



The Churchillian

The Newsletter of the Churchill Hall Association

June 2021



Churchill Hall Association News Updates

Update on 2021

This is the second Newsletter being sent to you during these very unusual times. With no annual reunion in 2020, and most other events cancelled for the year, and with little hope of any in person events in 2021 there is little that can be planned.

The CHA were one of the sponsors the Spring Showcase of online events, which we hope many of you were able to see. This Newsletter seeks to update you on what life has been like in Churchill during the autumn of 2020 and what is going on in early 2021. It also brings you up to date with the activities of the Association.

Help!

The COVID-19 lockdown has demonstrated the real willingness of many people to give their time or skills to help others in a whole variety of ways. The Churchill Hall Association (of which everyone who has spent an academic year (or such part as they could) in Hall is a member) exists to be an engaged and supportive community; and the CHA Committee is there to help to make this happen

We need you to help us to fulfil this purpose effectively. Why? Because this Committee must be able to reflect the interests and views of the membership as a whole, and currently it is insufficiently diverse to be confident that it can do this. We very much need the involvement of relatively recent graduates - for instance, those of you who were in Hall after it went mixed. Members based in or around Bristol or still at the University would also be very valuable.

Could you assist? Please give this idea some thought – and then drop a line, entirely without commitment, to committee@churchillhallassociation.co.uk so that we can discuss with you what might be involved – we'd be happy to be flexible. We would love to have your involvement, and are confident that you'd enjoy this particular way of making a difference

Alumni Reunion Weekend 2021



Although it had been hoped that the 2021 reunion weekend would be taking place in the summer of 2021, including the annual CHA dinner and a wide variety of other events, this now appears to be impossible. However, the reunion will be back. More details will be available on our website <https://www.churchillhallassociation.co.uk/>. Or from the University website, once things become clearer.

Staying in Contact

CHA Website

A reminder that the Churchill Hall Association has its own website that contains up to date information on events and newsletters and articles on Churchill Hall. Courtesy of Thomas W. Cohen, hall archivist 1960-1963, it now includes the addition of a set of newsletters covering the founding period 1961 to 1972. It is designed to assist in the building of an engaged and supportive CHA that represents the views of its members, please take a look and bookmark for future reference <https://www.churchillhallassociation.co.uk/>

Bristol Connects

As you are probably aware, the University has moved to Bristol Connects as their online platform for keeping your details up to date. It incorporates new networking capabilities and has allowed us to create a dedicated network Connect Churchill Hall which allows us to directly contact you.

The objective of these improvements is to make it easier for the University and the Hall Associations to stay in contact with its membership and for you to regain contact with friends from your time in Bristol.

It is most important that your contact details are up to date so for those that have not so far registered please sign up by following the instructions below.

For those that are not tech-savvy, it is still possible to contact the Alumni Relations Office directly on [+44 \(0\)117 394 1046](tel:+44201173941046) to inform them of a change to your details such as your email address.

- 1) Joining Bristol Connects - Go to step 2 if you have already done this.

Please find all the information you need at

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni/connect-with-your-community/bristol-connects/> and see their getting started guide.

Create your account at <https://www.bristol.aluminate.net/> and populate it with your details; to save time, if you have a LinkedIn account you may import your details.

2) Updating your Profile - identify as having stayed at Churchill Hall.

To do this please log in to Bristol Connects <https://www.bristol.aluminate.net/>

Then go to "Profile" and find "Your time at Bristol". Then use the edit function to add your Hall of Residence and any Students' Union club or society that you were affiliated with from the pulldown menus.

3) Joining Connect Churchill Hall - Our dedicated network.

Please join our dedicated network Connect Churchill Hall. Go to the Networks tab at the top of the Alumni Directories homepage and then select our network and then Join Network:



4) Passing on the news - Please pass this information on to any former Churchill Hall residents that you have stayed connected with and who are interested in reconnecting and are not currently covered by the University's mailshots because, for example, the University does not hold a current email address for them.

Visit to Chartwell.



Last year we (the Churchill Hall Association/ London Branch of Alumni) had planned a visit to Chartwell (the home of Sir Winston Churchill for many years) but due to COVID-19, this was put forward to May 2021. Unfortunately, the revised date of 18 September 2021 looks pretty unlikely as much of the day will be indoors and if Social Distancing rules still apply it may be difficult. However, watch the Alumni section of the University website as a final decision will be made in June 2021. If not, September 2021 we will plan for May 2022.

Chair's Review

2020 – 21



It has become hackneyed to say that this was a year like no other. While in mid-2020, we would have been unlikely to have foreseen that our lives during virtually the whole of the next twelve months would be over-shadowed (or worse) by the pandemic and its consequences, it is also true that, by summer 2020, we had already lived through the first – and perhaps worst – period. And, in philosophical mode, one might also say that, to some extent, every year is unique!

There were periods in the latter part of the last century when Churchill Hall Association was quiescent, but this last year was the first since then when we have had no physical meeting of any kind. But this does not mean that nothing happened at all! Zoom and other video messaging platforms became part of our normal lives, and CHA Committee meetings were held in this fashion – albeit mostly with steady-as-you-go agendas. The lack of any meet-and-greet session with this year's residents was much regretted, as

also was our inability to hold an Annual Dinner – either last July or this. We very much hope that next academic year will be entirely different in these respects.

However, the Alumni Network (of Hall Associations and geographic Branches), in conjunction with the Students' Union and the University's Alumni Relations Office, did organise and run an online Spring Showcase, and a report on this features elsewhere in this Newsletter. This event was deemed to have been a considerable success, and will very probably be repeated. If so, there will be an opportunity for Churchill Hall teams to get closer to the final of the University Challenge quiz!

The opening session of the Spring Showcase was devoted to presentations and discussions about the changes necessitated by the pandemic to the ways in which academic programmes were delivered and assessed, and to some of the impacts on residential life. It is clear that some of these changes were for the better, and that these will be tweaked and retained; though most will be consigned to history with relief.

And so it is time to move our focus on to next year. Let's hope that this next period is different in many good ways. One such difference is that I shall be handing over to a new Chair. This provides me with the opportunity to thank all other members of the CHA Committee, both elected and ex-officio, for their sterling service – energy, ideas, etc. - over the years; essential and much appreciated. However, a new era beckons; so bring it on...

Alastair Scott

Churchill Hall, 1962-3

University of Bristol Spring Showcase, 19/20 March 2021

Background

For the second year running the annual Alumni Reunion weekend was unable to take place, so the Alumni Network decided to appoint a sub-group to organise a Digital Weekend – in term time, and before the summer exams. This took place over the weekend of 19/20 March 2021.

First a little background about the Alumni Network (A.N.). This is a loose ‘unofficial’ group formed from the Chairs of Hall Associations, UK Branches and some University Societies. It first got together after it was learnt that, as far as the University was concerned, the 2019 Alumni Reunion weekend comprised only the lunch in the Great Hall; A.N. therefore stepped in and organised, amongst other events, Hall Dinners, trips to Concorde and tours of the Botanic Gardens to fill out the weekend. A.N. was in the process of organising the 2020 Alumni Reunion weekend when it became clear that the pandemic scenario would make this impossible; and then fairly early on decided that the 2021 Alumni Reunion could also not go ahead physically. A.N. then appointed four members to organise a digital Spring Showcase weekend with assistance from DARO (Development and Alumni Relations Office of the University), and with the involvement of the Student Union.

Programme

The weekend opened on the Friday evening with an introduction by Jonathan Phillips (Chair of the Alumni Association), followed by a presentation about the changes in how the University’s programmes were delivered, and the additional support for students from the University necessitated by COVID-19. Although interesting, it would have been better if a Student Union rep, or a Hall JCR President had participated – although, with 20,000 students, there might have been 20,000 opinions!

On the Saturday there were a wide variety of ‘Digital Events’, some of which are briefly reviewed below.

A virtual tour of the Botanical Gardens. As all Churchillians should know, the Botanical Gardens were, about ten years ago, re-located to the grounds of The Holmes, which has been part of Churchill Hall since the late 1950s. Although I have often stayed at The Holmes for Reunion weekends, this was my first real opportunity to have a fascinating tour of the Botanical Gardens by the Curator, Nick Wray. There are a huge number of plants there from around the world; and, as a non-botanist, I was surprised how many of these - especially those from hot, dry climes - could survive the English weather.

A Tour of the Theatre Collection. I had known of the existence of this Collection but had not realised the extent of it or, in “normal” times, how easy it is to visit. The recently

acquired collection of the actor/theatre, ballet and film designer/illustrator, Oliver Messel, was a revelation.

University Public Art. Most visitors to the University (students and locals) will have seen one or two pieces of public artwork outside the main buildings. There are now four major pieces of artwork, and the talk explained the how and wherefore of the pieces. My next visit to Bristol will be much more meaningful.

Talk and film on human bones found at Fishmongers Swallet by the University's Spelaeological Society. Did they solve the mystery of the bones? What the film did show is that I have not changed my fear of narrow entrances to small caves. Not an activity for me!

Organ Recital. David Bednall, Sub-Organist at Bristol Cathedral, gave an impressive and varied performance on the Dame Monica Wills Chapel organ. The compositions included in the programme ranged over more than 300 years. David studied for a PhD in Composition at Bristol.

Showcase Event led by Student Societies. This was conceptualised as an equivalent of Fresher's Week, with student societies 'selling' their activities. However, I was unfortunately unable to participate in this due to technical difficulties.

Hong Kong Branch film. The Hong Kong Branch of the Alumni Association showed two fascinating films focussing primarily on the Scholarship that they award annually to a postgraduate student from HK. This has clearly opened up many possibilities for the fortunate recipients, both in terms of a thoroughly enjoyed experience while in Bristol, and career advancement on their return to HK.

University Challenge. Using the format of the BBC TV show, nine teams took part in this Quiz. Churchill Hall entered two teams, but unfortunately did not reach the final stage. Heats were held in the days before the Final, which itself was the culmination of the Spring Showcase on Saturday evening. All participants were "at home" and the buzzer technology worked well despite the separateness of the participants. In a thrilling Final, ably chaired by Bristol's own equivalent of Jeremy Paxman, Robert Villain, one Cambridge Branch team beat the other Cambridge Branch team. Well done.

And well done too to the four organisers of the whole Showcase - Linda Wilson, Savannah Coombe, Charles Gunter and David Richards - and many thanks for assistance from DARO. Financial assistance to run the event came from six Societies /Halls/ Branches, including the Churchill Hall Association.

Even after Covid-19 is long out of the way and we are able again to meet physically for Alumni Reunion weekends, A.N. hopes to repeat the online event, especially as it can be seen by alumni all over the world.

David Clarke

Updates from Churchill Hall

The 2020/21 Academic Year in Bristol and Churchill Hall.

In January 2021 the Hall Association Committee met by Zoom and were able to receive an update from Andrew Abbey (Head of Residential Life (Northern Village)) and Joshua Boniface (President of the Churchill Hall JCR) on what life had been like for students in the autumn term of 2020, and how the spring term was shaping up.

For the benefit of those of us who left the University before 2018, it may be helpful to explain the current management arrangements. The Hall is no longer managed by the Warden with the help of the Hall Tutors, but is now part of the North Residential Village, which covers the Halls of Residence in Stoke Bishop. The overall management of the Hall is now through the Head of Residential Life (North Village), who is part of the Student Residential Life Service of the Student Services Directorate of the University.

To say that the autumn of 2020 was like no other year for those starting their studies at Bristol University would be an understatement, but this was to be nothing when compared with the Spring Term.

The biggest change for students was the introduction of living circles to help keep all students and staff safe during the coronavirus pandemic. A living circle is a household within the Hall, made up of the people residents could interact with closely each day. Depending on the accommodation, living circle were a single flat, a single floor of the Hall or the like. The living circles allocated to incoming students was the one they would stay with for their first year.

Interacting with others in a living circle was based on the principle that after the first 10 days of living in halls, there was no need to distance from the others in the living circle as they became a household. The new residences were informed they could “socialise, study together and support each other as a student community, which is important as you adapt to life in Bristol and the blended learning environment.” However, it was stressed that “You are not allowed to have anyone other than those in your living circle inside.” Students were allowed to meet with others who were not in their living circle outside of their accommodation, but it was stressed that they must follow current social distancing guidelines.

Despite these precautions, there were a number of outbreaks of Covid-19, and as it was felt the precautions were not always being followed some enforcement action had to be taken.

Studies were also very different with many lectures online and with this blended model of studies students were recommended only to come onto campus when they have:

- Scheduled face-to-face teaching sessions;
- Scheduled time in the laboratory or other specialist research facility; or
- Pre-booked a study space or other pre-arranged activity such as a sport or society.

This was the situation up to early December, then after the Christmas vacation with the lockdown announced on 4th January, this advice changed to not returning to Bristol unless they were studying a limited list of subjects that required hands-on teaching, such as medicine, dental surgery, veterinary science and postgraduate certificate in education.

The University responded to this by announcing the following rebates on hall fees:

- Rebate 1: 10 day (9 nights) 100% rebate from 10 Dec to 19 Dec;
- Rebate 2: 50 day (49 nights) 30% rebate from 19 Dec to 1 Feb; and
- Rebate 3: 55 day (54 nights) 100% rebate from 1 Feb to 26 March

This put Bristol at the forefront of universities in compensating students.

However, not every student (resident) had been able to leave the Hall at the end of the autumn term. Many international students could not return home due to travel bans (some have been unable to come to Bristol) and others could not return home or had returned to Bristol before the lockdown, with the result that the Hall has had to provide care and packed meals for a number of residents.

During this whole period, most care and support for the Hall's residents had to be provided remotely, as it was impossible for Senior Residents to visit living circles without the risk of spreading infections.

At the time of writing during the spring vacation, the government has announced that students will not be able to return to blended learning before 17th May at the earliest. As a result of this, the summer assessments and examinations will be online only, with few exceptions for practical examinations.

The Wardens of Churchill Hall

From the opening of Churchill Hall in 1956 to 2018 when the role of Warden ended in all the University's halls of residence, Churchill Hall has only had five Wardens. Three within the space of three years. They were as follows:

Dr Alan Reynolds (1956-1972)



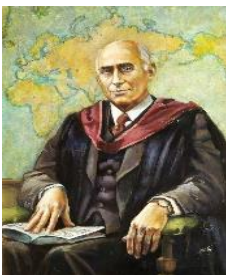
The first Warden on the opening of the Hall was Mr (later Dr) Alan Reynolds, who had previously been Sub-Warden of Wills Hall. He was a Bristol graduate, founding member and JCR president of Wills Hall, and an Ex-President of the Students' Union who lectured in English at the University from 1947 to 1975. He was to remain Warden till 1972 and was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters by the University in 1977.

Dr Reynolds' background was rather conventional, but he created a more informal Hall than was normal at the time. He was remembered as having carried out his duties with good humour, patience and discretion, and very much laid the foundation of Hall.

Mr Roy Parker (1972-1975)

The second warden was Mr Roy Parker, the first married Warden, who as a consequence did not live in Warden's flat in K House but move into the Holme Cottage with his family. Mr Parker was to remain Warden for only three years, before leaving due to family circumstances to take up a full-time post in the School of Education.

Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Graves (1975-1976)



Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Graves, a Bristol graduate with a distinguished war record, who lectured in Geography and had been warden of Burwalls Hall before becoming the Warden of Wills Hall (1973-82), was acting Warden for the academic year 1975/76.

Dr Alan Rump (1976-2009)

Following this period of three wardens in three years, Dr Alan Rump, a very talented musician who was an economics graduate, but also a music lecture, took over in 1976. He went on to become the Senior Warden and later the University's Director of Student Services until his retirement in 2009. Dr Rump had had a very different Style to his predecessors and had to lead the Hall through some very difficult times.

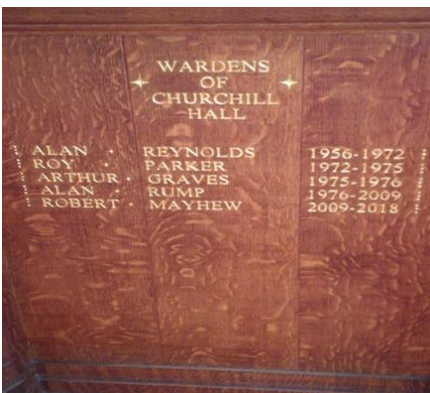
He was to remain warden for an unprecedented 33 years until his retirement. During his period as Warden Churchill became a mixed Hall in 1978, lost both Claverton and Waltham but gained M/R blocks as well as the hexagon common room.

Professor Robert Mayhew (2009-2018)



The fifth and final Warden was Professor Robert Mayhew, who is Professor of Historical Geography and Intellectual History. He became warden in 2009 and guided the Hall through some turbulent years.

He remained Warden until the overall change in the management of all the University Halls of Residence resulting in the ending of the system of Hall Wardens, and bringing his period of Wardenship to an early end.



To mark the service of the Wardens of Wills and Churchill Halls during the 2019 annual Alumni Service in the Dame Monica Wills Chapel an engraved stall was unveiled listing the five wardens of Churchill Hall.

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

David Ewart

Churchill Hall 1974-77