

The Churchillian

The Newsletter of the Churchill Hall Association (CHA)

2026



The Holmes



**The Newsletter seeks to update readers on the activities of the
CHA and the wider Alumni network.**

**Note The Churchill Hall Association (CHA) comprises all those who are or have been resident at
Churchill Hall, for a period of one academic year (or a substantial part thereof
in the case of the pandemic years).**

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Churchill Hall Quad



Chair's Annual Statement

Celebrating Churchill Hall's Diamond Anniversary

Churchill Hall marks a significant milestone this year, as it celebrates its 70th anniversary having opening in 1956. This diamond anniversary holds personal significance for me, as I was also born in the same year.

Historical Overview

Churchill Hall was the second all-male residence established in Stoke Bishop, with Wills Hall being the first. Upon opening, Churchill Hall accommodated 111 male students, a Warden, and three tutors housed across one newly constructed block and three Victorian houses: Claverton, Waltham, and The Holmes. In 1978, following a Junior Common Room debate and vote, in which I participated, the hall began admitting both male and female students.

The Holmes: A Unique History

The Holmes was once owned by Herbert Midelton Baker, nephew of William Mills Baker and cousin of Hiatt Baker. Their Baker & Baker Co. store in Bristol was destroyed during the blitz and so Herbert sold The Holmes to the University, and it came with its butler, Henry Caine, who was born in 1897. Following its acquisition, The Holmes was initially requisitioned by the American Army and served as the official residence for several senior American commanders, including Generals Collins, Hodge, Dever, Patton, and most notably General Omar Bradley, who were involved in planning the D-Day landings. After World War II, The Holmes became part of Wills Hall and later transferred to Churchill Hall when it opened. Henry Caine was still serving meals to students while I was there in 1978 and when he was then aged 80, he retired shortly before his death in 1983.

Anniversary Celebration Events

To commemorate this special occasion, the Churchill Hall Association, in collaboration with the Bristol Alumni Network, has organised a day of events on Saturday 15th August, which is part of the annual Alumni Weekend running from 14th to 16th August.

Programme of Activities

The day will commence with a gathering in the Junior Common Room for coffee, tea, and pastries, providing an opportunity to share memories and enjoy a tour of Churchill Hall, guided by members of the current JCR.

There will be a guided tour of the Botanical Gardens, which were created in the grounds of The Holmes. Attendees will also have the chance to view D-Day landings posters and photographs in The Holmes, alongside Churchill Hall archived materials, courtesy of Bristol University's Special Collections.

Lunch will be available in the Botanical Gardens cafeteria.

After lunch, a Boules or Pétanque match will be organised on the Churchill Hall Quad lawn, gather in the JCR. All are welcome to participate and enjoy the festivities, with coffee, tea, and pastries.

For further details and booking information, please refer to page 6. We encourage everyone to attend and make this a memorable day, with groups warmly welcomed. Discounts are available for students and recent graduates.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all Committee members, both past and present, for their invaluable support over the years. Without their dedication, the CHA would not exist.

Philip Lake
BSc Chemistry 1978

Annual Reunion Weekend 2025

Overview

The Annual Reunion Weekend 2025 was a memorable occasion, enjoyed by all who attended. Alumni and friends gathered for a variety of events, with the highlight being the traditional reunion dinner held at Wills Hall on Saturday evening.

Festivities began on Friday evening with a delightful wine tasting at Avery's wine cellar.



The Reunion dinner featured a wine reception in The Holmes, hosted by Andrew Franks (Manor Hall) and Savannah Coombe (Badock Hall). The halls celebrated significant milestones—Manor Hall 100 and Badock 60 years.



Saturday evening brought everyone together for the annual reunion dinner at Wills Hall. Alumni and their guests enjoyed a special address by Professor Sir Malcolm Evans, Principal of Regent's Park College, Oxford. Until recently, Professor Evans served as professor of International Law at the University and captivated the audience with fascinating stories about the various "missions" he had been asked to undertake.



Weekend events included a guided tour of the SS Great Britain, a boat trip on SS Bagheera as far as Temple Meads, which allowed a view of the University Temple Quarter then under construction, guided tours of the Wills Memorial Tower, and an opportunity to join a tour of St. Nicholas market and air raid shelter.

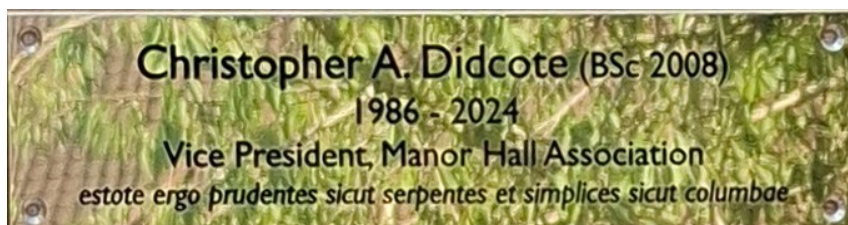
For former residents of Badock Hall it was an opportunity to join their celebrations of 60 years



While for Manor Hall they were celebrating their centenary



and the life of Christopher Didcote
Vice President of the Manor Hall Association.



Alumni Weekend 2026 Fri 14th August – Sun 16th August

Churchill Hall Diamond Anniversary Celebrations

Bookings can be made now through the [online booking form](#) (Note bookings close 5PM Tuesday 28 July).

Full programme for the weekend and details of accommodation [can be found online here](#) (PDF, 251kB).

Friday 14th August 6.30 pm for 7 pm start	Private Wine Tasting at Avery's historic vaulted cellars	Culver street, BS1 5LD. Enter on Frogmore St, via green doors next to Sergio's Restaurant
Saturday 15th August 10 am to 11:15 pm Please arrive by 10am	Churchill Hall is hosting a coffee/tea and pastries morning and tour of Churchill Hall.	Churchill Hall JCR, Stoke Park Road, Bristol, BS9 1JG
Saturday 15th August 11am to 12:30 pm	Wills Memorial Building Tower Tour (A)	Wills Memorial Building, Queens Road, BS8 1RJ
Saturday 15th August 11 am to 12:30 pm Please arrive by 10:50am	SS Great Britain dockyard museum tour	Great Western Dockyard Gas Ferry Road Bristol BS1 6TY
Saturday 15th August 11 am to 12:30 pm Please arrive by 10:55am	Churchill Hall's guided tour of the Botanical Gardens located in the grounds of The Holmes.	Entrance opposite Churchill Hall main building, Stoke Park Road, Bristol, BS9 1JG
Saturday 15th August Open 12:30 –14:30pm	Churchill Hall - The D-Day Story and Hall Almanac and historic materials courtesy of Bristol Universities Special Collections	The Holmes main entrance and Bradley Room. Opposite Churchill Hall main building, Stoke Park Road, Bristol, BS9 1JG
Saturday 15th August 1 to 2:30 pm	Wills Memorial Building Tower Tour (B)	Wills Memorial Building, Queens Road, BS8 1RJ
Saturday 15th August 1:30pm arrival, 2 –3:30 pm tour	Bristol Aerospace guided tour of Concorde	Bristol Aerospace
Saturday 15th August 2pm-3pm	Private Boat Hire - Cruise aboard The Bagheera through the heart of Bristol	The Bagheera Great Western Dockyard Gas Ferry Road Bristol BS1 6TY
Saturday 15th August 3-5pm	Pétanque on the Churchill Hall Quad Lawn. Coffee/tea and pastries in JCR	Churchill Hall JCR, Stoke Park Road, Bristol, BS9 1JG
Saturday 16th August 6:15 pm	Reunion Drinks Reception	The Holmes, Stoke Park Road, Bristol, BS9 1JG (The drive way opposite the main Churchill Hall building)
Saturday 16th August 7.15 pm dinner	Reunion Dinner at Wills Hall Dress Code Black Tie / Lounge Suits Speaker Alex Rakes - Doctor of Law honoris causa	Wills Hall Main dining room (upstairs but has lift access) Parry Lane, Bristol BS9 1AE Estimated finish time for taxis 10pm After dinner drinks in the Wills Hall bar until midnight
Sunday 16th August 9.45 am	CHA AGM—All Members of hall welcome	Bradley Room on the Ground Floor of the The Holmes (room near original main entrance)
Sunday 16th August 10.30 am	Reunion Weekend Morning Service	Dame Monica Wills Chapel, Wills Hall, BS9 1AE
Sunday 16th August 12.00 pm (coffee 11.30 am)	Arthur Graves Memorial Lecture: Professor Nicholas Lieven	Dame Monica Wills Chapel, Wills Hall, BS9 1AE
Sunday 16 August 1 pm	Two course lunch	Wills Hall Dining Room

Alex Raikes our Guest Speaker

Alex was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in July 2023 and you can read more here: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni/our-alumni/honorary-degrees/honorary-graduates/2023/alex-raikes/>

Alex leads the award-winning human rights charity, SARI (Stand Against Racism & Inequality) having joined the organisation shortly after graduating in Social Policy at Bristol in 1991

She is a member of University of Bristol Court; was awarded an MBE in 2009 for her contribution to race relations; received an Honorary Doctorate from UWE and made Deputy Lieutenant in 2019; and was High Sheriff of the County of City of Bristol in 2022.

Updates

Charity Rugby Match: Will Hall vs Churchill Hall

Background

In 2019, James Johnson, a resident of Wills Hall for the 2019-20 academic year, began organising a charity rugby match to be played between Wills Hall and Churchill Hall. The chosen beneficiary for the event was [the Ted Senior Foundation](#), a charity created in memory of a former Bristol graduate who had moved to Swansea University and tragically took his own life in 2018. In response to this loss, his family established the foundation to promote better mental health support and suicide prevention.

Matches Played

The inaugural match was originally planned for late March 2020. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the game was postponed and eventually took place when James was in his final year as an undergraduate. Churchill Hall emerged victorious in this match, as well for two subsequent annual fixtures. The fourth match, held in 2025, saw a reversal of fortunes for Wills Hall, who secured a win with a score of 45 to 26. The event succeeded in raising £400 for the Ted Senior Foundation.

This years result

The fifth charity match took place this year on 26th April at Coombe Dingle. On this occasion, Churchill Hall claimed victory once again, with a final score of 62 to 38. Congratulations to the Churchill Hall team on their achievement!



News from The University of Bristol

Celebrating 150 Years

A week of celebrations across campus is coming up as we mark the University's 150th anniversary. We'll be opening our doors to alumni and the public to celebrate 150 years since the founding of University College, Bristol (1876–1909).



The schedule of events is still to be finalised but there will be plenty for alumni to get involved with

Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus Opening

We are eagerly anticipating the opening of the [Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus](#) in October. It has been very exciting to see the development of the building in the heart of the city, and we cannot wait to share this incredible space with students, alumni and the public.

Situated right next to Temple Meads station, the campus has been designed to have a welcoming atmosphere for all. Four internal gardens throughout the main building provide spaces to unwind and boost wellbeing. There will also be a café, food court, shop and Exchange Hall open to the public during operating hours.



[A Royal Visit](#)

This January, the University welcomed the Prince of Wales to tour the Isambard-AI supercomputer, as well as the Bristol Robotics Laboratory (BRL).

His Royal Highness had the opportunity to learn more about how Isambard-AI's impressive speed is powering research, something that has not been possible in the UK and globally until now.

The final stop of the day, at the BRL, included being introduced to the University of Bristol-led engineering research team at the VIVO Hub for Enhanced Independent Living. Their work brings together advanced robotic and digital healthcare technologies to pioneer new approaches to ageing and assisted living. [Read the full story here.](#)

[Rankings](#)

A record number of University of Bristol subjects have been ranked among the top 20 globally and top 5 in the UK. Of the 33 subjects placed in the world's top 100, five were in the top 20 and ten were in the top 50. Four subjects achieved top-5 status in the UK.

Evelyn Welch, Vice-Chancellor and President said, "Bristol is an organisation of remarkable people working together to achieve more, and it's great to see QS highlighting the impact and strength of our research and teaching."

[International News ...](#)

[Mumbai Campus](#)

The University of Bristol has recently opened our first international campus in Mumbai, the centre of India's financial capital. The campus will officially open its doors in August 2026, and we are excited to share further updates on the benefits for students and research opportunities. Watch this space!



[China Graduations](#)

This March we hosted our China Graduation Celebration in Shanghai. Over 300 of our most recent graduates donned their caps on Saturday 21 March. Many staff members took flight to support the event and help create a memorable celebration for students and their families.

As many graduates return to China after submitting their dissertations in September, the celebration allows them to mark this special milestone with their families without having to travel back to the UK.

News from Churchill Hall

This year we have been collaborating with the current and previous JCR committees to help organise the 70th year events and this years President Ben Lee supplies the following update from hall:

I (Ben Lee- President) alongside Vice President Events (Amelie Cooper) and Vice President Finance (Will McIntyre) have thoroughly enjoyed being on the JCR committee this year and putting on events for all residents of Churchill Hall.

We started with a Winter Ball in December which involved a formal dinner followed by DJ sets in a decorated common room.

Our social media presence (@churchillhalljcr on Instagram) has allowed us to keep connected with residents and receive suggestions on future events. The popularity of the Winter ball led us to organise a midsummer themed spring formal which also included a formal dinner in the Churchill dining hall.



Right after we returned after the Easter break we organised a club night at Barbara's Bier Bar on the Harbourside, hiring out the entire club for all of the Churchill residents to socialise after the break.

This year we have helped organised a charity rugby match - which has been held for the past 5 years - between Churchill and Wills Hall. This rugby match is for the Ted Foundation, honouring a member of the University of Bristol - and Wills Hall - who tragically passed away a few years ago. The match took place in April and saw extensive support from students not just from Churchill and Wills, but from the wider first year cohort.

We have loved continuing the partnership with Winestock, an end of year ball on the Downs for University of Bristol students, and have been pleased to gain discounted tickets for Churchill residents. Additionally, we have worked alongside other JCR's to contribute to the University's Constitution Ball whereby we were able to provide Churchill residents discounted tickets for this large scale annual event to celebrate the end of the academic year.

Throughout the year we have been consistently engaged with facilities regarding improving student spaces, even further, and making them more hospitable for students. Additionally, we have loved working closely with the Churchill Hall Association in the run up to the 70th anniversary celebrations!

Staying in Contact

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.

Its purpose is 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 www.churchillhallassociation.co.uk and please ensure that any communications from committee@churchillhallassociation.co.uk are not filtered as spam.

Update your details

Please ensure the University is aware of any change in your email contact details as this allows us to keep you UpToDate with the latest news.

This can best be done [by completing their new digital update form](#) which now allows you to specify if and how you hear from the University and importantly your hall of residence as this information allows us to contact you.

Alternatively you can email them on alumni@bristol.ac.uk or by calling them on +44 (0)117 394 1046 indicating your wish to receive email communications from the CHA.

Passing on the news

Please pass this information on to any former Churchill Hall residents that you have stayed connected with who are interested in reconnecting.

Local Alumni Branches

The University of Bristol have a number of local branches to aid alumni staying in touch. These include the Bristol Branch, London Branch, Midlands Branch and Cambridge Branch in the UK.

The London Branch hosts several events a year, including an annual lecture, a annual carol service guided walks and more, for example this year a guided visit to Canterbury Cathedral organised by David Clarke. The Cambridge Branch hosts at least 2 events a year; normally also lecture based.

The Midlands Branch has an annual lunch and AGM in January. For the last few years they have had a visit to the Opera House in Buxton in August and they normally also have one or two other visits each year.

[The University also has branches across the world](#), including Canada, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, and China. If you would like to know more, or be put in touch with any of these branches please contact the University, alumni-volunteers@bristol.ac.uk.

Could you help the Churchill Hall Association?

We need your help us to fulfil our purpose building an engaged and supportive CHA community effectively. Why? Because this committee needs be able to reflect the interests and views of the whole membership, and currently it is insufficiently diverse to do this.

Could you assist? Please give this idea some thought – and then email us, entirely without commitment, to committee@churchillhallassociation.co.uk or discuss at this years reunion weekend. We normally hold about 3 Zoom committee meetings a year together with our annual meeting but we are 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.

Churchill Hall Association Committee

Purpose

The Churchill Hall Association (CHA) comprises all those who are or have been resident at Churchill Hall, for a period of one academic year (or a substantial part thereof in the case of the pandemic years).

The purposes of the CHA Committee (CHAC) are to contribute to building an engaged and supportive CHA community, and to consult with and represent the views of members either to the Hall or to the University.

Full terms of reference and job descriptions are available on our website:

www.churchillhallassociation.co.uk/cha-committee/

Finance Update to year to 31st March 2026

As in previous years, the activities of the Association during the year have been working in conjunction with the other Hall Associations and Alumni groups to arrange the Reunion Weekend. The Bristol Alumni Network (the organising group) agreed that the finances for the event would be handled by the Wills Hall Association, as they had the necessary facilities in place, and that any surplus would be held by WHA on behalf of the Network, to be available for future Reunions. Therefore, no transactions relating to the Weekend appear in our accounts.

The only income was the interest earned on accrued funds which covered the basic account fees for maintaining the bank account. During the year, the bank changed the terms of the bank account to remove the monthly "account" charge (which means that we are only charged for transactions where paper is involved). The main expenses are the costs of maintaining the Association website. Last year, there was an opportunity to purchase a perpetual licence to use the website theme which means that although the costs this year are higher, we will save money in future years.

There was also an additional cost as the Committee invited the 2025-2026 President of the JCR committee to a meeting of the committee with the new Chair of the Alumni Association.

Therefore there was a shortfall of £152.56 for the year, meaning that the funds in hand amount to £3,156.86. This is considered to be more than adequate to meet the expected financial needs of the Association over the immediate future.

Keith Walton
Hon Treasurer



The Churchill Hall Association

Churchill Hall Association Annual General Meeting

At 9-45 on Sun 16th August 2026 in the Bradley Room, The Holmes.

Items

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of AGM on 17th August 2025
3. Report on the activity of the committee.
4. Election of:
Chair;
Secretary
Treasurer.
Communications Officer
Web Developer
Events Officer
5. Finance update
Keith Walton.
6. Feedback on the weekend to date.
All
7. Any Other Business.
8. Date of Next Annual General Meeting.
As part of 2027 the Bristol Alumni Network Reunion Weekend.

