



QE(K)A

2016

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# ENVOY

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*Published by Queen Elizabeth (Kensington) Branch K.C.L.A.*

# EDITORIAL



Welcome to yet another edition of Envoy. I am forever being humbled and impressed to learn of the great things that our QEC students go on to achieve and the huge impact their work can have on people's lives. This year we read of Professor Colin Sibley's research on the placenta that can save would-be mothers from losing their babies, and Professor Jane Welsh's work on multiple sclerosis. We also continue with our history of the College in song, get an update on the College buildings and find out more about our spirited neighbours.

Many thanks to those who have contributed to Envoy - both in terms of input to the newsletter and financial donations to support production of the hard copies. It is good to know that Envoy is still appreciated!

We have just a couple of snippets of news from members but would like to hear more from you all. Please keep sending in any snippets or short articles on **any** topic that interests you.

*Lyn Embling* (nee Rigby)

(Physics, 1972-1978)

## CONTENTS

<b>Chairman's Report</b> - Paul Ogden	3
<b>QE(K)A Annual Reunion October 2015</b>	5
Reunion photographs	5
Address by Prof Colin Sibley	8
<b>Expensive Real Estate at QEC</b> - Sylvia Elliot	12
<b>On Mice and Multiple Sclerosis</b> - Professor Jane Welsh	15
<b>A Social History of Q.E.C. in Song</b> (continued) - T J Dillon.	20
<b>Bletchley Park</b> - Lyn Embling	27
<b>More Spirited Encounters</b> - Lyn Embling	31
<b>News from members</b>	33
<b>KCLA Report</b> - by Paul Ogden	34
<b>Obituaries</b>	35

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

*Paul Ogden*  
*Chemistry 1984-87*



I'm proud to say that the association had another successful year in 2015-16. This year's reunion speaker, Professor Colin Sibley (Biochemistry and Physiology, 1973-80), maintained our fantastic run of highly entertaining and informative presentations. His talk titled "The Placenta - Before and After Birth" described a much overlooked organ which has, of course, played a critical role in all of our lives.

As the QEC scarves and crests have very nearly sold out we are going to produce college coffee mugs for sale later this year.

This year's reunion, to be held as usual on the first Saturday of October, will feature a talk by Dr. Claire Thomas (Biochemistry, 1987). She has both a medical doctorate and a D.Phil. in Molecular Virology and has worked extensively in infectious diseases. Her talk will focus upon antibiotic resistance and the human microbiome.



Our secretary, **Rupal Kapadia**, has retired from the QE(K)A committee this year. We will miss her cheerful face and wish her good health and happiness for the future.

If anyone would like to volunteer for the post of secretary, please contact any member of committee.

# QE(K)A



## ANNUAL REUNION AND AGM

October 1<sup>st</sup> 2016.

King's College London, Strand Campus

Guest Speaker:

**Dr. Claire Thomas**

(QEC Biochemistry, 1984-87)

Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases

## “THE END OF THE LINE”

10.30	Tea/Coffee (Old Committee Room)
11.30	Guest Speaker
12.30	AGM
13.00	Buffet Lunch (River Room)
15.00+	Close

To book, please send a cheque for £30 per person, payable to  
‘Queen Elizabeth (Kensington) Branch KCLA’,  
to Membership Secretary, Mrs Rahda Robinson, 1 Ellington Street,  
London, N7 8PP

Please mention your name (including maiden name if applicable),  
course, and years at College.



**2015 Q&A  
Reunion**

**KCL Strand  
Campus**

**3rd October 2015**



*Photos courtesy  
Belinda Parham  
(left)*

**2015 GE(K)A  
Reunion**



**2015 Qe(K)A  
Reunion**



**QE(K)A Reunion October 2015 Address by  
Professor Colin Sibley.**

**THE PLACENTA, BEFORE AND AFTER BIRTH**



*Colin Sibley obtained both his first-class honours degree in Biochemistry and Physiology (1976) and his PhD (1980) from QEC. After a spell as a Postdoctoral Research Assistant at St George's Hospital Medical School he moved to Manchester where he has been based for most of the last 35 years. He is currently the Professor of Child Health and Physiology in the Maternal and Fetal Health Research Centre in the Institute of Human Development and Director of the Tommy's Charity, Maternal and Fetal*

*Health Research Centre (MFHRC) in Manchester. Among his many other awards, Colin was awarded the DSc degree of the University of Manchester in 2013 for his work on nutrient transport by the placenta in relation to fetal growth.*

Colin had promised us a light-hearted but informative talk about the placenta and he delivered just that from his opening words - apologising for the shameless "after birth" pun in his lecture title before going on to describe the average person's knowledge about the placenta being focused upon it being eaten, used as a face cream or used as a garden fertiliser.

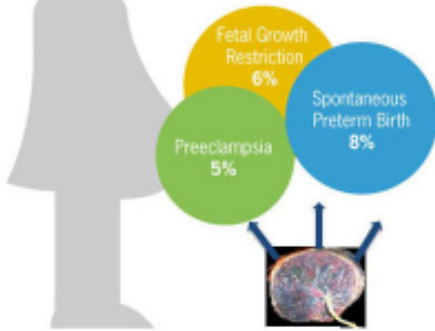


### **Pregnancy Problems**

On a more serious note Colin described the scale of pregnancy related problems around the world with placental dysfunction related to many maternal



# Pregnancy Problems



Fetal Growth Restriction 6%  
Preeclampsia 5%  
Spontaneous Preterm Death 8%

**Placental dysfunction  
underlies these diseases**

**Pre-eclampsia is the major cause of maternal death worldwide  
(63,000 pa)**

**Fetal Growth Restriction increases risk of neonatal death 6x;  
1/200 pregnancies end in stillbirth**

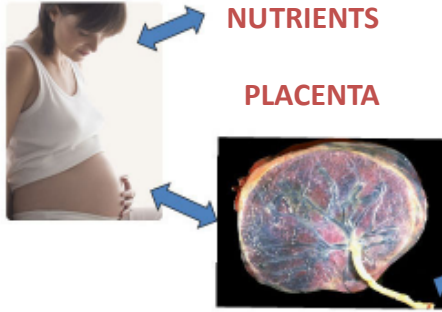
death, stillbirths and neonatal deaths. He also highlighted the risks later in life if a child is born unusually large or small, another area in which the placenta plays a crucial role.

The mission statement of the Manchester 'Tommy's' Maternal and Fetal Health Research Centre is to "*Find Solutions to Pregnancy Problems by Translating Understanding of the Placenta into Improvements in Diagnosis and New Treatments*". This is precisely the task that Colin is dedicated to. Interestingly by adopting Manchester as his home he now works under the vice-chancellorship of another notable QEC alumnus: Dame Nancy Rothwell.



## Strategies for Reducing Stillbirths

A key part of Colin's work has been to increase the understanding of the role of placental dysfunction in stillbirths caused by fetal growth restriction (FGR). These account for a significant number of stillbirths in the UK so the understanding of the processes involved and the development of techniques to identify and treat those at risk are keenly sought.



He described, with the aid of several micrographs, the physiology of the placenta and how this facilitates the supply of nutrients from the mother's blood to that of the fetus.



## Manchester Placenta Clinic

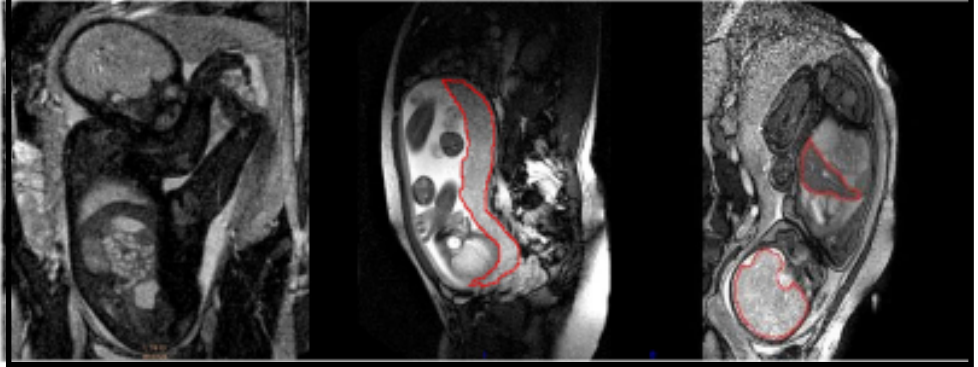
One of the most important aspects of Colin's work in Manchester is that it has enabled techniques to be moved from a laboratory setting into a patient-facing clinic environment. He described the team that he has established and the sort of work that they carry out involving the identification of at-risk pregnancies.

Several approaches have been used ranging from simple measurements of the shape and size of the placenta to the application of advanced MRI techniques to examine differences in how oxygen is handled in normal and dysfunctional organs.

## The Next Steps

Having identified those at risk from FGR there remains a major problem - there are no drugs presently in development aimed at treating it. Fortunately there is a commonly employed drug that does seem to help namely sildenafil

## *Searching for Better Biomarkers of Placental Dysfunction: Magnetic Resonance Imaging*



citrate, better known as Viagra. Colin and his collaborators have shown that there is a positive effect in mice so the aim now is to test it in a sample of pregnant women.

Work in this area has already started and Colin is hoping that there will be over one hundred women participating within two years.

With that optimistic view of the future concluded his lecture and took the opportunity to put up some old pictures of his good friends from his QEC days - Winston and Lynda Hutchinson.



*Reported by Paul Ogden*



Our thanks to Professor Sibley for a fascinating talk.



*Penthouse Apartment, Academy Gardens  
Photo © Rob Falconer, reproduced with his permission  
(Previously 4th and 5th West Queen Mary Hall)*

## **Expensive Real Estate at QEC**

**by Sylvia Elliott (Physics 1974)**

This is a follow up to my 2011 Envoy article regarding the luxury apartments fashioned from the QEC building in Kensington. Renamed Academy Gardens, it is still a highly exclusive residential development. Unbelievably, its penthouse was London's most expensive flat at the time, with an asking price of £30 million.

The penthouse was originally renovated from part of the Queen Mary Residence Hall. It has five bedrooms and occupies over 5,900 square feet of the 4th and 5th floors in QEC's southwest wing. Its reception room has a 37 foot high ceiling.

*“How do you change the lightbulb?” asks Henry.*

In November 2015, someone offered me a Wall Street Journal newspaper. To my astonishment, a photograph of that Academy Gardens penthouse was prominently displayed on page one of the WSJ 'Mansion' section. It was still for sale!

The WSJ article explained the chilling effect of the new 2014 stamp duty tax on expensive London property sales. The Brexit referendum this summer has added to estate agents' worries about slumping prices.

As predicted, the Academy Gardens penthouse was recently reduced in price. It is presently (August 2016) on the market for £26 million, with an additional stamp duty of £3 million. The amenities charge for this flat is approximately £70,000 annually.

In comparison, the 1972 QEC prospectus listed our Residence Hall fees as £44 per double room, £40 per single room, with a required deposit of £5.

The Academy Gardens apartment is no longer London's most expensive flat. That honor went to an ultra-luxurious penthouse at One Hyde Park which sold for £140 million in 2014.

London's most expensive available apartment is now a property in the iconic Admiralty Arch. It features 15,000 square feet with 12 bedrooms. It was listed for sale in July 2016 and is expected to fetch a record £150 million including a stamp duty of roughly £16 million. The remainder of the building is to be developed as a luxury hotel. However, several Parliamentary officials consider any non-governmental use to be a national security risk, and further debate is expected. (Admiralty Arch project: [www.admiraltyarch.co.uk](http://www.admiraltyarch.co.uk))

Further details of the 5 bedroomed penthouse apartment with its own gym and steam/sauna/massage rooms, 5 bathrooms, housekeepers flat, safe room and retinal entry system can be found in several entries on Rightmove and Zoopla, or in Sylvia Elliott's article in Envoy 2011 on [www.qeca.org.uk/Envoy\\_2011\\_200dpi.pdf](http://www.qeca.org.uk/Envoy_2011_200dpi.pdf).

*continued on page 19*

# QEC MEMORABILIA



## QEC SCARF

Pure wool scarf, double sided in the QEC and University of London colours.  
66 inches long by 9 inches wide.

Cost £25 plus p&p



## QEC SHIELD

QEC crest mounted on smart wooden wall plaque measuring about 6 inches wide and 7 inches high.

Cost £25 plus p&p

To Order, please contact Henry Embling, tel 01252 333977,  
email [hembling@cardinala.freeuk.com](mailto:hembling@cardinala.freeuk.com)

Cheques only to be made payable to:  
“Queen Elizabeth (Kensington) Branch KCLA”

# On Mice and Multiple Sclerosis

Professor Jane Welsh



If you had told me in 1976 when I finished a degree in Microbiology at QEC, that in 2016 I would find myself in the middle of Texas I don't think I would have believed it. But here I am. After the BSc, I stayed at QEC for a PhD with Dr. Alan Ebringer and then a postdoc at Kings College Hospital Liver Unit followed by post docs at Cambridge University. Colin Young another QEC-er and I got married in 1981 and we went to College Station, Texas in 1989 as refugees from the Thatcher regime.

Texas A&M\* is the state's first public institution of higher education and one of the largest universities in the US with 59,000 students. It was established in 1871 on a 5,200 acre site in the College Station, located about 90 miles north of Houston. Somewhat larger than QEC which had 1,000 students when I was there! However, QEC did have three bars (the best selection of malt whiskey!) back in the 1970s and alcohol is not allowed on campus at A&M apart from the university club. TAMU is a rich environment for interdisciplinary research and has allowed multiple collaborative projects to be developed.

In the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical sciences here at A&M I teach immunology, virology and neuroscience to graduate students. I also serve as associate department head for Veterinary Integrative Biosciences and assistant dean for graduate studies. Currently, I am chair of the Texas

\* *A&M:- Historically Agricultural and Mechanical, now just known as A&M*



*Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Building  
Texas A&M University*

A&M Institute for Neuroscience. Our research focuses on how viral infections induce autoimmunity and neurological diseases.

For our research we use the Theiler's virus model in mice to investigate the pathogenesis of epilepsy and multiple sclerosis. Multiple sclerosis is the most common demyelinating diseases of the central nervous system with an incidence of 1/2000 in the USA although it appears to be on the increase with the latest reports suggesting the incidence is more like 1/1000. Like

other autoimmune diseases it is more common in women (2 women affected: 1 man) although there appears to be an increase in female preponderance. Risk factors for MS are certain immune response genes (MHC HLA-DR, IL2R and IL7R), living in temperate climates, smoking and suffering from childhood illness at later ages. People that develop symptomatic Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) infections later (infectious mononucleosis or glandular fever) are at higher risk of developing MS. Finally, stressful life events have been implicated in the development of MS and other autoimmune diseases.

Many infectious agents have been associated with MS including herpes virus simplex, human herpes virus 6, EBV, varicella zoster (chicken pox/shingles). It is notable that these viruses are herpes virus able to establish latent persistent infections, often in the nervous system. Interestingly, one of the treatments for MS is interferon beta which has immunomodulatory properties but is also an antiviral agent and so it may be mediating its therapeutic effects by restricting viral replication. In animals, demyelinating MS-like disease only develops following viral infections: visna virus in Icelandic sheep; canine distemper virus in dogs; and experimentally Semliki forest virus, herpes sim-



plex virus, mouse hepatitis virus and Theiler's virus in mice. For all these reasons, it makes sense to examine the pathogenesis of MS using a viral infection model.

I started work with Theiler's virus in Dr. Tony Nash's lab in the Department of Pathology Cambridge University in 1985. We established the role of the immune response to Theiler's virus in the demyelinating process and then I decided to continue working in this area when we moved to Texas. The first project undertaken was the investigation of the role of the blood-brain barrier in Theiler's virus infection. One of the first signs of an MS flare is increased permeability of the blood-brain barrier so we studied the effect of viral infection of the cerebro-vascular endothelial cells. We found marked differences in endothelial cells from strains of mice that are susceptible to MS-like disease compared to endothelial cells from resistant strains of mice.

We have also studied how stress affects disease outcome, since stressful life events are thought to precipitate MS and have been implicated in other autoimmune diseases. This project came about because of our annual English tea with the local MS patients' support group. I was horrified to discover people drank iced tea here so decided to bring some semblance of civilization to this God-forsaken country (as my mother calls it), and insisted on hot tea in a teapot. During one of our meetings, the patients said that when they were stressed their symptoms get worse. So we decided to examine how stress could exacerbate MS-like disease in Theiler's virus infected mice. We observed that stress prior to infection with Theiler's virus, suppresses



*Brazos Valley Multiple Sclerosis Support Group meeting with MS researchers at the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical sciences – note the teapot*

the immune system allowing increased levels of virus to establish a persist infection in the central nervous system and later more severe demyelinating disease. This research maybe relevant for MS since a stressful life event coupled with a viral infection in a genetically susceptible individual, may provide the perfect storm allowing a pathogenic virus to gain access to the central nervous system and trigger MS.

Theiler's virus infection is an excellent model for testing potential therapies for MS and epilepsy treatment. We have found estrogens and interferons to be effective in ameliorating demyelinating disease.

More recently we have been working on how Theiler's virus induced epilepsy and developing peptide therapies to treat mice. We have also been collaborating with the veterinary neurologists examining the role of the immune system in naturally occurring spinal cord injury in dogs in the clinic.

Perhaps one of the best events that happened when we came to USA was the miraculous appearance of James and Robert (born 1990, 1992). Having been diagnosed with endometriosis in 1985, this was a wonderful surprise for us. Anyone considering moving to the USA should bear in mind that although you may have established your belief system and values, it is very difficult exposing your children to this strange society and you will be confronted by unimaginable situations. For example the boys came home in tears saying:

"Mummy we are going to hell (pronounced hail in Texas) because we don't go to church!" and

"Mummy can I go on a deer hunt with my friend?" (James aged 10).



*Neuroscience PhD students  
enjoying typical English  
Christmas dinner at our house*

On the plus side there is much more money for research and opportunities abound. However, the free exchange of scientific ideas is much healthier in the UK.



Any old QEC-ers are very welcome to come and visit us and we can show you some of the hidden delights of the Lone Star state!

*Spring Flowers in  
Texas*

### **Expensive Real Estate at QEC** *continued from page 13*

Academy Gardens has its address as Duchess of Bedford Walk, which sounds somewhat grander than the Camden Hill Road where we lived at QEC. Sixty six new units were developed in the College block in 2004 and sold as ‘bare shells’ ranging from £0.5m to £5m, although some units were subsequently merged to provide larger apartments. Zoopla estimates current prices of the apartments to be in the range of

£1,432k to 1,977k	1 bedroom
£2,604k to £2,921k	2 bedrooms
£3,239k to £13,438k	3 bedrooms
£7,621k to £21,540k	4 bedrooms
and £17,283k	5 bedrooms

The latter seems to be in what was previously the food science department, with the beautiful bay window overlooking the garden. In September 2013 it was listed for rent at £43,333 per month.

Some stunning images and floorplans can be found under the Rightmove and Zoopla websites. Information for some of the apartments that are not currently on the market can still be found under Zoopla’s Sold Prices section.

*Last year we rediscovered Part 1 of a 1970 article by Miss T J Dillon recounting the history of the College as reflected in songs sung at the Social Performances. We left our College Canaries singing away in wartime Cardiff. Now read on to find out what they sang on returning to a war-damaged KCHSS.*



Extracted from QEC Magazine No 1, 1970.



## *A Social History of Q.E.C. in Song*

### **Part 2**

After one year it was decided that the College should move back to London but when the first Council Meeting coincided with the beginning of the blitz and the Council members had to move into the basement, the plans were changed; the vans and crates that we had packed with apparatus were given an order to go into reverse. After a few days of uncertainty about where we could go we arrived in Leicester and repeated the settling down process, and we eventually sang:

(CORNSILK)

*It was all for the beicester(er) when they let us come to Leicester  
When we moved back from the weicest(er) when the bombs began;  
In the race to find a place we were the also-ran.  
Where to go we didn't know.  
It will be beicester(er) to leave the reicester(er)  
Till we write our thanks to Leicester  
When we're safely back in London - and at King's.*



It is good to know that a happy liaison has gone on ever since between the two Universities and many friendships have continued. It took quite a long time to adjust ourselves to the new life, but after a time our 'Show habit' went on and we sang first in the College Hall and then in



(WE WON'T KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING)

*In thirty nine to Cardiff we were sent to win the war  
In forty Leicester took us in - just for a year or more .  
By Forty-one and Forty-two, we felt we ought to strive  
To get back home in Forty-three - or Forty-four? or Five?  
We won't know when we're going until we're there  
with lots and lots of rumours in the air.  
We've heard somebody say, the permit's on the way;  
They put off to tomorrow what they ought to do today.  
We wonder when they'll really start repairs  
on the blasted labs, the library and the stairs.  
does anybody know? - So we'll sing until we go,  
That we won't know when we're going until we're there.*

What really worried us was the following:

*Now Bedford's back in Regent's Park and King's is in the Strand,  
Then L.S.E., the Institute of Education, AND  
Now half U.C. is back again we're beaten by a year -  
So, Oh! King's Household, WHEN ARE WE GOING FROM HERE?*

We got back to the ruins with holes in the walls, an iron staircase on to the roof and a climb through the window to Biology, a temporary 'research hut' in the quad (which stood for 20 years), but things were gradually being built up.



*Bomb damage to  
KCHSS*

(UNKNOWN)

*Through the years we hoped to hear  
Tales of reconstruction  
When shall we new buildings see?  
Goodness knows when that will be.  
Round the hut we're clearing up  
Signs of bomb destruction.*

Then with a change of rhythm;

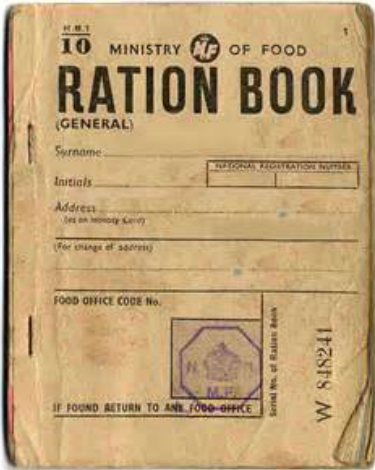
*We hope for the future and we try not to care  
When its raining on the staircase which is in the open air.  
We hope for an Entrance and we hope for a Hall,  
We hope for the Union Room we've never had at all.*

There were some noticeable changes and one was the increase of married women on the staff so they sang:

(IT'S NICE TO HAVE A MAN ABOUT THE HOUSE)

*Of our matrimonial status we are proud  
And a slight superiority we're allowed  
in a college such as this is  
It is done to be a Mrs.  
Where the married staff is noted for its nouse  
It's so nice to have a man about the  
house  
If our spinster colleagues envy us a lot  
They've a certain independence we've  
not got,  
But we never would change places,  
We shall keep our airs and graces  
And the double lives we're leading with  
our spouse,  
It's so nice to have a man about the  
house.*







There seemed to have been a lot of preoccupation with food and rations so we sang a quartette:

(LOVE IS MEANT TO MAKE US GLAD)

*Milk is meant to make us fat -*

*Hey, jolly, jolly, jolly little calorie.*

*Each department teaches that*

*Hey, jolly, jolly, jolly little calorie.*

*In finals and in terminals*

*There's sure to be a question*

*On Milk or the digestion,*

*Which we may or we may not nonny, nonny know ... or we MAY.*

*For in Hygiene and Household Arts, Biology or Bac,*

*Bacteriology, Chemmy, Physiology,*

*They ALL go jolly, They ALL go jolly.*

*They ALL go jolly when they see a glass of MILK.*



But there were good times coming and we could sing:

*We once were the Kings where they learnt about the things*

*And the answer we had waited for had come.*

*So though they oughter, call it something shorter,*

*Now we've got a Charter and new name and all.*

And there was a greetings chorus:

(GOOD ELIZABETHANS)

*Let's all be good Elizabethans,*

*Let's all be good Elizabethans,*

*Time has come to do*

*What was overdue*

*Start some courses new*

*Change the name and start again.*



And we added a sentimental song which ended with the verse

(MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I'M A LONDONER)

*How do all the newer Universities  
Compare with London Town?  
Maybe they prefer their gaily covered hoods  
To our sombre ones of yellow and brown.  
It's sometimes said that the Older Universities  
On London may look down  
Still we're rather pleased that we're Londoners  
And wear the London Gown.*

There should be songs of Praise for the magnificent buildings that have grown up in the last few years, the laboratories, the dining rooms as well as the student amenities on a scale that was not thought of in those early days, so to finish on an up-to date (ie 1970) note there could be a new edition of 'Land of Hope and Glory' :

*They're our Hope and Glory  
Honour of the U.G.C.  
How well they control the  
Q.E.C. £.s.d.*

*(Ya, Ya, Ya.)*

*Tighter still and tighter  
Does their budgeting get  
Yearly grants grow lighter  
They may grow TIGHTIER yet*

*(Ta, Ra, ra.)*

*Yearly grants grow lighter  
They may grow TIGHTIER yet*



*We would be very interested to hear from anyone with memories of the effects of wartime rationing. Please contact the editor, Lyn Embling*



## **BLETCHLEY PARK**

Continuing with our WW2 theme, we sometimes hear of the activities of some of our earlier alumni who may have been involved in wartime intelligence. We recently visited Bletchley Park, home of the Government Code and Cypher School who enabled the Allied forces to decipher the military codes and ciphers that secured enemy communications and produced vital intelligence in advance of military operations. Previously Britain's 'best kept secret', Bletchley is now open to the public as a heritage site to preserve the crucial story of the Codebreakers during WW2.

Enemy communications were scrambled using complex coding machines such as the Lorenz cipher and Enigma machines. The latter offered 159 million million different settings, changed daily, that could only be deciphered using another Enigma machine set with the correct codes. A complex electro-mechanical machine, the Bombe, was developed by Alan Turing and Gordon Welchman to run through the billions of possible settings to identify the codes required to decipher the intercepted Enigma messages. The Lorenz cipher

needed a different approach; for this the first computer, Colossus, was developed. These machines represented the birth of the computer age.

Bletchley Park comprises the grounds of a mansion house near Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire. The house is set beside a picturesque duck pond and was designed in an intriguing hotchpotch of several different architectural styles. The entrance door is guarded by two griffins that reminded me of our own mascot, Greg the Griffin.



The mansion houses several exhibits from the WW2 period. Another exhibit shows key scenes from the recent film *The Imitation Game*, starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Keira Knightley, that depicted the life of Alan Turing, the genius who invented the Bombe.

The life and works of Alan Turing are also exhibited in the main museum building. Although historians assess that Turing's genius may have shortened the war by around two years, saving 14 million lives, he died in shame by his own hand due to his homosexual preferences. At least there is now a statue in his honour.

Large pre-fabricated wooden huts were set up on the lawns of the park for the cryptologists to work in. These now contain recreations of the offices and



*Alan Turing Statue*



*The Turing Bombe Rebuild Project*

various interactive exhibitions to tease the minds of children and adults alike (we were still puzzling over them on the journey home!) Hut 11 provides a noisy atmospheric exhibition of the Turing-Welchman Bombe machines giving voice to the women who worked the machines in the Hut they dubbed the "Hell-Hole".

Other exhibitions include a comprehensive display of Enigma machines, the world's only fully-operational Bombe rebuild, the breaking of the Lorenz cypher, a Home Front exhibition of how people lived in WW2, messenger pigeons and, in the garages, WW2 vehicles.

The National Radio Centre that traces the development of radio communications is also located at Bletchley but is not always open to the public as it is manned by volunteers.

Bletchley certainly provided an interesting day out with plenty to see and plenty of food for thought. It was far more extensive than I had expected. Visitors could also choose to take advantage of a tour guide who provides

added interest with additional anecdotes. However, those who are less steady on their feet need to beware as although there are plenty of seats, these are not necessarily in the places where the tour guide stops so there can be quite a bit of standing around. The grounds are wheelchair friendly.

There is a cafeteria near the main entrance and a separate restaurant close to the mansion. There is also a shop packed with interesting books and puzzles as well as the inevitable souvenirs.

The National Museum of Computing (NMC) is next door to Bletchley Park but has its own entrance and admission fees. It traces the history of computing from Colossus to modern day. Although we did not have time to explore this museum, we have been told by friends with computer interests that it is well worth a visit. I'm not sure that I want to go and see the machines that I have used in my lifetime being relegated to exhibits in a museum - but I would be very interested to hear from anyone else who has visited there!

*Lyn Embling, Editor*

## **TOP SECRET MACHINE SOLD ON EBAY**

The Guardian, 29 May 2016, reported on a dusty old gadget that had been stored under a pile of rubbish in an Essex woman's garden shed and was sold off on e-bay for £9.50 as a telegram machine. The purchaser was an eagle-eyed volunteer from the National Museum of Computing who recognised it as a very rare military issue Lorenz teleprinter.

NMC are trying to refurbish the machine but are missing a drive motor - they are asking people to search their garden sheds for something that looks like a small rugby ball with spindles sticking out of the ends.

# More Spirited

# Encounters



Following Richard Boutland's article in Envoy 2015 reporting a sighting of a ghost in the QEC hall of residence one night in 1984, I invited comments from other readers. As no one else has written in, I tried to see if there were reports of any other Ghosts in the vicinity. A search on Google returned plenty of entries for '*Kensington Ghosts*' - but they all seemed to relate to a rock band!

Finally, an old book in a second hand shop yielded up some gems. Rachel Ferguson's book '*Passionate Kensington*' (1939) describes all aspects of living in Kensington, and draws on a book '*Ghosts of London*' by Elliot O'Donnell to report sightings of ghosts:

A ghost, thought to be that of Lord Holland, usually emerges at the stroke of midnight from behind a secret door in the 'Gilt Room' at Holland House. As Lord Holland was executed in 1649 for trying to restore Charles 1st to the throne, the ghost carries its grinning head under one arm.

The basement of a house in South Kensington is haunted by a man in white with a 'deathlike face and long beard'. There are also sounds of objects being flung down in the kitchen. The ghost is thought to be that of a butler who committed suicide in the house.

A house in Earl's Court Road is afflicted with a 'semi-human' apparition that attempted to strangle living beings.

Two adjoining houses in Scarsdale Villas are infested with the ghost of a convict.

A man who had been dining in Phillimore Gardens was walking home between 11pm and midnight. He saw a man ahead of him unlock the door of a house and enter it. The man had ‘a face like a corpse’. The diner returned to the house the next day and knocked on the door. The lady who answered the door broke into tears and told him that her lodger who had had rooms in the house for years had been visiting Monte Carlo. A wire had arrived that morning to say he had shot himself at 11.45pm the previous night - just the time the diner-out had seen the dead man enter the house.

The authoress herself lived in Phillimore Terrace. People living in the house had experienced various minor unexplained phenomena including being followed by footsteps. Three members of the family had heard a voice impersonating other members of the household who were subsequently found to be elsewhere in the house.

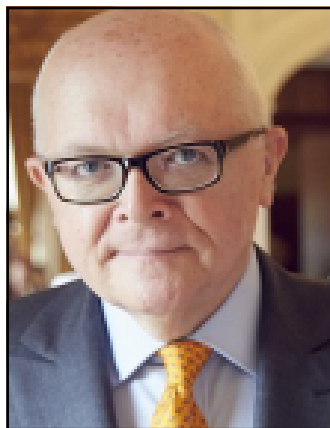
A lady living in a house in Tregunter Road was writing letters in the dining room with her back to the fireplace. She happened to look up into a mirror and saw a man standing by the fireplace. When she turned round he was not there. The house had formerly been occupied by a sculptor who shot himself on the very spot where she had seen him.

Although the book, ‘Passionate Kensington’ contains all kinds of snippets and opinions about Kensington and its residents, I could find no reference at all to our own esteemed establishment. However, it does list some other famous residents who were our near neighbours:

Baroness Orczy	2 Phillimore Terrace	Wrote <i>The Scarlet Pimpernel</i>
Ellen Terry	Little Holland House	Famous Stage actress
Kate Terry	Moray Lodge, Campden Hill	Stage Actress Sister to Ellen Terry
Isidore de Lara	13 Pembroke Gardens	Composer and singer Wrote opera <i>Messalina</i>
Sir William LLewellyn	Little Blundell House Campden Hill	Artist
Sir Henry Newbolt	Campden Hill Road	Poet, Novelist, Historian



# NEWS FROM MEMBERS



Congratulations to **Brian O'Sullivan** (QEC Physics 1972-75) who completed his PhD in Financial History last year. His thesis was entitled "The Transformation of Merchant Banking, 1914 to 1939". It dealt with the impact on the British merchant banking sector of the harsh economic climate of the interwar period. Since merchant banks experienced a high failure rate during this period, a considerable effort was made to recover the histories of many long-forgotten firms to obtain a fuller picture of this once important sector. The transformation of merchant banking from a potentially risky, capital intensive activity to a relatively low risk, advisory business culminated in the

mid-1990s, but had its origins in the interwar years.

Brian undertook his research in his spare time, studying at Birkbeck, University of London. In May this year, he presented his findings at the annual conference of the Association of Business Historians in Berlin. While he continues to work full-time in the City, he is undertaking new research and is scheduled to present a paper to the Centre for Financial History at the University of Cambridge next spring. He has also been appointed a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Contemporary British History at King's College, London. Brian has therefore completed his own transformation from Physics Graduate to Financial Historian.



## **Mark Leitch**

(QEC Physics, 1971-75) performing Beethoven's 3rd Piano Concerto Opus 37 in C minor at a concert with the Bristol Players' Orchestra at Red Maid's School, Bristol on 19 June 2016. Mark had previously performed Mozart's Piano Concerto no 24 in C minor, K491, with the same orchestra.

# KCLA Report

2015-16

by Paul Ogden

QE(K)A is a branch of the King's College London Alumni Association (KCLA) which is the independent body representing all alumni and former staff of King's and the colleges with which it has merged. All QEC graduates are automatically members of KCLA.

Our association has a seat on the KCLA council and we endeavour to always have representation at their meetings and events.

QE(K)A members benefit in two ways from our relationship with KCLA:

- We receive a small annual grant from KCLA which is used to print and distribute Envoy and to maintain the website.
- All QE(K)A members are invited to attend the events organised by both KCLA and those run by the college itself.

The annual calendar of events includes:

- KCLA Games - The annual contest between sporting alumni and current King's students. The event has grown considerably in recent years and attracts some 400 sportsmen and women, together with a large number of spectators. This event sometimes clashes with the QE(K)A reunion but this year will be held a week later on 8th October 2016.
- KCLA Sports Dinner - The Sports Dinner is held on the evening before the KCLA Games. It is designed to cater for all alumni who played any sport at King's, Guy's, St Thomas' or any institution with which King's has merged. This year it is planned to be held at the Oval on 7th October 2016.

- Annual Dinner and AGM - will take place in the House of Lords on 4th November 2016, it will be preceded by the Annual General Meeting of the KCLA.
- Duel Day - held in late March it commemorates the Duel fought between the Duke of Wellington and the Earl of Winchilsea over the founding of King's and Wellington's support of democratic rights for Irish Catholics, Duel Day is a worldwide event celebrated by branches of our King's College London Alumni.
- KCLA Address - an early spring speech given by an eminent and prominent member of KCLA to an open audience, on a serious topic of major current interest.
- Alumni Weekend - Originally initiated in 2003 to mark the 175th anniversary of the founding of King's, this extensive mid-summer programme comprises a rich selection of internal and external events designed to appeal to people of all ages regardless of their subject of graduation. In 2016 the events focused on Shakespeare to tie in with the commemorations of 400 years since his death. Next year's details are yet to be announced.

On top of these annual events KCLA also organise several one-off events during the year. Full details of all of these may be found at

<http://alumni.kcl.ac.uk/alumni-community/alumni-events>

or [www.kcla.co.uk](http://www.kcla.co.uk) .

## OBITUARIES



**Chris Basista**

*Biology 1974-77*

died Nov 2015

**Dr Edmund Lisher**

*Undergraduate & PhD 1965-71*

died November 2015

*If you would like to share your memories in tribute to any QE(K)A friend who has passed way, please write to the Editor.*

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