

## Autumn Newsletter - September 2020



**There is still plenty of colour to be seen in the College Gardens**



Welcome to our new residents, Theresa and Jill. Also, Ellie will be moving in on 1<sup>st</sup> October we hope you will all be happy here at the College.

Under normal circumstances, there are various groups and events happening which allows us to get to know each other, but I am sure we will all meet in passing and introduce ourselves!

### **A little bit of history of The Manor Farm, Froxfield, Judith G writes:**

John Redman and his wife, Eliza Neate married on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 1849, the Manor House was built for them. The second son, Thomas, sadly died young, aged 55. He married Margaret Kelly in 1877, whose mother lived at the College and was a clergy widow. The eldest son, James, had taken The Manor, Winterbourne Bassett and was well established there. The Froxfield Manor was only home to the Redmans for about 50 years.

My Stepmother was the granddaughter of James Redman and I spent many happy holidays at the Manor, Winterbourne Bassett. There was a lovely walled garden and a small lake with an island. I think the productive garden provided the whole village with food! Sam Farmer, who lived in Little Bedwyn, was a relation. Mr Farmer, with Lord Long, was a Trustee of the College.



**The Manor House, circa 1960**



**Sam Farmer**



**Froxfield Village Centre, circa 1900**

## **OLD ACQUAINTANCES AND MUSKETS** by Charlie Clarke (a College Resident)

'Ben Doyle?' Claire plopped down into the kitchen chair, almost dropping the tea towel as she grabbed the telephone receiver cradled between neck and chin. 'Yes, of course I remember you.'

Ben's deep voice sailed down the wire, 'I was sorry to hear about David, It must have been a shock...'

It took Claire a second to notice she was gripping the receiver so tightly her knuckles were mushroom-white.

'Yes,' she mumbled, watching Tibbles shimmy in through the cat flap.

'I hope you don't mind my calling you, Claire, but well...we've known each other for about twelve years haven't we?'

'I guess so.' If you can count seeing each other about six times a year at Civil War re-enactment shows, she thought, tweaking the tea towel. 'How did you know my telephone number?'

'Dawn gave it to me.'

That figures, Claire mused, Dawn had cajoled her into several 'invited a few friends around, come and join us,' dinners, where there was always one spare male.

'It's just that I recently moved to Oxfordshire. It's all new and to be honest I was feeling a bit low with the weekend looming,' he continued.

Claire could sympathise. She knew what Ben meant. During the week, she was too busy working and cleaning the house to dwell on her empty life.

Tibbles sauntered over and head butted Claire's leg before jumping onto her lap.

'Are you still there, Claire?'

She cleared her throat. 'Yes, sorry, I'm trying to extricate my cat's muddy paws from what was a clean tea towel.'

Ben's answering chuckle surprised her. She'd only ever seen his serious side when he'd been checking the powder for his musket was dry and ensuring the crowds kept a safe distance from the plethora of old firearms and weapons.

There had never been any socialising with Ben or anyone else after the shows. David refused to stay for the evening barbecues. Singing around the campfires, sounded fun, but David insisted he had to get home, where he'd spend until the early hours of the morning on the Internet.

Ben cut into her bleak thoughts.

'Could we meet up do you think?'

'We could,' she said, her own voice startling her with its timbre of daring. 'The local amateur drama group are staging a production of Gilbert and Sullivan's Mikado this weekend, I don't suppose...'

'Sounds great I enjoy a good musical.'

Minutes later she was listening to Ben scrabbling for a pen and pad and on his 'ready' she gave him her address. In between dodging Tibbles's restless tail waving she jotted down his address and telephone number.

Replacing the receiver her heart was hammering and her mouth dry.

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'You're on your own this evening, Tibbles, I'm going out,' said Claire running the hairbrush through her blonde bob. Leaning towards the mirror, she smoothed on a mix of dusky pink and red lipstick.

Tibbles sat on the bedroom carpet, his back to her, ears laid flat.

The doorbell rang. Claire jumped up, jammed the lipsticks into her handbag and ran down the stairs.

Taking a deep breath, she calmly opened the front door.

Ben's cheeks dimpled as he smiled.

'Hi!' he said brightly, dry-washing his slim hands. 'Hope I'm not too early.'

Claire assured him she was ready.

He leaned forward, bussing her cheeks French style – the way they always greeted each other at the re-enactment shows.

As Ben drove his Audi down the street past shuttered shops and busy restaurants, they talked about the people they both knew. Since David had left her for Angela, she hadn't wanted to go to any re-enactment shows.

By the time they'd reached the theatre car park, she had all the up-to-date news; except what shows David had gone to, she thought, pushing down the desire to ask if David was still with Angela. Had the affair petered out, she wondered.

'Are you okay?' asked Ben, an arm looped over the steering wheel.

She stopped biting her lip. 'Sorry...I was just wondering if Angela...'

Outside the warm bubble of the car interior, chatter from the arriving audience, bleeps of central locking doors sprang through the June evening air, up and over the Victorian village hall and profusion of trees surrounding the tarmacked car-park sentinel-like.

'David and Angela split up months ago.' She watched a red car swing into the next parking space, her emotions rioting. 'You didn't know, did you?' She shook her head, not trusting her voice. 'That's why I called you. I was sure you two were finished.'

'We were, we are,' she said, looking at the new handbag in her lap. Oh damn, I can't cry, not here, not now. She swallowed. So David hadn't even called her despite his affair having ended months ago. He was probably too busy calling up Facebook and dating someone else he'd met through the Internet, she silently reasoned.

And she knew, in one flashbulb moment, David wasn't right for her. With fresh clarity, she recognised their incompatibility – she liked socialising with friends, while he 'talked' to friends through Facebook and chat rooms.

'There's no pressure, Claire. You're free to do as you choose. If you want me to take you home and forget I ever called you...'

She looked up. 'Be a pity to miss a good show.'

THE END

## From The Chaplain

Dear All

I can hardly believe that nearly three months have passed since lockdown began to be loosened and we were looking forward to being able to circulate more freely with the wider world. I had optimistically thought that life would be returning to normal rather more quickly than it has! However, life *is* gradually easing back into some sort of pre-Covid 19 normal, albeit slowly! During this long period of cautiousness the danger is that we may become so used to being cautious and separate from others that we accept the status quo and lose interest in what is going on outside our 'bubble'. God tells us though that we are social beings and need each other to have a full life. Our wellbeing and happiness depend on free interaction with others; those close to us and those in the wider community. It is difficult though to maintain relationships when physical and emotional barriers are put in the way.

I know I have become very dependent upon my garden for fulfilment during these last few months and also realise that I need to rekindle some balance when we are able to move around with confidence, freely and safely again.

Part of this process for me, and I hope for you, will be our services in the Chapel. I am pleased to say that I have just had confirmation today (7<sup>th</sup> September) that services can resume on the 20<sup>th</sup> September! We shall have an 11am Holy Communion in the Chapel. Please do come if you would like to – there will be protocols in place for safe distancing and for receiving Communion. We will no doubt start cautiously and gain confidence as time passes.

In the meantime, I welcome those who have moved into the Community over the last few weeks. I am sure I speak on behalf of us all as I wish them every blessing in their new homes and in the community.

I look forward to having the opportunity to meet everyone very soon but in the meantime do get in touch if you would like to chat and, if you would like me to visit you please let me know!

With love to all, Ann  
(Chaplain)

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If you have anything you would like to contribute to a future newsletter –  
poems, fiction, recipes etc. please pass on to me,  
with no social events, there is little to report on - Irene

