



The Churchillian: The Newsletter of the Churchill Hall Association 2012-13



Warden's Column: Hall and Churchill Hall, *Mundus Alter et Idem*:

It was one of my personal heroes, the 17th century Bishop of Exeter, Joseph Hall, who wrote a book with the title *Mundus Alter et Idem*, "Another World and Yet the Same". The book is a spoof travel account, one of the great satirical achievements of its age, attacking the mores of Hall's contemporaries. Whilst no warden would look too closely at the morals of his residents for fear of what he might find (!), the title of Hall's book resonates with me as I look at university life in general at present and as I act as Warden of Churchill Hall. For in many ways, the Hall and the University look like the same world you will remember, and yet if you scratch the surface, you find a very different world emerging indeed.

This October, we welcomed the first students who will pay £9,000 per annum to be educated at the University. Obviously, we are thereby put upon our mettle, both in terms of the quality of the education we offer and in terms of the other services we provide to facilitate the student experience. In this regard, we are lucky at Bristol to have been ahead of the game in terms of retooling for this new world, and Churchill Hall has been one of the major beneficiaries in the form of the major refurbishment programme I spoke of in last year's newsletter.



The summer of 2012 saw the continuation of this project, with FGH blocks refurbished, giving the hall some 75 further rooms of the highest standard. As such, we now have around half of our study bedrooms wholly ready for the new world of university life, however much, from the outside, they look unaltered by the passage of time. The summer also saw a complete refit of our catering kitchen, bringing in state of the art facilities as part of the University's commitment to providing top quality, local and sustainably sourced food for our residents. A further tranche of work is due in the summer of 2013 and there are further exciting plans in the pipeline, of which I hope to inform you in next year's newsletter.

Amidst all these developments in the new world of the University, hall life remains, in many ways, reassuringly "the same" in Joseph Hall's terms. Churchill remains the fun, friendly hall it ever was, balancing tradition with informality as always. Our students work hard and play hard, with drama, music and sport flourishing at present. They love our formal dinners, inviting jazz bands, string quartets and even building their own scratch bands for these occasions. I am struck by the disjunction between the rather gloomy headlines we see in the newspapers about a "forgotten generation" left stranded on the shores of global austerity and the vibrant, positive and confident

residents it is my pleasure to welcome to Churchill. In changing times, Churchill students are facing the future with the robust good humour that you doubtless did, as hopefully you can see from the ensuing pages.

Robert Mayhew, Warden



JCR President's Column

It would be fair to say that Churchill Hall strikes a very happy medium between the spartan 'cosiness' and wanton frippery of certain other halls. The newly refurbished blocks – notably The Holmes – are the 'jewels in the crown', both boasting luxury and spaciousness. Soon to join them this summer are another residential block, the bar, the Hexagon games room and the kitchens – which, bizarrely, will also become a water bottling plant... This caused much chagrin to the environmental committee, whose valiant – if slightly ineffectual efforts – will set a precedent for further sustainable measures in halls next year.

The quad saw a myriad of activity over the year: barbeques during the glorious spate of sunshine in the midst of exam season; the Churchill football team – unable to enter the league – trampling it to mud every Wednesday afternoon; and the occasional firework in the middle of the night. We took the opportunity of the end-of-year Garden Party to further destroy the lawn with a slip 'n' slide, a fun and (mostly) injury-free activity. Inflatables, a Pimms tent and live jazz band provided a yet richer backdrop against which to bid goodbye to Churchill.

The JCR was totally transformed for the extravaganza of debauchery that was the Valentine's Ball – well nigh unrecognisable beneath new lighting and drapes. On a bitterly cold night, the atmosphere inside was certainly warm. Other highlights included a pub quiz run in aid of BVDA – a student charity for development abroad – which saw an unprecedented turnout, with barely standing room only.

The JCR did sadly stand empty for much of the year; no longer outfitted with the armchairs and newspapers of the 1960s, there seems little reason for students to go there. During exam season, however, it saw a steady stream of refugees from the library. This led to what I think embodies the Churchill spirit well – by simply studying side by side, nobodies became acquaintances, acquaintances became friends; and so it is with real sadness that the year came to an end.

Barney Main

Churchill Hall President 2011/2012



Reflections of a Founder: Mike Pascoe

They also serve...

Today's students are used to waiting on people as bar or restaurant staff. It would probably come as a shock to them and appear rather non-PC that in the 1950s students in Halls of Residence were those who were waited on.

I joined Churchill Hall as a founder member in 1956. The logistics of life were very much taken care of. Breakfast and evening meals were taken in hall and included in the fees. Vouchers worth, as I remember, 1s 6d (7pence) were issued for lunch in the Refectory, next to the City Museum. If we were feeling especially flush we would pay a few pence more and eat in Underdown's restaurant in the Victoria Rooms. In addition, our rooms were cleaned and beds made either by scouts



(permanent staff who also helped in serving meals) or by cleaning ladies who came in on a part-time basis.

My scout was called Lew. As he told me, he had been a "gentleman's gentleman" or valet. His life before the Second World War had been an enviable one. In the 1950s when foreign exchange was severely limited and even a trip to Paris was seen as exciting, Lew had accompanied his master by rail and steamer many times to France and Italy in the 1930s. Looking after teenage students must have been a sad decline by comparison. Yet he enjoyed his work and once complained to me that Mr Bradley's* room was so immaculate it was "unnatural". Mr Bradley had just finished National Service so that he was used to living neatly in small spaces.

By far the most important of the permanent staff at Churchill was Mr Cainey. An impressive figure, he had been the butler for the family owning The Holmes, one of the older houses near the new

building which the University had taken over. As I got to know him I found him a fascinating source of information about an era which was not then so far away as my student days are now, but which seemed a different civilisation.

Gradually I learnt that he had been in the trenches in the First World War, “but the family were very good and took me back afterwards”! He informed me, no doubt ruefully, on one occasion: “Mr Pascoe, this house was full of epicures and connoisseurs. I would go to London to buy cheese and if I couldn’t get what I wanted I would come back empty-handed”.

Students were certainly less demanding of the servants (or scared of Mr Cainey) than some of the former occupants of the house and their guests. On one occasion he told me that a visitor had thrown a hunting pink at him at midnight (he had been on duty since before 6.00am) and said: “Cainey, I can’t possibly hunt in that tomorrow. Clean it.” Cainey spent the rest of the night doing so.

Among the butler’s many other duties was that of finding out from the lady’s maid what colour dress Madam was wearing that night so that the flowers on the dinner table did not clash.

Cainey had all the trained butler’s memory for names. Five years after graduation, with my wife, I returned to Churchill for the first time for a reunion dinner. I had no sooner



arrived at the door when Cainey said: “Good evening Mr Pascoe. Good evening madam”. Then, leaning forward confidentially, “I advise you to take the white wine.”

On another occasion a student who had failed his exams and been sent down returned to Bristol during the vacation to see his girlfriend. Being unable to find anywhere to sleep he managed to gain entrance to the mattress store and had what he later told me was a very uncomfortable night. He jumped out of the store early in the morning – but not too early for Cainey who was about to stoke the boilers for the house. “Good morning Mr Beaton, Slept well I trust?” said the imperturbable Cainey.

Wills Hall residents no doubt have similar stories to recount. I have heard that one evening at a formal dinner (at which gowns were worn) when the food had been somewhat less than attractive, and the student behaviour even less so, the Steward approached the high table at which academic

staff sat and signalling the end of the meal reported, “The gentlemen (if you can call them gentlemen) have dined (if you can call it dining)” – then an immaculately-timed pause – “sir”.

Even members of staff had their own servants. Miss McLeod, the Warden of Clifton Hill House, which was a women’s hall in those days kept a servant. I remember having to call on the Warden and being most impressed at being ushered in to her presence by a maid in uniform and mob cap.

Servants they may have been but they had their own high standards and sense of their own dignity and worth. They have long gone but in the words of St Matthew’s Gospel, “Well done thou good and faithful servant”.

*Names have been changed to protect the guilty.



Art at Churchill Hall

A couple of years back, the Head Warden, Dr Martin Crossley Evans (Manor Hall) noted to me the woeful absence of pictures on our walls at Churchill.

Determined to make amends, last year I launched an art competition amongst our students. The two winners were Josh Edwards (photography, pictured) and Francesca Harris (oil on canvas). The works by both artists are now hung on the walls leading to the dining room and the intention is to run the competition year on year to build up an archive of the creative talents of our residents which also graces our public spaces. Josh also kindly took the photos

of Churchill which grace the pages of this year's *Churchillian*. If any alumni have unwanted pictures, images and other works of fine art that they might like to donate to the hall, do please get in touch and we can look to add to the halls' fabric!

Robert Mayhew

The Hexagon

Residents of Churchill from the 1980s on will be aware of the Hexagon, a room of that shape which was added just outside the bar. For the past few years, the Hexagon has housed the hall's 12 foot Queen Anne snooker table and been a party space. Perhaps due to the last named function, the Hexagon had degenerated into a considerable state of disrepair over by the time I took over as Warden in 2009. Fortunately, I was successful in a bid to the minor capital projects fund of the University, and this has resulted in a major refurbishment of the Hexagon which now boasts soft seating and a flat screen television, making it an ideal space in which smaller groups can socialise in more intimate surroundings than those offered by the Junior Common Room. And, to complete the package, the Warden's annual allowance was spent on recovering the snooker table and providing fresh balls and cues.



Alumni Dinner

The Churchill Hall Association alumni dinner for 2012 was another great success, with some fifty guests in attendance. The Association's guest of honour was the Chancellor, Baroness Hale of Richmond, and also in attendance were Bill Ray, Chair of Convocation, and Tanya Jane Rawlinson, Director of Campaigns and Alumni Relations. The three course meal was hosted in the congenial surroundings of The Holmes, and was marred only slightly by an all-too predictable dose of the dampest summer on record.

Details of this year's Alumni Dinner will be emailed to you all directly by Campaigns and Alumni Relations as part of the alumni weekend programme. Having doubled our numbers from 2011's dinner to that in 2012, a continuation of this process will lead us to have an attendance list of 12800 by the end of a decade! Why not come along and be part of the process. And if you are coming to the 2013 dinner, this year Churchill Hall is pleased to be able to offer a limited number of bed spaces for alumni in The Holmes. More details are available from the Hall Association who can be contacted by email: churchillhallassociation@gmail.com

To book your places for the dinner or accommodation in The Holmes please go:
<http://churchillhalldinner2013.eventbrite.co.uk/>

