



ARCHIVIUM

Blundell's School Archive Newsletter



Relaxing in SH, circa 1977

IN THIS EDITION



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- Gloucestershire Archives
- SARA Conference
- National Trust Visit
- Student Volunteers



ENQUIRIES:

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- Francis Farewell
- W.B. Kemeys-Jenkin



CAN YOU HELP?

- Portrait of The Rev. Henry Knott-Venn



CURIOSITY OF THE MONTH

- Mission Collection Box, Westlake

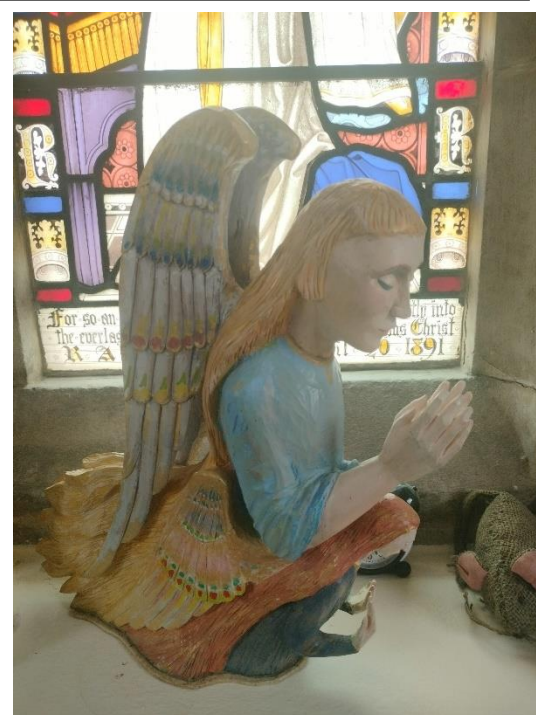
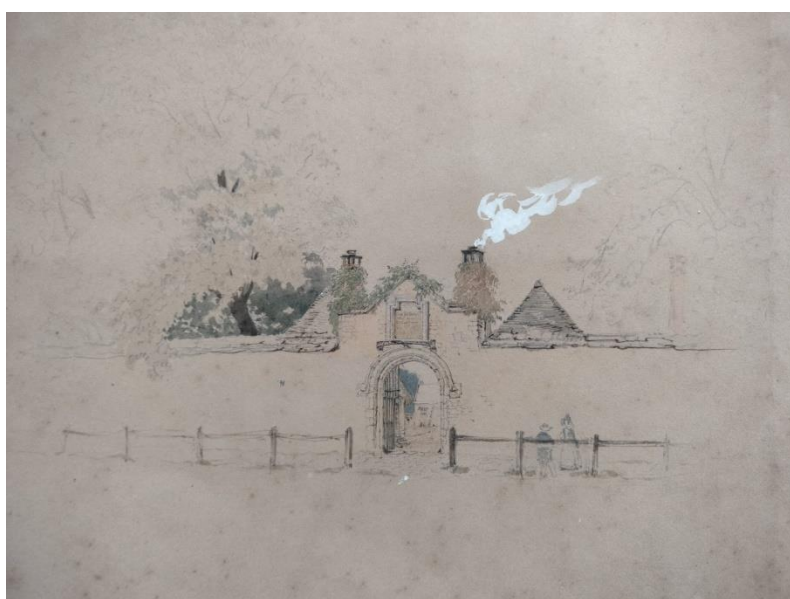
WELCOME TO ARCHIVIUM

It was decided earlier in the year that the *Archivium* newsletter should become termly, so apologies for the radio silence from me. It has been a very busy few months since I last wrote. Much of the work of the Archive is fairly humdrum, involving ingesting new material and routine preservation tasks along with various enquiries to support the work of various departments in the School whether it be The Development Office, Marketing, The Bursary or the teaching staff. That said, there have been several interesting things that have happened in the past little while, which I hope to share with you below. This edition's cover photo is one of many marvellous images which have been donated to us in the past six months by **Brian Brady (SH, 1973-8)**. Along with a cornucopia of remarkable photographs, Brian has kindly shared a wealth of memories of his time at school, for which I am most grateful. As ever, it is your continued support which allows the Archive to thrive, so if you would like to share anything with us, please don't hesitate to be in touch.

CELF

NEW ACQUISITIONS

Beyond Brian Brady's generous donation, mentioned above, the Archive has continued to receive a steady stream of new material. Particular thanks to the family of **Richard Turner Parkinson (NC, 1944-48)** who have given the archive a wealth of NC material from his time at School. Other interesting new items include a carving of an angel which has been donated by Cluny Paget. The angel was carved a family friend, **Ronald Thirst**, who was the architect for the new buildings from 1964, and has found a home in the sacristy of the chapel. We have also received a series of watercolour images which were rescued from a car boot sale. Rather excitingly these appear to match up with some engravings by **Bradford Rudge** which we already have in the collection, so I hope to get these authenticated in the coming months.



Above: mystery sketch of Old Blundell's porters' lodge; Right: Ronald Thirst Carving

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVE

Lots of enquiries since the last issue. Among the most interesting include:

For the History of Bath Research Group – looking up records on **William and John Wood (1816-18)** who were the grandsons and great grandsons of John Wood the Younger and John Wood the Elder (pictured right) who designed much of the famous architecture of that city. The boys were sent to Blundell's when their parents' marriage broke down (their father John Brock Wood allegedly bigamously married a mistress). Interestingly, whilst put down as the sons of a gentleman on our registers, their mother also claims John Brock Wood was deceased when in fact he was living. Perhaps dead to her?



For a South African historian – sharing the history of the school and records for **Francis Farewell (1802-07)** who founded Port Natal after making a deal with Shaka, king of the Zulus (the meeting depicted left in this imagined image by Richard Caton Woodville in 1936)

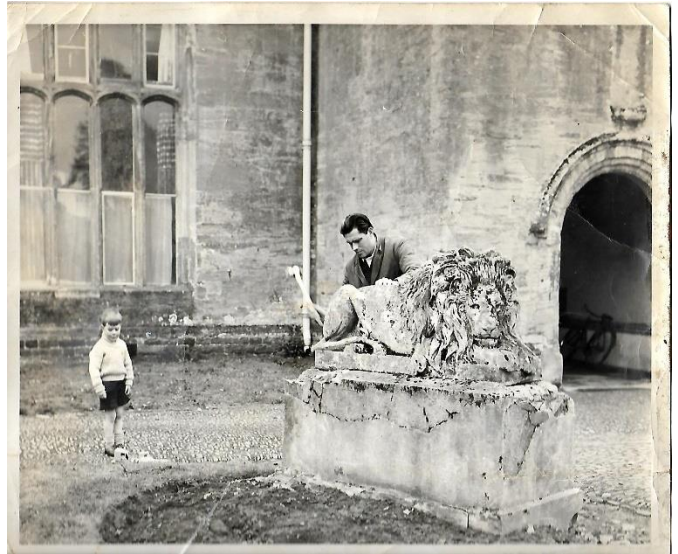
For Merton College, Oxford – research regarding the school career of **W.B. Kemeys-Jenkin (P, 1929-1932)**. As I know many of you are interested in finding out more about our community's war heroes I attach an summary of his career, as put together by researcher, John Hamblin.



Walter was born in India in 1915, to Captain Ernest Kemeys-Jenkin FRIBA and his wife Edith. Back in Exmouth, Walter was sent to St Peter's School, Lymptone from 1925-9 before joining Blundell's where he was in Petergate (pictured right here, whilst at Blundell's). He was an avid rugby player, playing for the First XV in 1931-2. He received House colours and appeared in the play 'St Joan' in 1932. He was a member of the OTC, where he was a member of the band and attended OTC Summer Camp the same year. He matriculated for Merton College, Oxford where he read English, marrying Kathleen Quiller, together raising a young family. On the outbreak of war, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Devonshire Regiment in March 1940. He took part in the Allied invasion of France, with the LCI Glenroy dropping anchor off the coast of Le Hamel in the 5th June. He was among those who landed there facing a preparatory artillery barrage upon their advance. The next day, he arrived at their objective near the village of Conde-sur-Noireau where they dug in. They came under heavy machine gun from a wood, but the enemy counterattack they anticipated never arrived. On the 13th August, they were in their same positions when their supporting artillery began shelling the woods to their front, which left Walter and his comrades under heavy artillery and mortar fire for the best part of a day. On the 14th August, the decision was made to clear the woods of the enemy. It was during this attack that Walter was shot and killed by a sniper during the operation while leading a two man patrol. His father donated £100 to Blundell's School to create the Kemeys-Jenkin Prize for Sixth Form English Literature in 1946. He is commemorated on the war memorial at Exmouth and on the memorial at Blundell's School. He is buried at Tilly-sur-Seulles War Cemetery.

Mystery Old Blundell's Photo

How very wonderful, the Blundell's community is! Following the last edition of *Archivium*, **Dr Peter Biggs (master, 1958-64)** was in touch to give me some details of the picture I posted of the little boy and the gentleman by the lions at Old Blundell's. I am reliably informed the boy is the second son, Nicholas, of **Terry Silk** who taught chemistry at the school. The family lived on the ground floor of Old Blundell's (with Peter Biggs in the upper floor flat above the retired Housemaster of Old House, **Pat McElwey**). The photo would be dated to around 1962 to 1963 which I gather was a particularly bitter winter made worse by seventeenth century insulation and inadequate heating. Many thanks to Peter for being in touch with me.



Gloucestershire Heritage Hub

For the last year I have been working closely with the school archivists from Cheltenham Ladies' College, Dean Close and Bromsgrove School in an active South West School Digital Preservation Working Group. As part of our work, trying to work out the most cost-effective and accessible ways of preserving digital records, we were **kindly hosted by Dr Viv Cothey at Gloucestershire Heritage Hub** back at the end of April who demonstrated some ways of preserving materials using creative commons software. Whilst using programming language was a new departure for me, it has raised my hopes that such a system might be rolled out by Blundell's in the near future.

Wong Family Visit

The Wong Family of Singapore have been mentioned before in these pages. Two sons of prominent Singaporean businessman, Wong Ah Fook, **Siew Qui Wong** and **Siew Yuen Wong (DB 1905-6)**, attended the school in the early twentieth century, where they excelled at the engineering tripos, and played rugby for the Day Boy Team. Both went on to have illustrious careers – one became the Attorney-General of Kwangtung Province, whilst the other was the architect for the palace, Istana Bukit Serene, in Malaysia. Both boys had very fond memories of their time at Blundell's and stayed in touch with Ted Crowe and OB Club until their deaths in the 1970s.

After many years of correspondence between the family, and myself (and my predecessor, Mike Sampson), a group of Wong relatives, led by family historian, Vivienne Tan Wong, came to visit in May. They enjoyed a tour of the Victorian and Edwardian School buildings. In particular, they appreciated seeing the oldest parts of our science laboratories – a gift from generous benefactor and School governor, Sir John Coles in 1900. Their only sadness (and mine!) is that we still have not been able to unearth any photos of the boys while

they were at the school, so another plea for any of you with school photo albums from this period, if you have any photos of Siew Yuen or Siew Qui to be in touch!



Members of the Wong Family with Catherine Flavelle (Archivist) and Ben Boswell (Development Director)

National Trust Visit

The Archive enjoyed a return visit from the National Trust. Programming and Partnerships Officer, Tim Bland, came for a visit with an MA student from the University of Exeter a couple of weeks ago to view our seventeenth to nineteenth century materials. These include the **Book of Abraham Podger** (a beautifully illustrated arithmetic book) dating from 1815-17 and our **Book of Orders** – the record of the meetings of the School feoffees between 1663 and 1847 (they tended to meet on an annual basis unless there was plague or another epidemic so it's a really useful source for illuminating our understanding of the schools' activities during this early period!). Like myself, they were very much appreciative of the architectural parallels between the two school sites in the shapes of the windows, doorways, roof joists and floor tiling. Efforts continue to get the Old School site re-opened to the public so please watch this space.

Student Volunteers

I have been very blessed this year to have continued to have the help of **Victoria Curgenvn (Yr 13)** who has continued to be excellent company on a weekly basis as she's helped me to sort out new incoming materials and creating an inventory of OB books for the OB Club. It has been with a heavy heart that I have had to bid her farewell as she embarks on her life beyond Blundell's. In grateful thanks for her hard work and bonhomie she has been presented with a copy of 'The Library: A Fragile History' by Arthur de Weduwen and Andrew Pettegree and I wish her every success in her future career in the heritage sector.





Luckily, I have been equally blessed to have a new volunteer. **Reuben Wielenga (Y10)** has joined me this term, eager to assist in the archive as part of his studies. He has already proved a brilliant help, digitising our set of LPs and is continuing Victoria's work at creating a database of OB related books. I look forward to having him back next year.



FOUNDED 1998

SARA Conference

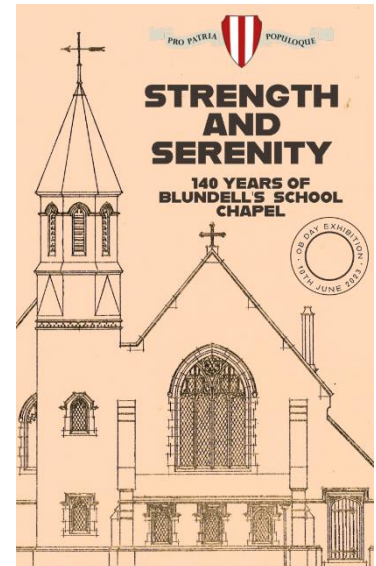
I attended the **School Archives and Records Association annual conference** for a second year running. This year, Manchester Grammar School were our welcoming hosts. Beyond fawning over their marvellous portrait in the entrance hall of Lady Margaret Beaufort, it was wonderful to network with other people doing similar roles to me and see what other schools are doing. I am convinced that the current activities of our archive are increasingly in line with what other schools are doing: working closely with the Development Office, and supporting curriculum development and marketing. **I was privileged enough to represent us on a panel of four archivists**, presenting with my colleagues from the South West Schools' Digital Preservation Group, the challenges of preserving our digital content for posterity, in terms of time, money and technical know-how. This was well received and as a result we hope to have increasing support from other schools for our **'Records at Risk' grant application with The National Archives** in coming months to further continue our work with Gloucestershire Heritage Hub.



Above left: With fellow panel speakers, Grace Pritchard-Woods (Dean Close); Rachel Roberts (CLC) and Nikki Thorpe (Bromsgrove). Above right: Enjoying the sunshine at Manchester Grammar School.

OB Day Exhibition

For obvious and understandable reasons, this year's OB Day exhibition 'Strength and Serenity: 140 years of the Blundell's School Chapel' has had to be postponed but we hope to be able to share this with you in the not too distant future. Least of all, it has proved to be a very useful exercise for me to familiarize myself with an important part of the School's history and to delve into the Chapel Archive, which has kindly been donated to the main archive by our chaplain. I look forward to reviewing this new material again in the new academic year as part of archival ingest.



Can you help?

Another donation has been made, this time of a Victorian portrait of OB, **Henry Knott-Venn (1828-34)**, who went on to found a school in Honiton. The donor family have very kindly offered him for free providing we can give him a good home (we can!). The only caveat is that 'Henry' is currently residing in Edinburgh. If anyone in our OB community is likely to be in Edinburgh in the next few months and is able to bring him down to us at any point in the next year please be in touch.



CURIOSITY OF THE MONTH

Below is **one of two collection boxes** held in the archive for **The Blundell's School Mission**. This particular one was in the Old Westlake Building. Blundell's established a Christian mission first at Exeter, subsequently in London, then Bristol, for which the School collected funds to pay the salary of the missionary and to establish clubs for the deprived children and youth of the area.

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