



ARCHIVIUM

Blundell's School Archive Newsletter



**Annual Inspection,
1949**

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CURIOSITY OF THE MONTH



CAN YOU HELP?

Alain John



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WELCOME TO ARCHIVIUM

After the long summer recess, welcome back to *Archivium*, the Blundell's School Archive newsletter, keeping you abreast of what's occurring in terms of the School's heritage and the preservation of its treasures.

It has been a very long and busy first month back in the Archive. Several big events have already taken place involving the Archive – namely the 1950s and 1960s reunion as well as the A.V. Hill Centenary Celebrations. Alongside this, I have had the most wonderful opportunity to visit Old Blundell's with the National Trust, as well as helping academics and other organisations with interest in the School. All this is outlined in greater detail below.

Please as always, do not hesitate to be in touch if you wish – my contact details are at the bottom of the newsletter.

CELF

VISIT TO OLD BLUNDELL'S

It's hard to talk knowledgably in my job about the old school building when you've only got books, photos, and lithographs to look to for guidance. Happily, I recently received a very generous invite from Lewis Patterson, the general manager for the National Trust in the area, to have a little private tour round Old Blundell's, with Charlie Olive, our Director of Community Partnerships. It did not disappoint – with the beautiful ceilings downstairs and stained-glass windows (of which I was able to take lots of photographs for our Archive Collection). One of the things, I perhaps found most interesting (as did Charlie I gather), was the number of nods made by the architect of the current Horsdon Site in the early 1880s to the original building. For example, the tiling downstairs in both buildings is the same colour and pattern and the internal roof joists upstairs, are the same colour, shape and style as those in our library. Many thanks to Lewis for his time and expertise on this occasion.



Side view of Old Blundell's

1950s & 1960s REUNION – 24.09.22



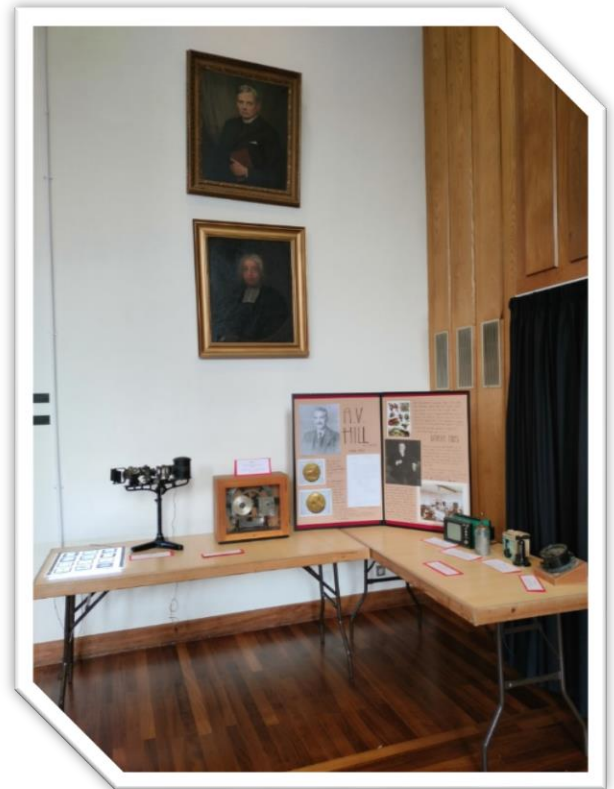
Blundell's Jazz Band, 1960

On a gloriously sunny, September day, I had the pleasure of being invited to the 1950s and 60s Reunion in Big School. As part of this I put together a small exhibition of those years set out thematically into sports, the arts, fun and games, and the Queen Mothers' visits. Among some of the more outstanding items included a selection of photos from the Leavers' Day in 1960 which included the Royal Artillery Section pointing a 25 pounder at the Headmaster's Study, hanging the masters' gowns from the telegraph wires, parking a tractor outside the chapel and painting a fake no entry sign across Blundell's Road. Other focal points included a Ronald Searle Valentine's Card sent to Ted Crowe by the Fourth Form, anonymised excerpts from the punishment book ("carrying scotch eggs with bare hands"; "practicing judo in the bathroom" and "inefficient bell ringing" being particular highlights) and a variety of sporting, drama and music programmes from across the period from Ted Crowe's personal collection. I also really enjoyed the opportunity to visit Old House with a large group of alumni, enjoying their tales of the fire there and memories of various misdemeanours. Many thanks to Linda Bulpin and the rest of the Development Office Team for pulling off such a splendid event and allowing me to take part.

A.V. HILL CENTENERY STEM DINNER – 26.09.22

After a brief hiatus of a couple of years due to Covid, the annual Science and Mathematics Dinner resumed this September to the great satisfaction of over 100 staff and students. The theme of the dinner was the celebration of the centenary of A.V. Hill's noble prize. For those of you unfamiliar with Hill (or perhaps a bit hazy on the details), he was born in Bristol in 1886 and attended Blundell's between 1900 and 1905. Whilst he was here, he proved himself an excellent allrounder, winning various athletic championships and cricketing/rugby events as well as excelling in his academic studies. He won various prizes, exhibitions and scholarships before heading to Trinity College, Cambridge to read mathematics where he was "third wrangler" before turning to physiology. Hill then worked at UCL after a stint in the Great War. Whilst there, Hill carefully studied frog muscles and was able to prove that our muscles rely on energy released by chemical processes. The chemical sequence required, consists of a work phase, which is not dependent on oxygen supply, and a recovery phase, when oxygen is required. For this work Hill was awarded his Nobel prize one hundred years ago.

In celebrating this, I was invited to put together a display detailing some of his achievements alongside a small exhibition for the dinner. Following a bit of a rescue mission at the end of last term from the loft of the Physics Department (the building of which was generously funded by the Governor, John Coles, in the late 19th century – and within which Hill was one of it's first students), I was able to present for the first time a number of historical pieces of scientific equipment. This included a Flatters and Garnett Precision Micro-Projector and original slides (1930s); a selenium cell, produced by Raycraft Bridge (1931); a bell timer, produced by Gents of Leicester (1950s) and a Vega 402 portable Black and White television monitor, produced in the former Soviet Union (1974). Excellent talks were given by a couple of alumnae on Hill's work as well as their experiences studying medicine and bio-science at university respectively.

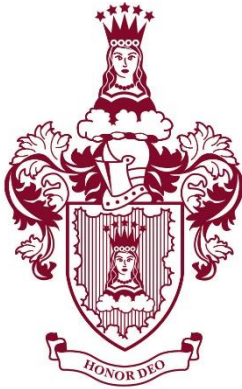


STEM Exhibition stand in Big School



A.V. Hill's Nobel Prize held by the School

OTHER NEWS & PROJECTS



THE
MERCERS'
COMPANY



*The Copy of Alain John's Statue
in the old Coventry Cathedral*

Can you help?

Victoria Curgenvin, now Year 13, has **rejoined me once a week to help with various projects to build up her personal statement** as she hopes to pursue a career in curatorship or archiving. Victoria has been most helpful this month appraising the 1930s science slides (mentioned above) so I warmly welcome her back to the fold.

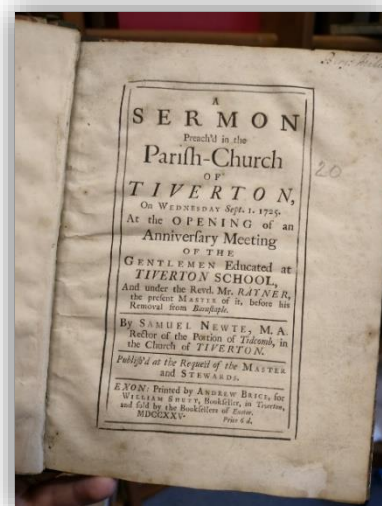
My assistance with next year's exhibition on the philanthropic contributions of the Mercer's Company in London, to celebrate Richard 'Dick' Whittington's large bequest to the company setting a precedent for centuries of charitable work, is now complete. As you will already know, Peter Blundell's most significant bequest was to found our school in Tiverton, but what is not commonly known is that he also bequeathed money to the Mercers' Company and 11 other livery companies. Part of this income was to be given to poor inmates of the various city gaols and prisons and Bedlam. Although not a Mercer himself, **it is on this basis that Peter Blundell is to be included in this exhibition as one of the philanthropists.** With the help of Ben Boswell, our director of Development and Andrew Nadolski in Marketing, we have procured an image for the Mercer's Company's curator, and I have been filling in the necessary historical details with my archival hat on.

Finally, I have been assisting a historian working on a biography of Alain John. If the name seems familiar to you, it is because you would have walked past his statue of Christ blessing the multitude, every time you entered the clock tower at School. Originally meant to be Peter Blundell, this thought-provoking statue carved in 1939 was applauded by the sculptor Eric Gill as being the best piece of sculpture produced in this country that year. Its young creator went on to leave Blundell's to join the RAF when he was killed in action in 1943. A copy of the statue acts as the memorial for the Coventry Blitz thanks to the Blundell's Coventry Connection of Headmaster and later Bishop of Coventry, Neville Gorton. One of the issues I am having in assisting this chap is locating an image of him – please see below if you can help!

Were you in Blundell's in the late 1930s? Do you have any group photos from Blundell's from this period in your family collection with names scribbled on the back that might be able to identify him? Or did your father or uncle ever jab the whole school photo and say – "that's the fellow who carved that Jesus statue on the clocktower!". I would love to hear from you if so. Whilst we have group photos where Alain John is likely to be present, we have no definitive image of him which is a massive shame as he is such an important part of our school and also national history. If you can help me at all, please drop me a line.

CURIOSITY OF THE MONTH

Curiosity of the Month this month is this published sermon from 1725. It was preached by Samuel Newte, the rector of Tidcombe on Wednesday 1st September 1725 at the opening of the anniversary meeting of the gentlemen educated at Tiverton School under the reverend Mr. Rayner. Based on Ecclesiastes, he argued the advantages of a superior and liberal education and that it was to God that we should look to as being responsible for this intellectual bounty.

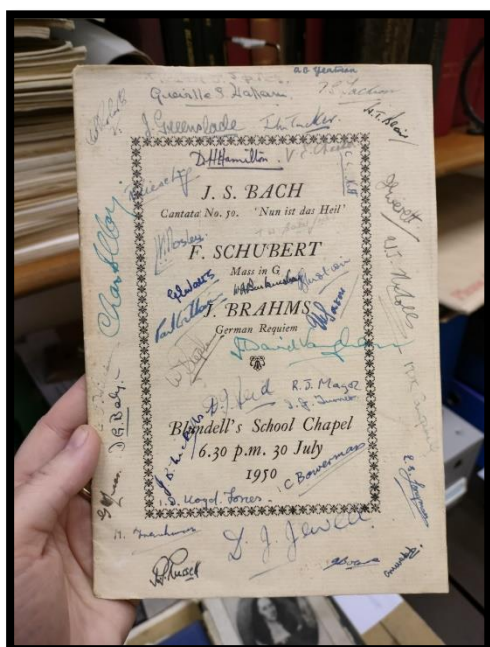


NEW ACQUISITIONS

I have received several new acquisitions this month. A number were kindly brought by attendees at the 1950s and 60s reunion – these included several tomes connected to the school, school colours, some further photographs, lithographs and programmes. My thanks and best wishes go our generous OB donors.

I have also received a beautiful watercolour from the son of Frederick de Jersey Clere over the summer as well as a beautiful rebound edition of Benjamin Incedon's Donations of Peter Blundell (1804) by Shirin Ord (nee Mason) on behalf of her father Graham Mason and Tony Miles.

And due to all the various refurb work across the School this summer the collection has been gifted Nick Swarbrick's original Second Master Sign (c.1976); a box full of music programmes (1984-2004); a collection of Ancient Greek Examination papers (c.1870-1930); a huge collection of science equipment (c.1920-80) and finally about 30 CD ROMs of photographs from the early 2000s from Marketing (thank you Peter Klinkenberg...). Something tells me appraising and digesting this all into the Archive is going to keep me very busy next month!



One of our wonderful new acquisitions

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The Exhibition for
1950s and 60s
Reunion complete
with 1950s
Fenman Wireless
and original
textbooks

