

# SACKVILLE COLLEGE



Friends' Newsletter  
Spring 2020

## News from the Warden

Dear Friends of Sackville College,

We are all facing unique and challenging times that are unfortunately expected to last for some time. The priority here is the safety and wellbeing of our residents. The majority are self-isolating and receiving assistance, from Linda and Marcus, for their daily needs and moral support. The College and Office are closed to all visitors, and as with many in a similar situation, contact with their family and friends is greatly missed.

As a charity we receive no Government funding and rely solely on the generosity of our supporters, fundraising events and visitors. Regrettably, our forthcoming events have been cancelled or postponed, and opening to the public for visits and tours has been paused for the foreseeable future. For the protection of our residents, the College is unlikely to be open this season. We do remain hopeful that private tours will resume in the autumn and that our winter programme of events will bring in much needed funds.

Even with the restrictions, life at the College continues, with gardening and general maintenance. Our new website is up and running with new material being added on a regular basis: there is a Virgin Giving Donation link to increase our funds. Please join our Facebook page and Twitter to stay in touch. But most of all, we so look forward to welcoming your friendly faces back again.

I sincerely hope that you and your loved ones remain in good health and thank you for your continuing support.

Best wishes - Rosalind Crowther

## Events at Sackville College

### CJ's Charity Dinner November 2019

Thank you to Chris & Julie and their Staff for hosting a wonderful Charity Dinner evening in aid of Sackville College. Thank you to Penny for organising the Raffle, and all her helpers. The evening raised a good sum for Sackville College. It was the sixth such evening, so all who attended have helped to raise over £3,000 for the College. Thank you!

### Cantu Amici- Christmas Concert

Once again we enjoyed a tremendous performance from Cantu Amici with their Christmas concert in the Chapel. As always, the music was wonderful and every seat was sold before the end of October.



### Christmas Carols in the Chapel

Sackville College hosts two evenings of Carols in the Chapel, followed by refreshments in the Common Room, with a blazing log fire to welcome everyone. We would like to thank Janet Gillbard for giving her time playing the organ on 5 different occasions for us.

Again our Resident and his helpers decorated the Chapel and Common room with magnificent floral decorations.

We were able to offer an evening when a local WI group hired the Chapel and put on their own Carol evening for members, followed by refreshments. The WI contacted us after the event saying how much their members had enjoyed this. If you know of any local groups who may be interested in hiring the Chapel for an occasion like this, please contact the Office on 01342 323414.



## Work parties

Thank you to all the volunteers who have given up their Friday mornings once a month to help at the College.



Over the last few months we have cleaned the woodwork in the entrance tunnel, weeded the paths in the quadrangle, sorted books, carefully cleaned some of the collection items, and chopped and stacked firewood, after some trees in the grounds had to be felled.

## Fundraising with Ebay.

Sackville College is now an Ebay registered charity. Place items for sale in the usual way and follow the link to the donation site and pick us! Please ask family and friends who use Ebay to give a percentage of their sales to a good cause.

## News from the Garden

Marcus and two of our residents have been busily preparing our garden in recent weeks for planting. We hope to have a good variety of vegetables and soft fruit for our residents, along with some flowers to cut for arrangements in the Chapel. The quadrangle grass has been well fed this winter following the long dry summer last year. Hopefully it will soon start to return to its former lush green appearance.



During this current lockdown May Day has been postponed by the East Grinstead Lions, so we will not be able to sell the plants that have been growing so well in the greenhouse over the winter. Therefore we may be offering plants to Friends at a small cost,

in the weeks to come. We will email you all a list of what we may have available and then arrange a collection point and payment. We do hope that we will be able to achieve this, as during the current Pandemic, it seems likely that we will not be able to open for visits during this season, so we will not have our usual revenue income for the year.



## From the Archives:

### Accommodation in the town for a Sackville family retinue one hundred strong

Thomas Sackville, 1<sup>st</sup> earl of Dorset, was recorded as staying in the town of East Grinstead in the year 1600, with his retinue of 100. They were all accommodated in the town, somehow.

Perhaps this was why his grandson, Richard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Dorset, decided to have the North wing of Sackville College built as the Dorset Lodgings, to accommodate his retinue, whenever he and his brother and their retinues had business in East Grinstead, as important landowners, Wardens of Ashdown Forest and Members of Parliament.

### Lady Anne Clifford, wife to Richard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Dorset,

noted in her Diary for March 1616 that she travelled *'over the dangerous moors...eight miles, the ways being so dangerous that sometimes the horses were fain to be taken out of the coach and the coach lifted*

*down the hills... Today Lord Rivers' horse fell from a bridge into the river.'*

This was on her return from her father's lands in Cumbria and Westmorland, which she eventually inherited, after many years and a long legal battle.

### Lord Rivers

was a friend of the Sackville family and executor to both Robert Sackville, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Dorset, in 1609, and Richard Sackville, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Dorset in 1624.

Rivers, as executor, was involved in establishing the almshouse to be called Sackville College, founded in the will of Robert Sackville, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Dorset.

Jessica Malay ed., *Anne Clifford's Autobiographical Writing, 1590-1676* (Manchester, 2018), p. 30.

### The Sundial: Extract from a book about Sundials

*'Horas non numero nisi serenas'*

(I count only the bright hours).

'This motto is found in several forms and in several languages and in many places...at **Sackville College, East Grinstead**, a building that dates from 1616, but the face of the dial was renewed and the motto painted on it during the wardenship of the Rev Dr J. Neale (1846-66); previously it bore the inscription *Tempus fugit* (Time flies)'.  
*From The Book of Sun Dials* by Mrs Alfred Gatty (1809-73) published 1872, p. 281.

The 'rearranged and enlarged edition' is available from archive.org

The 'rearranged and enlarged edition' is available from archive.org

Thank you to 'About EG' for his 'tweet' about this on Twitter. He noticed that the Sackville College sundial bears the date 1782.

Eleanor Towle, in *John Mason Neale DD: A Memoir* (Longmans: London, 1907) wrote (p. 141) that the inscription, *'Horas non numero nisi serenas'* was Neale's choice of motto. She added. 'How many hours have been numbered since the legend was engraved and for these old bedesmen with what measured pace they slip by!'

*The information poses several questions: who installed the older sundial? Why did Neale have the*

*inscription changed? Who changed it back to 'Tempus fugit', and when and why?*

## The Well

A typed copy of this very badly spelt letter was among the papers of the late Michael Leppard

*Mr palmer warden of Sackvill College Sussex*

*To the warden of Sackvill College*

*Sir you are Desired to have a pump put over the Well in the Squar of the College for the Benifitt of all the Collegins please to see it fixt well- the person who sends this will be Responsobell to Remit the money to you in July to Defray the hole Expencc it is as Shour to you as the Bank of England- privacy is Desired*

*A friend of the College a due March 12 1816*

'A due' probably means 'adieu'.

**Thomas Palmer was Warden of Sackville College 1813-44.** He is buried, with other members of his family, in a once magnificent stone tomb with an urn on top, in St Swithun's churchyard. You can find it right on the corner of the path leading from the South entrance (from the High Street) round to the car park.

Perhaps the unknown donor did pay for the pump, as potholers found evidence of a pump mechanism and ledges in the 90 feet deep well.

In the 1850s, when Neale was Warden, **William Butterfield** designed the well house which replaced 'an unsightly pump'. Neale had a porter, **William Wren**, so perhaps Wren drew the buckets of water every day for all.

**Wren's Diary** is really scraps of paper, not in any reliable order, and with doubtful dates, but it contains some useful information, such as: [Possibly] 11 January 1859 'the pump was removed from the square'.

## A Sackville College inmate who was expelled

*John Mason Neale, Letter, Christmas Day 1852* 'Master Trice and I rang the bells, it having pleased Master Martin to go out after supper without leave'. (Letters, pp. 205-06).

*Mary Lawson:* Poor Master Martin was another College worthy, a warm-hearted old man, and a great favourite with us all, in spite of his faults. Unfortunately, he possessed a weak head and too many friends in the town to treat him, the result being that he was finally expelled from the College. My father used to lecture him and warn him; my mother, with the charity and humility of a medieval saint, did her best for him, sending him off to bed when he came in noisy and quarrelsome – even sometimes taking off his boots for him herself, in order to keep him out of mischief. But the College statutes were appealed to by those who saw the offence and would not see the extenuating circumstances, and were pleased by this means to gratify their enmity to the Warden: sorely against his judgement the old man had to resign his pension and leave his comfortable home.

**Wren's Diary** (?) 1858 18 of January 'as I was a going to the Ash hole with some rubbish I met **Master Martin** coming out of the kitchen he did abuse me he sware at me very much that he would give it me if he was hung for it for turning him out of the college he went away through the garden'.

*Another typescript of a document dated 1863 records a John Martin in 'the Union'- that is, the Workhouse. This would be the most probable end for someone expelled from Sackville College at that time.*

## Animals and birds at Sackville College in the past

**Wren's Diary 1860** 12 of July they had a pig in the pown (pound)

11 of December they had a pig and put him in the ash hole

1862 15 August Betsey [Ongley, a blind girl who lived at the College with her Mother] bought a pair of doves

19 of September the young peacock was hatched

1864 1 of July the young peacock was hatched

When a pig was slaughtered, John Mason Neale's son, Vincent Cornelius was away in Brighton with

Neale's wife and mother, over Christmas. The boy had been seriously ill and was having homeopathic treatment. Neale wrote to him:

'My dear little Corney-Boy, I hope you are getting better and will soon be strong and able to run about again. Last Sunday we dined in Hall and drank your health at dinner. We ate the pig, but he was very fat and the College people did not like him much:

Master Wren grunted when he beheld the pig,

Master Martin had a hand in making him so big,

Master Everest, he could never rest till he tasted it,

Master Trice was too nice to devour a bit'.

### **Dogs**

Before coming to Sackville College, Neale had a dog called Pombal, when he and his wife lived in Madeira. Neale was very upset when the dog died and recorded the anniversary of Pombal's death for many years afterwards.

Neale did not actually *own* a dog at Sackville College, but wrote to one of his daughters:

'Do you remember a chocolate coloured dog called Rover that used to come up with the St Agnes girls, a dog that belongs to nobody? This beast has lately taken to me and haunts the Study, or any other room that he can get to. He is so very good tempered and so peacefully obstinate that you can't turn him out. Anyhow I can't. Ever your own dear father.'

### **A rude letter to Mrs Neale from the Bishop of Exeter:**

*Presumably she had written to the Bishop to seek a curacy for her husband. In his abrupt reply the Bishop did not even bother to write out the words 'which' and 'servant' properly:*

**Exeter** 7 September 1860

Mrs Neale: Madam, Forgive me when I say that the subject is one on *which* I do not suffer myself to correspond with ladies. I will only add that you are under a misapprehension that the Curacy is in my gift.

I am Madam,

Your obedient *Servant*, H Exeter (Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter from 1830-69)

### **John Mason Neale and Hawker of Morwenstow:**

Piers Brendon, *Portrait of a Victorian Eccentric* (Pimlico, 2002), p. 94.

*'The saga of Hawker's restoration of the church is a long one. He used part of the material from the ruin of the previous vicarage to rebuild the Vestry... Later he made various restorations to the inside of the church, restored the ancient rood-screen, demolished the gallery and banished the ancient box pews.*

*The last he probably disliked for many of the same reasons as the hymn writer **John Mason Neale**- they were Protestant innovations and they discriminated against the poor. At any rate he seems to have followed Neale's example in attacking the pew system physically'.*

It was when Neale briefly held the living at Crawley that, despite his weak chest, he took an axe to some of the box pews. He described box pews as 'abortions of a puritanick age'. He objected to the rich paying for pews, because the poor could not do this. At Christchurch in St Leonards (where Mrs Neale ended her days, after her husband's death), the poor were apparently made welcome and not expected to pay for pews.

### **A 90 day Warden: William Claude Johnson: Warden of Sackville College February- April 1909.**

Dr James Harrison was Warden from 1893-1908. He died in the Queen Victoria Hospital.

**William Claude Johnson** was appointed by **Earl De La Warr, the Patron of Sackville College.**

Johnson was an engineer, living at Broadstone Farm, adjoining Ashdown Forest. He had a miniature railway in the grounds.

Some letters survive written by Lieutenant Colonel Miles Reid. He married one of the daughters of Warden Frank Hill. Reid corresponded with Warden Peter Williams, and Robert H. Wood, who was a

Guide at Sackville College and the author of the very good pamphlet *A Short Account of Sackville College, East Grinstead*. The letters give an interesting insight into Sackville College in the recent past.

Reid wrote that he went to Sackville College in 1976 and 'gave lunch' to Warden Williams and his wife and to R.H. Wood and Mrs Wood. He must have taken them out to lunch in the town. I think that Warden Peter Williams did not live at Sackville College.

To Lieutenant Colonel Reid: 'The Patron appointed Mr Johnson for this brief period in order to preserve his initiative under Statute no 22. No events of these few weeks nor personal history of the Warden [have come to light]. He lived at Broadstone Farm on the fringe of Ashdown Forest. The writer recalls him rather vaguely. More clearly comes to memory the miniature railway which once threaded his little estate and the harsh cries of the peacocks which he then used to keep.'

Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Reid:

'I am afraid that I never knew that Claude Johnson ever had anything to do with the College. I knew his son & his little railway which, if I remember rightly, led from his house to the 15<sup>th</sup> Tee on Ashdown Forest. The father had the reputation of being a man of great wealth who had built up the firm of Johnson & Phillips, manufacturers of electrical equipment at Greenhythe. All I can remember is that he had a little pointed beard and a huge brown Mercedes limousine, which I understood had been made for the Czar'.

To Lieutenant Colonel Reid: dated 23 July 1976.

'William Claude Johnson's appointment was a 90 day stop gap, failing which the Collegians might, by right, have elected one of their number to the wardenship. I knew his son slightly, but when I last visited Broadstone Farm, the little railway was abandoned and the peacocks [were] dead'.

Johnson was succeeded by Frank Hill, Warden 1909-29.

## **A Glimpse of the Work during the Second World War of the Society of St Margaret, the Sisterhood founded by John Mason Neale.**

'The King's Christmas Message: The Sisters are taking orders for this, as bookmarks, in script of different styles, price 4d. to 1/-

Please order from the School of Embroidery, St Margaret's Convent'.

*The King's Christmas Message included these words by Minnie Haskins:*

### *God Knows*

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown'. And he replied: 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way'.

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

(From St Swithun's Parish Magazine for February 1940).

## **Death at Sackville College on Christmas Day**

Relatives of Miss Jane Charlotte Page (1870-1963) contacted Sackville College to find out if there were any records about this lady, who lived at the almshouse latterly.

They knew that she was blind but had not been blind from birth, lived with 3 successive generations of relatives and ended up at Sackville College.

Miss Jane Page, from *A Brief History of Sackville College*, by Michael J. Leppard, p. 21:

'Miss Jane Page, who was quite blind, and lived in the College for 49 years, was the only Collegian allowed to keep a pet, a cat with a bell.'

This must have been Michael Leppard's own recollection of Miss Page.



*Miss Page and The Queen Mother June 5<sup>th</sup> 1963. The lady with glasses is Mrs Katherine Jacques.*

In a letter to Lieutenant Colonel Reid, son in law of former Warden Frank Hill, Peter Williams wrote:

‘A few years ago, when Sir Harry Sinderson was Warden, he decided to go abroad for Christmas and left me, as one of his Assistant Wardens, in charge of the College. As has always been my custom, I visited the College on Christmas morning to see if everyone was well and I was assured by the Matron that although Miss Page had been totally blind for many years, she was in good health and cooking her Christmas Dinner. I believe it consisted of a pheasant and a pound of sausages. Later that day I was telephoned to say that Miss Page had died very suddenly, and apparently the cause of her death was a surfeit of pheasant and sausages. It is hard to imagine a better way of leaving this world!’

## **Welcome to new Friends and Thank you to all Friends.**

We hope that new Friends will enjoy being Friends and supporting Sackville College.

**Thank you** to the growing number of Friends. Your continuing support is very much appreciated and brings funds, practical help and additional support to the life of the community at Sackville College.

As the College cannot be open to visitors for the time being, due to the current pandemic, your support is more important than ever.

Several events were planned but have had to be postponed until next year.

When Sackville College can open again, we will let you know about forthcoming events.

Later he wrote in a letter that he remembered Jane Charlotte Page:

‘blind and undefeated, some years dead, but while I live, I, too, shall remember her on the seat in the south corner of the quadrangle, ever neatly turned out, hands in lap, seeming demure as a little girl’.

## **Addendum**

This is a small postscript to the article about **Warden Peter Williams, solicitor**, in the last Newsletter: we are reliably informed that the telephone number for his practice in the town was:

**East Grinstead 1.**

## **General Matters**

### **Publicity Officer appeal**

Sackville College is seeking a volunteer, with experience, to help increase the profile of the College. Please contact the Office if you can help.

### **Accommodation Availability**

There are flats available at the College. If you know of anyone who may be eligible, please contact the College Office for more details.

### **Visits**

Although the College is currently closed, Groups can still book a visit for a future date, perhaps in the autumn or for next year.

If you know of people who would like to arrange a visit in the not too distant future, please contact the Office to discuss this.

## Sackville College

Patron	The Earl De La Warr	
Warden	Mrs Rosalind Crowther	Office 01342 323414 warden@sackvillecollege.org.uk
Trustees	The Countess De La Warr	
	Mr Christopher J Rolley	
Sackville College Office	Open Weekday mornings 9am-1pm	01342 323414 admin@sackvillecollege.org.uk
Almoner	Mrs Linda Bryant	01342 323414 almoner@sackvillecollege.org.uk
Chaplain	The Rev'd. Andrew Hawken	St Swithun's Church
Head Guides	Mr & Mrs G. Edwards Contact the Office- Mrs Linda Bryant	01342 323414
Friends' Secretaries & Newsletter Editors	Steve and Caroline Metcalfe	friends@sackvillecollege.org.uk
Maintenance	Mr Marcus Bryant	

### Important Dates for Your Diary 2020 (Friends' Events)

Due to the current situation, the dates shown are subject to postponement.

Sunday 3rd May	Lions May Fair Opening College will be open for visitors with guides in each room. Tea and cake available in the common room. Donations of plants and garden tools will be very welcome for our stalls	
17 <sup>th</sup> 2:30pm May	Talk by Caroline Metcalfe on 'Lady Anne Clifford: The Knot Diaries'	
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> May 3pm	Friends' Afternoon Tea: 3pm followed by tea, sandwiches and cake	
Saturday 20 June 2020	MIDSUMMER SOIREE - You are invited to a very special evening of music and dining in the beautiful surroundings of Sackville College. Enjoy a welcoming drink on arrival prior to repairing to the College Chapel where the music of professional Harpist, Margaret Watson, will soothe and delight. The recital will be followed by dinner and you will be able to purchase wine and soft drinks throughout the evening. Reception 6:30 – Harp Recital 7:00pm – Black Tie	Tickets £50 per person
Saturday 25 July 2020 7 for 7:30pm	A Lecture on the Architectural History of Sackville College The Warden, Mrs Rosalind Crowther, will give a Lecture on the Architectural History of Sackville College, East Grinstead from the early building of the College to the present day.	Tickets £10 to include refreshments
Dec 2020	Christmas Music - to be confirmed.	

We have used email addresses where possible to save printing and postage costs.