



JANUARY 2022

Issue 22

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

www.claremontfancourtalumni.co.uk



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CLAREMONT ON SCREEN

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Actress, Diane Cilento, surrounded by excited Claremont students during the filming of *The Admirable Crichton* (1957)

STAY CONNECTED

Rosalind Seabrook

Alumni office

alumni@claremont.surrey.sch.uk



Krish Gunatunga

Development office

development@claremont.surrey.sch.uk

KEEP IN TOUCH

We're always keen to keep in touch with the Claremont Fan Court community. Whether it's memories of your school days, stories of your travels, career details or reunions.

Please email alumni@claremont.surrey.sch.uk with your updates.

HEADS' BLOG

Love for learning, kindness and friendship

You might have thought that record COVID-19 rates, the need to wear face coverings in school and the fear of staff and pupil absence would cause this to be a start of term fraught with difficulties. These will indeed provide us with ample challenges, together with any future developments, however, experience now tells us that on-site learning at practically any cost is well worth fighting for.

We all wake up with that nervous, butterflies feeling when returning to school or work after a long break, particularly with a pandemic surrounding us...

Read the full blog at

www.claremontfancourt.co.uk/headsblog

Join the online alumni community

- Create an online profile
- Keep your contact details up to date
- Connect with old school friends
- Register to attend alumni events
- Receive school and alumni news

www.claremontfancourtalumni.co.uk

A word from the editor...

It has been just over six months since I joined Claremont Fan Court School. I joined from The Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge with over 16 years development experience, including fundraising and alumni relations campaigns for educational institutions such as Eton College, London Business School and Bancroft's School. My move to Claremont Fan Court will of course bring new challenges but with many exciting developments on the horizon, I look forward to working with the wider school community to grow the school to its full potential.

I would like to thank my predecessor, Kelly Hilder, for all her work and leaving such a strong foundation for my team to build upon. I am delighted to have two alumnae on the team, Rosalind Seabrook, alumni relation officer and Kate Bradford, development assistant. Rosalind leads on re-connecting with the alumni Claremont and Fan Court School respectively. Kate is currently interviewing alumni on their memories of Claremont and Fan Court School, helping contribute to a growing digital archive.

In 2022-23 we will be celebrating Claremont Fan Court School's centenary, and over the coming months releasing more details on events to mark the occasion. We welcome all members of the school community to be involved. A simple way to help our celebrations is to please bring just three alumni to our community and events. Thank you.

Krish Gunatunga

Head of Development



I have now completed my first term as alumni relations officer. It has been an eventful term with Christmas drinks, music recitals, and launching the new community and alumni portal "Claremont Connect". Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to email me with their questions, photos and memories of your time at school. During these uncertain times it is wonderful that we have been able to connect with each other online. I sincerely hope in the near future we will be able to safely host more in-person events. From the whole development and alumni team we wish you all the best for new year and look forward to hearing from you.

Rosalind Seabrook

Alumni Relations Officer



CHOICE GRENFELL

Joyce Grenfell (1910-1974, class of 1928) is one of our most well known alumni. She is remembered for her witty monologues, songs, sketches, and for her magnetic presence that graced many British and international theatres over her career. We were delighted when alumni, Andrew Brewis (class of 1985), approached us to stage a version of "Choice Grenfell" in our very own Joyce Grenfell Centre (JGC). We can now announce there will be a special one off performance on 22 April in aid of raising money for the JGC redevelopment. Tickets will be going on sale in the coming weeks, please keep an eye out via Claremont Connect for further details and updates.

"tremendously funny and totally on the ball"

Choice GRENFELL

Join us as we celebrate the
groundbreaking, genteel,
hilarious and *incomparable* ...



Joyce Grenfell

*"a wonderful evening of
warmth, wit & gentle humour"*

By special arrangement with Samuel French,
a Concord Theatricals company

Starring
SUZANNA WALTERS
and
ANDREW D. BREWIS

Directed by
SIMON DOWNING



CLAREMONT FAN COURT ON FILM

VIVIEN HEFFERNAN (NEE LACK 1959, ESHER)

Claremont has appeared on screen on several occasions, in both fictional and documentary films. In 1956 Pinewood studios used the exterior of Claremont in *The Admirable Crichton* (1957), which was also released under the alternative title "Paradise Lagoon".

Claremont appears in the opening shot of this romantic south seas comedy as "Loam Hall". This glamorous photo featured on our front cover pictures the actress Diane Cilento surrounded by Claremont students. The image was sent in by Vivien Heffernan (nee Lack, class of 1959, Esher) who recalls: "The filming caused great excitement and

as a treat we were allowed to crowd round the stars and they chatted to us girls. I remember that they were very gracious and looked stunning!" Later in 1963, Claremont appeared as Lady Despard's Holcomb Manor in the satirical film "Heavens above".

Its impressive 18th century facade inspires ideas of the gentry of a bygone era and so is an ideal location for period dramas. Claremont's connection to the French Royal Family in exile features in a 2016 episode of *Fake or Fortune*; as they search for answers and provenance for a suspected Paul Delaroche painting. As recently as last summer, BBC3 used both shots

of the grounds and the interior for the adult comedy 'Toast of Tinseltown' now showing on BBC iPlayer. It would seem the mansion remains a site of interest for location scouts and we hope that Claremont will feature in many more films and television productions in the coming years.

Vivien also provided additional photos of life at Claremont for girls in the 1950's, which have been added to our ever growing archive. If you have any photos of your time at Claremont, Fan Court or Claremont Fan Court, we would love to preserve them in our digital archive. Once again thank you to Vivien for the wonderful photos and anecdotes.



ALUMNI PROFILE HENRY BARNETT



HENRY BARNETT (2018, RADNOR)

Here at Claremont we are blessed with a ninety six acre site that allows for a range of sport, from more traditional fixtures such as lacrosse, tennis, rugby and football to sport such as archery.

Archery is one of the fastest growing fixtures and is one of the few school sports where students of all genders and ages can practice together. Furthermore, as archery is a non contact sport it is ideal for social distancing, keeping students active, engaged and COVID-19 safe.

Former art teacher and alumni, Hillary Longman (nee Draper, class of 1972, Esher) has forged a path for archery at Claremont for many years. Now joined by Sarah Gibbs, together they have started the School Archery League (SAL) which is supported by Archery GB.

We recently caught up with archery alumni, Henry Barnett (class of 2018, Radnor) who's love for archery began at Claremont in Year 10 when he joined a lunchtime club. Developing on from this, in Year 11 and sixth form, archery became Henry's Wednesday sport fixture. He highlighted that although the archery in itself was enjoyable, it was the opportunity to socialise in a more competitive environment that enhanced the experience. Archery was a sport Henry gravitated towards as it relied on skill and

practice rather than pure athleticism; although a healthy fascination with robin hood as a child also drew him in.

Henry continued his archery, joining the University of Exeter club in his first year. Since then he has become an accredited coach and is responsible for organising competitions at the Uni of Exeter, and training a squad to compete externally.

"To anyone considering choosing it, I would first of all say that it's great fun and very safe in spite of the fact that it involves flinging pointy sticks around, so I would highly recommend it! In archery you only have control over your own shooting, you don't attack or defend as in other sports. So the best thing you can do is just relax and focus on the process, and don't think about how anyone else is doing."

Thank you to Henry who took the time to speak to the school about his archery achievements. We wish Henry the best of luck as he continues with his History MA.

WEST ACRE DEVELOPMENT

Dear alumni

I am delighted to share with you the exciting news that Claremont Fan Court School has purchased an adjoining property, West Acre.

West Acre comprises a large 1930s house with one acre of land enveloped by our existing site; approximately 98% of its perimeter is school land. It is located to the left-hand side when walking down the steps from the top car park towards the sports hall. The land extends between the back of the sports hall and the Orchard buildings, and the upper sports field all the way to our proposed new artificial pitch.

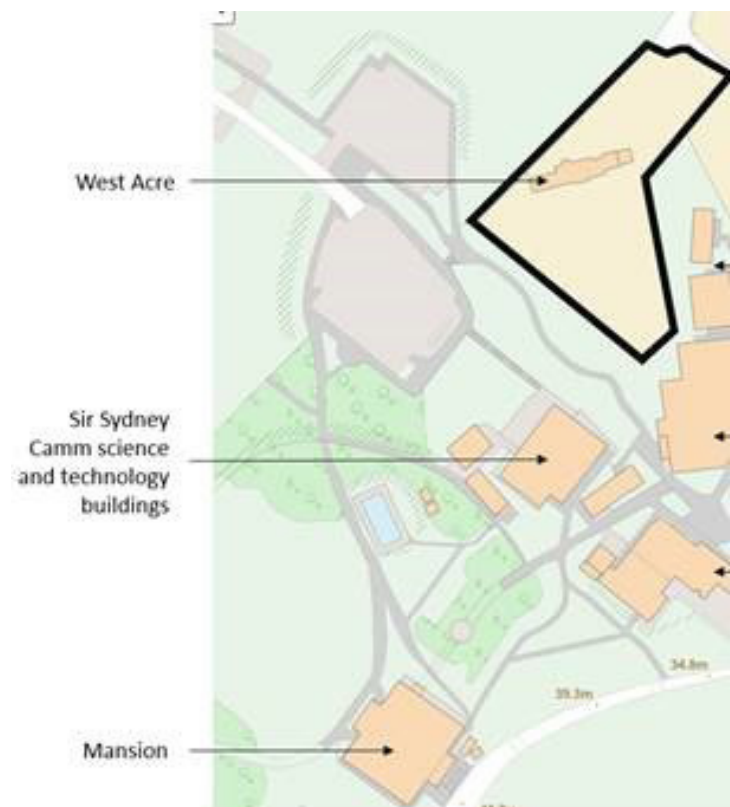
For a school with 100 acres already, you might wonder what the extra 1% will bring. We are indeed blessed with an amazingly beautiful and calming location, but it is significantly restricted by greenbelt land status, listed building planning constraints on the parts of our landscape that are within sight of the mansion and a protected underground pipeline. Any development work on the school site has therefore tended to be complicated and costly to deliver. Indeed, until this purchase, the next stage of the site development master plan was focused on the Joyce Grenfell Centre (JGC). The facilities proposed there remain a priority, but before purchasing West Acre, JGC construction required a costly basement and a £1m haul road (a temporary road built for the use of heavy plant vehicles) for construction traffic, wrapping around most of the Senior School area including the mansion. The purchase of West Acre has almost certainly negated the need for an extensive haul road, which would have been a dreadful eye-sore, and we can now potentially open-up a far easier, safer, cheaper and (from local residents' perspective) less contentious construction route.

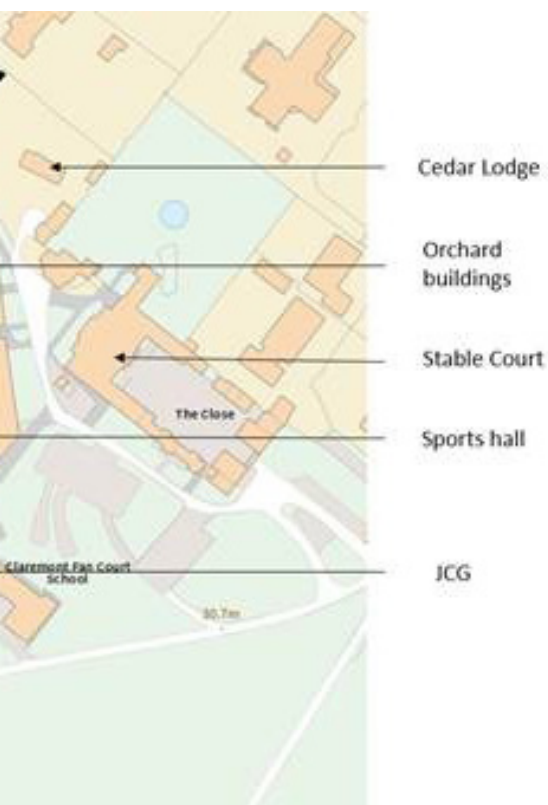
The purchase price of West Acre was £4m, which has been funded without seeking additional borrowing due to capital expenditure savings delivered by revising the scope of our Stable Court redevelopment. The board of governors and the school's leadership team consider the purchase of West Acre a game-changing opportunity for Claremont and we are now working together closely on exciting new plans, which we look forward to sharing with you in the coming months.

In the meantime, we hope the image below goes some way towards illustrating the new site in the context of its nearest school surroundings.

Yours sincerely,

William Brierly
Headmaster





The aerial photo above and the drawing to the left show that approximately 98% of the West Acre property's existing perimeter is on school land. This acquisition has the potential to unlock access for future developments within the heart of the school and reduce disruption to school life and local residents.

"...a game-changing opportunity for Claremont and we are now working together closely on exciting new plans."

CLOCK TOWER RESTORATION

Thanks to the generous donation from an alumna, the Stable Court clock tower underwent a full restoration this autumn, and we are delighted to say this heritage preservation project is now complete.

Working with a specialist restoration company, Ash Contracting Ltd, the clock and weathervane have been updated and restored back to full working order, and it looks better than ever. The restoration project included:

- Stripping back the original clock face
- Refurbishing and refitting the clock face and hands (including restoring the gold details on the clock face)
- Installing a new remote clock mechanism
- Restoration of the bell
- Design, supply and installation of the bell strike mechanism
- Strengthening existing structures for the bell within the tower

None of this would have been possible without the generous support of one alumna and we thank her for her continued support. As a school, we are custodians of a rich historic site, but maintenance and preservation projects require specialist restoration and are costly. These projects are only possible with the support of the Claremont community, ensuring the next generation has the opportunity to enjoy our historic grounds.



ALUMNI EVENTS

LONDON NETWORKING DRINKS

Thank you once again to everyone who attended the Christmas networking event at the Bankside Gallery on 2 December 2021. We hope everyone enjoyed themselves and that it was an opportunity to reconnect and meet new alumni, past parents and current staff.



MUSIC SCHOLAR'S RECITAL

In November we were treated to an evening of wonderful music by our scholars and woodwind musicians. This time we were able to invite our alumni back to showcase some of the new talent Claremont Fan Court has been fostering. Our music department, led by the highly capable Alexis Affonso, has always been an integral part of school life. Thank you to all the musicians who performed and the alumni who came to support.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: 2022

We are delighted to announce that there will be more opportunities for alumni to return to Claremont Fan Court and reconnect with old friends in the coming months:

- **MARCH: Employability week**
- **8 APRIL: 1975-85 reunion** (booking now open, please contact the alumni department)
- **9 APRIL: 1975-85 reunion** (booking now open, please contact the alumni department)
- **22 APRIL: Choice Grenfell** (tickets on sale soon)
- **2 JULY: Summer festival**
- **10 SEPTEMBER: Heritage Open Day**
- **24 SEPTEMBER: Class of 1963 tour** (booking opening later in the year)
- **SEPTEMBER 2022 (date tbc):** Official opening of the Sir Sydney Camm science and technology building and the Stable Court Prep School refurbishment

If you attended Claremont during this time and have not yet received a save the date or invitation please do get in touch via alumni@claremont.surrey.sch.uk

SCHOOL NEWS



PRE-PREP AND NURSERY NATIVITIES

The Pre-Prep and Nursery school children performed both an early years 'Sleepy Shepherds' nativity and a Year 1 and 2 nativity for parents before Christmas. Dressed in full nativity costume, the children took to the stage to play out the charming nativity story with a series of well-rehearsed songs and dances. With a standing ovation from parents, it was clear to see the children thoroughly enjoyed performing.



SIXTH FORM CHRISTMAS PANTO

Sixth form students certainly understood the panto brief this year, with a brilliantly funny and energetic performance of Aladdin. With more costume changes and props to shake a stick at, sixth form students gallantly took to the stage on Tuesday 14 December to perform a matinee performance to an audience of adoring (and very enthusiastic) Year 6 pupils, followed by an evening performance to friends and family. It was wonderful to hear so much laughter coming from the JGC during their performances, and we congratulate the students on their hard work in making the performance such a success!



PREP SCHOOL POETRY READING FINAL

The Preparatory School poetry final took place today with "choice" as the theme. There was a broad interpretation of this theme with poems about the environment, life choices, school and food! Every child in the Prep School participated in the class rounds and from those rounds, a class finalist was chosen to participate for the junior prize (Years 3 and 4), senior prize (Years 5 and 6) and overall winner. Congratulations to all those who participated.

CLAREMONT PUPILS QUIZ MP DOMINIC RAAB ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Esher and Walton MP and Deputy Prime Minister, Dominic Raab, visited Claremont Fan Court Preparatory School on the morning of Friday 3 December to speak with pupils and participate in an environment focused Q&A session prepared by the children.

Welcomed by our Prep School choir, singing their G7 climate summit song, Mr Raab heard all about our school's very own climate change summit held last summer and the views our children had on the subject before settling in for the Q&A.

Prep and Senior School pupils, many of whom are members of their school councils or environmental clubs,

along with our lower sixth politics students, were in attendance and excited to hear from the MP. Together they took turns to quiz Mr Raab on the policies the government have in place, or will be implementing, to help protect the environment and slow the effects of climate change.

Questions revolved around high speed train line plans, electric cars, the protection of wildlife and natural habitats, pollution levels, sustainable waste disposal strategies and cycle path schemes in the local area, to list just a few. Mr Raab was impressed by the questions and was delighted to see the pupils so engaged in the subject matter.

To demonstrate our commitment to the cause, and in a bid to hold Mr Raab to his word on government climate promises, the pupils' questions were placed into a time capsule following the Q&A and presented to Mr Raab for placing into the ground outside the Prep School. The capsule will be dug up in 30 years' time, by which point the government's target to have reached net 0 carbon emissions by 2050 should have been realised!

Our thanks to Mr Raab for visiting Claremont Fan Court School and for giving our pupils a fantastic insight into the world of politics and how the country is governed.



CLAREMONT 1XV WIN END OF SEASON FINALE

Spectators were treated to a very exciting, end-to-end game of rugby under the Friday night lights at Cobham RFC on 10 December. Undeterred by strong ACS opposition, Claremont displayed grit and determination in defence, and worked together to win crucial turnovers and executed some excellent attacking play to open up space for stunning scoring opportunities. Their resilience throughout the match earned them a deserving 34-24 win against ACS – a wonderful way to end a successful rugby season at Claremont. Huge congratulations to all involved!



DID YOU KNOW?



HYDROTHERAPY AND ROBERT CLIVE

One of the most well known idiosyncrasies of Claremont is Clive's stone bathtub. How many schools can claim they have an 18th century hydrotherapy pool next to the locker room?

The history of hydrotherapy is a long and varied one; belief in the healing power of natural springs has been recorded since the 16th century. The divine powers of water eventually became intertwined with the idea of health and wellness culture in the 17th and 18th century with the formation of spa towns. It was believed that bathing could cure a host of ailments from, nightmares, leprosy, plague, to hysteria, and flatulence.

However on the other end of the spectrum, there was the use of cold baths to treat madness and other mania. Often these baths or cold water soakings, were inflicted on patients repeatedly, by surprise or with little consent. Although by the late 18th century treatment shifted to more humane 'moral management'. This is most likely where Clive's bathtub comes into practice.

Cold water plunges were believed to help shock the illness out of your body, reinvigorating your senses and thus removing your melancholia. It is very possible that Clive planned to treat his depression and other physical ailments through hydrotherapy. Similar plunge pools, both inside and outside can be found at various locations,

including a garden bath at Stourhead (Wiltshire) where Henry Hoare took up residence in 1741 after a series of bereavements.

However, unlike the Stourhead bath which was fed directly by the lake, how Clives' bath would have been filled is unknown. Usually these baths needed direct access to water and as there was no indoor plumbing, it can be assumed that the bath would have been hand filled with water by an attendant. There is some conjecture over whether or not Clive ever used the plunge pool, with no obvious drainage and Clive's early death, it may have been purely ornamental.

Clive's stone bath remains as an enigmatic window into not only the history of Claremont, but also how far medical treatments for mental illness have progressed since the 18th century. Although as with all things it seems, time is cyclical. Perhaps it is easy to dismiss the idea of cold water treatments. Yet hobbies such as wild and sea swimming have become more mainstream, especially since the 2020 lockdown, with some claiming a quick dip in the sea is key in their wellness routine. There is evidence cold water can aid circulation and release endorphins, so perhaps Claremont's plunge pool was somewhat ahead of its time!

Sources: *Mental health today*, *Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh*

MEMORIES PROJECT

In preparation for our centenary celebrations next year in 2022/23, the development and alumni department are collecting the memories of our alumni's experiences of Claremont School, Fan Court School and Claremont Fan Court School, through a series of interviews. Although the school has changed, your memories of life at school could potentially mirror even the most recent of Claremont Fan Court leavers.

Memories are so important, especially those of a happy time at school. Sharing these stories help piece together a huge tapestry of pupil memories at Claremont, Fan Court and latterly Claremont Fan Court. Whether it be your first day at school, nervously walking through the school doors, adventures as a boarder or day pupil, representing your house in inter-house sports, performing in drama productions, writing articles for Vox Leonis or The Torch, lunchtimes in the school grounds or funny escapades with your friends – the list is endless! Experiences like these are intergenerational. Recounting memories can help connect alumni and make the past become a part of the present.

Each interview will be transcribed and catalogued, alongside those of other alumni, for posterity in our resident school archive. Alumni can choose to share their memories with the wider school community too!

If you would like to share your memories please contact Development Assistant, Kate Bradford
kbradford@claremont.surrey.sch.uk



CENTENARY ARCHIVE

CAN YOU HELP US EXPAND OUR ARCHIVE?



As the centenary year approaches we are working on expanding and digitising our archive.

Do you have any physical photos that you want to share but also keep a hold of? If you send photos in to us we can digitise and return them free of charge.

Do you have any uniform or a Claremont lacrosse stick? We would love to display it at centenary events and reunions.

Alternatively can you loan/give us an item for a reunion? If you have anything from the class of 1955-65 or 1975-85 please get in touch!

Whether you are a Fan Court boy, Claremont girl or Claremont Fan Court School leaver, we want to collect memories and help preserve our history for the future.

SUPPORT US

DONATION FORM

1. Contact Details: please use block capitals (mandatory fields marked *)

Title* _____ First name* _____ Surname* _____
Address* _____

Postcode* _____
Email _____ Telephone _____

2. Donation Focus

I would like to make a contribution to:

- ☐ Bursaries
- ☐ Heritage
- ☐ Building Development Fund
- ☐ Where most needed

PLEASE COMPLETE SECTION 3A OR 3B.

3a. One-off Donations

- ☐ I enclose a cheque, made payable to **The Claremont Fan Court Foundation Ltd**, for the amount of £ _____
- ☐ I have made a bank transfer to the Beneficiary details below for the amount of £ _____

Beneficiary details: Claremont Fan Court Foundation Ltd, NatWest Bank, Account Number 41112822, Sort Code 60-08-04

3b. Regular Donations

I would like to contribute a regular gift of:

- ☐ £ 10 ☐ per month
- ☐ £ 50 ☐ per year
- ☐ £ 100
- ☐ £ _____

- ☐ I have set up a Standing Order/updated my Standing Order to the Beneficiary details below, referenced DONATION.

Beneficiary details: Claremont Fan Court Foundation Ltd, NatWest Bank, Account Number 41112822, Sort Code 60-08-04

(For international donations, please contact the School prior to submission of your Standing Order).

Signature _____ Date _____

4. Gift Aid

Gift Aid allows the Claremont Fan Court Foundation (registered charity: 274664) to reclaim tax back on your donation. By gift aiding you agree that you are a UK taxpayer and understand that if you pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all your donations in that tax year, it is your responsibility to pay any difference.

- ☐ I would like to Gift Aid my donation.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please return your completed form to:

Krish Gunatunga, Head of Development, Claremont Fan Court School, Claremont Drive, Esher, Surrey KT10 9LY
kgunatunga@claremont.surrey.sch.uk | 01372 473727



HOW ARE WE DOING?

If you enjoyed reading this latest edition of the alumni newsletter, please drop us a line and let us know what you liked most.

GET INVOLVED IN OUR NEXT EDITION

Contact us to share your story with the Claremont Fan Court alumni community or make suggestions as to what you'd like to see in future editions.

You can opt out of receiving future editions of the newsletter at any time. To do this, please contact us using the contact details below.

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