

## **Memories of a Resident of Churchill Hall 1975-1978.**

I was 19 years' old when I applied for my place at University. I had grown up in Truro in Cornwall, from the age of 6, but had not passed my 11 plus and so had gone to the local mixed secondary modern school. In 1971 I was 15 and had the option to leave school or take the Certificate of Secondary Education exams. CSE's had a poor reputation with employers and my standing in tests had improved, having been diagnosed as needing glasses, I therefore transferred to Cornwall Technical College to take a two-year O level course. This was the last year that that this could be done as the school leaving age was raised to 16 in Sept 1972. CSE's and O levels were subsequently replaced in GCSEs in 1988. I excelled at Cornwall Technical College and continued with A levels.

I did sufficiently well to be accepted for a place at Bristol University, and in 1975 I came up to Bristol to read Chemistry, I had reviewed the accommodation options and had chosen Churchill Hall, as my obvious choice. Accommodation was in blocks A-K and consisted of a room with a bed, a desk against the window with angle-poise lamp and a wardrobe. Each block had a communal toilets with washing basins and a shower. Power sockets were very sparse and round pin and were limited to 5 amp; kettles were not allowed. It was obviously before the days of the internet and mobile phone, and a single phone box was under the stairs on the ground floor.

The Holmes and Waltham houses were also a part of Churchill Hall in these days and it was not uncommon to stay in Hall beyond the first year. Weekday food consisted of a full English breakfast and an evening meal including an often-unidentifiable soup of the day. The weekend fare comprised a formal meal on Sunday lunchtime, and on Saturday a midday meal when we were issued with a packed lunch for the evening.

After the formal meal on a Sunday we would gather in the JCR to discuss issues in Hall. I stayed on in Hall for my second year and the JCR voted in soft toilet paper!

When I was young, I had been given a Kodak camera, and I became a keen photographer. In the third year I took over the running of the Hall's darkroom, located in the Holmes. This entitled me to a room in the Holmes which I was pleased to accept. This had larger rooms and had some notoriety as it had been used during the Second World War as the residence of senior members of the US army; there were many photos in the original entrance hall area of the building. Importantly the rooms had a gas fire to provide the heating. This transformed the Saturday packed lunch that we were issued as you could toast the bread rolls and the slab of plastic cheese.

During the spring of 1978, my third year, the JCR turned its thoughts to whether the hall should become mixed. Passionate views were aired on both sides of the argument, the JCR eventually voted to accept women from the next intake.

Since I graduated in 1978 many major changes have come to pass, with students these days expecting more of their accommodation. We now enjoy the benefit of these changes when we stay in Hall to attend the Alumni Weekend.

Philip Lake  
B.Sc Chemistry 1975-1978

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