

**BROMLEY & SHEPPARD'S COLLEGES**



# *Herald*

May 2025



# Welcome

Dear Collegians and Friends,

Today is a cold day in early May. Last week was a warm week at the end of April, and Rob and I got to use our patio set purchased only the week before. (Photo by Paul Allton.) Isn't British weather wonderful!

Holy Week and Easter went well here in the Colleges, and this week we are looking forward to our celebrations of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day. Life in the Colleges carries on!

The next Herald will be for June and the deadline is Saturday May 31<sup>st</sup>. Please send contributions to me, preferably by email to: [therevvedbee@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:therevvedbee@hotmail.co.uk) Thank you to Jo for printing and distributing them, to Rob for his support, and to all our contributors!



*Brandy Pearson*

## **An unexpected connection with Bromley**

When we moved here two years ago, we did not think we had any connection with Bromley. However, some recent family history research has revealed some unexpected connections. Although these events are in the distant past, they have given us a real interest in the history of Bromley in which Dick's relations played no small part.

The first surprise was the discovery that Lucy Wells (sister of Dick's 2 x great – grandmother, Mary) had married Edward Dunn in 1826. The Dunn family were a well-known family who had an upmarket furniture store in the Market Place (sold to Heal's in 1976) The Dunn family had traded in the Market Place since 1710 and at various times were upholsterers, undertakers, and owners of a large furniture depository. Lucy and Edward Dunn had at least ten children, all born and baptised in Bromley. Lucy was buried at the parish church in 1866. The Dunn family had served as parish clerks in the 18th century and as sextons in the 19th century. The detailed records made by Lucy's husband when he was the sexton are an invaluable source for family historians.

Lucy had probably met Edward Dunn when she was visiting relations in Bromley. Her father, uncles and brothers were gardeners on large country estates in Kent. Her uncle had worked in the grounds of Southborough House in Widmore, Bromley, from at least

1791. At least one of Lucy's brothers was living and working on the same estate in 1841.

Another surprise came when we discovered that Dick was also related distantly to H G Wells. Mary Wells, Dick's 2 x great grandmother had seven siblings. One of them was Joseph, head gardener at the Redleaf estate in Penshurst, Kent. His son, also named Joseph, moved to Bromley to run a china shop on the High Street after the Redleaf estate was sold. Joseph junior was the father of H G Wells, the author who was born 'above the shop' in 1866. There is a blue plaque on the building just beyond Primark. With this new found knowledge (and DNA matches) Dick is able to claim that HG Wells is his second cousin, twice removed!

*Janet Woodger*



*H G Wells and his blue plaque*



## Holy Week and Easter

Chapel worship in Holy Week and at Easter was quiet and hit exactly the right note for us Collegians. A simple Palm Sunday procession of just the right length for us - from Clock Tower to Chapel- began a week of pilgrimage through the events of Holy Week which culminated in a very prayerful Exaltation of the Cross on Good Friday.

Then Easter burst upon us with the lighting of the Easter Candle in the Quad and another gentle procession following "The Light of Christ" into Chapel. Our thanks are due to our Sacristans – Valerie, Robert and Paulos for all their hard work through what was a very busy week for them but delivered to us so quietly and effectively.

*Paul Allton*





*Photos by Janey Heatley and Paul Allton*



## Bluebells near Chartwell

The week after Easter I went on a walk with Michael Hewitt to see the bluebells near Chartwell. We started at Crockham Hill where Octavia Hill, one of the founders of the National Trust, is buried in Holy Trinity churchyard. There is a memorial to her in the church, to the left of the altar. On the way to Chartwell there are fine views towards the Ashdown Forest. We stopped for a snack at Chartwell before continuing through beech woods and the meadows alongside the stream which becomes the River Darent. The Darent flows through Otford and Lullingstone Country Park and after 21 miles joins the Thames at Dartford. We continued on to Westerham and enjoyed a welcome glass of beer at the King's Arms. The whole walk is about 5 miles. On the green in Westerham is a statue of Churchill and another of General Wolfe, famous for the capture of Quebec from the French in the Seven Years War. He grew up in Westerham in a house which is now owned by the National Trust. I have yet to visit the museum. It is not open on Mondays and Tuesday and you need to pre-book except at the weekend. You can take the 246 bus from Bromley North to Westerham. On Sundays the bus continues to Chartwell.





*Clare Preston (whose photo of the bluebells is on the back page).*





## Future of the Churchill Theatre



Following last year's announcement of their intention to sell the Churchill Theatre site, Bromley Council has now issued a public notice to confirm the sale in accordance with the terms of the covenant that gifted the site to the people of Bromley in 1879.

You can read more about the proposal and the background to the charitable covenant on the council website. For people concerned about the future of the theatre, this news is not a significant development, as it had already been confirmed that an offer from a developer had been accepted. Trafalgar Theatres are reported to have signed an agreement with the purchasers to ensure that the theatre can continue to operate, in what is expected to be a refurbished and improved theatre.

The key point is that the Council are selling the freehold, rather than the leasehold as previously stated, removing

any control over the future of the site from the people of Bromley.

*Shared by Christine Latham*

## **La Boheme at the Churchill**

It turns out that there were four of us from the Colleges at the Churchill to see La Boheme on 26<sup>th</sup> April. It was a fine performance by the Ukrainian Opera Theatre from Kyiv, highlighting both the humour and tragedy of Puccini's opera.



During the production, there was an appearance from Miep, the dog – more information in the photo from the programme. He was a very good boy!

At the end, after the well-deserved curtain calls, the company unfurled their Ukrainian flag, and sang their national anthem – translated into English on the surtitles used during the opera.

Everyone stood and clapped – and for many of us there were more tears than for the death of Mimi. A memorable evening.

*Brandy Pearson*

## Have you looked up at the chimney stacks at Sheppards?



Having taken over the custodianship of the part-chimney pot from Janet at 37, I have become interested in those on the two central stacks, most of which are probably as old as the building. I am doing a search on



the various designs, visits to the British Library, local library, knocking on doors of houses with similar pots, looking at art, architecture etc. and the internet.

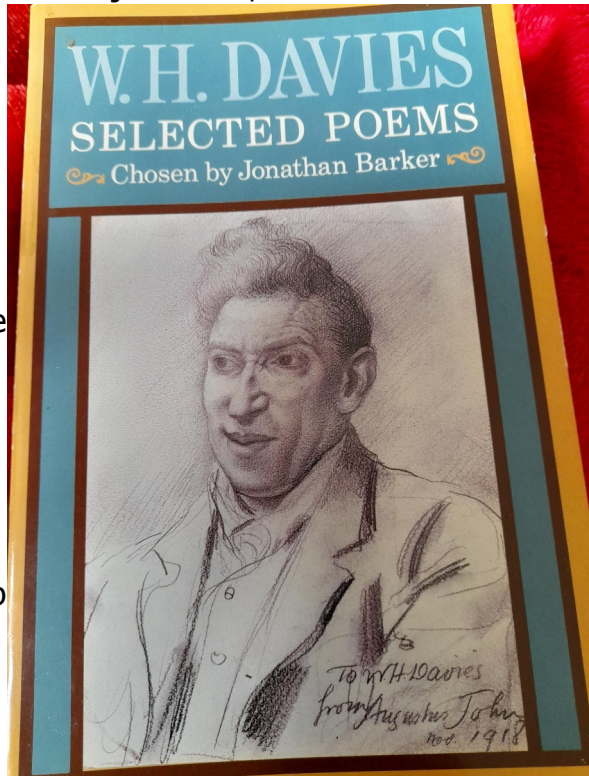
The search goes on!!

*Maily Clare*

## **W H Davies**

One day, a month or so ago, Rob and I were returning from a walk around the grounds, when we saw a magical sign outside Flat No 1 that just said, "Books". How could we resist? We joined other Collegians, looking through shelves of books that had belonged to our dear Richard Handforth, and were being offered to us by his lovely family.

I think we all said that we probably had enough books – but that did not stop us looking, and taking books away with us!





One of the books I took was "W H Davies Selected Poems".

W H Davies was arguably the last popular poet, writing from his wide experience of life. Even today, many people will quote his most famous lines:

*"What is life, if full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare"*

without necessarily knowing the author.

William Henry Davies (3 July 1871 – 26 September 1940) was a Welsh poet and writer, who spent much of his life as a tramp or hobo in the United Kingdom and the United States, yet became one of the most popular poets of his time. His themes included observations on life's hardships, the ways the human condition is reflected in nature, his tramping adventures and the characters he met. His work has been classed as Georgian, though it is not typical of that class of work in theme or style.

The turning point in Davies's life came after a week of rambling in London. He spotted a newspaper story about the riches to be made in the Klondike and set off to make his fortune in Canada. Attempting with a fellow tramp, Three-fingered Jack, to jump a freight train at Renfrew, Ontario on 20 March 1899, he lost his footing and his right foot was crushed under the wheels of the train. The leg was amputated below the knee and he wore a pegleg thereafter.

Please look him up on Wikipedia for further details of his fascinating life! In 1908 he wrote *"The Autobiography of*

*a Super-Tramp*". After lodging at several addresses in Sevenoaks, Davies moved back to London early in 1914, settling eventually at 14 Great Russell Street in the Bloomsbury district. During this London period, Davies embarked on a series of public readings of his work, alongside others such as Hilaire Belloc and W. B. Yeats, impressing fellow poet



Ezra Pound. He soon found he could socialise with leading society figures of the day, including Arthur Balfour and Lady Randolph Churchill. While in London he also took up with artists such as Jacob Epstein, Harold and Laura Knight, Nina Hamnett, Augustus John, Harold Gilman, William Rothenstein, Walter Sickert, Sir William Nicholson and Osbert and Edith Sitwell. He enjoyed the society and conversation of literary men, particularly in the rarefied downstairs at the Café Royal.

For some years I have been recording poems on YouTube, and I am always on the lookout for someone new to me. I recorded some of his poems and have been uploading them every day to my YouTube channel. (That might sound grander than it is!) Interestingly, they have proved popular. "Truly Great", which I uploaded 8 days ago, has 662 views! May be he is more popular than is generally thought nowadays.

*Brandy Pearson*

## Truly Great

My walls outside must have some flowers,  
My walls within must have some books;  
A house that's small; a garden large,  
And in it leafy nooks.

A little gold that's sure each week;  
That comes not from my living kind,  
But from a dead man in his grave,  
Who cannot change his mind.

A lovely wife, and gentle too;  
Contented that no eyes but mine  
Can see her many charms, nor voice  
To call her beauty fine.

Where she would in that stone cage live,  
A self-made prisoner, with me;  
While many a wild bird sang around,  
On gate, on bush, on tree.

And she sometimes to answer them,  
In her far sweeter voice than all;  
Till birds, that loved to look on leaves,  
Will doat on a stone wall.

With this small house, this garden large,  
This little gold, this lovely mate,  
With health in body, peace in heart--  
Show me a man more great.



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