

SACKVILLE COLLEGE



Friends' Newsletter
Autumn 2023



Margaret Watson at Sackville College, September 2023.

News from the Warden

Dear Friends of Sackville College

The College is ready for the longer nights with a programme of events, including our ever popular Carol Concerts in the Chapel. The tickets are now available so please be expeditious in booking.

The visitors and tours have increased this year and we are slowly getting back to our pre-pandemic numbers. In September, we were delighted and very grateful to welcome the renowned harpist Margaret Watson, who gave a magical fundraising concert in the Chapel.

If you have any suggestions for fundraising events that you would like to see at the College, please let me know.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas.

With best wishes

Rosalind Crowther

Events at Sackville College

The Lunch for Friends of Sackville College



Thank you to the Warden, Linda, Marcus, Angela and Eloise. We thank Dave and George for their wonderful music. Thank you to Pip and Sally, and Martin & Veronica for all their help.

The Friends of Sackville College give so much to the life of the College, as well as financial support. We thank each of you for coming to events, and for bringing along your own Friends and Family.

Forthcoming events

Quorum Concert in Sackville College Chapel, Sunday, 19 November at 4pm. Quorum, led by Adrian Goss, will bring a lovely mixed programme of music, covering William Byrd to Billy Joel, to Sackville College Chapel.

Christmas Music

- Monday 4th & Tuesday 5th December Carols in the Chapel followed by mulled wine and mince pies
- Friday 8th December Carols in the Chapel for Friends and Guides
- Monday 11th December Christmas concert by Cantu Amici followed by mulled wine and mince pies

Work parties



These have continued to take place on the last Friday of the month. We are very grateful to everyone who comes along for giving their time and energy. Tasks both outdoor and indoor carried out recently included: weeding, moving compost, hedge trimming, cleaning brass, sorting photographs and documents. It is also a social occasion with a break taken for tea, coffee and cake in the common room. Please contact friends@sackvillecollege.org.uk if you would like to join us.

Postcard From the Garden

As we start to see the end of October, there is little sign of Autumn except for a few leaves on the lawn. We are still picking a small amount of runner beans, but I find myself 'fighting' with the squirrels for the chestnuts on the front lawn. In the vegetable garden, the cauliflowers, sprouts and broccoli are loving the warm damp weather. I have had to cut some of the cauliflowers in half because they are too big for one resident.

It was a very good year for the fruit garden, allowing the Warden's husband to make pots of delicious jam for all the residents.

I would like to end with a big thank you to the 'Friends of Sackville' who bring their support to the monthly work parties.

Marcus Bryant

From the Archives

Cecily Webster was a Guide at Sackville College in the 1960s and 70s. She composed this poem about Sackville College and the 'Guests' of Robert Sackville, 2nd Earl of Dorset.

SACKVILLE COLLEGE

When generous hearts, far-seeing, set their course,
And back their visions with a firm intent,
That even death itself should have no force
To halt a benefaction, Heaven sent -
This, noble Dorset, was thy kindly plan,
Posthumous dreamchild of maturer years,
To shelter, in old age, thy fellow man,
And ease his mind of pauper's doubts and fears.
Decades and generations since have passed,
Till now long centuries proclaim thy love;
Kings, queens and princes reign and die at last,
But still the warming hearth and roof above
Are there for those whose evening peace attests
They are, as ever, Robert Sackville's guests.
C.H. WEBSTER

The Bells at Sackville College

The four bells in the belfry, underneath the heraldic snow leopard or ounce, are rung at weddings and for the Chapel Services for Residents.

The bells, according to a letter dated 19 March 1971, from Lieutenant-Commander Peter Williams, D.S.C., Warden of Sackville College 1969-81, were made by C. & G. Mears who operated in Whitechapel between 1844 and 1861. The date on the first bell is 1850, which was during the time when John Mason Neale was Warden (1846-66).

By 1971, C. & G. Mears had become Mears and Stainbank, Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 32-34 Whitechapel Road, London E1. In 1971 the firm could find no reference to Sackville College and suggested that the bells 'were made for another place and later transferred', 'or else made for a builder who carried out the actual installation, in which case they may have been invoiced to him'. The bells bear specific inscriptions, which makes it unlikely that they were made for anywhere else.

A drawing of the inscriptions on the four bells was made during the restoration of the Banqueting Hall during the winter of 1966-67. They read:

C & G Mears Londoni fecerunt MDCCCL (C & G Mears of London made [these] 1850)

Per te corneli

nobis pateat via coeli

By thee, Cornelius, may the way to heaven lie open to us.

Neale's son, Vincent Cornelius, was born just weeks before the family moved to Sackville College in 1846. Neale's own father was **Cornelius Neale**. Stained glass depictions of Pope Cornelius and Cornelius the Centurion appear in the east window of the Chapel.

Ave Mara gratia plena

Hail Mary, full of grace

The Virgin Mary is depicted in the centre of the east window of the Chapel. Neale's third child and second daughter was called **Mary Sackville**, so this may refer to her, too.

Gloria in excelsis deo

Glory to God in the highest

Nobis Agnetis

det sponsus regna quietis

May the spouse of Agnes (ie Christ or the Lamb) grant to us the kingdom of rest (or peace)

Agnus is Latin for Lamb, but this was the feminine form, Agnes.

Two sets of Notes, by a Mr Frank Knowles, in or before 1967 and by Michael J. Leppard (1967) help to explain what the inscriptions mean.

Sarah Agnes, Neale's first child and eldest daughter, was just a small child when the Neale family moved to Sackville College. She was usually called Agnes. Virgin Saints were regarded as brides of Christ. Mrs A. Bell in *Saints in Christian Art II*, (1902), p. 83, wrote about the tradition that St Agnes told her pagan lover 'I am betrothed to one greater and fairer than any earthly suitor, who will crown me with jewels compared to which thy gifts are dross'. Agnes was martyred.

Neale's daughter, Agnes, married a wine merchant called Phelps and had a daughter, but Agnes died comparatively young.

Mr Knowles clearly did not know about **Agnes Neale** and yet he realised that there was a St Agnes in the Chapel window and that the Society of St Margaret Convent school was called St Agnes. He wondered about the College patroness, who was Countess Muriel Agnes De La Warr, but conceded that she was 'too recent' to be the person so honoured.

Michael Leppard noted that the first and fourth inscriptions, as shown above, were in Medieval Latin verse, which Neale loved.

Work to repair the four bells and make them suitable for use again was carried out during the time of the present Warden's Father, **Derek Chislett**, (Warden 1988-96), between 1993 and 1994. The cost was over £6,000 and the work was carried out by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry.



The four bells and their fittings were dismantled, with the bells being returned to the foundry for retuning. New fittings were provided and the bells were cleaned. Ropes and pulleys were fitted, and the bells were reinstalled. The bells would no longer be swung over, but instead would remain stationary, with the clappers being moved towards them. A bell for stationary chiming has a supporting beam called a 'deadstock', made from Iroko wood, a West African hardwood.

A letter indicating that the work was complete noted that the hand chiming apparatus could not be fitted to the walls in the chamber below the belfry, as these were lined with ancient panelling, so the apparatus was fixed to the floor.

They explained that 'The number of conventional tunes that can be played upon four bells is, of course, extremely limited,' but they helpfully enclosed a booklet of tunes suitable for 8 bells, or even fewer.

The tune of the bells:

- 1... Tenor weighs 115 lbs Note C
- 2 3rd 90 lbs Note D
- 3.....2nd 75 lbs Note E
- 4 Treble.....55 lbs Note F

(This all sounds a bit like a passage from Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Nine Tailors*.)



Next time you hear the bells ringing, think of John Mason Neale, who had them installed, and of past Wardens, Peter Williams and Derek Chislett, who worked so hard to have them restored and cared for.



The old Bell Frames

Some of the earliest Residents of Sackville College

Eliza Brace of Sackville College died of 'shock from the sting of a wasp.' Michael Leppard commented: 'The first to be buried from the College was **Elizabeth Gee, 23 January 1622**. Most of the books get this wrong'. *East Grinstead Society Bulletin* 003 January 1970

Among the records of Sackville College, East Grinstead (in the County Record Office at Lewes) Michael Leppard found a certificate made on 6 September 1669 by Stephen Head, parish clerk, and witnessed by Daniel Cripps, from the Register of the Burials

The first is for **Thomas Maynard 'of the Colledge', dated 20 Jan.1637**

and the second is for **William Vargis 'Warden of Sackful Colledge' dated 6 April 1646.**

The entry of Maynard's burial survives (p. 184), though there it is given as 24 January 1637, and without mention of the College, but Vargis's does not, as 1646 is one of the years whose burial entries perished.

(From the Notes of Michael J. Leppard.)

Feasting.

One descendant of the Founder, Robert Sackville, 2nd Earl of Dorset, was Charles, 6th Earl of Dorset, (1643-1706). The Warden has a glass lantern slide with his image.

In 1691 over 6 months at Knole, his table boasted: '85 gallons of sherry, 72 gallons of Canary, 63 gallons of White Port, and 425 gallons of Red Port. On one day in **September 1696** the household accounts itemised: 40 stones of beef, 1 mutton, 1 goose, 30 chickens, 2 pigs, 2 pheasants, 1 tongue, 1 partridge, 1 calf's head, 105 fresh herring, oysters...and so on'.

(Robert Sackville-West, *Inheritance*, p.79)

Then in the time of **Warden John Mason Neale, 1846-66**, a parade and lunch took place in 1865 to raise money for the Convent for the Society of St Margaret, the Anglican sisterhood of nursing nuns founded by him in 1854.

On St Margaret's Day, 20 July 1865

'We had intended to go through the fields, but the townspeople were so horribly disappointed that we have engaged...to go through the town. It shows how completely we can trust them, that I have not the least anxiety in letting some 30 girls and the Sisters do this.'

In the quadrangle of Sackville College about 200 people formed the procession. They were members of the choir, clergy and the Sisters, with other clergy from London. The procession moved down the High Street singing. At the site of the Convent, Neale himself blessed the foundation stone and his friend, the Rev'd Eugene Popoff, chaplain to the Russian embassy, did so according to the eastern rite. The bells of the parish church rang a peal, because at last the Vicar, the Rev'd John Peat, was friendly to Neale, unlike his predecessor, the Rev'd J. Netherton Harward. Neale wrote to a friend that the day was 'the most brilliant and uninterrupted success...the procession was nearly a quarter of a mile long and so very beautiful. We sat down 360 to luncheon. The collection amounted to £713'.

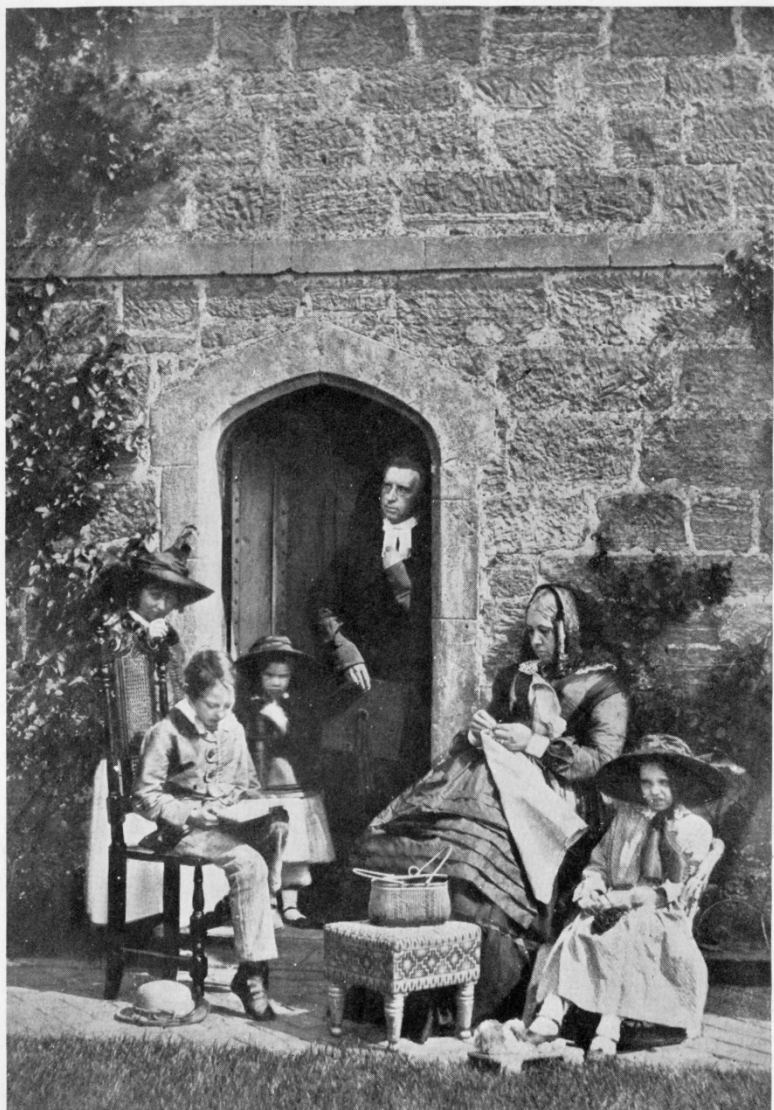
So feasting is part of traditions linked to Sackville College.

Cornelius Vincent Neale, (1846-1927), son of John Mason Neale

He was born on Good Friday, 10 April 1846, in Reigate, just weeks before the Rev'd John Mason Neale took up the post of Warden of Sackville College in May 1846.

Cornelius Vincent was the second child and only son of John Mason Neale and Sarah Norman Neale (née Webster).

We catch glimpses of the boy in his Father's letters and we have one photograph of the family at Sackville College, as well as a few recollections that Vincent gave in later life.



A FAMILY GROUP AT SACKVILLE COLLEGE
(From a photograph taken in 1855)

[Frontispiece

One of Vincent Neale's earliest recollections was that of 'lying awake at night and seeing the room lit up fitfully by flames of the bonfire, lighted in the College field on the occasion of what were called the 'no popery' riots ...I was too young and possibly too ill to have any fear of the noise and lights.' This was in 1851, when he was about 5 years old. The children were known to be ill at the time, which angered and upset their father greatly.¹

Mary Lawson Neale wrote that in 1852, aged 6, Cornelius Vincent became dangerously ill and 'was placed under homeopathic treatment, at his father's strong wish. The boy and his mother were staying with Mrs Neale senior, a sufficiently uncomfortable arrangement, as she herself was strongly opposed to homeopathy. The treatment was successful.'

On December 7, Neale wrote 'Corny, thank God, is going on very favourably: our accounts today were the best we have had.'

Neale wrote to his wife on Christmas Day 1852 'A great many happy Christmases to you, and no more away from me.'

The photograph of the family group in 1855 shows (I think) (I to r): Sarah Agnes, standing, Cornelius Vincent, seated, possibly Katherine Ermenild next to her Father, Mrs Neale, seated and possibly Mary Sackville beside her. The youngest, Margaret Isobel, is not there.

Sackville College, undated.

'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 the Hall and drank your health at dinner. We had the pig for dinner, but he was very fat and the College people did not like him much. So I made the following rhyme:

¹ St Margaret's Half-Yearly Chronicle, 20 July 1918, Vol V, part 2, USA. Cited by AG Lough, *John Mason Neale: Priest Extraordinary* (Devon, 1976), 85.

Master Wren grunted when he beheld the pig. Master Martin had a part in making him so big.

Master Everest he could never rest till he tasted it. Master Trice was too nice to devour a bit.

Give my love to Aunties and Grandma, your loving papa, JM Neale’.

Mary Lawson commented that this was the only letter which her brother could give her for the edition of their Father’s letters. ‘By an unfortunate accident, all his Father’s letters, including many written to him when he was at Rugby and Cambridge, have perished, whilst this trifle, indelibly printed on the child’s memory, remains’.

Vincent Neale wrote a little about his father’s time at Sackville College.

‘In the early days, my father kept the church hours: Terce, Sext, Nones. The inmates were not required to attend, but the family and such servants as could be spared from household work attended, we children not finding these services burdensome, but to run into the Chapel was ...a relief from lessons.’

In defence of his father’s changes to the customs for funerals of residents, Vincent Neale wrote that at St Swithun’s church: ‘the custom was to have men carrying the coffin underneath a black pall that reached below their knees, staggering along in the dark, like a monstrous twelve-legged centipede.’

Mary Lawson remembered that a resident, Master Everest, ‘was a great friend of the Neale children. He had been a cricketer in his youth and despite being very lame, gave my brother, Cornelius, his first cricket lessons. When the old man’s turn to go in came, I used to stand beside him and make his runs for him, he being nearly eighty and I about four or five.’

Writing about her Father’s carols, Mary commented: ‘My brother, Vincent Neale, who has been a resident of the United States for half his lifetime, writing of the popularity of the carols there, says: ‘*Good King Wenceslas* speedily crossed the ocean and was the favourite Christmas Carol at the Theological Seminary, Nashota, Wisconsin, in the early [eighteen] fifties, as I am informed by one who was there at the time.’

In John Mason Neale’s will, a clause stated that if his son should train to become a clergyman, he was to have the theological books, but if not, that they were to go to Hurstpierpoint College, one of the Woodard foundations. Vincent became a lawyer.

Cornelius Vincent Webster Neale was christened on 8 May 1846 in Reigate before the family came to Sackville College. He attended Rugby School until 1864, when he won a scholarship to Trinity Hall, Cambridge in 1865. He became an attorney-at-law in 1870. He married **Eliza Ann Parkin** in 1875, in Lewisham, 9 years after the death of his father. They emigrated to America in 1877, travelling on the ship City of Berlin. By 1880 he and his wife, Lizzie, were living in San Rafael, California, where he worked as a lawyer. They had one Chinese servant. It seems that there were no children of this marriage, so descendants of John Mason Neale have to be traced through the three daughters who had children, Agnes, who married Charles Phelps, Mary who married the Rev’d Robert Lawson, and Margaret, who married Alexander Sutherland-Graeme. (Katherine Ermenild became a Sister of the Society of St Margaret and did not have children). Vincent became an American citizen in 1888. He and his wife travelled to England in 1908, travelling from New York to Liverpool on board the ship Mauretania. (It is not clear whether this was a visit or a longer stay). He was certainly back in California by 1912, when he wrote letters from there. He died on 20 August 1927. He was buried in Mount Tamalpais Cemetery there.

Recently the Warden noticed a book on sale and bought it, to add to the collection of books by or about John Mason Neale for Sackville College. The title is: ***Letters of Historic Interest from Vincent, only son of Dr John Mason Neale, Hymnologist and historian, Cousin to Lord Alverstone, Lord Chief Justice of England, first***

published in book form by his Sister-in-Law, Mrs Sidney Oldall Addy. The publishers, Roffey and Clark, had a stationer's shop and printing works in Croydon (England).

The letters selected range from 1912-23. There is no mention of Sackville College, and only the slightest reference to his father. Although the letters are addressed to 'Dear Mary', this is not his sister, Mary, who married the Rev'd Lawson. He refers to 'my sister' publishing the edition of their Father's Letters. Instead, the lady is Mary, the wife of Sidney Oldall Addy and described as his sister-in-law. This Mary must be Mary Golden Parkin, who, in 1899, married Sidney Oldall Addy (1848-1933), an antiquary, writer and solicitor. She was probably the sister of Vincent's wife.

The *Letters* are an interesting collection of observations. On 15 July 1913 he noted: 'So another State has enfranchised its women- Illinois'.

On 5 April 1914 he wrote 'My sister brought out some years ago my father's *'Life and Letters'*, a sequel to the life by Mrs Towle, which many people thought contained too much Mrs Towle and too little Dr Neale'.

In 1915, the sinking of the ship SS Lusitania, due to unrestricted submarine warfare, resulted in horrific loss of civilian life, including many Americans. Vincent commented 'Our President's note on the Lusitania was as strong as any of us could expect: we all wish that Roosevelt had been at the helm, the Lusitania and other ships would not have been sunk...'

(He refers to Theodore Roosevelt, President 1901-9. Woodrow Wilson became President in 1913).

M. Lawson, *Letters of John Mason Neale, edited by his daughter* (London, 1910), pp. 95, 201, 202, 282.

<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Neale-2451>

Photographs



An early image of the Dining Hall, purchased by the Warden (date of photograph unknown), showing a stove in front of the screen and a linen or book press on the table on the left at the back.

Photographers

One of our Guides, Robin, has shared this

Those of you who have noticed this photograph in the Common Room may be interested to know a bit more about its photographer.



The Alms-house.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOSEPH CUNDALL.

HOW tranquil is the beauty of the place!
The air around this holy spot is calm,
And nought is felt of human whirl or strife.
Sure, he had noble thoughts and gentle heart,
Who rear'd this refuge for the aged poor.
Here, in a haven shelter'd from the storm,
The care-toss'd voyager through life's long sea,
At length can find a rest. Peace dwelleth here,
And quietude, an old man's happiness
When that his heart is right. Here may he sit
And bask his grey hairs in the summer's sun,
And listen to the humming of the bees,
And with a lowly and a thankful voice
Bless God for all the mercies he enjoys.
J. C.

The doorway to Sackville College, East Grinstead, founded A. D. 1616, by the Duke of Dorset, for the relief of forty-eight aged persons.



TAKEN on Collodion, August 25, 1855, 10 A. M. in clear sunshine;
Exposure twenty-eight seconds; developed with Pyrogallic acid.
Lens by Ross; focal length fifteen inches; diameter three inches; Diaphragm
five eighths of an inch.

A copy of the photograph is currently in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (The MET) in New York. It was taken in 1855 by Joseph Cundall who, together with Philip Henry Delamotte were commissioned to take photographs of Sackville College, to support the title deeds of the College.

Joseph Cundall also made portraits of the Warden of the College, the Reverend John Mason Neale (1818-1866), and members of his family. Both Cundall and Delamotte later featured their photographs of East Grinstead and Sackville College at various photographic exhibitions across the country.

Also in the MET is the covering page that accompanies the photograph which is equally interesting!!

For 1855 the quality of the photo is very good. In an enlargement you can make out the expression of the lady leaning out of the window!

(The child reading is presumably one of Neale's five children).

Trivia:

Sackville-Baggins

In *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, JRR Tolkien created relatives of Bilbo and Frodo Baggins called the **Sackville-Baggins** family. Recently a visitor asked if there is a connection between Sackville College and *The Lord of*

the Rings. Various websites suggest that the name ‘Baggins’ was a pun on ‘Sack’ and that with the hyphenated name of Sackville-Baggins, Tolkien was suggesting a more aristocratic branch of the family.

Group Visits

This year we have had visits from several groups including a History Seminar group, a WI, an NHS group, a Probus Club, a local History Society, a Conservation group and some Beaver Scouts. Groups can be up to 30, or just a few people. Group visits may be arranged outside the general opening times, and refreshments can be provided at a very reasonable charge. If you belong to a group or society, do consider asking them to arrange a tour of Sackville College. This all helps to bring in funds and to raise awareness of the College.

General Matters

Legacies to Sackville College

Leaving a legacy gift to Sackville College is easily arranged with your solicitor. There are 3 main types: residuary, pecuniary and specific gift (personal possession).

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. Grateful thanks go to those who have done this, for their support. Sackville College is receiving regular small donations this way.

Accommodation Availability

There are flats available at the College. If you know of anyone who may be eligible, please contact the Almoner at the College Office on 01342 323414 for more details.

Visits to Sackville College

The College is currently closed until mid June. It will be open on May Day. Opening times will be advertised next year. Private visits are possible but must be arranged in advance with the Office.

To arrange a Group Visit please call the Office.

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.

The newsletter can be downloaded from

https://sackvillecollege.org.uk/Files/Friends/Newsletters/Current_Newsletter.pdf

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

Sackville College Contacts

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 Mrs Alexandra Durrant	

Sackville College Office	Open Weekday mornings 9am-1pm	01342 323414 admin@sackvillecollege.org.uk
Almoner	Mrs Linda Bryant	01342 323414 almoner@sackvillecollege.org.uk
Maintenance	Mr Marcus Bryant	thepottingshed@sackvillecollege.org.uk
Chaplain		St Swithun's Church
Guides	Contact the Office - Mrs Linda Bryant	01342 323414
Friends' Secretaries & Newsletter Editors	Steve and Caroline Metcalfe	friends@sackvillecollege.org.uk

Important Dates for Your Diary 2023 (**Friends' Events**)

Saturday 19 th November 4 pm	Concert by Quorum	Tickets £10
Monday 4 th December 7:30 pm	Christmas Carols in the Chapel followed by Mulled Wine & Mince Pies	Tickets £10 – friends £8
Tuesday 5 th December 7:30 pm	Christmas Carols in the Chapel followed by Mulled Wine & Mince Pies	Tickets £10 – friends £8
Friday 8th December 3 pm	Carols for Friends followed by Mulled Wine & Mince Pies	Please let Linda know if you would like to attend
Monday 11 th December 7:30pm	Cantu Amici Concert in the Chapel followed by Mulled Wine & Mince Pies	Tickets £12 – friends £10

Other Events

- For Events run by The Bookshop at Sackville College see <https://www.eastgrinsteadbookshop.co.uk/events-2>