



The Churchillian

The Newsletter of the Churchill Hall
Association

2015-16



CHURCHILL
HALL

Message from the Chairman

Fellow Churchillians

Welcome to our 4th annual newsletter. It was great to see many of you at the Annual Dinner again held in the Holmes last summer. We had as our guest speaker the departing Vice Chancellor, Sir Eric Thomas, who gave us a talk on 'People at Bristol'. The VC was introduced by our other VIP guest, namely the Chancellor, Lady Hale of Richmond, who has attended all recent CHA dinners. In my brief summation I also especially welcomed the class of '65, who were celebrating the 50th anniversary of their graduation, and we offered Lady Hale a Life-Long Membership of the CHA.

This year we will be holding a founders dinner, which will be a 60th celebration of the Hall's opening in 1956. All presently-known members of Churchill Hall in those early years have been personally invited to attend the dinner, in the Holmes on Saturday 9th July 2016. The response has been so enthusiastic that the dinner is almost fully booked.

For 2017 we hope to move back to the main building once the renovations to it are completed this summer. (See message from the Warden). The Holmes is a delightful setting and has served us well but is not ideal for dinners with Speakers.

May I thank my committee for their excellent efforts during the year, and again we appeal for younger members to help us. We would particularly like to have some input from ladies who stayed at Churchill - I believe the Hall went co-ed in the late seventies.

David Clarke
Chairman, Churchill Hall Association (CHA)
Churchill Hall 1963-65

Message from the Warden

This really is the beginning of the end...

As I sit to write this column, it is almost seventy-three years to the day since Sir Winston Churchill's famous speech marked a turning point in the War with the words "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end, but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning". As readers of previous newsletters will be aware, a turning point for the hall named after Churchill came some five years ago when the University committed to a major investment programme. The hall was well over a half century old by that time and in desperate need of renovation. Five years later, the summer of 2015 saw the final student bedrooms refurbished such that all our Freshers arriving in September were guaranteed a room of the highest standard. And it is just a month ago that I was involved in developing the specifications for the final phase of refurbishment for next summer, which will address the major communal spaces of the hall – the library, the dining room, the bar and the JCR. We have been consulting with our students over the past two years to get this right and the plan is to retain the "period" feel of the hall with its characteristic oak paneling but to entirely transform our social spaces to fit the needs of twenty-first century students. So, the bar will be transformed by the addition of a multimedia online gaming space, while the library will be retooled to respond to the needs of students who spend more time on screens than poring over books. By the conclusion of summer 2016, Churchill will once more be the envy of Stoke Bishop (yes, I mean that, Wills Hall!).



If the refurbishment works are reaching the beginning of the end, their whole purpose, of course, has been to allow for new beginnings for Churchill's students and alumni. The refurbishment began in the same year in which the Churchill Hall Association was re-formed to host annual dinners for alumni. This year is a

particularly important one for the hall and its alumni as it marks the sixtieth anniversary of the opening of Churchill, something upon which other contributions to this newsletter will focus. We hope to welcome many from the Class of '56 back to this summer's dinner; as we begin the end of our renovations, so we hope that new connections and beginnings can be forged for and with all of our alumni.



Robert Mayhew
Warden

Message from the JCR President

Atop the Stoke Bishop hill lies a hall, which has changed enormously over the years. Although it's external appearance is the same, the inside and its people are completely different. After undergoing many, many refurbishments which are nearly complete - the main building will be refurbished this summer - Churchill will be a perfect gem. The days during which Churchill was isolated are long gone; thanks to the Wessex 16 service, Churchill Hall is a short bus ride away from the business of the city.

2016 has lots in store for the Hall. Churchill residents and those at the rest of the Stoke Bishop halls will be able to take part in our mindfulness sessions during the exam period in order to avoid anxiety and other mental health related issues. We hosted an excellent Venetian Masquerade Ball as part of the traditional Valentine's Ball. In addition, we will be taking part in Pink Week, by incorporating pink as the theme for our March formal; with this we hope to raise awareness about Breast Cancer and some money for their charity.

Closer to the end of the academic year we are hoping to put on our very own Churchill Hall play and a recital. We are very proud of our musical and artistic talent, which seems to be incredibly high this year, with dozens of musicians and actors among our cohort. We plan to end the year with an incredible Garden Party so that together with that and the Churchill Hoodies, which will be made, they'll have plenty of memories to take home.

Churchill is a place where many have formed friendships that will last them a lifetime - the Hall is endlessly welcoming and open. While we are only part way through this year, there have clearly been many worthwhile moments, where acquaintances have become close friends.

I am looking forward to a successful year at Churchill Hall

Cristina Oehling
Churchill President 2015/2016

Churchill Hall Sixty Years Ago - Robert Mayhew, Warden

The present Warden is known to the university's archivists as a cussed soul who has refused to alienate the treasures of the Churchill Hall archive to the central repository in the Arts and Social Science Library. The reason for this is quite simple: long before the University was interested in archiving the Hall's existence, the intrepid founders of Churchill – staff and students – saw fit to record and memorialise their activities, and it seems only right and proper that the Hall retains the fruits of this labour. And so, when one is asked “when was Churchill Hall founded?” a quick skim of the archive gives a suitably nuanced answer from our first “President of Archives” (no, we don't have one any more!), Mr Grenville Eden: “If we must name a date, we can say that 111 students, a Warden, three members of the Senior Common Room became the new Churchill Hall on Wednesday October 3rd, 1956, this being the day when we first dined and met together as a Hall.”



The Holmes Christmas Dinner, 1956

As such, our newsletter for 2016 really does mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Hall. Some things look remarkably different to the present Warden. We no longer hold mixed recitals and meetings called “smokers” in The Holmes, and I rather imagine university branding policies would mitigate against the name should we wish to revive them. And yet equally, how well do I recognise the notice by my predecessor, A.B Reynolds, dated 13th March 1957 noting that on the previous day 118 gentlemen had signed for dinner, which meant some 105% of the hall’s residents needed dinner that night. Churchill still has mysterious refugees from Badock who allegedly seek out our fare in preference to their own! Perhaps the class of ’56 can help me to understand Reynolds’s cryptic reference that “it was generally rumoured that certain household accessories nearly reached a state of dynamic equilibrium over Holly Bush Lane”, but it sounds uncannily similar to the projecting fruit catapult I had to deal with a few weeks ago. And the first ever newsletter of the Churchill Hall Association, still safely in the Hall archive, notes cricket, football, table tennis and snooker being played in intramural sports, as well as “madrigals and folk dancing” in June. Most of these activities, *mutatis mutandis*, are still recognizable to present day students (although I fear discos have replaced madrigals and we are the worse for it!).



Christmas Dinner.

The final word about the Class of '56 should be left to their Warden, A.B. Reynolds. With a wry humour I had not been told of previously, he opined with mock grandiloquence in the 1956-7 newsletter of the Hall Association "there was never any doubt that this would be the best year so far in the history of Churchill Hall". Sixty years on, one rather suspects this playfully self-deprecating remark has more substance in it than A.B. could possibly have imagined at the time.



Robert Mayhew
Warden

CHA Alumni Dinner, 2015

The Dinner was held on the 11th July in the Holmes. Our guest speaker, the departing Vice Chancellor, Sir Eric Thomas, gave a talk on 'People at Bristol'.

The Chancellor, Lady Hale of Richmond, introduced the Vice Chancellor. We had a total of 50 guests including the class of 65.

Good weather allowed pre-dinner drinks to be taken outside.





Churchill Hall 60th Anniversary Dinner 9th July 2016 at 19:00 at The Holmes

This year marks the 60th Anniversary of the founding of Churchill Hall, and this will be celebrated at the 2016 Dinner: This will be held in the beautiful surroundings of The Holmes.

The guest speaker will be Sophie Hatchwell, teacher and PhD student in the Department of History of Art, who will give a short talk on Speeches & Celebrations: Churchill at Bristol.

Those who were resident at Churchill in the very early years of the Hall have been given priority to attend the Dinner. Due to the excellent response from these Founder Members, the dinner is currently almost fully booked with only a few places remaining. Should any Churchillian who wishes to attend – and, in particular, anyone who was resident during or before 1958 - find the dinner fully booked, please contact Alastair Scott at alastair.f.d.scott@btopenworld.com to check for spare places due to cancellations.

The Dinner will form part of the 'Best of Bristol Alumni Weekend 2016', and all Churchillians are encouraged to book up for this.

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni/events/alumni-weekend-2016/>

We hope to hold the 2017 Alumni dinner in the newly refurbished main building.

Churchill Hall Association

The Churchill Hall Association welcomes feedback - together, of course, with letters or articles for the 2017 Newsletter. Please make contact via email at churchillhallassociation@gmail.com