipment – she built a large framework covered in polythene and then injected methanol into the space, measuring the rate of diffusion and time to set off an alarm. The photograph was taken in the physics lab in the black and white buildings – long demolished and partially replaced by the Faculty of Education building.



The final, rather hair-raising, experiment was to test the sensors with carbon monoxide. In the method she reports "A lawnmower was placed in a garage and the gas sensors probes were positioned ... whilst the rest of the apparatus was kept outside. The lawnmower was started, the doors shut, and it was timed how long it took for the gas sensors to give audio signals."

There are some interesting comments in her conclusions where Rachel says that there is a wide range of uses for gas detectors. She reports how one of the probes was held near the metal gas taps in an old laboratory of a technical

college in her hometown. Nine of the sixteen sets of taps had leaks but in an adjacent laboratory none of the new taps were faulty. "The laboratory technician described how he normally would test for leaks by smearing liquid around the taps and looking for bubbles". In the salutary following paragraph, Rachel reports that a mother and child had died during a very cold night that winter whilst sleeping in a kitchen by a coal fire. "Had the mother possessed a gas detector she and her child might still be alive today." A little later she comments "I have found it impossible to obtain any literature on gas detectors for the general house holder."

How things have changed in the last forty years. Now carbon monoxide detectors are readily available, but their installation has only been in the Building Regulations since 2010. Here it stated that "Where a fixed combustion appliance is provided, appropriate provision shall be made to detect and give warning of the release of carbon monoxide." This is nearly 30 years after Rachel wrote her report and referred to a replacement or new appliance, not to existing appliances. In 2015 landlords in the private sector had to install a carbon monoxide alarm in any room used as living accommodation where solid fuel (wood, coal, etc) is used. This was extended in 2022 to include gas boilers. Today a detector can be bought for under £20, some just over £10.

Finally, to one of the other pieces of work ... the printout of a computer programme along with a series of test runs using different numbers as an input. Beside one of these, a zero, is my pencilled comment "Oh, very nice" reflecting a good choice of test number. Little did I know then that 'choice of example' would become one of the cornerstones of the research project, the Knowledge Quartet, for a group of us, which Tim Rowland has described in earlier RSMA newsletters!



Enid Johnson

Earlier this year Derek Johnson sent an email so that RSMs would know that Enid "my beloved wife for 62 years" had died on April 18th. Enid's funeral was held in Newton, the village where she and Derek lived.

Enid herself was not, strictly speaking, an RSM, but of course Derek is, so Enid was, I would like to think, 'part of the family'. She certainly gave Derek her truly unfailing support and actively participated in Homerton's social life.

But Enid was more than that to Homerton. She had been a teacher at Queen Edith's primary school for many years and became a Professional Studies tutor at Homerton from 1988-94. It is a pleasure to include this photograph of Enid, taken in the summer of 1994, showing her being thanked by her group, made more special as this was her final group before 'proper' retirement.

I know that they were enjoying their retired life when a few years later I looked across to the next but one table in a restaurant in Dublin (I hasten to add that I was in Dublin for an IT conference) thinking 'it can't be'. But when the table in between was vacated, it clearly was Enid and Derek (they not quite believing it was me either) enjoying a short break. They told me about all the benefits of being retired, happy to be together and away from 'work'.

Libby





Ivory Towers and Pearls of Knowledge

Universities, colleges and the spreading of the wealth of knowledge

Kate Pretty

I began this piece with the intention of reviewing two books, published over a decade apart, which either mentioned Homerton or have close connections with the College. Indeed, our own Peter Cunningham is the lead editor of the earlier book. Here, in a series of essays called *Beyond the Lecture Hall*, various authors trace the history of universities and community engagement 'from the Middle Ages to the present day.' There are essays on the definition of a university, on the history of outreach, on the spread of adult education in the English-speaking world and finally on the decline in community engagement as seen in 2009. The second book, published last year, is *The Vital Message*, an account by Mark Freeman of continuing education and the University of Cambridge between 1945 and 2010, written to celebrate 150 years of community engagement at this university.

To my mind it is an honourable history. I was brought up in a liberal left-wing household where my working-class father, himself enriched by a grammar-school education, ran various adult education enterprises in Leeds, Darlington and east Devon. I have the text of a lecture he gave to an international audience in about 1947 in which he lays out the value of education in the post-war world. Once a Communist Party member he was a passionate advocate of teaching history, politics and economics. He knew that he could offer the fruits of his own education at the LSE, where he was an external, mature, student, to anyone who had been barred from that knowledge through class, gender or poverty. Eventually, in turn, I taught archaeology in Cambridge at the WEA when I was a graduate student though by then the well-heeled inhabitants of villages like Comberton were pursuing knowledge for rather different reasons. But the principle was the same.

Looked at from a present-day perspective, the principle is fraught with danger with the issues of privilege, class and social engagement. In the late 1860s and 70s the fellows of Trinity had no such qualms. They took note of the two leading trends of the day - the demand for the better education of girls and women and of the working class - and set up a system of networks, not just locally but across the north of England (our 'red wall' districts), and through extension lectures brought subjects like astronomy and mathematics from Cambridge to the provinces. Oxford followed and the 19th-century civic universities like Birmingham and Liverpool built community engagement into their founding practises. But Cambridge was the first. Such

community engagement enriched the University too. From about 1850 the university had accepted another social responsibility - the setting and marking of school examinations - which resulted in the Local Examinations Syndicate, discussed by our own Sandra Raban in *Beyond the Lecture Hall*, which brought fee income on a grand scale. This led to a huge increase in the provision of school textbooks which enriched in turn the University Press. It was either a virtuous circle or enlightened self-interest, depending on your attitude.

It has made me think about Homerton's role in all of this. Unlike most other Cambridge colleges (excepting the theological colleges and Hughes Hall) we were unusual in that community engagement is implicit in teacher-training. Moreover, among our Trustees were representatives of the local authorities, usually from their education committees, who, according to Tom Simms 'kept college policy in touch with those responsible for implementing national policies in education.'

Between the College and the hundreds of schools with whom we were in partnership there was considerable respect for we were engaged in a common enterprise and the question of privilege, of ivory-towered patronage, which threatens community engagement today, was rarely voiced, if at all. That said, when I first came as Principal, at my first College Forum I remember being surprised by the debate about which of the town's two universities we might seek to move closer to. Unthinking on my part and a salutary lesson to my father's daughter.

Homerton took community engagement for granted. Two examples come to mind; the first were the Saturday workshops for local children like Kay Meltzi's art classes and the Homerton Gym Club which was going strong when I first arrived. It wasn't just that Homerton could offer extra training and tuition to students intending to specialise in art, music or PE and had the facilities to do so; more it was about sharing those facilities with our local community and, in the untrammelled days before the research exercises, no-one minded how staff spent their time. The second example was the involvement with international partners, sharing expertise with India and Africa including Ethiopia. At the turn of the century Cambridge's sessional extra-mural classes were based at Homerton in the Mary Allen building, close to the station and with easy parking and in distinct contrast to the glories of the towers of Madingley Hall.



Both books describe a golden age of extra-mural involvement by Cambridge and elsewhere but one under threat from government who will no longer fund universities to provide a liberal adult education at a sub-degree level. Notably only Cambridge and Oxford have continued to do so and the future at Cambridge is under threat. There are of course new ways to acquire knowledge, through the web and distance learning, but that is to be divorced from other students and shared learning and from direct contact with teachers and places of learning. And that divorce pushes us back to the distancing, the re-instatement of the ivory tower

whose pearls of knowledge are losing value and I find that I regret that on a deeply personal level.

References

Beyond the Lecture Hall: Universities and community engagement from the middle ages to the present day Peter Cunningham (Ed.) with Susan Oosthuizen and Richard Taylor. University of Cambridge Faculty of Education and Institute of Continuing Education 2009

The Vital Message: Continuing Education and the University of Cambridge 1945-2010. Mark Freeman. Regents Court Press 2023



The Disruption of Higher Education in University Education Departments

Elaine Wilson

At the time of writing in June 2024, there are significant global teacher shortages, with England experiencing particularly severe issues. The shortages are caused by a combination of under-recruitment and low retention rates in schools. In 2023, over 40,000 teachers left the state sector, representing 9.6% of the teaching workforce, a figure slightly higher than the pre-pandemic year. Concurrently, teacher recruitment is at a historic low, with 10 out of 17 secondary subjects expected to under-recruit in 2024. As a result, teacher vacancies surged by 20%, rising from 2,300 in November 2022 to 2,800 in November 2023, and more than doubling over the past three years from 1,100 in November 2020. The number of temporarily filled positions also grew, increasing from 2,100 to 3,700 during the same period.¹

Teacher Shortages: How Have We Got to This Point?

The next sections draw on the most recent data from both the Department for Education (DfE) and the Faculty of Education along with interpretation based on over thirty years of direct teaching experience in schools and as a teacher educator in England and more recent work with colleagues in a range of international contexts.²

Teacher shortages identified in England can be linked directly to the policy decisions and actions over the last fourteen years. Whilst the Cambridge school-university partnership courses were and still are constantly striving to do what Tim Brighouse termed as ‘improving *on previous best*’ it feels like the Cambridge programmes have spent the last fourteen years reacting to regressive and overly centralised constant structural changes. The next sections will set out the evidence for these claims.

Disrupt university-school partnership models of teacher recruitment

Almost certainly one of the primary causes of the recruitment crisis was the decision to close university Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. This government decision was deeply political and ran counter to evidence in England³ and the teacher education professional practices of high-performing countries in the world.⁴ Early signs that closing university education departments was likely to be a key policy drive was set out in both the 2008 Policy Exchange pamphlet ‘More Good Teachers’⁵ and the 2010 white paper ‘Importance of Teaching’⁶. When the coalition government came to power their focus was on redirecting teacher training applications to new school-based routes and in promoting the heavily subsidized Teach First routes. Alongside these changes, new state-funded free schools and academy trusts were set up. These schools were permitted to appoint unqualified teachers and were also exempted from the strict Ofsted accountability system operating in the majority of state schools.

However, despite the clear pressure on higher education providers, School Direct did not attract as many prospective teachers as expected. Indeed, most schools continued to work in school-university partnership programmes.

Cut direct funding to university departments

In November 2010, the DfE published ‘The Case for Change’⁷ in which they recommended cutting direct university funding and reducing the allocation of university places so that education departments would be forced to close. At the same time, Post Graduate



Certificate of Education (PGCE) students were required to pay tuition fees for ITE courses while Teach First courses were fully funded. However, most universities supported their education departments and most continued to offer well-respected ITE programmes. Figures 1 and 2 show how the allocation of primary and secondary PGCE places in the Faculty of Education has

fallen since 2005. The Faculty diligently complied with meeting all the changes being forced on it. These included meeting compulsory DfE targets to avoid financial sanctions and following arbitrary year-on-year DfE allocation of places. Since 2021, the situation with secondary allocations has worsened to an all-time low for all providers in England.



Figure 1: Trends in the allocation of Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge places and actual uptake of primary phase applicants

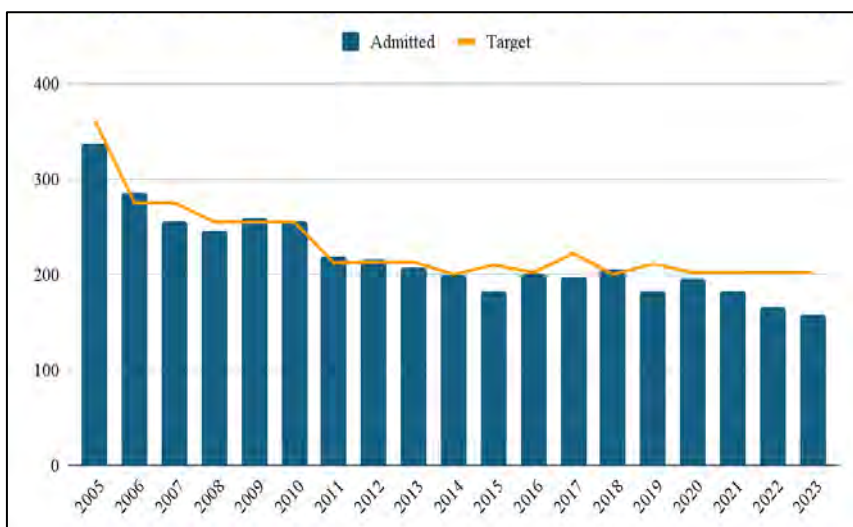


Figure 2: Faculty of Education places and actual uptake of secondary phase applicants

In 2023/24, 44% of postgraduate ITT entrants were recruited by higher education institutions, 24% through the fee-funded School Direct route, 3% through the salaried School Direct route, 19% entered School-Centred ITT (SCITT), 6% through Teach First (known as high-potential Initial Teacher Training), and 4% through postgraduate teaching apprenticeships.⁸

Figure 3 (next page) shows the actual data from the 2024 school workforce census.

The clear intention of the policies was to squeeze university funding along with fairly drastic structural changes to teacher education and school systems so that Initial Teacher Training and Education would be further

devalued, and universities would close these courses down. In 2024 this had not succeeded and despite enormous difficulties higher education institutions were still the main providers of ITT.

Dominant the narrative and silence alternate views.

Following the 2015 election, the extent, depth and determination of the government to rapidly and permanently disrupt university provision continued. The antagonistic and provocative negative characterization of academics and research within Schools of Education was increased. Indeed in 2015 the Cambridge PGCE History course almost closed because of a drastically reduced allocation of graduate students.

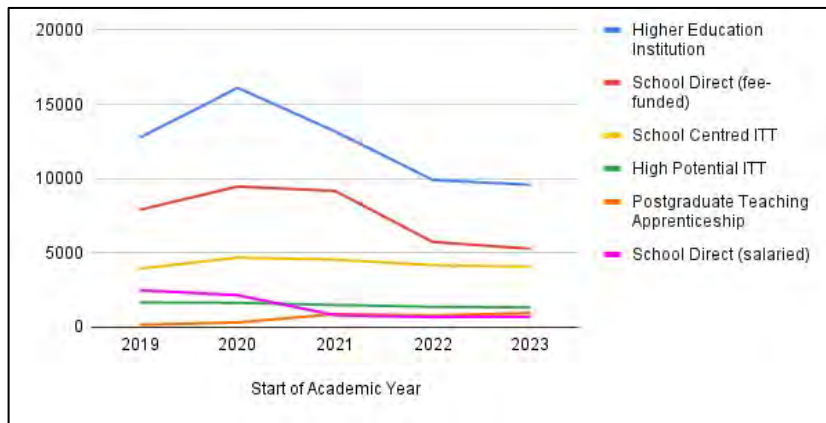


Figure 3: Total recruitment in England by route Data: Gov. UK School Workforce census 2024⁹

The decision was reversed overnight following a very vociferous Twitter campaign by PGCE alumni, the PGCE History team and others in the Faculty.¹⁰ DfE Special Policy Advisors controlled the communications in education. Consequently, social media narratives continued to criticise education faculties despite having no evidence for their arguments. In fact, by all the DfE metrics of student satisfaction, school reviews and Ofsted inspections, University-based Initial Teacher Education scored highly.¹¹ All alternative views were silenced, and an echo chamber of loud pro-disruption supporters, described by Melissa Benn as the ‘New Educational Establishment’¹² selected by ministers and their special advisors, dominated debate and policy-making implementation. Indeed in 2023, it was revealed that the

DfE had monitored and kept files on the social media activity of some educational experts.¹³

Devalue university-based teacher research, Privilege ‘what works’ research

In 2011 the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) was set up with a DfE start-up grant of £603 million. In 2013 the EEF and Sutton Trust were jointly designated by the DfE as the *What Works Centre for Education*. The EEF places a strong emphasis on research methodologies, such as randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and systematic reviews. Universities seeking funding had to comply with this approach. See Figure 4 for the most recent funding allocation data.

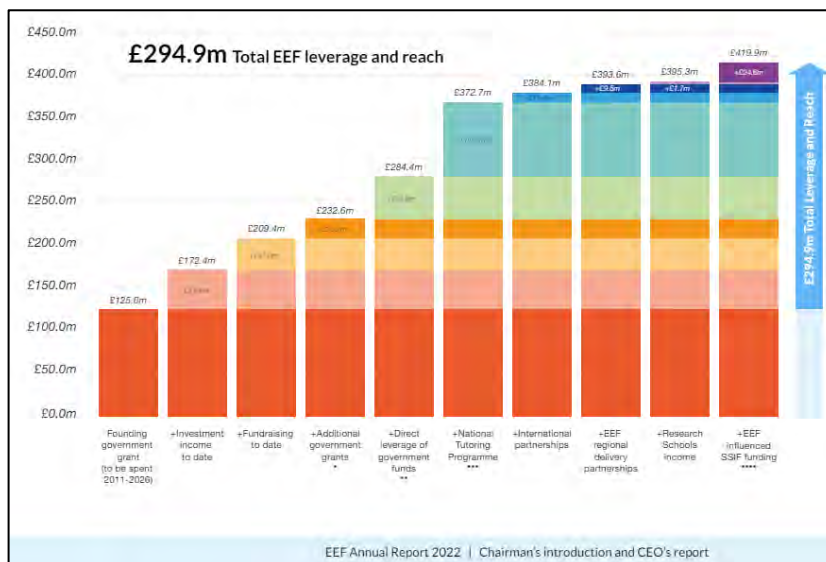


Figure 4: EEF funding allocation 2022¹⁴

Universities traditionally received funding from a variety of sources, including direct government grants, to conduct educational research. The DfE’s focus on EEF meant a significant portion of funding was funnelled through a single organization, altering the competitive landscape.

The DfE’s decision to fund educational research primarily through the EEF had a substantial impact on

university research, influencing what research was conducted, how it was conducted, and which institutions were able to secure funding. This approach likely increased the emphasis on practical, evidence-based interventions, while also presenting challenges related to competition, alignment with EEF priorities, and administrative demands.



The deprofessionalisation of university-based teacher education.

From 2019 to 2022 the DfE experienced a turbulent period with seven different secretaries of state appointed by three different prime ministers as well as the drastic impact of a global pandemic. This vacuum allowed the minister of state, Nick Gibb, along with his influential special policy advisors to plough on with their drive to close university-based initial teacher education programmes. Although the DfE's 2021 ITT Market Review and the Early Career Framework (ECF) were intended to 'improve the quality, ensure consistency, and foster stronger links between theoretical and practical training',¹⁵ the next steps involved a series of curriculum documents and prescriptive top-down directives. The all-party parliamentary group agreed that the market review was flawed and represented an existential threat to teacher supply.¹⁶

In their 2021 book *About our Schools* Brighouse & Waters¹⁷ describe the recommendations by the ECF as being restricted to planning and checking and closing down horizons and pushing teachers to view their role more like technicians trying to get procedures right rather than being professionally curious and thinking like a teacher.

In 2021 the DfE went further, introducing a compulsory ITT accreditation process¹⁸ which stepped up the centralisation process and insisted on total compliance with a one-size-fits-all approach to teacher education, linked directly to being given permission to run ITT programmes and the allocation of places.

In a Cambridge University setting this is the equivalent of the history department having to apply for permission to recruit and teach students. At the DfE a small group of Mathematics graduates working as DfE special policy advisors read and approved the content of the curriculum on offer, the teaching methods permitted as well as checking that reading lists conformed with those prescribed in the review. This would be an affront to the professionalism of expert educators with a long history and tradition of educating young people, as it is for the team in the Faculty of Education.

In a time of teacher shortages, it seems very strange that university-based teacher education programmes would be closed because they did not gain accreditation through this process. Indeed only 179 providers made it through the Department for Education's two reaccreditation rounds this year, well below the 240 providers operating in England last year. 68 providers that either did not apply or were unsuccessful were responsible for 4,491 trainees, 16 per cent of those nationally, including 605 teachers in STEM subjects.¹⁹

Final Push, set up The National Institute for Teaching²⁰

In 2022 a consortium of four large academy trusts was awarded a £125m start-up to set up the National Institute of Teaching (NIoT) based on the model used by the US

Relay Graduate College.²¹ The NIoT-prescribed model of teacher education is largely based on the idea that effective teaching can be deconstructed into specific, actionable techniques that can be learned and mastered by educators to improve student outcomes.

Despite having no track record of running teacher education programmes, the Institute's training programmes commenced in September 2022, to deliver evidence-based approaches to teacher training, mentoring, early career support, leadership courses, and continued professional development.

The period 2010 – 2024 has been a spiral of increased centralisation with an ever-shrinking group of influencers exerting disproportionate control over the system. This has had very serious repercussions on teacher recruitment and retention and I fear will continue to do so for the next few years.

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Thomas Raffles: my great-great-great-grandfather

Gabrielle Cliff Hodges

In May 2013, *The Homertonian* carried an article by Peter Warner about identifying former Homerton students or lecturers who also appeared as authors on the Homerton College library website. Peter included Thomas Raffles (1788-1863) whom he described as an author, biographer and Homerton student (1805-09) when Homerton was still a dissenting academy in London. Raffles went on to become an apparently much-loved, longstanding Congregationalist minister in Liverpool. Having undertaken some family history research, I realised that Thomas Raffles was my great-great-great-grandfather and, although I was interested to discover that he, like me, had been a student at Homerton, there is sadly not much else which now connects us.

It is very hard, at a distance of over two hundred years, to appreciate what Raffles might have been like as a person, though he is described as genial and appears to have worked exceptionally hard at his ministry. He was, as Peter Cunningham said in his RSMA Newsletter article (2023) about former Homerton students, like many other dissenters at the time, very involved with the Anti-Slavery Society. His eldest son (also Thomas), compiled a biography after his father's death, drawing heavily on Raffles' many surviving letters, diaries, sermons and other writings. He, too, mentions Raffles' involvement with people in Liverpool who were committed to the abolition of slavery, despite Liverpool being "a place very unfavourable to the views and opinions of those who urged that the foul stain of slavery should be altogether blotted out" (Raffles, 1864 p. 220).

Raffles moved from London to Liverpool in 1812. The previous year, a young man called Thomas Spencer, the popular minister of Newington Chapel, Liverpool, had died a tragic early death by accidental drowning in the Mersey. His services were so well attended that a vast new chapel had begun to be built for him. Raffles was persuaded to take over Spencer's ministerial position and thus was, in due course, inducted into the Great George Street Congregationalist Chapel. For almost the whole of the rest of his life he remained there as minister, apparently much-revered, often preaching to congregations of around two thousand people from all walks of life. (That must have been quite a challenge, not without interest to those of us who have either been teachers and/or involved in teacher education, all too well aware of the vital importance of being able to project one's voice!)

Despite not having known his predecessor, Raffles was persuaded to write Thomas Spencer's biography which proved to be very popular indeed, running into numerous

editions. Raffles said that "in order to supply the lack of personal acquaintance, I introduced his name into every company I entered, and set the people talking about him. This they were always ready enough to do, and thus I became as well acquainted with him as though I had been his intimate companion". As an English teacher, I thought that sounded like a very interesting approach to biographical writing, as well as shining something of a light on Raffles himself as a listener and writer about other people.

As Peter Warner explained in his article, Raffles was a varied and prolific writer. As well as letters, diaries, and sermons (for the latter he said he used a form of shorthand he had developed at Homerton so that he could read what he had written while appearing to speak spontaneously), he also wrote poetry and hymns. He made time for travelling, too, frequently to preach, but also for the pleasure of touring different (not to mention "Romantic") places whether near home or further afield in Europe. However, he was not beyond being chided by his wife, Mary, who was anxious that he was spending too much time away from his home and children and said he needed to pare back a bit, something he obviously found rather hard, but attempted nevertheless.

Raffles was a Congregationalist minister in Liverpool for more than forty-five years until he eventually became too unwell to continue. In addition to his unremitting hard work, he was sometimes beset by illness and injury, as well as disasters such as the complete destruction by fire of the Great George Street Chapel in February 1840, although he oversaw its subsequent rebuilding. (It still exists in Liverpool but is now an arts centre rather than a chapel.) Raffles' beloved wife also died unexpectedly beside him in her sleep, sadly on his 55th birthday, 17th May 1843. They had been married for twenty-eight years. Some of his children and grand-children (including my great-great-grandfather and great-grandmother) lived near him in Liverpool, though, and his household appears – from the census returns of 1851 and 1861 – to have been a very full one which also included his widowed sister.

Interestingly, though, it would seem that in the final years of Raffles' life the person who looked after him particularly well was his longstanding housekeeper, Emily Snell (born in Colchester, Essex, a very long way from Liverpool). She had been with him for over twenty years, perhaps much longer. Like so many women at that time who were likely to have been born into impoverished families, Emily Snell would almost certainly have been expected to move into domestic service to earn her own keep rather than remain in her



own home. The role of housekeeper, according to *Beeton's Book of Household Management* (1861), originally published just a couple of years ahead of Raffles' death, was second only to that of the mistress of the house and required – at least according to Mrs Beeton – an extraordinary and demanding set of attributes including cleanliness, honesty, cookery, accounting, oversight of the domestic team, good health, ability to deal with tradesmen ... the list goes on and on.

What happened to Emily Snell after Raffles' death is not entirely clear, though I have found a reference in both the 1871 census and 1881 census to one Emily Snell (annuitant), born in Colchester, Essex, and living in the village of Oxton on the Wirral peninsula with one servant. If she was the same person, then it may be that someone in the Raffles family looked out for her after Thomas Raffles died. Or perhaps he left her a bequest in his will? That would have been in character, I suspect.

We can probably never know, though, whether or not that would have been what Emily Snell really wanted.

Thanks to Raffles' "Memoir" being digitised, I have been able to read it online. But I remain entirely in the debt of Peter Warner and Peter Cunningham for their historical research which drew my attention to him in the first place.

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RSMA Summer Picnic with Poems: Infant School memories

In the 1880s, Charlotte Mason founded the Parents National Educational Union (PNEU), to promote her philosophy for early education.

I gained my Infant School education at St Agnes PNEU School in Leeds hand in hand with our parents' encouragement to develop the skills of recollection and public speaking. For me, such introductory wisdoms included developing the habit of careful attention, exploratory thinking and oracy. Story 'writing' was not encumbered by the requirement to write my ideas on paper. Learning to write was a manipulative skill practised in copy books. We told our story to a parent who wrote it for us and helped us, if needed, to tell it or to read it out to the class.

This experience has never left me as I selected two of the treasured poems we performed all those years ago to recite at the RSMA Summer Picnic.

Trish Maude

Bunny was Hungry

Bunny was hungry, bunny popped out,
Ate a piece of parsley and a Brussel sprout.
No-one saw bunny, only just me.
I won't tell anyone what bunny had for tea.

Anon

The Caterpillar

Brown and furry caterpillar, in a hurry,
Make your way to the shady leaf or stalk or what not
Which shall be your chosen spot.
No toad espy you, bird of prey pass by you.
Spin and die, live again a butterfly.

Christina G. Rossetti

A big **thank you** is due to John Hopkins
for taking on the role of Newsletter Editor for the last two years.
Unfortunately, John is unable to continue for next year,
so Libby is looking for a new helper!





... this all stems from naming 'that flower' ...

Philip Stephenson

Ever since I was sixteen, I have regretted taking my father's advice to focus on science rather than my preferred route which would have been History of Art. Since retiring from the Faculty of Education in 2014 I have devoted my time to researching about, writing about and talking about western fine art (principally paintings). I also still have academic associations with the Department of Art Education at Palacky University in Olomouc, Moravia where I am in regular exchange with like-minded colleagues.

Earlier this year, I posed a question to RSM horticulturalists and botanists as to whether they could identify the potted plant with the orange flowers in this picture. After much deliberation, the consensus was that it was a Pot Marigold (*Calendula officinalis*).



Gerrit Dou, *Woman at a Window with a Copper Bowl of Apples and a Cock Pheasant*,
1663
Oil on panel
38.5 x 27.7 cm.
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

This conclusion was supported by the Metropolitan Museum of Art who, in their interpretation of the Gerrit Dou self-portrait that they have in their collection, wrote:

This self-portrait is a 1665 niche painting by Gerrit Dou. It shows the artist at the peak of his fame, holding a palette and surrounded by studio objects. In the foreground is a pot of marigolds.

As is always the case in these Dutch Golden Age paintings, flowers serve an important symbolic function and, in this case, the Marigolds are believed to promote happiness, creativity, and productivity.

The Dutch held great stock by flowers and particularly tulips. Walk into the Dutch section of any major Western art collection and you will be overwhelmed by flower paintings and genre paintings that include floral motifs such as this example. Not only were flowers an important part of the Dutch economy, but crucially, served an important moral and spiritual purpose in art. Calvinist doctrine forbade the literal representation of biblical subjects so artists had to adopt more subtle ways to convey fundamental religious ideas.

All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.
Isaiah 40, 6–8

It could be said that since all plants are doomed, like men, to fade and wither, all flower paintings necessarily carry intimations of mortality. A lovely example of how this is implied can be seen in Rachel Ruysch's *A Spray of Flowers*.



Here, the artist compiles a simple but beautiful array of flowers for the bouquet that includes blue convolvulus and white roses among others.

However, beneath the veneer of superficial beauty and opulence already there are signs of infestation by insects attacking the leaves. Then we have a medlar fruit – only edible once it has started to rot while the whole thing is set on a stone table, reminiscent of a mortician’s slab. These all serve to present the viewer with an uncomfortable *memento mori*. Regardless of our material riches and youthful beauty, life is transient – we are each of us bound to *withereth* and *fadeth*.

Flowers can also have a more general religious significance as evidence of the miracle of God's Creation. The idea of nature as revelation of God’s goodness and power was widespread in the Renaissance. The great humanist philosopher Erasmus of Rotterdam, wrote in 1527:

In my opinion Nature is not mute, but is everywhere full of speech, and teaches the observer many things, if she finds him attentive and ready to learn. What else does that pleasant face of verdant Nature proclaim than that God’s wisdom is equal to his goodness?



Rachel Ruysch, *A Spray of Flowers*,
c.1690-94
Oil on canvas
30.4 x 36.6 cm.
Fitzwilliam Museum. Acc. no. PD.38-1975



Unknown maker/s, *Iznik Tile*

Turkey 1575-1600 CE.
Buff coloured fritware, coated in a white slip and painted
with red, green, blue and black glaze.
21.8 x 21.9 cm.
Fitzwilliam Museum, Acc. no. C.41-1924

A similar idea is found in the East. While Islamic art almost never includes the human figure, flowers recur throughout as symbols of Allah’s creation. A sixteenth-century Islamic tile from the Fitzwilliam’s collection was made in Damascus and decorated with a tulip and other flowers of the field.



Jan Breughel the Younger, *An Allegory of Tulipmania*, c.1640

Oil on panel
31 x 49 cm.

© public domain, courtesy of Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem

Once again, the tulip crops up and prompts some account of the strange Dutch Golden Age phenomenon that came to be known as Tulip Mania.

Here, in a painting held in the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem, monkeys in contemporary 17th century Dutch dress are shown dealing in tulips. A satirical commentary on speculators during the time of *Tulip Mania*, an economic bubble that centred around rare tulip bulbs. At left, one monkey points to flowering tulips while another holds up a tulip and a moneybag. Bulbs are weighed, money is counted, a lavish business dinner is enjoyed. The monkey at left has a list of rare tulips, his sword denotes upper class status. Farther back, a monkey sits like a nobleman astride a horse.

One in mid-foreground draws up a bill of sale; the

owl on his shoulder symbolizes foolishness and ignobility. Brueghel is not only ridiculing tulip speculators as brainless monkeys, the work is also an object lesson for the folly of speculating to such an extent in such a transient thing as a mere bloom. In the denouement at right, a monkey gleefully urinates on the now worthless tulips; fellow speculators in debt are brought before the magistrate or weep in the dock. A frustrated buyer brandishes his fists, while at the back right a speculator is carried to his grave.

When you next get the chance, pop into the Fitzwilliam Museum Dutch Golden Age rooms and soak up the array of sublime, naturalistic representations of the floral paintings along with their attendant insect, mollusc, arachnid and, occasionally, simian characters.

Probabilities

In my Chair's Letter last year, I mentioned my visit to a Prom, something that I didn't think would happen again during lockdown but added "A visit to the Proms can in no way be connected to Homerton?". Really? Well this year I went to two Proms on consecutive nights (having incidentally been 41 thousand and something in a randomised generated queue when booking opened). I do not Prom but opt for Centre Stalls. The second night was a 'sell out', except for the three seats next to me, though these were filled with latecomers, drinks in hand after the first movement of the first piece – and to cap it all one of their phones went off – but that's by the by. When the interval came, I heard someone in the row in front, one to the left, tell her friend directly in front of me, that she was just popping out, in what I thought was a very familiar voice. Yes, it was Judith Witt. She had come with Jill Craske, her colleague in the Conference Office. What is the probability in a hall of say 5,500+ people (including those standing) we could be allocated those adjacent seats - not forgetting that we also had chosen the same one out of more than 70 Prom concerts.

So yes, the Proms and Homerton can go together.

Now if only Philip Stephenson had made his visit to The Garden Museum a week earlier (he mentioned visiting it in his Art Column a few days afterwards that he sends to us periodically) he too may have bumped into me.

PS. To complete the three buses routine, earlier I mention my chance Dublin encounter with Enid & Derek Johnson.

Libby





Another year in the life of ...

Lizzie Madder

It's now the third year since Peter and I retired. Life seems to have become even more busy and I wonder how I've managed to fit in any painting at all over the past twelve months, never mind sewing, embroidery, theatre trips ...

In June 2023, we visited Dubrovnik, staying just outside the old city walls. Whilst the old city was beautiful, it was over-packed with tourists (and we realise that we're part of the problem) and it was much too hot for me and my wobbly heart. We had watched the kayaking in the sea every day from the hotel's balconies, and decided we'd have a go one early evening. However, we hadn't taken into account Peter's balance problems. What had looked from the hotel like an Adriatic millpond, we quickly realised was nothing like! Peter could only grip the sides of the kayak as the sea rocked us around. Fortunately, the kayak guys had spotted us having problems and came out in their motorboat and towed us back to the beach. We felt rather foolish. Two old codgers who should have known better. We will stick with the river at Houghton in future!

Do you know about the lavender farm at Bluntisham, open at the weekends from June to August? It's a lovely way to spend an afternoon, picking your own bunches of fragrant lavender, and to have a lavender ice cream. (Cambridgeshirelavender.co.uk).

In September, we travelled to France - first to Rouen, then to a house in Brittany for a six week stay. I'd been brushing up my French for some weeks, determined not to leave all the talking to Peter. We had a very relaxing time, visiting many towns and villages, usually no more than 45 minutes away.

We discovered Becherel, a village with 16 secondhand book shops, a mini Hay on Wye. Peter was overjoyed to come across a bookshop called 'Neiges D'Antan'...from the poem by Francois Villon, which Peter had loved since his youth. He even managed to discover a secondhand copy of Villon poetry. (*Ou sont les neiges d'antan - where are the snows of yesteryear?*).

We also fell in love with the coastal scenery at St Jac de la Mer. To break our journey homeward, we stopped at Chateau de Behen, only an hour from Calais, which was a beautiful place, run by two quirky brothers.

No sooner were we back in Earith, I abandoned my French lessons in favour of Italian. Knowing nothing

more than 'ciao' and 'vino rosso', I was starting from basics and now spend half an hour a day studying Italian via Duolingo.



Secondhand Bookshop in Becherel

Once again, I entered the annual Open Art Exhibition in October. I didn't sell any paintings until two hours from closing time - and then sold three!

I discovered the courses being run by the Botanic Gardens and signed up for a two-day painting pine cones course, which was fun. It was good to be using my 00 and 000 brushes again.



A pine cone



Peter and I also signed up for a one-day spoon carving course. I imagined a pleasant day whittling wood. It turned out to be very physical. We were each given a log which then had to be axed, chopped, planed - very exhausting. I was rather worried at lunchtime that I seemed to still have a log! We were a group of 12, using the same template but we each produced a different spoon!



Same template ... different spoons!

In January I was invited back to give tuition to the Prickwillow art group, and decided to get the group painting nobbly vegetables - celeriac, swedes, turmeric etc. They produced some brilliant work. I was much impressed, but oh what hard work is this teaching lark!

Kettles Yard put out a request for people to sew date stones onto strips of fabric, for an art installation being put together by Issam Kourbaj, Christ's College's artist-in-residence. So I joined a group of other sewers at Kettles Yard stitching hundreds of date stones onto fabric. I've not yet seen the finished installation.

In March, I finally got to use my Italian. We went first to Bologna, staying in the university quarter, where it seemed that everyone was getting married! Confetti, bouquets, champagne, wreaths in the hair...until it was explained to us that students were graduating! They certainly know how to celebrate. Then we went by train to Lake Garda to stay with friends. We visited the spectacular Heller Botanic Garden, with its amazing sculptures by Keith Haring, Roy Lichtenstein, Fernand Léger and many more.

I was back in England just in time to go on the RSMA

Ely ramble. It was a perfect day, a lovely walk organised by Linda Hargreaves, in a part of Ely I'd not seen before, and ending perfectly with a pub lunch at the Cutter Inn.

In April, we went to Gunton Hall near Lowestoft for a four-day country music festival, which was great fun. We discovered line dancing! People danced every evening and I'd never seen such energy in people 'of a certain age'! Was this the Elixir of Youth? We decided we should learn and have now joined a class in St Ives. It's a great form of exercise, good for balance, the mind and those stiff hips!



An example of painting nobbly vegetables

We've rounded this year off with a five-day trip to Lanzarote, where my sister had been staying for six weeks. The weather was a perfect 23/24 degrees. However, on day 3, my heart started playing up again, and after a visit to the local clinic, I was rushed by ambulance (with siren and lights) to the only hospital on the island, a 45 minute, high speed journey! All rather scary, and Peter had to follow in a taxi. I didn't see him for a couple of hours whilst I was being wired up and examined. Fortunately, medication got my heart back to normal and I was discharged in the early evening. It was a pity I hadn't learned any Spanish, but lucky that I had a doctor who could speak a little English.

It was very good to get back to Earith!

Trish's Retirement

Choral Evensong on Tuesday 11th June 2024 was this year's Leavers' Service and also marked Trish's final service in her role as Honorary Lay Chaplain. Trish started her role (she thinks in 2016, or about 10 years ago, Daniel the Director of Music told her recently) and felt it was time that she should 'call it a day' or perhaps 'hang up her boots' and retire. Several RSMs marked this retirement by going to that Evensong for one of our 'treasures'. We especially enjoyed hearing the choir singing the anthem, chosen by Trish, *For the beauty of the earth* with John Rutter's wonderful music.

It has always been so lovely on all the occasions that I have seen Trish and the Charter Choir in their various incarnations to see their love for her. A special bond and an end of an era.

Libby





How a failed rock star morphed into a mandolin player

Philip Rundall

Throughout most of my 25 years as a tutor at Homerton I had a parallel life as an electric guitar player. There was nevertheless a cost to be paid for this and it presented itself in the form of my not understanding a single word when it came to questions at the end of formal lectures. Although hearing aids have been a great boon, hearing speech in particular, remains a problem for me. Had I the chance to start all over again, I would now choose to be an acoustic player.

In 2001, when I gave up playing in *The Backyard Band*, I formed an acoustic blues group called *Free Agents* with singer and guitarist David Doddington and Myke Clifford the sax and flute player. This was followed by another acoustic group with Jon Betmead, Dave & Lynne Olney and Nick Barraclough, and we were modestly called *The Famous 4 + 1*. When all this ended, I began to study acoustic bluegrass flatpicking guitar online with the great Bryan Sutton in around 2012. (Seek him out on YouTube and you'll see what I mean. He's something special.) This was challenging and it was like starting from scratch as it's a completely different approach to playing the guitar. My growing interest in bluegrass eventually led me to join Mike Marshall's online mandolin school, and within months Mike urged me to attend *The Mandolin Symposium* at the University of California in Santa Cruz, in 2015. This was a pivotal experience for me as I got to meet some of the world's leading players, including David Grisman and Caterina Lichtenberg, and I fell in love with the mandolin. (As far as I'm aware, Caterina is the only professor of classical mandolin in the world, and she happens to be Mike Marshall's wife and musical partner.) Whenever I have attended classes given by leading players, both for mandolin and guitar, I have always been struck by the seriousness with which they approach their teaching - they simply want to share their knowledge and their love for their instruments. I have only found encouragement and support - and you also get similar encouragement from fellow students.

Because of my hearing difficulties I soon discovered that the mandolin suited me better than the guitar as I can hear it clearly, particularly when I play with others. This is because the instrument is tuned at a higher pitch, the same as the fiddle i.e. GDAE. (By the way, the great fiddle player Daryl Anger once explained the difference between a fiddle player and a violinist by saying that the latter is paid twice as much.) This anecdote led to my suggesting to my friend Denise, *The String Section's* fiddle player, that given my mandolin has twice as many strings as her fiddle, perhaps I should be paid twice as

much as her. It didn't work. (The mandolin has 4 pairs of strings tuned in unison - GGDDAAEE.)

One of the great things that has emerged from my move from playing in a semi-pro blues band to the acoustic/'folk' scene is the opportunity to play regularly at round the room sessions in pubs, where people of all standards come along and take part. *The String Section* mostly performs in folk clubs and more formal situations, even in churches. But we do sometimes join in such open sessions as a trio although mostly we go either individually, or just Mike and I as a duo. Since retiring from teaching, music has been the main means by which I meet others and socialise. I think this is the main reason that music has taken over from my being primarily a visual artist, for it is less isolating. We have so much fun and jam sessions are great places to develop one's improvising skills.



'The String Section' at Wimpole Hall

When I played in blues bands, I mostly improvised, but since getting into bluegrass and Americana, I now have to memorize whole tunes. All this we know helps the brain. Science tells us that even taking up a musical instrument later on in life can make a big difference to one's physical and mental wellbeing. The first thing I do each day is to get an instrument out of its case and play. Breakfast can always wait. With music, like anything else worthwhile, one is always learning and developing. One never arrives, and that's why it's so satisfying.



I play mostly mandolin with *The String Section*, occasionally some guitar, and I sing a bit. We rehearse once a week and Denise, who lives just across the road from me, sometimes brings her fiddle over and we have mini rehearsals when we work out harmony parts and anything that doesn't require Mike on guitar. Denise was raised in the US and has a background in psychology and computers. Mike, also US born, is a former vice-principal of Ridley Hall in Cambridge and an authority on St Paul, something we find *very* useful in an Americana trio.

Hosting the second Wednesday of the month folk sessions at the Newnham Croft Social Club has really helped us develop as a group. As many of you have seen from the flyers kindly sent out to you by Clare Ryan via the Homerton RSMA list, we always invite a special guest or guests. Having a venue where you get to regularly play for an hour is such a treat and it has made a big difference to us in terms of allowing us to try out new material and simply just build up our confidence. The club is so warm and welcoming, it has free entry, and I hope more of you can get to join us there in the future. On 10th April this year, we had a special session that featured: Jon Betmead, who used to teach folk guitar part

time in Homerton's music department - he took part in the Children's Music Club shows that Barbara and Malcolm Pointon used to organize, until I eventually took over his role; Tom Ling, the wonderful Cambridge fiddler, accompanied Jon; Nick 'Telephone Bill' Barraclough (the former BBC radio presenter); Dave Olney, a top professional double bass player who lives in Fulbourn, and Mal Hyde-Smith on percussion. It was great to see RSMs Jane Edden, Kate Pretty and Chris Doddington among the large and generous audience! We plan to repeat the session, probably in November 2024.

I have two mandolins, both made by Tom Ellis in Austin, Texas, USA. One is an A style, the other an F style. On YouTube you can find a lovely video about Tom. I'd love to visit his workshop! The level of craftsmanship is amazing and I'm lucky to have them.

Finally, as a mandolin player you have to get used to people calling one's instrument a ukulele whether or not it's in its case; it just doesn't seem to matter. Mike Marshall once told me that at airports he had finally given up and now simply says, "Yep, it's a ukulele!"



Ellis A5 and F5 mandolins



Front & back of F5

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





A Holy Heist, Hereward (the Wake?), and the Ely Hoax:

RSMA's Walk at Ely March 19th 2024

Linda Hargeaves

This walk follows the two mile 'Kingfisher Walk' in Ely Country Park with short extensions at either end to include our **Starting** point opposite Peacock's excellent Tea Rooms and **Finishing** point at The Cutter Inn. The country walk leaflet (Ely Country Park Leaflet) alludes briefly to most of the points below, but Rouse (2016) is my principal source.

Background to Ely

Rouse (2016) cites four meanings of Ely, either literal or fanciful:

- 'Elge' – Isle of Eels (Bede, 672-735);
- 'El-ge' Land of God (El = God in Hebrew), ge = land in Greek) (Ely monk, Liber Eliensis 12C)
- 'Helig' – willow in Saxon (Edmund Carter, 1749)
- 'Isle of Fairies', or 'Elf Island' (Rev Sabine Baring-Gould, 1894).

There may have been fairies in the 1890s, but 18th century travel writer Celia Fiennes described Ely as, '... the dirtiest place I ever saw ... a perfect quagmire ... though my chamber was twenty steps up, I had frogs, slow-worms and snails in my room.' (Rouse, 2016, p.99).

Ely dates from 673 when St Aethelthryth or Etheldreda founded a monastery for 70 men and women on the island she had inherited from her father, King Anna of the East Angles. She did so to thank God for the tidal wave that facilitated her escape from her second husband, young Egfrith of Northumbria. Etheldreda, widowed by her elderly first husband, Tonbert, was then married to 15 year-old Egfrith. She opted to live in a convent. Neither marriage was consummated, as 'proven' by the uncorrupted state of Etheldreda's body when it was moved from a simple grave to a marble coffin, 16 years after her death.



Annotated route map

Description of the Route

From **Peacock's (labelled 1 on map)**, we walk down to the river, turn left at the Babylon Gallery, and walk along 'Willow Walk', so named after the willows and osier, or basket weaving, industry that grew up there. At this point we follow the paved path to the left and *not* the riverside

path which goes under the railway bridge. We soon reach the Fisherman's carpark, and 'Poplar Walk' where a line of poplars screens our view of the 'water treatment works'. Ironically, this area had once been known as '**The Creasels**' (2) referring to the watercress grown in



the fresh flowing water of a series of springs leading down from town to river. The nearby 'Cresswells Lane' recalls that sweeter past.

Enter the Country Park and fork right up a short bank, at a wooden Kingfisher sculpture. From the bank there are wide open views across the fenland to the east of Ely. Prior to the draining of 'The Great Level' (3) in the mid-17th century, this would have been marshy flooded land, passable only by boat. Small-scale drainage projects had been practised for centuries, but drainage on the scale of the Great Level was new. It was initiated by James I, followed up by Charles I and II, and led and funded locally by Francis, IVth Earl of Bedford and investors known as 'The Adventurers'. Sir Cornelius Vermuyden engineered the cutting of the 'Old Bedford River' in 1630, and other Dutch engineers, (such as the fictional Jan Brunt in Stella Tillyard's (2018) historical novel), cut the 'New Bedford', or 100-foot river in 1650-1652. The drainage created 500 square miles of rich arable land, which was portioned off to the Adventurers, although many, including Vermuyden, lost all that they had invested. While Vermuyden described the work as an unprecedented improvement 'for the good of the nation', Rotherham (2013) who details the history in depth, describes it as 'England's greatest ecological disaster'.



Hearing about the Great Level

After viewing the Great Level, we follow the path through the country park, between a playground on the left and ponds (or floods?) on the right. We turn right to cross a footbridge and then left onto an unpaved track. This was the route taken by Abbot Brithnoth and the Ely monks as they carried out a **Holy Heist (4)** in 974. Brithnoth played a significant role in the restoration and extension of the Ely monastery, after Danish invaders had broken into it and 'put all the Religious to the sword ... stript the Monastery of everything ... valuable, and ... set fire to the Church' in 870 (Bentham, quoted by Rouse, 2016, p.19). King Edgar rewarded Brithnoth for this work with gifts including the village of Dereham. Etheldreda's sister Withburga had founded a convent in Dereham and was buried in the abbey there. Her body, like Etheldreda's, was apparently uncorrupted some 50 years after her death. Brithnoth decided that Withburga should lie beside her sister in the Ely Abbey. The heist involved Brithnoth providing a great feast and entertainment for the people and monks of Dereham, thus distracting them while the Ely team stole the body and carried it by boat at dead of night to Turbotsey, the ancient port of Ely. It was

then carried by cart from the river along our unpaved track, and up Springhead Lane, accompanied by great rejoicing, all the way to the Abbey (in anticipation, perhaps, of the extra pilgrimage revenue it would attract) (Rouse, 2016).



Which way?

Our route continues up a track to the right which joins Lisle Lane at one of the entrances to the Country Park. Here we are on (or near - the signposting is a bit ambiguous) the 110-mile-long distance footpath, the **Hereward Way (5)**, from Oakham to Thetford via Ely. Hereward: prototype Robin Hood? hero or villain? patriotic leader, or arsonist? At 18, in 1054, he was outlawed by Edward the Confessor, at his father's request, for upsetting the neighbours with his gang. Exiled variously to Scotland, Cornwall and the Netherlands, he returned to Ely in 1070 after news that the Normans had murdered his family members. Twice he repelled Norman attempts to invade the Isle of Ely, by setting fire to their wooden causeways and ammunition stores. 'Fire was Hereward's favourite weapon' (Rex, 2004, p.131). The Conqueror's third attempt, in 1071, eventually succeeded, but not before Hereward had set fire to (i) the village of Burwell, possibly to warn off Norman troops building a stockade near Devil's Dyke, and (ii) a wooden siege tower near Aldreth, upon which the Normans stationed a witch to scare off the defenders by loudly 'denouncing destruction and uttering charms', and, it is said, 'displaying her naked buttocks' (Rex, 2004, p.131). In the end, Abbot Thurstan, blackmailed by Norman threats and promises, informed William that Hereward was going away, and revealed a route into Ely via Little Thetford. Hereward subsequently fled and melted into history. The title 'the Wake' was added retrospectively by the Anglo-Norman Wake family who claimed him as an ancestor. Rex (2004) traces the family's argument, but casts doubt on their claim.

We now turn right up Lisle Lane, right again at the mini roundabout into Prickwillow Road for a short distance, and go through a stile on the right onto what was once 'Milking Hill Common'. The path goes across this meadow, but we didn't see any Adders Tongue Fern that grows (or Green Winged Orchids that grew) there (Country Park Leaflet), but did see the WW2 pillbox, apparently repurposed as a bat hibernaculum. Follow the path into a small wood and turn right into Kiln Lane.



Walk downhill to the **Roswell Pits**, which once were **Hills (6)**. The lane goes between two of the pits, now lakes, and provides superb views of Ely cathedral.



The start of a downhill stretch of a flat walk ...

The Roswell Pits had been the source of clay for brick making and river banks since the 17th century, to the extent that the hills were now holes. The clay itself is grey-green, very fossil-rich Kimmeridge Clay, which was a deep sea bed 150 million years ago. The Pits are both geological and botanical SSSIs.



Roswell Pits and that fine view of the Cathedral behind

The walk continues downhill, past an old oak tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order, to reach a level crossing: **The Railway (7)**. In 1845, Samuel Morton Peto brought the railway through Ely to Norwich and to Lowestoft, where he was building a new seaside resort and harbour on waste land that cost him £200. His bust at Norwich Station, is inscribed 'Baptist, Philanthropist and Entrepreneur'. Railway historian Richard Joby's alternative inscription is Liar, Cheat and Fraud (Vaughan, 2009, p.5). In the 1830s, Peto, and his brother-in-law, Thomas Grissell, gained a good reputation for their part in the building of Trafalgar Square, Nelson's Column and the Houses of Parliament. Peto was a fervent Baptist, and when Peto and Grissell began building railways during the 'great railway bubble' of the 1840s, their business grew exponentially, and internationally. Peto employed Baptist ministers to preach to the navvies as they worked, to teach their children 3Rs during the day and run evening classes in reading for the men. At the same time, he engaged in risky and dubious financial practices, lied to his constituents as MP for Norwich, and undercut other railway builders' bids by using shoddy materials. At Ely, the Bishop of Norwich and Dean of Ely sang his praises

in the grand celebration of the opening of Ely station. Five years later, Ely station was collapsing due to the shoddy timbers used beneath it!

Just beyond the level crossing, we turn right through a stile signposted 'Fen Rivers Way', pass a field where lapwings might be seen (but weren't) and join a gravel path heading back towards the city. Here's a fine view of the new Cambridge University Boathouse (featured in the 2021 Boat Race), as well as good views of the Cathedral and Great Ouse.



Linda's tale of the Hoax

The path now runs close to the river and we reach Cresswells Bank, the site of the **Ely Hoax (8)**. In April 1905, new postcards on sale at Burrows' stationers in Ely showed drawings of the riverside, clothes (hat, collar, watch and trousers) and 'the body', a large bag tied at the middle. Early on April 1st, the clothes had been found by the river, with footprints leading into the water. Search parties in boats looked in vain for a body. The riverside tragedy became a tourist attraction, and Burrows' postcard sales rocketed. In 1906, journalist J.F. Burrows, owner of the stationery store and publisher of postcards and the annual Ely Green Book, revealed his hoax, apparently aimed at a particularly unpopular police constable. Burrows' profits may have contributed to the continued existence of the shop on the High Street, which still displays local history books for sale (Rouse, 1978).

The last section of the walk takes us under the low railway bridge, and along the riverside path.

It passes Jubilee Gardens, now a park but in the 12th century it was the location of docks for unloading stone for the cathedral, after the river had been straightened to come close to the town (**The Great Ouse Cut (9)**). The land was excavated in 2000 and shown as a Channel 4 Time Team investigation (Ely online) The story goes that King Cnut and his wife visited Ely annually and were rowed close enough to hear the monks singing in the Cathedral.

Our walk ended a little further along the bank, with a good lunch at **The Cutter Inn (10)** named, I am told, after the men who dug the new cut of the river.



Nearing the pub & the end of the walk



Watching birds ...



Walking companions



Willow the Magnificent

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It would be absolutely brill if we could have more walks next year.

So, could you suggest a walk to share?

Do you have a favourite walk that we could do?

We can travel a little way to nearby towns and villages ... but not across the waters.

An opportunity for a coffee break or a pub lunch would be nice but is not essential.

Please contact Anne or Libby with your ideas in the first instance.



Dr David Ebbutt

An appreciation

Dave Ebbutt died in January 2024 after a long and brave struggle with Parkinson's disease. This note puts on record his association with Homerton and Cambridge, in particular through the 1980s. Dave, a Science Teacher at Cromwell Community College, was a member of the Ford Teaching Project based in the Cambridge Institute of Education and under the direction of John Elliott in the early seventies. The project took the idea of teacher classroom action research developed by Lawrence Stenhouse in the Humanities Curriculum Project and developed it as part of an exploration of 'inquiry/ discovery learning', and the development of collaborative action research by teachers became the springboard for what was a mainstay of the work of the Cambridge Institute of Education and then the Cambridge University Faculty of Education, as well as an international movement.

I got to know Dave first in this context but went on to work with him in the 1979-81 Cambridge Accountability Project also directed by John Elliott and with Rex Gibson and Jenny Nias. While at the Institute he was also part of the team that created and taught the first of two MPhils in the Faculty of Education on the Curriculum (the other was on Educational Psychology). In the mid-eighties Dave was looking for a research base. By this time we were both getting drawn into work for regional local authorities, in particular Norfolk and Suffolk. We decided to set up a small research centre in Homerton – the Homerton Education Research and Development Unit (HERDU) – which Dave joined as a Senior Research Associate. Through this we took on a series of commissions from Local Education Authorities. As for, in particular, evaluations of various initiatives like TRIST and GRIST (I think GRIST stood for Grant Related In-Service Training!)

Dave was never afraid to say that the Emperor had no clothes, which got us into some trouble when we reported on the Suffolk/ Sainsbury Schools and Industry Project. Dave had visited all the schools in which the project was supposed to be operating (very successfully when seen through the rose-tinted glasses of the Project Director) but reported that he had failed to find any evidence of the impact of the project in any of them. There were good reasons for this, not least that there had been extended industrial action by teachers who withdrew from all non-essential work, but the project was in any case poorly conceived and accepted by schools mainly because there was some money attached. The report was not well received and it took some diplomacy by myself and Alison Shrubsole to settle Suffolk's ruffled feathers without retracting the report.

In 1986, following a visit I had made to Ethiopia, we established the Homerton link with Kotebe College of Education. Dave was one of the first participants in the link. Earlier in his career he had taught in Nigeria and was able to make a contribution based on this experience as well as his work as a science teacher in the UK. Kotebe particularly appreciated, as well as his unassuming personality, what he showed them about how you could use materials from the natural environment as well as equipment found in ordinary kitchens to carry out scientific investigations and experiments in the absence of anything that you might normally expect to find in a science laboratory.

Dave also contributed to some of the international work which we began to attract to Homerton through a relationship with Perran Penrose and Cambridge Education Consultants. He was a brilliant companion on such trips not least because of his apparently encyclopedic knowledge of bird life in several continents.

When I left Homerton in 1990 to go to UEA, Dave also relocated to the Centre for Applied Research in Education, where John Elliott was already based. Dave had already worked with CARE while at Homerton, not least on the Home Office Police Training Project for which we had both been producing case studies of live policing experience. CARE was a natural home for the remainder of Dave's academic career, though this continued to consist only of serial short-term contracts – a life he accepted with modesty and humility (perhaps too much). When we established a new British Council supported link – this time between UEA and Addis Ababa University -- I was once again able to enjoy his companionship and expertise on visits to Ethiopia. When the door fell off the old Lada taxi we were travelling in as it went round a roundabout in the centre of Addis Ababa and he nearly went with it (no safety belts in old Ladas!) he declared that he thought his Africa days were over.

However, Dave did subsequently accept an invitation by a wildlife charity to spend a month in a tent in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest with two local colleagues to observe the provisioning behaviour of stripe breasted tits. Some invitations are irresistible! The report of these observations rather neatly book-ended his career, because his first publication in 1965 was a listing of birds of West Africa, which is still occasionally referenced.

I am immensely privileged to have had the opportunity to know this kind, creative, generous, modest Scouse and to have benefited from his honesty, wisdom and impish sense of humour.

David Bridges





Notes from the Archive

Peter Cunningham

John Jones, Geographer

A recent RSM tour of the North Wing, kindly led by Sally Nott, Events and Alumni Relations Manager, reminded us of an historic but neglected feature of Homerton, demolished in the course of new buildings. A feature created by a forgotten but highly distinguished member of Homerton's staff, the 'Geography Room' was the brainchild of John Jones, a highly significant but neglected figure in our institutional memory.

A student at Homerton in London from 1888-89 John Jones gained his 'Parchment' (the national Teachers' Certificate) in 1893. Brought to Cambridge by John Horobin he served as resident tutor in physics, maths, drawing and geography. From 1902 the only full-time male academic staff member in a women's college, he retired in 1934 after 40 years of service. A warm posthumous tribute in the *Homerton Association Newsletter* of 1950, recalled the 'great affection and real gratitude' generations of students experienced, his 'humanity, unflinching kindness and cheerfulness, his humility and generosity of mind'. To many of his students he was a 'personal friend and wise counsellor'. It was also his 'zeal and amazing gifts' as a self-trained geographer, who travelled little but 'read with a seeing eye' and offered 'vivid, detailed pictures of the world'. This paean of praise concluded with words voiced by an old student: "Johnnie was our Mr Chips".

Geography at Homerton

In 1909 John Jones gained the Cambridge University Diploma in Geography, an important early link in establishing relations between Homerton and the University, where the subject was gradually rising in status. A Geography Tripos was first established in 1919, its status as a valuable academic and scientific discipline no doubt enhanced following the First World War. A Faculty of Geography was established, and John Jones proceeded to coach over 30 students for the award, none failing and six at least going on to graduate in the third-year course, 'enthused by his teaching and inspired by his own thoroughness and accuracy'.

John Jones was then material in negotiating access for Homerton students to this diploma (effectively Part 1 of the new Tripos), as a third-year course to follow the two-year national Teachers' Certificate. Following the 1918 Education Act, demand grew for specialist teachers in new types of schools, and increased opportunities were made for an additional third-year work in college. As reported in the student led college newsletters at the time, students from previous years might occasionally return to

college to take up this opportunity. The University having given full Faculty status to teaching and research of Geography, 11 Homerton students gained the Diploma 1919-22. Select students were also encouraged to take a third-year course at Homerton, for example in Gardening, and the 'London Final Arts' course. Significantly, student Grace Dibble at College from 1922-25, who took the Cambridge Diploma in Geography, went on to receive a BA Hons. London (Geog.) pursuing her career as a traveller and writer of books on Geography: *Return Tickets to Yugoslavia* (1984), *Return Tickets Here and There* (1988), *No Return Tickets!* (1989), *Return Tickets to Africa* (1992), *Return Tickets in Pictures for Armchair Globetrotters* (1993), *Return Tickets to Asia* (1993), *Return Tickets to Sacred Places* (1996), copies of which are housed in the college archive.

John Jones meanwhile wrote various books 'of great value to teachers' on geography, its methods, and the local geography of Cambridgeshire. *Geography by Discovery: a practical geography based on explorers' narratives* (1920) [Hom Coll Lib 910.9 JON]. This was a markedly 'progressive' approach to the subject at an early stage in British education, engaging pupils in active learning, critical thinking, and creative activity. 1933 saw publication of *Africa, Asia and the Oceans* (with plates) by 'JONES, John, of Homerton College, Cambridge', as volume 5 of Collins' *New Scheme Geographies*. His *Human Geography of Cambridgeshire* was published in 1924 [Hom Coll Lib 942.65 JON], and in 1938, following retirement he contributed a chapter: 'Villages of Cambridgeshire' to a volume on *The Cambridge Region* edited by Sir Clifford Darby CBE, FBA (1909-92) whose PhD was the first awarded for Geography in Cambridge.

Homerton enjoyed a succession of distinguished and long-serving geography educators throughout its history in Cambridge. John Jones was succeeded in 1934 by Edith Butcher (born 1902 some thirty years his junior). Like many Homerton lecturers of her generation she had a Cambridge academic background, Geography at Newnham and a Fellowship of the Royal Geographical Society followed by teaching at Beckenham County School for Girls and lecturing at Lincoln Training college. Interviewed after Jones' death she recalled how 'students loved Mr Jones' (and 'were not very pleased to see me'!). He was an 'absolute dear' and she kept in touch with him, 'popping in to talk about things'. 'A very nice man with a great reputation and very respected', she recalled that he was referred to by some as 'Professor Jones' though he was not even a graduate.



Homerton's external examiner for geography was one of the founding members of the national Geographical Association conferences which Edith attended, following which she started a Cambridge branch. Wartime meetings were held when 'lots of geography people came to Cambridge with "hush hush" work going on, so there was no difficulty in getting senior people to come and lecture'. The Geography Faculty was graced by Clifford Darby, who had been awarded the first ever Cambridge PhD in Geography. A fellow of King's, and later promoted to Professor, and then later still, Sir Clifford, he was appointed in 1941 to lead the Admiralty's wartime Geographical Handbook Centre.


Edith Butcher also attended meetings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, which held its 1938 meeting in Cambridge: A scientific survey of the Cambridge district was prepared for the Cambridge meeting by Professor Darby. (Darby, London: Office of the British Association, 1938. Hom Coll Lib Local Collection 942.65 BAS [1 copy Ref only])

A 1986 newspaper article shows a photograph of Edith in the company of Professor Darby celebrating the 50th anniversary of the local GA branch. Rex Walford, also seen here, was Secondary PGCE Tutor at the University Department of Education in Trumpington Street, illustrating early ties between the University and Homerton College.

1986

CAMBRIDGE STUDY GROUP TURNS 50

Geography . . . no longer a dusty subject taught in a dusty room



THE Cambridge and District Branch of the Geographical Association celebrated its 50th anniversary with a reception at the Central Library —BONI BARNARD tells of its proud history.

ONCE Upon a Time geography was a subject teachers taught in front of a classroom of seated children, drawing chalk maps on a blackboard. Nowadays the geography teacher is much more likely to be found in the streets of Cambridge, discussing a new City ringroad.

In short, the subject lives and this new lease of life owes much to a national group which locally celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

A founder member of the Cambridge and District Branch of the Geographical Association, 85-year-old Edith Butcher, remembers clearly how back in 1936 an honoree phone call led to the establishment of the branch.

Friends

Miss Butcher, of Sherlock Road, Cambridge, a former head of geography at Homerton College, explained: "I went to a conference of the national Geographical Association in Sheffield. I came back to Cambridge and immediately rang a friend.

"I found myself saying: 'We had better start a branch', and that is how it was founded —on the telephone.

Looking over the geographical exhibition at the Central Library are (left to right): Prof H. C. Darby, Edith Butcher and the chairman of the association, Rex Walford.

"I had many friends in Cambridge who joined and the then Professor of Geography at the University, Frank Ibbetson, gave the inaugural address," she said.

Mr B. B. Dickinson, a former head of geography at Rugby School, was bring in Cambridge and having been one of the eight founder members of the National GA, soon joined forces with Miss Butcher.

She recalls how she went to a meeting more than 20 years later and was overjoyed to find it so crowded that she had difficulty finding a seat.

Today the work of the 100-strong Cambridge branch is carried on by others involved in the teaching of geography such as the chairman, Mr Rex Walford, University Lecturer in Geography and Education.

The work.

At a suggestion that the GA is a fuddy-duddy group of people with one foot in the 19th century is dismissed by Mr Walford, who tells us it is an active and lively group discussing important issues of today.

He said that the GA was founded nationally in 1933, at a time when geography was an expanding subject in schools.

Geography, Mr Walford assures us, has become an all-embracing subject which gets students to discuss issues such as nuclear energy.

"Geography today is very much concerned with the awareness of the environment," he said.

Eminent members of the group include the Cambridge President, Prof R. J. Chorley, a physical geographer who is head of geography at the university, and Prof Clifford Darby, a historical geographer and author.

[source: Homerton College Archive]

Throughout his career as student and tutor John Jones was very active in playing and coaching a variety of sports, and was popular with students, generations of whom testified to his friendship and support. His commitment to women students included their physical education, as images held in the archive testify.



Homerton juniors cricket day with Mr Jones 1926



John Jones with Hockey players

Thus far, I have focused on John Jones as a key male member of staff. Following their 1894 move from a mixed-sex college in London, it became evident that in the Cambridge context, single-sex colleges were *de rigueur*. Principal John Horobin had graduated at Emmanuel College was aware of this norm, and the choice of an all-female institution was made. At the same time, he encouraged John Jones to accompany him, doubtless aware of qualities this younger colleague displayed.

In 1934 John Jones was finally retired (against his will, aged only 65!) after 43 years of service to the College.

In 1945, aged 76, he contributed personal memories to a Jubilee History of Homerton, marking its 50 years in Cambridge. He recalled his student days in London, attending public lectures outside college, visiting theatres, and singing with a huge choir at Crystal Palace a work by Sir John Stainer conducted by the composer himself.



Geography Room 1937



South Elevation of Geography Room in 1937 positioned at right angles to the west end of the Ibberson Building

John Jones' final contribution to improving Homerton's physical infrastructure was his involvement in the establishment of a dedicated new 'purpose built' room for geography, located west of Ibberson's 1914 building. This came about following the loss of teaching space resulting from the College library being moved from Macaulay to newly refurbished wood-panelled accommodation - now the Fellows' Dining Room. The new Geography room itself was not only equipped with the latest visual aids according to Tom Simms' history of Homerton "a fashionable sliding blackboard, arrangements for the display of maps, and projectors" but also housed John Jones' collection of books and maps which he bequeathed to the College on his death in 1949.

Edith Butcher recalled in an interview that John Jones' son-in-law was architect to the college. In the Principal's (Miss Skillicorn) absence, she had to consult with him over the Geography Room which he designed. In 2021, Jill Mapey, John Jones' granddaughter, named him as Harold Herbert Parker, living in a house he designed in Cavendish Avenue.



Interior of the 1937 Geography Room in 1967 (class names are recorded in the Archive)



Outside the Geography Room Doors (no date)

Geographers moved to the new 'Black and White Buildings' in 1967. On the recent tour with Sally Nott, RSMs shared memories of John Jones's 1937 Geography room being used for other purposes. Some colleagues recalling it as a pottery room, close to the art and sculpture studios before it then became the Primary PGCE base (P1) for the one and only group ... closely guarded by those involved! A peaceful space, much valued, if its origins were by then lost in the mists of time!

By 2019, the Geography Room had been adapted as an entrance and welcome desk for a Conference Centre located in the new North Wing. The North Wing gable is seen here from the north and south sides. The original north wall of John Jones' Geography Room remained unchanged, but metal fence railings now run alongside the new Harrison Drive, facing the now redeveloped former 'Rattee and Kett' site on the other side. More recently, further radical alteration (demolition) came with the building of the New Dining Hall and Buttery.



2019 North side view of old Geography room as Conference Reception



2019 South side view of old Geography room as Conference Reception

*

Peter is currently considering writing another article on more recent Homerton geographers including Principal Alice Skillicorn. She herself had a particular interest in geography (in part, perhaps, from her childhood on the Isle of Man to which she frequently returned) and her friend Dorothy Sargent HMI was also a geographer.



Muriel Kathleen Cordell

5th June 1935 – 16th September 2023

Many will remember Muriel fondly either as a colleague and/or as a member of the RSMA. She was a staunch supporter of the Association for many years and regularly came to coffee mornings and other activities until ill health made that difficult.



Muriel awarded 'the prettiest cake' at the PE Ladies' Summer Party 2020

In retirement she was an integral part of the Drama and PE community and met with friends from Homerton for many years. Her zest for life, cheerful demeanour and delighted interest in all that was going on continued throughout her life.

Muriel was a Dance Lecturer at Homerton from

1968 – 1977 teaching a range of courses for the undergraduate course. When asked about how students reacted to her courses, Muriel recalled that “one student reported that she had thought nothing of Dance during the course, but it was her favourite subject to teach. Others took to it like ducks to water!” In addition, she ran Saturday Dance clubs for three different age groups of children (from 2 to 11). These were alongside Trish Maude’s Gym club and Barbara Pointon’s Music club, so College was very busy with children!

There was also a Tuesday night dance club for students as well as days of dance and choreography for different groups. Muriel said that “We encouraged students to volunteer to extend their experience through evening and weekend short courses. These courses were well supported. We also took students to London to see professional dance.” She had a lifelong interest in the relationship between art and dance.

Muriel’s interest in dance had begun when she was a student at Saffron Walden College training as a primary teacher – a 2-year course at that time. Later she followed a 2-year course in dance at The Studio where the teaching of Rudolf Laban was central. In conversation with Trish, Muriel recalled that Mary Feaver [Head of Department at Homerton] said that “she [Muriel] sat at the feet of Laban when he came to Homerton”. Muriel taught in junior, infant and secondary schools before joining the staff at Homerton. She introduced dance to the curriculum in

some of these schools. After her time at Homerton, Muriel taught in a Suffolk middle school until her retirement.

When David Male heard of Muriel’s death he wrote to Trish. In his letter, David said: “We first met in my first incarnation at Homerton whilst she was teaching Laban movement with your formidable predecessors [including Mary Feaver] but a connection was made. Laban dance was on my syllabus when I returned as Head of Drama.” Later in his letter David writes, with affection about the contents of Muriel’s home, “... she was very ready to acknowledge that she was an inveterate hoarder. She knew how to ‘fill a space’ but she managed to carry it off with light comment. ... I am glad that her gift of a sculpture has been recognised.” This last comment was in relation to the wooden sculpture *Midsummer Dance* by Christine Fox [see the article in last year’s (2023) Newsletter p.36 Circle of Dance...]



Muriel’s nephews’ choice of photo of their “wonderful Auntie ‘Moo’”

A number of her colleagues from the RSMA were able to attend her funeral arranged by her nephews Martin and Robin Cordell who referred to her as their “wonderful Auntie ‘Moo’”. They recalled her enthusiasm for life and readiness to take on new challenges with aplomb – for example the ascent of Machu Picchu when well into her 70s.

Muriel had lived in an old, thatched cottage in Lode for much of her life and there were numerous people from the village at her funeral. Trish sat with a group of them later and says that “Stories abounded, with lots of hilarity.” What a perfect end.

Anne Thwaites



Elizabeth Gatland

23rd June 1929 - 13th September 2023

Elizabeth died comfortably in a very pleasant Nursing Home quite close to her own house in Bury St Edmunds. She was born and spent her early years in Walthamstow with her parents and her younger sister, Anne. When she was 5 years old the family moved to Maidstone in Kent where her father had secured a post in a grand hotel.

At the beginning of the war, Elizabeth and Anne were evacuated to Woking in Surrey, but after a year the family were reunited and they moved to Windsor where Elizabeth began her secondary education at Thomas Carlyle Grammar School for Girls which had been relocated from Chelsea for the war years. Her final school years were spent at Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College. From there she won a place at Nottingham University to study for a degree in English Literature, graduating in 1951, then she continued her studies in Nottingham to qualify in 1952 with a post graduate degree in education.

She became an inspirational secondary school teacher, teaching in High and Grammar schools in Braintree, Bromley, Fakenham and Wisbech. Her last teaching post was at Ely High School, she was very disappointed when as a result of a shake up by the Department of Education many grammar schools lost that status, and Ely High became a Comprehensive School.

Elizabeth made the decision to leave her teaching career and she chose a complete change of direction. She retrained as a Librarian at London University and was awarded a Diploma in Library and Information Skills in 1974. She then joined the Staff at Homerton College for a 2-year placement in the Library and Resources Centre to complete the course and to become a fully Chartered Librarian. Elizabeth re shaped the School Practice Library which, under her leadership, became a highly regarded resource for all the Homerton students and numerous local teachers as well. She had a vast knowledge of books for children of all ages but especially for teenagers, and with her many years of teaching experience she knew how to make the best use of literature and how to engage the interest of pupils in a classroom. She was a tremendous asset to the College, well respected and loved by colleagues, students and all who knew her.



Which of 94 birthday cakes is this one?

After her retirement in 1986, Elizabeth moved to Bury St Edmunds and became a part of the local Quaker Meeting, where she found a home and many friends. As a loyal and highly valued servant of the Meeting she wrote regular reports for the News Letter and organised the library as well as helping with the garden. Her great variety of interests became apparent when browsing her extremely eclectic collection of books. She was involved in the Bury Society, Shelter for the Homeless, Amnesty International, Support for Deprived Children and people from 3rd world countries Elizabeth led a fulfilling and principled life, she liked to contribute to the small community where she lived in Old Convent Orchard, she acted as Treasurer to the Residents Association. She was also involved in the wider community of Bury, she was a member of the Historical Association and of the University of the 3rd Age as well as having a great interest in the development of the City.

Elizabeth was an unassuming person who always carried with her a sense of quietness and serenity, her generosity, knowledge and wisdom made her a treasured companion and friend. I shall be forever grateful for her sound advice and support throughout our many years of friendship.

Jenny Carr



Olga Mae Hindley (nee Hadden)

May 12th 1927 – August 6th 2023

Olga was an Irish girl with a Russian name. Daughter of William and Kathleen Hadden of Otter Holt and of the department store, Haddens - Carlow. She first attended Wesley College, Dublin and then Methody (Methodist College), Belfast. She undertook training in Institutional Catering and after a number of positions in both England and Ireland, returned home to be her mother's companion.

With her twinkling hazel eyes, bright sense of humour, film-star smile and lilting soprano voice, Olga cast a bewitching spell on everyone she met. This was as true back in 1951, at the Methodist Guest House in Kilkee, where she first met David Hindley, her accompanist when she sang to a packed drawing room audience, as it was in 2023 when co-residents Chris, Barry and Bruce in their electric wheelchairs, would vie with each other to be the first to position themselves alongside Olga in her residential home's dining room.

Olga and David's meeting had been such a chance encounter. It was the first time she had taken her mother away for a little holiday, travelling the full width of Ireland; and in parallel fashion, it was the first time Yorkshire born David and his sister Elizabeth, had persuaded their parents to join them on one of their Irish summer adventures. Methodism being the traditional heart of both families, it was fascinating that the Haddens and the Hindleys coincided for the first time in this remote, Irish, Methodist Guest House.

Back then 24-year-old Olga was probably the more accomplished musician, having studied for several years under Brian Boydell, Professor of Singing at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. She had already given several concerts in both her hometown of Carlow and in Dublin. David was merely a teenager of barely eighteen years, but his keyboard mastery was second to none and he took great pleasure in accompanying Olga's singing.



Meeting with a co-alumnus some years later David was asked: "and what became of that gorgeous Irish girl you always spoke about?" "I married her - of course," he replied. As for Olga – even into her 90s - she would regularly announce with a radiantly cheeky smile: "I married a toyboy – you know!"

1954 saw David's 'Sinfonietta' premiered in Oxford Town Hall. The piece was dedicated to Olga and was Oxford's first public undergraduate performance. By January 1956 Olga and David were married: David was undertaking his PGCE and Olga was packing blackcurrant pastilles at Allen & Hanbury's.

David's first teaching post was Music Master at Huddersfield College, subsequently Huddersfield New College. Olga and David were active members of Queen's Street Methodist church where David was organist and choir master. A particular highlight of this time was Queen Street's recording of Bach's St Matthew Passion with David as conductor and Olga principal soprano soloist.

In 1963 David became Head of the Music Department at Homerton. He appointed two exceptional musicians, Barbara and Malcolm Pointon, as lecturing colleagues, and Olga became Music Librarian. Prior to the introduction of the National Curriculum, this was a 'Golden Time' for creativity and the training of Music Teachers. Over a period of 22 years, Olga & David, Barbara & Malcom and a host of specialist instrumental teachers formed a team, second to none.



Students on teaching practice remember Olga being like a walking encyclopaedia. If a placement school required coverage of a topic on, say water, to the huge relief of the student, Olga would be able to suggest all kinds of relevant pieces of music. At this time Olga more or less lived wearing headsets, listening to and making notes about music from Stockhausen to Susato and Pink Floyd to Pachelbel. Departmental Week was always a highlight of the year. Music students would look forward to gathering in Little Shelford Church for the 'Sing Through' of the Messiah. With Barbara conducting, Malcolm on the harpsichord and David on the organ, everyone was in their element. And when Olga sang the arias: *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, and *If God be for us* everyone was utterly enraptured. On occasions Olga

would be asked to sing one of these arias for a village funeral. How she did it I will never know – but amazingly she did!

In 1985 David & Olga took early retirement. They remodelled part of their house to run a bed and breakfast business. Olga's catering skills came to the fore attending to the needs of visiting guests and David was able to focus on composition.



Towards the end of the noughties, Homerton College's Retired Senior Members formed a choir. David played the piano of course, Barbara conducted and Olga sang. Much fun was had by all. But David, who was a brilliant pianist, had begun to play the odd duff note when sight reading and was having trouble transposing accompaniments into different keys, something hugely taxing for the rest of us, but an automatic skill for David. Barbara knew something was wrong, feared it was the start of Alzheimer's and indeed she was right.

David was diagnosed with the disease in 2012 and for some years Olga cared for him at home, but by 2016 this had become a real challenge. Eventually, Addenbrookes' Hospital told Olga she could no longer care for David at home. To ease David's anxiety and assist with his care, Olga and David moved into a Birmingham Care Home together - where David died in 2018 with Olga his 'best girl' by his side.

On June 16th 2019, a Memorial Concert was organised for David. Family, friends, former students and colleagues were delighted to see not only Olga - but of course Barbara., who was also in attendance. Barbara smiled and laughed but clearly wasn't at all sure what the jolly gathering was all about. Everyone there was devastated to realise they would now be losing, not only Malcolm (2007) and David (2018) but now also Barbara (2020) to the cruel disease that is Alzheimer's.

Olga did not want to follow suit. In spite of losing her central vision due to Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) she did her best to keep her brain active. For a

while she made seven stranded cords - by feel. These were turned into bracelets and sold in aid of the Alzheimer's Society. Until her hearing deteriorated too much, she avidly listened to books on Audible. As a young woman she learned several poems by Percy French which she could recite for a 'Party Piece'. She spent a good deal of time practising and would recite her favourites for her co-residents on special occasions. Most recently she loved listening to poems and did her best to remember key lines so she could join in. Her favourite poems were: *I must go down to the seas again* by John Masefield; *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* by W. B. Yeats; *The Kings Breakfast* and *Disobedience* both by A. A. Milne.

And Olga loved trees! Calthorpe Park was just over the road from her care home. Whenever the weather permitted, she would be out in the park enjoying the trees. She loved their height, the feel of the bark and the colours of the leaves. Her favourite tree, a large nine-stemmed Cordyline, was always welcomed with a huge smile and a "hello tree!". For her 95th birthday she was given her very own tree which lived on the patio outside her French windows. The pleasure it gave her was enormous. If 'her tree' was in sight, her iPad close by and Dougie the Doggie on her lap, she was content.

By the time Olga turned 96 in May 2023 her spirit was tired. She had broken the same leg twice in three months. The sudden loss of independent mobility hit her hard and mobilising the healing leg was exhausting for her. In August 2023 she took a turn for the worse and she died peacefully a few days later. She was ready to go; she had outlived all her brothers and sisters, her beloved husband, Elizabeth his sister and her dear colleagues Malcolm and Barbara. She firmly believed there was a place waiting for her next to David and she was looking forward to filling it.



Olga's father bought a stylish, soft top Morris Minor for her to drive her mother out on 'jaunts' ... and travelling the full width of Ireland

Olga's daughters, Karen & Joanna Hindley

[This is an edited version of the longer tribute deposited in the Homerton Archive.]



Bob Burn

15th August 1934 - 23rd February 2024

“It is a sign of the man who knows, that he can teach” (Aristotle *Metaphysics*, Book 1).

Bob came to work at Homerton in 1971, succeeding Hilary Shuard as Head of the Mathematics Department in 1974, and left to take up a post at Exeter University in 1988. Bob had an interesting and very successful life, inspiring admiration and affection from his colleagues and friends.

Bob was the son of Joshua and Katharine Burn and was given his mother’s maiden name, Pemberton, as his middle name. He grew up in ‘the other place’ as his father, Joshua Harold Burn FRS, was an eminent pharmacologist and professor of pharmacology at Oxford University.

Bob’s schooling began at the Dragon School in Oxford, whence he moved to Shrewsbury School in 1948, as a scholar, and a boarder. Five years later he had won an open scholarship to read mathematics at Peterhouse Cambridge. It seems that he had progressed so far with mathematics at Shrewsbury that he proceeded directly to Part II of the Mathematical Tripos at Cambridge. Two years later, he had completed Bachelor’s study of mathematics, but not yet fulfilled the residency requirement for the degree. He wanted to read theology in that third year, but his father insisted on natural sciences. After Cambridge, Bob taught at Mill Hill School, London, from 1957 to 1960.

It is important to record that Bob developed a strong Christian faith in his teenage years. In the Cambridge Student Christian Movement he met Isabel Bennett. They married in August 1958. In 1961, with children Christopher and Katherine, they moved to South India, where Bob had been asked by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to work in the Mathematics department at St John’s College, Palayamkottai. Even today, the College’s website refers to Bob’s tenure there as “a unique honour”. Whilst in India they had two more children, Nicholas and Sarah. Bob’s convictions about teaching and learning mathematics, at all levels, were already well-formed, and he was critical of the college’s way of teaching; it was almost entirely by rote, learning solutions to exam questions from old English textbooks. The Principal encouraged Bob to reform the teaching of mathematics. He did exactly that.

I now quote from son Christopher’s words at Bob’s funeral. “As Bob embarked on the project set by the Principal, his educational mission became more formally wrapped in his Christian vocation. His calling was to serve others. As a teacher he wanted to enable everyone in his classes, not just the top students, and in the church he sought ordination as a deacon for a position of service rather than authority. He thought long and hard about

what would be distinctive in a Christian approach to mathematics teaching and came to five principles, all of which we will recognise permeated his work and his connections with us: first, that mathematics (or Christianity) is not something we learn, but something we do; second, that his job was not so much to stimulate the memories of those he taught, but their understanding; third, to treat the syllabus less as a prison than a home base; fourth, to lecture less and let the class work more; and fifth, to be less like a father and more like a brother to his students”.

Bob had set out those five principles in his early thirties, in his second publication – an article entitled ‘Mathematician Missionary’, for a journal named *Frontier*. The first four of them were apparent in Bob’s teaching at Homerton, although any connection with his faith was never made explicit. His determination to enable students’ active engagement in, and contribution to, their own learning became the ethos of the department for both colleagues and students.



As Bob’s five principles became evident at St John’s, the Principal urged Bob to go back to England for doctoral study, and then return to India to set up a post-graduate course. Bob registered as a graduate student at Westfield College, London. He was supported by CMS for his studies and for two years study-leave. His thesis was completed in 1967. The title? *Involuntary Perspectives in Projective Planes and their Relation to Quasi-fields, Pappus’ Theorem and Harmonic Conjugates*. His doctorate was awarded in 1968. Bob and his family returned to Palayamkottai, and to a very different experience. A new MSc course established at St John’s, incorporating Bob’s approach to teaching, was an outstanding success. Furthermore, the children enjoyed a happy environment, with more freedom for Isabel as they grew, and Bob took on more responsibility within the church. But in 1971 they were ready to return to England, and Bob to his new position at Homerton. In the context of 1970s ‘Colleges of Education’ in England, very few mathematics lecturers would hold a PhD in the subject.



As would be expected in his university academic roles, Bob published a significant number of papers in journals over a 50 year period from 1967. Initially, many of these were published in *Mathematics Teaching (MT)* the journal of the Association of Teachers of Mathematics (ATM). It was the ATM that brought together schoolteachers who aspired to interest and engage their students in mathematics, notably through mathematical ‘investigations’, where the starting point was prescribed, but the ‘road’ might lead anywhere. Bob would have felt very much at home in the company of his fellow ATM members. In the next 40 years he wrote no fewer than 19 articles for *MT*: the April 2024 issue includes a two-page Appreciation of Bob Burn, with “*MT* would like to acknowledge the debt that we owe Bob and celebrate all that he shared with the ATM”.

As for Bob’s ‘other job’; having served as a deacon in the Church of South India 1963-71, just 10 years after returning to England he was ordained a priest in the Church of England. From 1981 to 1988, with Isabel’s support, he served as non-stipendiary priest-in-charge at St. Laurence’s Foxton, just south of Cambridge. When they left, they were presented with a photograph of the church, signed by 180 people.

Bob spent nine years at Exeter University and was awarded a Readership. In the autumn of 1995, he was invited to Agder College, Kristiansand, Norway, as a visiting professor, and upon his ‘retirement’ in 1997 he took up a professorship there. He and Isabel moved to Norway for three years, before returning to Exeter. But Bob was not yet ready for a quiet life in his fireside chair; Isabel and he translated some Latin correspondence between early 17th Century Italian mathematicians, to see what could be learned about the construction of mathematical thinking from it.

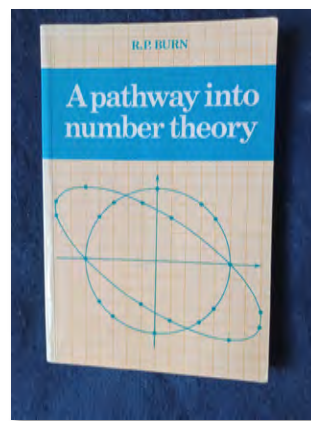
Bob remained very active as a speaker, especially at mathematics teacher conferences, and, as you would expect, his talks always engaged listeners in some mathematics, or the history of mathematics. Bob’s writing on symmetry, and many of his talks, revealed his deep interest in pattern. The family said he liked to look at tiles and other arrangements on walls, on ceilings and floors when travelling and discussed tessellations with daughter-in-law Joan – a quilter.

In addition to many publications both in ‘straight’ mathematics and in mathematics education journals, no fewer than 14 published books bear Bob’s name as author. In university mathematics departments around the world, Bob will probably be best known for three ‘textbooks’ first published by Cambridge University Press between 1982 and 1992. They are *A pathway into number theory* (1982), *Groups: a path to geometry* (1985), *Numbers and Functions: steps into analysis* (1992). Subsequent editions include a 2011 Chinese edition of the first of these. It was through the medium of these books that Bob enacted his radical beliefs about teaching advanced mathematics in the classroom.

Three years ago I sent Bob a copy of a published paper whose title included the word ‘joy’, the feeling I had gained from a group session many years earlier. At the

end of December 2021 he replied “This is a very nice article”, and later in the same email he wrote “I certainly enjoyed writing the *Pathway into Number Theory*. As an ignoramus, I had to learn it all and that became possible by seeing meaning from special cases and then thinking out the generality”. So it seems that Bob had not encountered much number theory as a student, and that he eventually came to learn it in much the same way as he was now offering the readers of his book.

By the time that Bob left Homerton in 1988, Alison Shrubsole had retired, but she wrote to him “You will have received all sorts of expressions of appreciation, but please stand by now for one from a past, not to say passé, Principal. It has all the authority of a recollection in tranquility. First and foremost, I appreciated your rock-like integrity. After that came my admiration for your scholarly qualities, teaching ability, concern for the students, capacity for organizing others, working harder than anyone I know. But there was usually a twinkle in your eye as well, and a refreshingly original approach to the problems which beset us”.



I believe that Bob would approve if I leave it to a former student, Dr Gina Donaldson, now a Senior Lecturer at Canterbury Christ Church University for the final words in this appreciation. She must have expressed the feelings of many others when she wrote to me “I was so sorry to hear about

the loss of Dr Bob Burn. I was one of his primary students from 1984 to 1988 at Homerton. He interviewed me for the maths part of my initial interview and taught me in my final year. I was lucky enough to get the benefit of the depth of his knowledge. He was completely inspiring. He used his book *A Pathway into Number Theory* with my group in the final year, which was a great approach to teaching (for me) really difficult ideas. The book is still on my bookshelf. He was kind but rigorous and I just fed off his love of maths”.

Bob’s funeral took place in Exeter in March 2024, which Peter Warner attended, and on 26th May a good assembly of villagers, family and former Homerton colleagues gathered for the interment of his ashes in the graveyard at ‘his’ church in Foxton.

The Reverend Professor Robert Pemberton Burn:
Requiescat in Pace.

I am grateful to Bob and Isabel’s son, Christopher, for his assistance as I compiled this tribute, and for permission to draw upon his own address at the funeral in Exeter.

Tim Rowland

[This is an edited version of the longer tribute deposited in the Homerton Archive.]



David Male

29th February 1928 – 17th July 2024

"Instigator and one of the founders of the RSMA, of which he was extremely proud"

We became aware that David had died aged 96 in Harwich Hospital after a short illness when Peter Raby noticed an announcement in *The Times* Saturday obituary column. It was clearly 'our' David Male given the once every four years, 29th February birthday date, so just 24 'real' birthdays - each one celebrated I hear with what I will describe as plenty of 'creative panache'.

His drama colleagues, Pat Cooper, Sue Macklin and Peter Raby, along with Anne Thwaites and myself went to David's funeral at Weeley Crematorium on August 13th, one summer's day this year when the sun was shining. The service was led by Reverend Ann Thelwell – David's Great Niece. Beforehand, I had been wondering whether David had many relatives. I soon found out, he was the youngest of six boys, so there are numerous nephews, nieces, great nephews & nieces and even a few great greats. He clearly loved and was equally well loved by them all.



I never had the pleasure of meeting David but 'knew' a little about his life from the 2020 Newsletter article '... *visiting David*' written by Muriel Cordell and Trish Maude. It is always

deserving of a re-read but especially now that David is no longer with us. During the funeral address it was mentioned that David was always immaculately dressed and never to be seen outdoors without wearing his cap – which rather explains the photograph of David that accompanies the article, a wet and windy May day notwithstanding.

Many tributes both long and short were offered by several RSMs on hearing the news about David. It seemed fitting to start with Peter Raby's contribution.

David was a man of action. He used to say - stop talking about it, just do it. So it's not surprising that I have many memories of David in action. He believed in performance to reveal the essence of drama, and willingly took part in many productions - Bottom, of course, but also as one of the Gods in *The Good Person of Setzuan* (from the top of

the zip-up), a memorably poignant Lucky in Sue Macklin's production of *Waiting for Godot*, the corpse in *The Real Inspector Hound* ... I only directed him once, when he agreed to play the Devil in *The Blessed Apple Tree*, complete with tail and cloven hoof, much to the astonishment of a party of Japanese tourists in King's College Chapel, who happened on our production. I also recall him leading an improvisation on Minsmere beach one Department week - was he Prospero? Or Poseidon? It concluded with David, staff in hand, leading the Department into the cold waters of the North Sea. No half measures - total immersion. He was a true, much respected and admired leader. We were lucky to work with him.

Peter Raby

David was always talented while also so kind. I am not sure he realised the high esteem and affection in which he was held. He will be long missed.

Chris Tubb

I do remember seeing David several times when he came back. He was always very well dressed and very polite.

Keith Heywood

I knew him fairly well because he was Head of Drama while I was Head of English ... David spoke quietly but always thoughtfully and with conviction. He was not easily distracted. A wry sense of humour ... he was held in high esteem by everyone who knew and worked with him, even in Cambridge. Drama in Homerton had a high reputation because of his leadership even though [at that time] there was no Drama Tripos, which meant that Drama students had to find their questions within the English Tripos papers, and that gave them no opportunity to use their much admired, practical work.

John Axon

I got to know David well and house/cat-sat for him at Ickleton while he travelled to Santa Barbara and I was finishing my Ph.D. (c.1982). I was a very junior temporary lecturer at the time and David was very kind and supportive. When he retired (at the same time as a number of other Homerton lecturers), he initiated the RSM Association. He was a great dramatist and loved talking about acting and theatre; Peter Raby, Philip Rundle and I acted with him for his retirement performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by him and Sue Macklin. David gave an unforgettable performance as Bottom. There are many photographs in the Archives of this and other Homerton plays he performed in and directed. He was one of those Homerton lecturers who you could not help looking up to and who's conversation always left its mark, simultaneously uplifting and humbling.

Peter Warner



[Peter Warner's] mention of A Midsummer Night's Dream incidentally also involved Richard Light, from the Maths department. However, my most vivid memories of David are when we got to work together on the joint Creative Arts Curriculum Course where I found him to be an extraordinary person to work alongside. He was incredibly kind and encouraging not only to our students, but to us, his colleagues. I learned a great deal from him and liked him enormously.

Philip Rundall

I have known David since the heady days of the early Seventies when we attended the excellent DES Drama Summer Schools over several years. He was originally Head of Drama Studies at Bretton Hall College and I lectured in the Drama Department at Doncaster College

of Education: both under the auspices of Sheffield University. David was instrumental in my appointment initially to the Language and Literacy Course in a very part-time capacity and thanks to him I eventually achieved full-time status in the Drama Department. I owe my ten-year career at Homerton entirely to him. He was a truly inspiring teacher and a caring tutor. It was a privilege to work with him.

Pat Cooper

As for David's 'instigator and founder roles', we all have much to be grateful to him for. David was the only RSM left who received information from Anne Thwaites via 'snail mail'. He would periodically write to Anne or phone Trish to comment on RSMA news; his interest clearly never waned.

Libby Jared



*A younger and older David
(chosen by his family for the order of service)*

Always Remembered: Great Lives

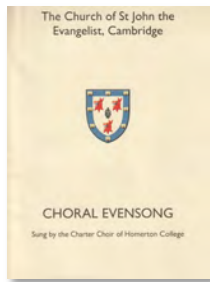
The academic year started with some of us going to Muriel's funeral and ended by going to David's; a symmetry of sorts, as Muriel had 'interviewed' David some three years earlier to write an article for the Newsletter and David on hearing the news of Muriel had written to Anne about his memories of times together.

Any mention of 'symmetry' really belongs to Bob, an expert on that and so many other things mathematical. I was told that he was still working on a maths problem on the morning that he waited for the ambulance, leaving home for what was to be the last time, to take him to hospital. I assume he may have been wearing his sandals as, apparently, they formed his entire 'shoe' wardrobe.

I did not know Elizabeth, but the photograph of her with her birthday cake to me radiates happiness and contentment. This is something that also appears to apply to Olga as well, even in life's struggles; from her pleasure at driving her soft-top Morris Minor, through the many wonderful performances she gave with her singing, to hugging her favourite tree, her smile never left her.

If I've done my sums correctly, I think that David and Olga both made it to 96, Elizabeth 94, Bob 89 and Muriel the 'baby' of the group a mere 88. This is truly an amazing set of ages; and not forgetting elsewhere in this Newsletter, Enid (Johnson) and David (Ebbutt), all long lives lived well and all leaving many memories for those who knew them so well: family, colleagues and friends.





The Charter Choir sing Evensong at Hampton Court Palace

Philip Rundall

When Homerton's Director of Music Daniel Trocmé-Latter's email arrived offering a place on the Charter Choir's coach going down to the Chapel Royal Hampton Court on Saturday 27th April I jumped at the chance but cheekily asked whether I could take Patti along with me. Initially one seat was offered, but someone dropped out and so we eventually both made it - and what a day we had!

As a student I studied at nearby Kingston College of Art and yet I never got to visit Hampton Court Palace, the excuse being that I lived far away in Vauxhall, in London and anyway I couldn't afford the entry price. So, to be delivered in 2024 literally to the Palace's front door, our coach passing through a gateway that has a sign that explicitly states 'No Coaches', all led me to thinking this was how it was meant to be.

With our pink THIS IS NOT A TICKET wrist bands we were all led through areas not open to the general public: Tudor brickwork towering above us; going through gates, doorways, glimpses of gardens; down dark passageways, and eventually entering a room alongside the Chapel Royal where instructions for the day were delivered by the welcoming staff. Then let loose, both Patti and I found the maps of the palace rather confusing, but we eventually found the rather good cafe that provides nice quality food and there we enjoyed chatting with Daniel and a few members of the choir, who had also managed to find the place.

The Evensong service was due to start at 4.30pm so there wasn't a lot of time, but we managed to look round

William III's apartments and what remains of the Tudor palace. We also managed to walk round parts of the gardens, but time was pressing and we returned to the Chapel. The service was well attended with quite a number of choir member's families there too. The Chapel Royal's interior is beautiful and fairly dark, so the electric 'candlelight' makes it quite magical. The acoustics were excellent, the organ rich and soft sounding, and the choir was on splendid form. The Chapel Royal is not a large church so there was a wonderful intimacy to the service. Photography is not allowed in the Chapel Royal, so I was delighted when after everyone had left the chapel, we returned with the choir and I was allowed to take a series of photos of them from the royal pew up the stairs, from where the Royal Family would have viewed the proceedings. Patti also took several at ground floor level.

The choir walked across the bridge over the Thames to eat at the Pizza Express restaurant in Hampton Court village and Patti and I explored the nearby streets with their quirky junk shops and refreshingly ordinary independent businesses. We found a Thai restaurant where we had an excellent meal and afterwards caught up with the 'gang' at Pizza Express before we all walked back, through light rain, to the Palace grounds and the waiting coach. The rain poured down all the way back to Cambridge. We arrived at the Mary Allen Building at 9.40pm, the precise time our excellent driver predicted.

Thank you, Daniel and The Charter Choir, for giving us such a splendid day!





Social Activities

Libby Jared

In summary: Anne & I think it is fair to say that this year we have had the largest number of events with the largest number of attendees, in spite of the fact

that the position of Social Secretary has remained vacant all this year. More about this last point later. But first a summary of all the events.

The year began with a 'proper' posh Afternoon Tea (funded by the RSM account) with 'proper' china plates, cups and saucers following the AGM, to celebrate having had a 'proper' full year return to College following two lockdown years.



Ian to Stephen "Do you think we can get a couple more members to join the committee"



Steve to Stephen "Do you get teas like this at home ...?"

The rest of the activities are somewhat in the manner of a partridge in a pear tree list.

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

October 23rd 2023:

Mary Earl: Reflecting on difference and diversity during undergraduate and post graduate education courses: a view from Homerton's bi-annual 'trips' to Leicester

April 19th 2024:

Dr Francesca Moore (Vice-Principal): Homerton in 2024: New Horizons

March 13th 2024:

Dr Elaine Wilson: The changing landscape of Initial Teacher Education and Training in a post-Govian world

May 17th 2024: (chaired by Steve Watts)

Dr Alex Pyrce (Course Leader) & **Sandy Mills** (Director of Studies): The Foundation Year (for Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences) at Cambridge and Homerton's role in it.



Left: Clare assures us that she did not eat all these cakes!

Right: Judith "Libby are you going to the BBC Proms next year?" (see page 17)



Three Formal Halls

November 21st 2023:

Dr Who Themed - celebrating the programme's 60th Anniversary



RSMs dressed for the part (well ... with scarves) joined by actor Nicola Bryant (companion to Doctors 5 & 6)

RSMs donned a scarf and other accessories with Chris Doddington stealing the show being the spitting image of the first female Dr Who. It turned out to be an evening never to be forgotten: entering the dining hall through the 'Tardis' and having a 'Dalek' say the College Grace, after the Charter Choir had sung a fine choral parts rendition of the Dr Who theme!



Chris D – spitting image of the first female Doctor

February 27th 2024:

First (ever) Vegan Formal Hall



Not only was this the first ever Vegan Formal Hall (possibly across all the Colleges, though I can't be sure of that) but it was certainly the first ever Vegan meal that some of us had eaten; a good introduction towards enjoying more such meals, formal or not.

We were joined by two Japanese visitors writing a book in collaboration with Peter Cunningham. Setsuko Kagawa from Tsuda University (Tokyo) and Yoko Yamasaki from

Mukogawa University (Hyōgo). Incidentally, in preparation of meeting our two guests I thought I should go and see the recently cinema released Japanese film *Perfect Days* which certainly in my mind lived up to its title.

Also, for this particular evening, the canticles sung by The Charter Choir for Evensong in St John's had been composed by Roger Green and Tim Rowland had joined the male voices only choir.



Evensong canticles: composer with Chair ...



Peter and his Japanese visitors Yoko & Setsuko posing before Betty Rea's Girl with a bird



... and with new choirboy, Tim



May 7th 2024:
Hunger Games Themed

This (Easter Term) is the one Formal Hall each year that is open to RSMs bringing partners and other guests. The theme itself was sadly completely unknown to me (at least), illustrative perhaps of the age that accompanies the

acronym RSM, but nevertheless it was as ever an enjoyable evening with good food and company. There had been no particularly special Evensong beforehand except that I had read the Second Lesson!

Two Twos

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

November 22nd 2023

Steve *Bourneville* by Jonathan Coe
Watts (Viking, 2023)
John *Buddenbrooks* by Thomas Mann
Finney (First Published 1901)
Anne *Two Wheels Good: The History and Mystery of the Bicycle* by Jody Rosen (Bodley Head, 2022)
Thwaites
John *The Russian Jerusalem* by Elaine Feinstein
Hopkins (Carcaret, 2008)
Libby *The Daughter of Time* by Josephine Tey
Jared (First Published 1951)

February 16th 2024

Lizzie *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels
Madder (Vintage 1998 (Paperback))
Rex The novels of Robert Neill - a hero in NE
Watson Lancashire (Burnley/Nelson/Colne)
Janet *A Great Reckoning* by Louise Penny
Scott (Sphere Books, 2016)
Linda *The Great Level* by Stella Tillyard.
Hargreaves (Chatto + Windus, 2018)

By the way, my horizons have expanded since these two sessions I have read and enjoyed 3 of these books, a different one by Jonathan Coe, and watched a film adaptation of Lizzie's choice - *Libby*

Two Walks

October 10th 2023:
Around parts of Eddington (see 2021 Newsletter for route)



Group photo – all present at the start



Fascination with rubbish bins – Keith thinking about it carefully – the 'girls' picking up litter to experiment



Left: let's all go down Rudduck Way



Libby steadying Anne's resource sheet



Right: Seeing double: the reflection wall



March 17th 2024:
Ely Country Park

Linda Hargraves ‘volunteered’ to lead this walk which, for us, the six other participants, added even more to her telling of *The Great Level*, her book choice the previous month. Linda certainly helped us to shake off the cobwebs by taking us on this walk, stopping us from time to time to pass on an amazing array of (historical) facts as

well as providing us with a series of fine views of the Cathedral (and cross-country trains). She has subsequently kindly written an article for this Newsletter (see earlier) about the walk as an in-the-moment ‘virtual’ guide, with photos, should others wish to do it. You really should!

Three Ones

One ‘Hybrid’ Evening Talk

November 2nd 2023:

Peter Cunningham: *Paintings and prints, provenance and Principals: a tale of three big projects in our art collection.*

For information the tale of three Principals involved in three individual big art collection projects related to: Principal John Horobin’s acquisition of Jane Benham Hay’s great painting *A Florentine Procession* Principal Kate Pretty’s acceptance of ten paintings of Coqué Martínez offered by his executors Principal Geoff Ward’s choice of a set of the Profiles series of prints by Michael Craig-Martin.

Whilst there were some minor blips with the technology, there have been many complimentary comments both about the talk and our efforts at experimenting with a hybrid talk. Indeed, we understand that the Principal listened into this talk and that it contributed to Homerton appointing an Art Curator.

One Xmas ‘Gathering’ - Mince Pie Friday

December 15th 2023



Holly concentrating hard with the mallets



Trish and Bev in their proper Christmas kit



An artist’s panoramic view



Left: Initial briefing of an attentive trio

Right: Surely teaching students was easier than doing this?



One Summer Picnic (with Poetry Readings)

Friday June 28th 2024



'Dress' rehearsal for Glyndebourne?

First though we met for the usual coffee morning, before most of us decamped to the nearby College Marquee, which I hasten to add was not erected for our purposes but as it was lying idle for the day we were given permission to use it. We should have been in the Orchard but the weather wasn't exactly playing ball and with tables and chairs set up in the marquee, it won the vote (probably sensibly for those of us who voted for the chilly outdoor option). Over our individual picnics and cold drinks (warm ones might have been better) and with no set order of play, most, but not all, people there read one or two poems, each much enjoyed by the poetry loving audience. The conclusion to this event was that we should do it again next year!



Reciting by heart - not composing



This year's battle of the picnic baskets



Warmer inside the marquee than out

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

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.

We simply couldn't do without you Clare



Always keeping an eye on us – remotely this time



“Many hands make light work” & “The more the merrier” ...

These two sayings appeared in last year’s Newsletter as a light-hearted way to ask for more help in organising various ‘things’ to give RSMs the opportunity to have some enjoyment together. Sadly, there was a very quiet response – perhaps you didn’t read it?

Whether you did read it or not, the summary of social activities on the previous three pages might suggest that, as if by magic, a plethora of enjoyment opportunities did arise without significant volunteer help. This is not so, there is no magic wand. If last year’s momentum is to be maintained or even increased, it has become essential to ask again if **you could offer to do just one thing** to help out!

Perhaps this could be:

- organising a talk by a colleague;
- hosting an ‘outside’ speaker;
- co-ordinating a ‘do-it-ourselves’ (‘dio’) 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

To ease you in gently, there is already an outline plan in place for next term and rooms are booked for: three coffee mornings; one talk with speaker already agreed; a ‘dio’ book share; a formal hall and hopefully a Christmas extravaganza.

To help volunteers further, a written guide for the organisation of different aspects of the RSMA programme will be available. Do realise that you wouldn’t be on your own – the committee and college staff will always be there to help.

Anne & Libby



Left: what’s the angle?

Right: from Homerton’s roof to seeking seagulls on the seashore – a more natural habitat (Westgate on Sea, Kent)



Picture credits:

Front page, Philip Rundall; p.4, pp.39 - 44, Jane Edden, Libby Jared, Trish Maude, Philip Rundall & Anne Thwaites; p.15 & 16, Courtesy of Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; p.17, Courtesy of Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem; p.22, Ely Country Park; p.23,24 & 25, Libby Jared; p.28 & 29, Homerton Archive
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