



The Churchillian

The Newsletter of the Churchill Hall Association

Autumn 2019



Churchill Hall Association News Updates

Would you like to help the Churchill Hall Association Committee?

Churchill Hall Association (CHA) comprises all who have lived (and mostly loved their time) at Churchill Hall. The CHA Committee organises activities designed to support the Hall and to encourage engagement among all members of the CHA community

The CHA Committee is looking for assistance and to diversify its membership. We would particularly welcome relatively recent Churchillians to help us to better represent the ideas of the entirety of the CHA community. Churchillians based in and around Bristol would also be very valuable.

If you would like to join the CHA Committee, or discuss other volunteering opportunities, please contact us at committee@churchillhallassociation.co.uk

Alumni Reunion Weekend 2020

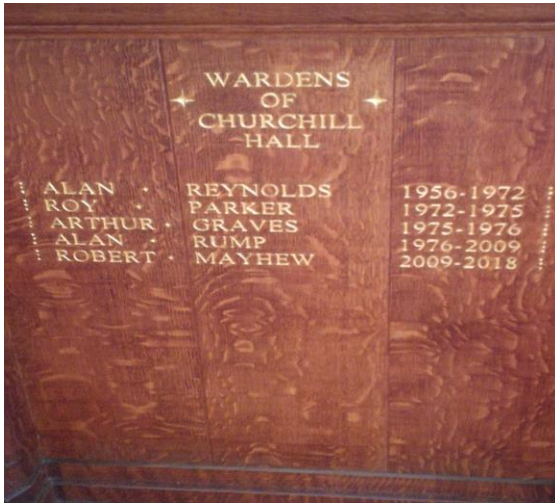
The 2020 Alumni Reunion Weekend will take place from Friday 17 – Sunday 19 July, and will include the annual CHA dinner on the Saturday evening (together with a wide variety of other events). More details will follow early next year, and be available on the website <https://www.churchillhallassociation.co.uk/> or via newsletters and mailings from the University. At the CHA dinner, we will be welcoming a contingent from the Badock Hall Association, and a star Churchillian speaker – so don't wait until you receive further information; make a diary note **now** (and then book as soon as you are able, once the details are known and a booking form is circulated)

Visit to Chartwell (Kent)

Following a successful day's visit to Chartwell- the long-time private home of Sir Winston Churchill- in 2014, we have been asked whether we would like another privately organised tour and lecture.

Subject to costing's we are planning for a Saturday probably in May 2020. The visit will include a coffee reception, lecture on a segment of Sir Winston's life at Chartwell, followed by lunch and then a guided visit to the House and grounds. For National Trust member's entry to the House/gardens will be free but there will be a fee charged for the Lunch etc. We will, as before, be running this in conjunction with the London Branch of Bristol Alumni but Churchillians on the University's email listing will be given two weeks advance notice over London Branch members. Spaces will be limited. Please watch out for further emails.

Dame Monica Wills Chapel Warden's Stall



During the 2019 annual Alumni Service in the Dame Monica Wills Chapel, an engraved stall was unveiled listing the five wardens of Churchill Hall: Alan Reynolds, Roy Parker, Arthur Graves, Alan Rump and Robert Mayhew.

It is matched by a similar stall listing the wardens of Wills Hall on the overset side of the Chapel.

Junior Common Room (JCR) Committee



In March the CHA Committee met with the 2018/19 President of the JCR, Will Manley, and were very pleased to learn that the JCR committee were very active, arranging a number of social events, and some sporting events/ activities with the support of the then relatively new the North Village Residential Life Team. The events the JCR Committee had organised include a Big Band themed Christmas formal dinner/ evening which raised over £500 for a local charity. They had also organised a Speed Friending evening, to help students get to know each other. They also intended to organise two more formal dinners/ evenings, and a number of other events linked to such things as the Six Nations and to finish the year with a Garden party before the exams. The JCR Committee had also established a Churchill JCR Facebook page and Instagram link to aid communications with members.

Residential Life update

In October, the CHA Committee received an update on the first year of the Residential Life Service from the Head of Residential Life in the North Village, Mr. Andrew Abbey, Churchill Hall has been part of the North Village since the autumn of 2018. The following are some of the highlights of this very full report.

The Residential Life Team have:

- Successfully introduced the 24 hour Student Centre in the North Village which has had interactions with approximately 30% all students at one time or another (over 800) for welfare support. This ranges from one single transaction with a student to multiple transactions with an individual student.
- Delivered of a wide range of community building events (by Senior Residents), aimed at offering an increase in the breadth of opportunities to enable all students to engage in something they find as a positive experience. This is intended to reduce the sense of isolation some students can feel when first moving to the University residences.

The JCR model continues in North Village, with each JCR (including Churchill) having a new constitution and new JCR bank account, with the £50 per student contribution continuing.

From September 2019 the University has seen the launch of a 'single point of access' operation called Wellbeing access, extending the support available to all University students (so not restricted to resident first year Undergraduates and postgraduates).

CHA Website

The Churchill Hall Association now has its own dedicated website that will assist in the building of an engaged and supportive CHA that represents the views of its members. So please take a look and bookmark for future reference

<https://www.churchillhallassociation.co.uk/>

CHA and the Alumni Weekend, 19 – 21 July 2019

The Weekend began on Friday evening with a CHA-organised reception for all alumni in the Holmes and a tour of the University Botanic Gardens (the former Holmes gardens). Unfortunately the garden tour, conducted by the Curator Nick Wray, was rather overshadowed by the weather - it was pouring with rain (as can be seen in the left hand picture below).



On Saturday there were a number of events: key among these were:

- In the morning: a walking tour of University precinct public art (see the right hand picture above); a tour of Clifton Hill House garden; or a tour of Wills Memorial Building Tower.
- In the afternoon: a guided tour of SS Great Britain; or a visit to Aerospace Bristol.

Between these events the University organized the traditional lunch in the Great Hall of the Wills Memorial Building, and this year a new venture, a Tea Dance in the Victoria Rooms.

In the evening we continued with our tradition of holding a Reunion Dinner, this year in the JCR, rather than The Holmes, though accommodation continued to be available in the latter. We were very pleased to again welcome members of the Manor, Clifton Hill House and the Badock Hall Associations as well as our guest speaker, Prof Andy Carr, the Alumni Association Trustee on the University's Board of Trustees and his wife. Prof Carr gave a short speech on his time at Bristol University and on his role (so far) on the Board of Trustees. His address was very well received.

The Dinner was preceded by a Reception in the Holmes Gardens, where we were also joined by members of the Wills Hall Association for drinks. As can be seen from

the picture below, this time we were blessed with fine weather, which helped to make the whole evening very enjoyable.

On the Sunday morning, following breakfast at Wills Hall, there was a service in the Monica Wills Chapel, which included the dedication of the engraved desk/ stall referred to above. The service was followed by coffee and a lecture in the Chapel organized by the WHA, with a buffet lunch in Wills Hall for all those who wished to attend.



The Chair's Report

September 2018 – August 2019



My report last year described the major changes within the University which were in the process of being implemented at the time of writing, and which either had impacted on the roles of alumni and the work of hall associations or were expected to do so. Most of these changes have now been made, though in most cases it is still too early for it to have been possible to measure the consequences.

Firstly, the Alumni Association Committee (AAC) has been replaced – although the name remains unchanged. The new AAC has reverted to having several designated members (as used to be the case) and has largely lost its operational functions. It is to be hoped that it is able to exercise its advisory role in a robust fashion, and that the Alumni Relations Office will use this resource broadly.

The first meeting of the Alumni Forum took place in June, and is said to have been a successful occasion. It will be interesting to see whether future meetings adopt a similar balance between informing attendees about developments within the University and asking for their opinions and advice.

Court has been radically reduced in terms of numbers of members – including numbers of alumni representatives. As the rationale for this was defined as being to make it a less cumbersome and more useful body (to the University), we must hope that this objective is achieved.

The Residential Life Services team has now had a full year of operations, and appears to have bedded down successfully. As this was a major change, both from an organisational perspective and in terms of cultural impact, it will be important that the University do a cost/benefit analysis to determine the extent to which the outcomes are

fulfilling expectations as to improvements relative to the Hall Warden system that it replaced.

In the context of these changes, Churchill Hall Association Committee has made efforts to reconsider its purposes, and to work out how these may best be achieved. In doing so, discussions have been initiated with other hall associations and with geographical branches of the Alumni Association with a view to determining areas of common interest and best practice.

The keynote event of the year was, as always, the Annual Dinner, held during the Alumni Weekend in July. This year, we invited Clifton Hill House, Manor and Badock Halls to join us, and – after a Reception held at The Holmes - were therefore able to move the event to the JCR in the Main Building. Plans for the 2020 event are still embryonic, but we may stick with this format. It was fun, so please join us next time.

Alastair Scott, Churchill Hall, 1962-3

Treasurer's Report

The financial year for the Association ends on 31 March, so the majority of this report relates to the year 2018/19.

The major activity of the Association at the present time is related to the Alumni Reunion Weekend. The events of the weekend in 2018 resulted in a small financial surplus. (Whilst most of the costs arise on a 'per head' basis, there are some fixed costs and some areas where we have to make a judgement as to the level of provision we make, which means that we can't simply charge the amount that the event will cost per head.)

During the year, we marked the retirement of Robert Mayhew from the position of Warden of the Hall, the cost of this event being met from Association funds.

The surplus for the year was £51 giving us total funds at the end of the year of £3,824.

In my reports in previous years, I mentioned plans to contribute towards the purchase of a piano for the Hall. With the changes in arrangements, this has been put on one side for the time being, but one of the aims of the Association is to support the life of the Hall and, as can be seen, we have the funds to do so.

The financial outcome of the 2019 Reunion Weekend was considered by the Committee recently and I am pleased to report that we have been able to make a donation of £75 towards the work of the Botanic Garden in acknowledgement of the help given by Nick Wray (curator of the Garden) at the Friday evening event.

Keith Walton, Churchill Hall 1969-72

A Short History of the Holmes and its link to D-Day



The year 2019 marks not only the 75th anniversary of D-Day, but also the 140th anniversary of the building of the Holmes, now the only out-house attached to Churchill Hall. How do these two facts connect together?

To understand this we need to know some of the history of the Holmes which, as the date over the door shows, was built in 1869. It was erected on land that had been part of the Stoke House estate, (Stoke House is now the main part of Trinity Theological College) by William Edward George. He and then his executors owned the house until 1921, leasing it to a number of tenants, three of whom had links to the University College of Bristol. One of these was Alfred Capper Pass in whose memory the Alfred Capper Pass Chair of Chemistry at the University was endowed. Before and after him it was let to members of the Baker family, first in 1882 to W. Mills Baker, the father of Hiatt C. Baker, a future Pro-Chancellor of the University and after whom Hiatt Baker Hall is named. Later his son Herbert Middleton Baker who purchased the freehold in 1921 and lived there until his death in 1943 when the Holmes was sold to the University.

It was during the Herbert Middleton Baker tenancy and ownership that the gardens with the croquet lawns were laid out, which will be remembered by generations of Churchillians (most of this Garden was reconfigured when the University Botanic Gardens took over the grounds in 2005). With the Holmes the University acquired the services of its butler Mr. Henry Caine, (who was awarded the Military Medal for service during WW1). He was to become a legend, serving as Churchill Hall's Steward until his retirement in 1982, four days short of his 85th birthday.

Although the University purchased the house in 1943, they did not get to use the building at first, as it became the official residence of a number of senior American army commanders, including Generals Collins, Hodge, Dever, Patton and most notably General Omar Bradley. It was here that Gen Bradley, commander of the US 1st Army, and later 12th Army Group, planned the D-Day assault on Normandy. In his autobiography "A Soldier's Story" he refers to the Holmes twice: Firstly "*V Corps had requisitioned a residence for me beyond the Bristol Downs, a billet spacious enough to house my key staff officers and aides.*"

Secondly *"It was 7.15 when I went down to breakfast at my quarters in Bristol on the morning of June 3rd. We had loitered late over dinner the night before, our last evening together in England. Today we were to board Admiral Kite's flagship for the invasion. D-Day had been set for June 5th*, and the warm summer sun that poured through the leaded glass windows of the Holmes cheered us ..."* (*D-Day was postponed to 6th June due to the weather.)

To mark these events, an act of remembrance was held in the Holmes in June 1948, when the then American Military Attaché, unveiled a framed statement from General (later President) Eisenhower which read *"It was here General Bradley spent the months during which he organized the First United States Army for the momentous assault against the Normandy beaches."* This can still be seen in the Main Hall of the Holmes (see the left hand image below). In this way the stories of the Holmes and D-Day came together.

To continue the story of the Holmes, it became part of Wills Hall, opening as "O" House in the autumn of 1946, with 32 students as residents. It was then transferred to Churchill Hall on its opening in the autumn of 1956. The next major changes came in 1979 when as a result of then new legislation, a new fire alarm system, fire escapes, fire doors and the metal spiral staircase through the middle of the upper floors were installed.

Fortunately the Holmes escaped sale by the University, unlike the other two outhouses Claverton and Waltham, in 1984. The next significant event was the University Botanic Gardens taking over the grounds and a number of the ground floor rooms in 2005 (see the right hand image below). Finally the Holmes, together with the rest of Churchill Hall, benefited from an extensive refurbishment programme over a number of summer vacations up to and including 2016.



A fuller history of the Holmes will soon be available on the Churchill Hall Association website <https://www.churchillhallassociation.co.uk/>.

David Ewart, Churchill Hall, 1974-77