GRANDMOTHER'S FOOTSTEPS

by

Verena Hanbury

Grandmother's Footsteps

In these memories it does not come easily to use the word 'cripple', but in Granny's day it was used to describe, as was 'deaf' or 'blind', so I feel while writing about her, I have to use it with the respect it deserves.

I don't want to lose my memories of this remarkable Granny or my time in her shadow in later years, so I'm going to jot them down.

Chailey Heritage

The public school of Crippledom, one of the many titles over the years, was the first purpose-built school in this country for children with disabilities.

Founded in 1903 by Grace Kimmins, my grandmother, it became of great interest to both educationalists and medics alike. She chose the beautiful Sussex countryside to offset the ugliness of poverty the children knew so well. They were educated, taught a craft, and prepared for independent living to compensate for the rejection cripples in those days were enduring. Grace was adamant that incomplete bodies did not deserve incomplete lives. Her two sons, Brian and Anthony, went to schools they looked back on with pride. Her dream was to create the same heritage for those for whom society provided nothing.

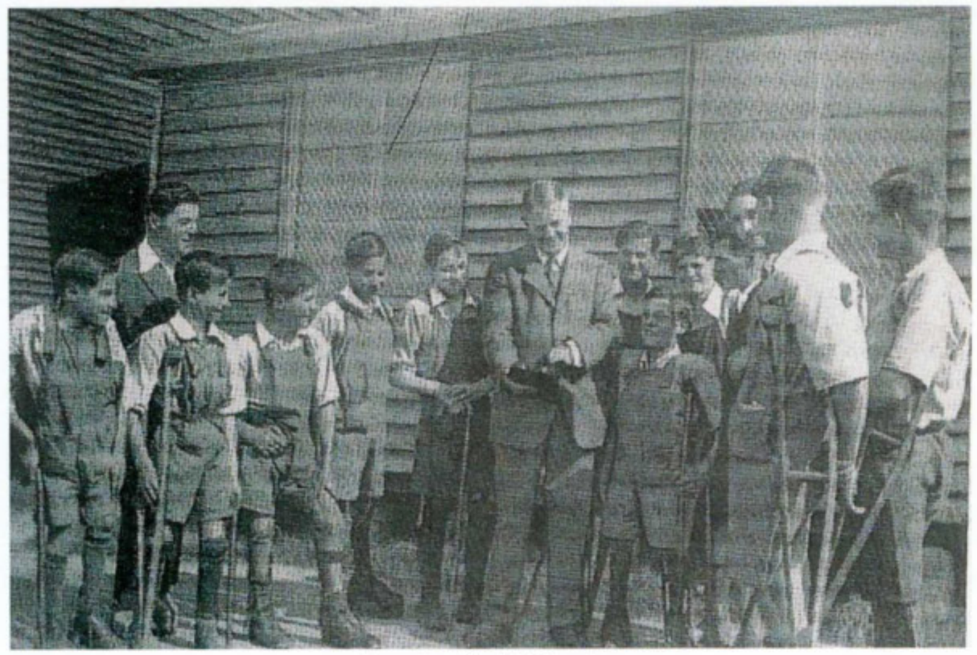
Dame Grace Kimmins in 1903

My first memories of Granny K are of a big lady; actually she was small, standing on the steps of her house in a long purple dress, a wide white hat, arms outstretched, shrieking in delight in welcome to her grandchildren.

Simon, my elder brother, and I loved going there. Granny would spoil us, over feed us and allow us to play with her magical musical box beside a huge log fire in 'the Jungle', named after the big game heads around the walls.

Granny had three people to help her – Ellen who cooked the memorable thick (and not always palatable) potato soup, Lily who was profoundly deaf and cleaned the house and Ernest who was deaf and dumb and seemed to me to spend all day rubbing the logs with floor polish to make the fire flare up and smell wonderful.

The Jungle, a large room up steep stairs out of the Brick Room, which was Granny's office, was a delight. At one end there were sliding doors, just like the old lift doors at Peter Jones, where Simon and I would stand announcing, "going up, toys, furniture. Sorry - full up" and slamming them shut. At the other end was a door securing Grandpa K's peace and quiet. To knock and go in to his study and seeing this kindly welcoming smile was a treat.



Grandpa K with the boys

Usually he was engrossed in his spectacular stamp collection but he always had time for us. He was the wisest of men, a much respected Doctor of Child

Psychology and Chief Inspector at the Education Department of the London County Council. He was kind, humorous and a prolific author of publications listed at the back of these memories. He died in 1948 when Grace was at her lowest ebb. He was the foundation stone of Chailey, always there, always supportive, and seldom seen. His ashes lie under the Bishop's chair in St Martins Chapel.

Grandpa K with Sir Jesse Boot's daughter at the Plantaginet Fair. Sir Jesse was the son of the founder of Boots the Chemist and a keen supporter of Chailey

One of the first things I learnt from Granny was that straight or crooked fast or slow, we all deserve equal amounts of love and respect. This she demonstrated by

her passion for her Chailey children being undoubtedly equal to that of her grandchildren.

Sometimes Chailey children would come to play with us, their limbless ability filled us with intrigue and admiration.

On Sundays we went to chapel. Occasionally brother Simon would sing in the choir, never me, I wonder why? I was allowed to join the Noah's Ark Sunday procession, a miracle as I was a girl in the boys' chapel. Usually we sat with Granny in her box at the back with Bowser her dog. In her hand would be her walking stick, made by the boys, with a whistle in the handle, used to attract Bowser or the attention of misbehaving boys. It is a treasured possession of mine.

Simon, the little one at the front on Noah's Arc Sunday

We had to behave in chapel, but there were always treats. Built into her box was a sliding door behind which would be books and coloured pencils and there was also a shelf that pulled out, on which to draw. Then there was this inviting switch which activated a flashing light in the pulpit, flipped by Granny if the

sermon went one second over the allotted ten minutes. In spite of the temptation to us, it was touch it if you dare; we didn't!

Noah's Arc Sunday – I'm the one with the short fat legs at the front & the steps!!

Granny would rehearse the lesson readers herself which resulted in a very exaggerated "Here begineth…" and a much welcomed "Here endeth…".

The steps on which the younger readers stood were made by the boys and are with me today.

There was so much to learn about Granny. She was born Grace Mary Thyrza Hannam on May 6th 1870 to her father James Hannam, a cloth merchant and tailor in Reading and her mother Thyrza Rogers from Callington in Cornwall. She was the youngest of four, educated at Wilton House School in Reading and then abroad. As a young girl she broke the traces and went to work in the East End of London from where her ground breaking journey began.

On November 11th 1894 St Martin's day (hence the strong influence of St Martin at Chailey) she founded the Guild of the Brave Poor Things and the Guild of Play. The guild was an opportunity for those crippled by the all too many poverty related problems to meet, have a cup of tea, a sing song but most of all, friendship. By 1913, there were twenty one branches from Bradford to Brighton supported by their president, Bishop Winnington Ingram, the Bishop of London, and their Patron Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll.

Grace's guidelines to all branches stated that the Union Jack should be raised at all meetings and that all members wear the guild medal designed by Field Marshall Sir Evelyn Wood VC resembling as closely as allowed the Victoria Cross... a little cheeky, but meaningful.

The Guild of Play, for which Grace wrote many books of dance and song, was flamboyantly once described as "not for the clean, beribboned, pinafored children alone, but for the noisy, impudent, little street arabs who have had a false start in life with nothing in their favour but that invisible little white soul caged in sometimes most repellent exteriors". This quote was not from her lips but it was these children who influenced the rest of her life and persuaded her to write "Polly of Parkers Rents" described as 'culturally important'.

****

In 1897, she married my much loved Grandpa K, strangely enough born in Dudbridge, Gloucestershire, not far from where I am now. They went to live in Dame Armstrong House, Harrow on-the-Hill, where the 1911 census shows that George Price, one of the original boys, who made the big oak doors to St Martin's Chapel, was staying there that night. George was working for H. E. Waters in Forest Row, the firm which built the chapel.

Their two sons were born in Harrow and went to Orley Farm Prep School. Brian went on to Harrow and Anthony to Osborne and Dartmouth. Brian, destined for the Army and Anthony the Navy, fired her theatrical vision of two handsome young men in glamorous uniforms serving their country. They were, and they did. This contrast between her boys and those she was "adopting" was so blatantly unjust; it sparked her crusade to correct this gross imbalance in society.

How did she set about this mammoth task? She had been described as a 'political activist', she was known as the greatest beggar in England and at Chailey

she was Commandant. Maybe this speaks for itself. To me it was her belief in her vision, her air of command coupled with her flow of enthusiasm that became so infectious to all who met her.

Slowly she assembled her dream. The dream, as described in the opening paragraph, was all embracing from scholar to master craftsman, but the depth of the dream was to give these children, often discarded from their families, a pride in belonging to a lifelong heritage, their public school of Crippledom.

Grace had no money to build her dream, but a great talent for encouraging others to do so.

The Guild, the umbrella to Chailey for many years, had acquired for her the old workhouse to which she and Alice Rennie arrived on June 6th 1903 with seven boys, one for each day of the week.

Alice was not only Grace's friend but a true family friend. Every letter from my father as a child to his mother ended "Give my love to Alice". Alice died in 1940, remembered by Rennie Ward at the Girls Heritage, now no more but the name has been given to a building at the old Heritage. She was also remembered by Waterloo, a building named after her uncle, the Scottish civil engineer who designed Waterloo Bridge. Alice gave art lessons in Waterloo which explains the name but does not do her justice. She was invaluable to Granny and as Treasurer she arrived with an envelope in her pocket containing £2 and a note from an old Guild pensioner which read "In hope this will save you any future financial worries."

A member of the Guild – Mr Ware – who left his sole legacy of £2 to the Guild – hoping that with such wealth at its disposal it might face the future with no further anxiety about money matters!!

The house had no electricity, pumped water and the nearest telephone was five miles away in Plumpton.

Gradually word got round that this unknown lady in purple was about to house a large number of 'cripples' in the heart of their treasured village. Educationalists and medics were fascinated – the locals were dismayed. So much grief did they give her any other woman would have conceded defeat; not Grace; she waited patiently to retaliate. She seized the moment when building St Martin's Chapel. She requested only three, instead of the customary four, clock faces on the spire to demonstrate that she refused to give the village the time of day. She never missed a trick.

St Martin's Chapel

Old scholars never fail to remember how tough life was. If you fell, no one picked you up; obstacles were put in your way, not out of malice but mindful of what life away from Chailey might hold. The first writing test read "There's always room at the top". The first task in woodwork was to make your ladder of life, each rung, however wobbly, representing an achievement. There were cold baths, strict discipline and no girls!

Some old scholars took their ladders to their grave as described movingly by Granny in this foreword to the first school magazine.

Foreword by The Founder

MRS. C. W. KIMMINS, D. St. J., C.B.E.

OVER 48 years ago, the first boys in the Heritage Craft Schools started work in a very ramshackle old Carpenters Shop. There were no syllabuses or planned education as you find here today, in fact it was all very rough and ready. But what they possibly lost in one respect they certainly gained in another, they gained that most valuable thing in life, an inspiration. They were given as their first job the building of a toy ladder. No matter how badly crippled, or how crude the result, they always had that ladder in front of them as their first achievement. That ladder was a symbol of the ladder of life. Each rung represented an obstacle which had to be overcome in order to reach the final goal. Some boys carved the School Motto on their ladders—"Laetus Sorte Mea."

Many an old Heritage Scholar keeps his first crude ladder in the place of honour in his home, and more than one has asked to have it buried with him. He will never reach the top–no one ever does–but whenever he is up against it, whenever he finds the future black with difficulties, he looks at that ladder and remembers the lower rungs, which at the time seemed insurmountable and yet he somehow managed to overcome. The first writing test in those far away days was—"There is always room at the top"

I had my ladder too, not a very expert one, for carpentry was never my strong point, but it sufficed. Neither did I ever reach the top, nor ever will. You see my ambition was a complete and perfect home for crippled children, where everything that was most up–to–date in curative, medical and technical science would be at the children's disposal, and where every opportunity would be given to overcome affliction and go out into the world as a really useful young citizen.

There were times when many of the rungs of my ladder seemed insurmountable and I thought I would have to give in, but slowly and surely we climbed up. Of course I never reached the top, and never shall, for the top is perfection and perfection is always just out of our reach. That is the spice of life.

At this moment, the Heritage is being taken over by the Government. That means security, and there will be lots of wonderful changes from which you will all benefit. But please, in addition to the many extra things you will learn from modern education, never forget the ladder of ambition.

Set out into life with definite aims. They can only be decided by yourself.

Your most affectionate founder and friend.

G. T. Kimmins.

Taken from the 1st copy of the School magazine in 1948

Without fail old scholars will tell you in spite of the tough, seemingly unreasonable discipline and the often painful medical treatments, without Chailey they would not have achieved anything.

On Old Scholars' Day, held annually, with a service in chapel, lunch, the Annual General meeting and much swapping of memories, they lay a wreath in their founder's memory with love and affection.

****

One of Graces greatest friends from the Guild days, Lord Llangattock, was the first to fall under her spell. In 1908, she was reminded that girls did exist and a heritage must be built for them. He bought the land from Sir William Grantham and was largely instrumental in building the Girls' Heritage. It was built three miles away from the boys because it was still felt that disabilities might be genetic. This, however, did not deter the odd tryst on Chailey Common. I remember being full of admiration hearing of a boy whose love letters were discovered posted down his plaster cast for safe keeping.

The generosity of Lord Llangattock continued when Grace needed a building for carpentry. Lord Llangattock's son, The Hon Stewart Rolls, the first Englishman to own a car, which went at four miles an hour on the highway with a red flag bearer ahead, together with Mr Royce, invented the Rolls Royce engine and became the first Englishman to be killed flying an aeroplane. In 1911, the Llangattock Building for Carpentry was completed in his memory. This building, in memory of a man who spent his life inventing, creating and daring, gave many boys of equal courage but less opportunity their chance to succeed. Above the door to this day is a carved sign, made by a boy with no arms, reading "Men made here".

The Girls' Heritage was completely different to the boys, in style and atmosphere. Trecarrol Cottage at the gateway, where my parents first lived and my brother was born, was welcoming and pretty. There were tiny babies and toddlers and of course the girls, educated in the Bernard Barron school room and trained in housewifery and exceptional needlework, completed often with feet or by mouth. Much of this work, in true Granny style, was presented to various royal visitors. This may have been influential in her being the first female on the board of the Royal School of Needlework.

The girl I remember most, when she was grown up, ran the laundry. She had arrived as a baby with no name and no connections. She lived her life at Chailey and was christened Iva Heritage. I just love that.

St Helen's Chapel was also in complete contrast to St Martin's. Built of wood and brick, it was small, light and airy and perfect for the girls and the very young. My fascination was the organ because all the keys were made of black ivory.

St Helen's Chapel

Inside St Helen's Chapel

Grace's ability to see good in bad was, I believe, the power to her success. A shining example was when in 1911, the Old House, as the original house became known, was condemned unfit for use. Was she downhearted? On the contrary, here was a great story, "Cripples left homeless", on which to hang a major appeal for the residential building for the boys that she so badly needed. She persuaded Princess Louise to head the appeal which raised £5,000 for St Martin's. She was then able to start building her own family home in the Old House, into which she and her family moved in 1915. I believe, but I am not completely sure, that she and Alice had a small cottage in Station Road, Newick, during these years.

At this time the medical interest in this pioneering work became immense, leading to much respected consultants giving their time free at weekends to help, treat and learn from this ever increasing number of deformed limbs, and spines, which never before had been considered worthwhile treating. Hence a basic operating theatre was built on both sites.

I have often thought that the chapel and this treasured new building, both bearing the name of St Martin, show how deep the significance of the day she founded the Guild was to her. I am not sure how many people realise how influential the Guild was; in fact, no Guild, no Chailey. How typical it was of

Granny, in complete innocence, to begin her crusade on St Martin's Day, November 11th, later to become a national day of Remembrance.

Another example of Grace's impudence was when she wished to acquire a piece of land around St Helen's Chapel. The owner did not want to sell, so what did Grace do? She invited the owner to the Service of Consecration amongst royalty and many influential people. As the service concluded, Grace rose to her feet and publicly thanked the poor unsuspecting lady for her generous gift of land. Unforgiveable, but successful.

For her Chailey children, she would stop at nothing. With her magnetic charm she drew advice and help from all corners of the earth and of course money.

****

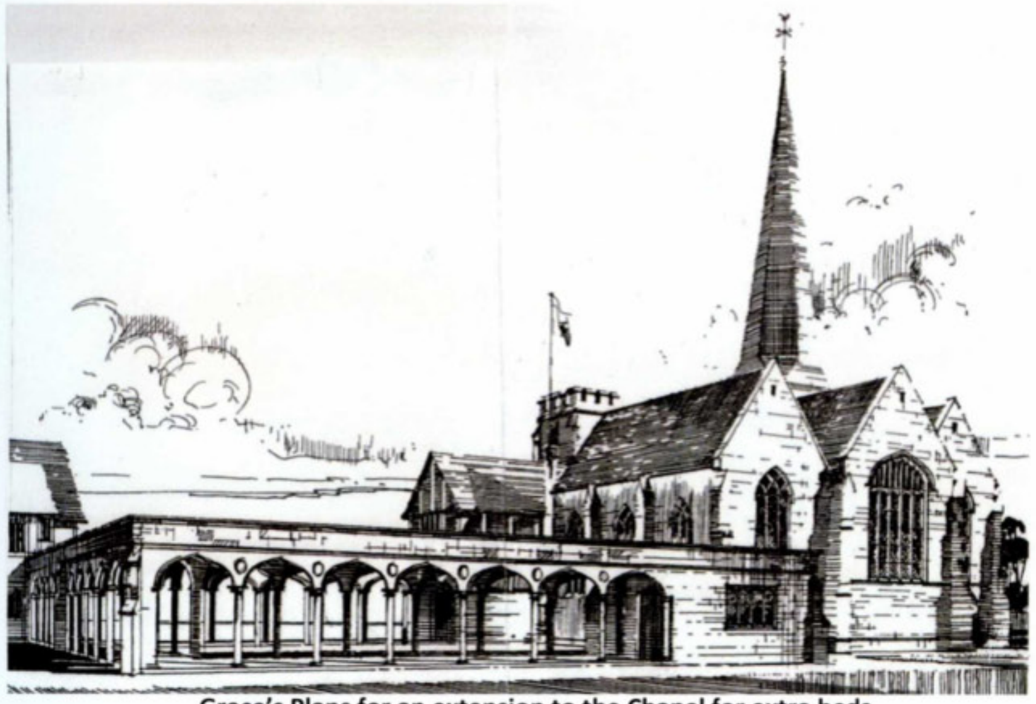
She once said "go forward on a strong foundation, don't be afraid of change, providing it does not weaken the strength of that foundation". The focal point of her foundation was St Martin's Chapel.

St Martin's Chapel

For Granny, not just an ordinary school chapel, but something extraordinary, designed by Sebastian Comper, a much respected cathedral architect. The ceiling of bright blue with gold stars, the stunning gold of the Reredos and the windows each telling a story of someone connected to the Heritage in brightly coloured stained glass. The spire was of oak shingles particularly requested by Rudyard Kipling to blend with his beloved Sussex Downs. He had been closely connected with the Heritage and I am sure enjoyed the lack of the fourth clock face. Living up to her love of pageantry, the festival alter cloth was made from the same material given by George V as a coronation gift to Westminster Abbey.

The tapestry kneelers in the chapel, made by Lucinda and me naming Grace, Ben, myself and our five children - Lucinda, James, Timothy, Simon and Marcus who were christened in the chapel. We later made ones for Amelia, Daisy, Rosa and Willow - four of the founders great, great grandchildren also christened in the chapel.

The other day I found a sketch of an extension to the south of the chapel for 100 beds; surprisingly it did not get built!



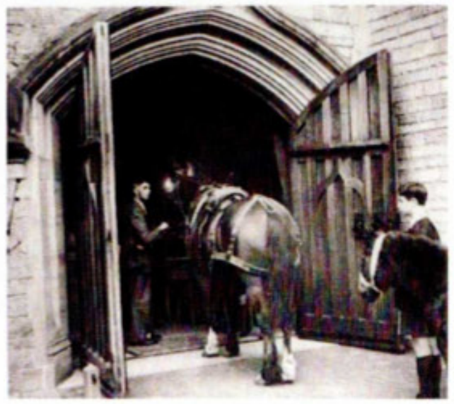
Grace's Plans for an extension to the Chapel for extra beds

Her enthusiastic exaggeration would today, I fear, have an adverse effect, but she got away with it. Arriving as a guest at Chailey was unusual to say the least. You would be greeted by a Guard of Honour, a salute and most probably the National Anthem. You would be taken first to the Chapel then to all corners of the school being gifted at each department. A speech of welcome from the boy or girl who had made the gift, then on leaving, exhausted, you would be confronted with an unavoidable opportunity to write a cheque. Her ability to raise money, or maybe extort, was an impossible act to follow. The singing at Chailey was second to none. The choir, known sometimes as 'The Singing Cripples' or 'The Doughty Singers', was the first choir to be affiliated to the Royal School of Music, hence they were permitted to wear their red cassocks. I think their singing was enhanced by the fact that all hymns and anthems had to be learnt by heart, as no books could be carried owing to sticks and crutches.

It was, however, Bishop Winnington Ingram, who influenced her the most. He was Bishop of Stepney in 1901, so he knew Chailey from the start. He confirmed the first seven boys at Fulham Palace; he dedicated St Martin's Chapel, St Helen's Chapel and Tidemills; he was the official visitor and most of all, enjoyed a game of stool ball with the boys.

In 1923 The Chapel was extended to include the Water Tower, The Doubty Song School and Cloisters, a replica of the Psallette at Tours which shelters the tomb of St Martin. The brass candlesticks, I am told, were looted by the Germans when occupying Belgium then regained by the Belgians and presented to Chailey. The stained glass in the tiny window near the North Door came from St Martin's Church in Ypres, as did the tiny wooden door on the wall to the left of the Chapel entrance.

To Granny, the chapel was where equality reigned and celebrations were held. Plays performed, balloons flown on Ascension Day, Noah's Ark Sunday and Animal Sunday, to say nothing of the lovely regular services. The dedication of the Chapel in 1913 by her Bishop, and sung by the Westminster Abbey Choir must have been a very special moment for her.



Animal Sunday, when creatures of all shapes and sizes were bought into the chapel

Outside the chapel, equality did not reign.

As a three year old, I was asked to present some flowers to a very special guest and, as she was a Queen, a curtsey would be nice. The flowers were presented with determination but no curtsey. Seeing my mother's dismay, the recipient kindly enquired about the curtsey "I left it at home came" the reply, where upon I turned my back and marched away." So like Margaret Rose" was heard.

Many years later as a gangly twelve year old, I was asked to repeat the exercise. Being at ballet school the curtsey was executed perfectly. Just as I was about the take my three steps back and escape, Her Majesty smiled and said "have you by any chance brought the curtsey you left behind last time?" - Granny, how could you?

Another unusual memory is the row of life-size wooden images of animals at the bottom of the garden, all wearing halos. This was the animal graveyard housing Bowser, Joey (Daddy's pony), Scout (Daddy's dog) and others I don't remember. They were eye catching to say the least, sadly no longer there.

WW1

I said earlier that Grace was obsessed by her Chailey children, she was, but her obsession spread to her patriotism and need to do her bit.

When, in 1914, the Great War broke out, she didn't say "how can I protect my children" she said "how can the children and I help?" And her talent for turning bad into good shone through.

She got in touch with the Ministry of Defence and offered her assistance. The reply was instant – "we need a surgical unit on the south coast for men coming back from France needing amputation". "Fine", she said, or words to that effect, "my boys will move out". They did, and St Martin's swiftly became the Princess Louise Military Hospital. There was of course method in her madness. The hospital got fully equipped and the much needed further accommodation for the boys started to emerge with the temporary huts being built, largely by the boys themselves, on Chailey Common. The first log was laid by the Vice Chancellor of London University and the huts were opened by Sir Francis Lloyd and Lord Kitchener's sister. Lord Kitchener presented a Union Jack to fly over the huts which were hurriedly named The Kitchener Huts. Who would have thought it!

Soldier students in residence and indeed "happy in their lot" – 1914-1921

In no time at all, Grace saw the relationships forming between courageous boys and soldier heroes. This alerted her inventive mind. She assigned each

convalescing soldier with an 'orderly' missing the same limb as his boss, to work together in the workshops and play together on the games field. No room for self-pity or fear on either side. How brilliant was that?

Friends alike in work and play

This scheme became known nationally as 'educative convalescence for the wounded' – another ground breaking scheme probably breaking every military medical rule in the book.

Sir Cyril Burt, the Educational Psychologist, a great strength to Granny, described her as "making a bonfire of red tape", followed by "it is the work of a charity to supply a pair of crutches, it is the work of a genius to inspire a despairing soul with the courage to live". I am not sure about the genius but she certainly had the courage.

Her war work did not stop there. In 1917 there were acutely raid-shocked children suffering from Zeppelin and Gotha air attacks on London. Some minds were seriously disturbed, needing specialist treatment together with the peace of the countryside and much TLC.

The Evening Standard, together with Lord Riddel, rented and maintained the St Nicholas Home for Raid-Shocked Children at Chailey under the umbrella of the Guild of Play, followed in 1918 by Botches, the gift of Graham Rees Mogg in Wivelsfield Green. These homes for children, crippled in mind as well as body, started with 30, and ended up treating 590. This work became known as The Trafalgar Day Experiment. Maybe they opened on Oct 21st? After the soldiers had gone and the military hospital was closed, the eminent surgeon Sir Robert Jones agreed to chair the medical board at Chailey if a new wing were built for surgery

and remedial treatment. Thanks to Dame Florence Boot's friendship with Granny, and Sir Jesse Boot's chequebook, all Sir Robert's wishes were met, giving children at Chailey the very best, just as she had planned! In 1918 ex-King Manuel of Portugal visited to open an exhibition. Why him I have no idea, but I am sure she made the most of it.

Obviously these are not my memories but over the years she told many stories so they feel as though they are. Plainly it is not my place to praise her WW1 work, but I think that this letter is something to be proud of.

The Tribute of the War Office to the Work of the Heritage for the Wounded, 1914-1920

[Copy]

C.R.I.D./42475/M

Headquarters, London District,
Horse Guards,
Whitehall, S.W.1.

Mrs. C. W. Kimmins,
O i/c Princess Louise Special Military
Surgical Hospital, Chailey, Sussex.

27th January, 1920.

Dear Mrs. Kimmins,

I have to inform you that it has been decided to close your hospital on the 31st March, 1920, and that instructions have been issued to all concerned accordingly.

The Officer Commanding, 1st London General Hospital, has been instructed to evacuate patients by that date, and arrange for the adjustment of the capitation grant.

The fact is fully appreciated at Headquarters that your scheme of Educative Convalescence for the Wounded was the earliest laid before the Military Authorities and recommended and approved by them on the 31st August 1914. Your hospital so completely equipped and furnished by Mr. Robert Mond and others will be one of the last two auxiliary hospitals to be closed in the London Command, on 31st March, 1920.

By means of your scheme so scientifically graduated, your hospital set an example which others have been quick to recognise and imitate throughout the various Commands—of excellent vocational and curative work in arts and crafts, music and sport, together with your poultry farm and agricultural course.

The foundation of the St. Nicholas Home for Raid-Shock Children was a most merciful and patriotic off-shoot of the hospital, and by it was rendered most valuable war service, whilst the fact that you willingly complied with the request of the Army Authorities to make provision for 150 additional children—surgical cases (preference given to Army orphans)—makes your six years' record of war work unique.

On behalf of Major-General Sir Geoffrey Fielding, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., the General Officer Commanding, London District, I wish to offer you my sincere thanks and appreciation of your untiring efforts and the valuable work that has been performed at your hospital during the past six years. Will you also kindly convey my grateful thanks and appreciation to Miss Rennie, and the Medical and Surgical Staff, and the Nursing, Teaching, Secretarial and Subordinate Staff, for the excellent, patrotic and devoted work that has been carried out by them in connection with the treatment, comfort, training and general welfare of the sick and wounded soldiers under their care.

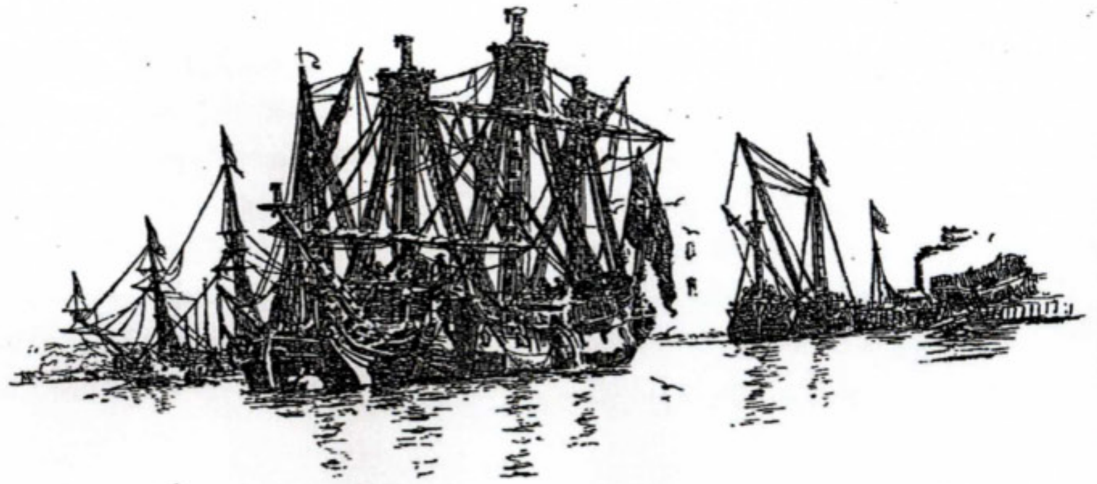
Yours faithfully,

(Signed) S. MACDONALD, Major-General.
Deputy Director of Medical Services, London District.

In 1919, Chailey Heritage became officially "a national asset". This must have added to her pride of the 28 boys who became strong enough and courageous enough to fight for their country and pay the ultimate sacrifice. In their, and of course many others, honour she asked Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, to sculpt a memorial to be placed at the entrance of the school. Princess Louise, the sixth of Queen Victoria's nine children, was the only one to marry an Englishman and the only one to be allowed outside of the royal enclosure – to train as a sculptress. On the following Armistice / St Martin's Day, the soldiers and boys together planted 28 flowering cherry trees forming, I am told, the first road of remembrance. I confess I am sad they are no longer there.

The War Memorial to the twenty eight Heritage boys who fought and fell in the First World War

After the war, Rear Admiral Ronald A Hopwood wrote a poem for Chailey, called "The Master Shipwright". He was known as the Poet Laureate of the Royal Navy. It was set to music by Henry Colman and illustrated by Harold Wylie, the naval painter and etcher. This became the School Song and was incredibly difficult to sing. We have tried on Old Scholars' Day and failed miserably.



THE MASTER SHIPWRIGHT

The ships in Chailey Dockyard lay crippled as they could be,
Rigging and masts and timbers, and in no wise fit for sea,
And some, tho' new from the cradle, seemed only built to fail,
And none might work to windward in the teeth of a winter gale.

So the Shipwrights came to Chailey to succour the ships therein,
For this is the Craftsman's honour to prove what his skill may win;
But gravely they spake and graver, as they saw the halt and lame,
'We must send for the Master Shipwright,' so the Master Shipwright came.

And no man saw His coming, but His presence was noontide clear,
In the work of the toiling Shipwrights, who worked with exceeding cheer;
He wrought no mighty magic, but He taught them day by day
To use the gifts He gave them, for that is the Master's way.

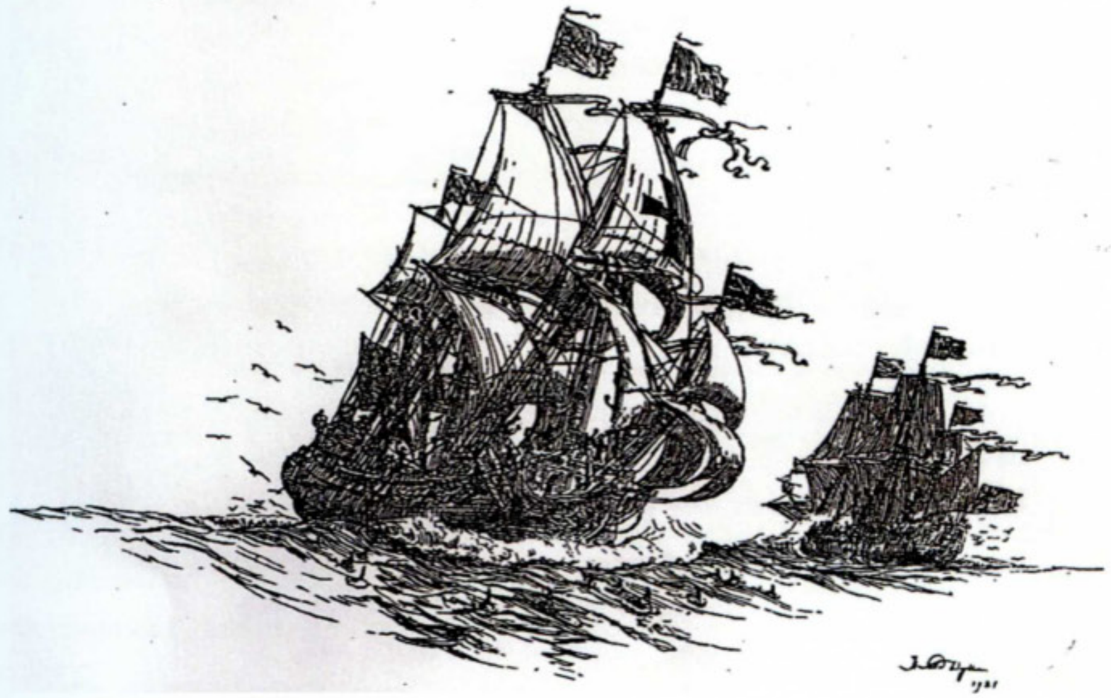
New Faith He gave to the Shipwrights, that shone in the craftsman's skill,
New Hope to the ships they tended, the Hope no wounds may kill,
But a message more than either, to toil for the Master's sake,
And the Shipwrights learned the message that the Master Shipwright spake.

For it wedded love to labour, and that's why their labour lives,
And who shall measure the giving, when the Master Shipwright gives?
Till the shipyard sang with service, as ship by ship was gained,
To carry whole her topsails, nor fear that a mast be strained.

So the craft from Chailey Dockyard go forth from the building slips,
('Twas ever the oaks of Sussex that fashioned the stoutest ships)
To speed with the summer breezes or to fight with a searching wind,
To join in the Master's service, in the service of mankind.

They hail and cheer in passing, they signal great and small,
For the mark of the Master Shipwright is on and through them all,
They carry the Shipwrights' message on a thousand new-won keels,
That men may know of the healing wherewith the Master heals.

Words by Rear-Admiral Ronald A. Hopwood, C.B.
Illustrated by Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Wyllie.
Set to music by Henry Coleman, Mus.Doc., at that time Organist and Master of the Choristers at the Heritage.



In 1964, it was sung at my Father's memorial service in St Martin's in-the-Field, the church where he was married and I was christened. The St Martin's choir truly did it justice and he would have been thrilled. Sydney Northcote, the organist and choirmaster at Chailey for twenty years, sang the solo. The words seem a little obscure but are clearly the ethos of Chailey Heritage.

Chailey thrived on the unusual. Many children were spending months in plaster casts following surgery to strengthen their limbs. You might have expected them to be warmly tucked up in wards being tenderly nursed. Not a bit of it; all beds out on verandas covered in tarpaulins in bad weather with school coming to them as if they were in class. This was the result of Grace's interest in the work of Dr Rollier, a Swiss doctor who in the same year as the Heritage was founded, opened his first clinic in Leysin in the Swiss Alps for those suffering from TB. He innovated the treatment of fresh air, diet and particularly sunlight to the skin to treat the disease. In the early days, many of Grace's children suffered from TB bone so she adopted his methods hence the verandas outside every building, including her bedroom where she slept come rain or shine. Grace went one step further to compensate for less sunshine in England than the Swiss Alps – she introduced sun lamps creating artificial sunlight to each bed.

Dr Murry Levick RN, Chailey Medical Director in 1923, was also a sunlight fanatic. He invented the string vest and never failed to point out how dramatically ladies health improved when they started to shorten their skirts and lower their necklines. Interestingly none of the children got skin cancer.

Murray Levick was a member of Captain Scott's ill-fated expedition to the South Pole. He and his party were left to conduct scientific research while Scott continued to the Pole. They had food and equipment for 6 weeks and skeleton

rations for a further month in case the Terra Nova was delayed to pick them up. As it turned out they had to spend eight and a half months in an ice cave before being able to journey back to the main camp only to discover that Scott and his companions had died nine months earlier. One of the ropes he used on the expedition is proudly hanging on a wall in St Martin's Chapel.

The coming of age of the Heritage must have been a remarkable moment in Grace's dream. Now aged 54 she had achieved her Chailey Heritage School. 153 boys, 70 girls receiving education and treatment, now recognised officially as a national asset.

Knowing her delight in the enormity, her list of patronage must have pleased her. A Royal Chief Patron, Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, the Bishop of London as President and as mere patrons, two Archbishops, twelve Bishops, three Duchesses, two Marchionesses, five Countesses, two Viscounts and a host of highly respected others, including Rudyard Kipling. Possibly a little excessive?! Today probably detrimental but it was this list of the great and the good that sealed the national recognition she so badly wanted and dare I say used without hesitation.

The morning of St Martin's Day 1924, our coming of age was drummed in by a boy with one leg, a big drum and a huge smile. This celebrated the existence of the Boys' Heritage, the Girls' Heritage, the Kitchener huts, two chapels, two operating theatres and two homes for raid-shocked children. In this year, the Duchess of Norfolk appealed for electricity and running water and Dr and Madame Rollier came to celebrate their shared anniversary.

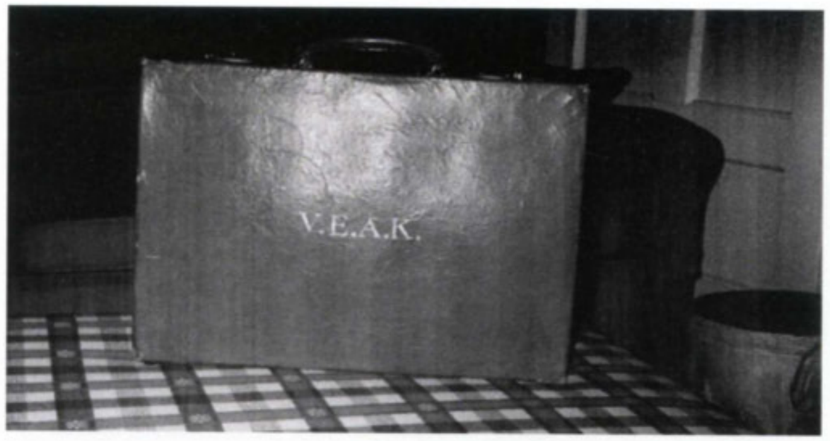
As you might expect, Granny didn't miss out on an opportunity to appeal. She asked

- 21 members of Lloyds to donate a commission
- 21 members of the stock exchange to do the same
- 21 Bishops to preach about Chailey

And so it went on, twenty one groups in all. Her fundraising skills were unique. At the other end of the scale, instead of merely collecting jumble, she had what was called 'the great green box' to which you came to present your unwanted clothes and were made to feel your donation was the most important ever received. These all went to the Guild.

Having now done a little fundraising myself, I am aware that the necessity to go that extra mile will never change. Government support will never progress further than the necessary. Excellence comes from an exceptional idea that magnetises national interest and support around government approval. In other words, don't bang your head against a brick wall, strengthen it.

There was also money coming in from the first class craft work, including printing, woodwork and leather work, Tony Medhurst, a pupil in 1935, started his own shoe mending business in Edenbridge which cared for the shoes of people from miles around because his skills were so admired. I mention him because I knew him quite well and admired him as a true representative of many who remind us of what Granny set out to do. I still have my red leather suitcase made by the boys and a little wooden money box given to me as a child and I treasure them.

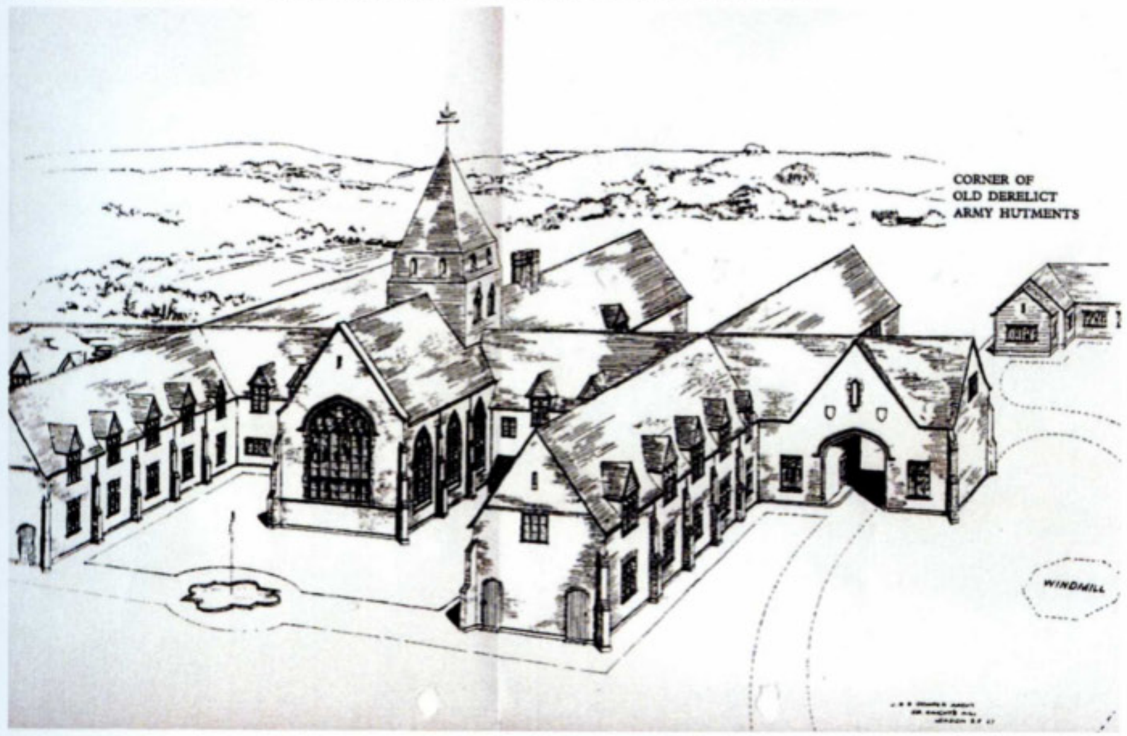


My red leather suitcase

Some memories are less romantic than others. Tidemills at Bishopstone, a row of huts right on the shingle, boys wearing no more than a loin cloth being dunked in the sea in huge shrimping nets and rows of camp beds lined up on the shingle in parade ground precision on which they lay to let the sun do its healing. This is

where the more delicate went for sea air! Apparently southern railway and an anonymous donor made the buildings possible but it was the Warren family who updated it, hence Michael and Mary wards. William Catt, another supporter, was interested in the Bishopstone shoreline with a view to harnessing the tides for scientific purposes. Sadly Tidemills was destroyed in 1940 for fear of it becoming a landmark in the war.

I have an unusual memory of apples, golden apples, which is odd because I was not born until the year after their appearance. Money was needed to replace the temporary Kitchener huts with a permanent boy's residence, St Georges. Not just an ordinary building because Grace did not do 'ordinary', but an unforgettably striking red brick building designed again by Sebastian Comper of Cathedral; and St Martin's Chapel fame. The reason apples stick in my mind is because of the majestic apple tree carved in the stone above the front door.



St George's was built high on Chailey Common next to the yew tree marking the centre of Sussex and the majestic white windmill described by John Galsworthy as 'the guardian of the Heritage colony'. Having stood idle for many years the Mill was restarted in 1933, the year I was born, by Princess Alice Duchess

of Gloucester together with my other Grandfather Admiral Sir Michael Hodges. He also gave the Ships Bell which hangs in the tower of St George's.

The boys took great pride in this building in spite of the fact it purposely forced them to walk across the Common twice a day in all weathers.

Grace's imagination came to the fore when deciding how to launch the necessary appeal for this extravaganza. Fortunately for her, King George V was recovering from ill health so obviously the appeal would celebrate his recovery, but just in case he should have a relapse, there had to be a plan B. She came up with the idea of planting an apple tree outside the chapel. You could buy a pip for a pound, a leaf for five pounds and a golden apple, made by the boys, for fifty pounds. Every time fifty pounds were raised, a golden apple would be ceremonially hung on the tree until it was full. In 1932, St George's was built for £35,000 and opened by HRH The Duke of Windsor, then Prince of Wales and later to abdicate.

HRH The Duke of Windsor & Grace followed by Admiral Sir Michael Hodges, my other grandfather

In 1995 we had to sell St George's as part of the one site development, but we retrieved the weather vane, representing Henry V111's flagship, which now stands at the entrance to the school.

Granny's powers of invention were to die for! The blue smocks worn by the boys, identical to those of Swiss workmen, strengthening the bond between Dr Rollier and herself. The big trees in the Old Heritage courtyard, some sadly no longer there, given by Sir Archibald Flower, the Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, signifying the gradual journey of a weak sapling to the strongest of strong. It seems everything at Chailey has a meaning.

****

Grace was no saint. She could be ruthless, dictatorial and she knew how to use her charm. If someone donated out of the goodness of their heart, that donation would instantly become a life-saving gift almost certainly generating more. Merciless yes, but only at Chailey. The other Grace was humble and unassuming, she avoided being photographed, she tried to avoid having her portrait painted, until unknown to her, Miss Gluck managed a tiny one. I don't think she had any other clothes other than her long purple dress and her white hat that grew wider by the year.

I often wonder if she wore them on the occasion she went to Buckingham Palace for an audience with The Queen. The next day the Telegraph gossip column reported that "Today Grace Kimmins had an audience with The Queen at Buckingham Palace which included being stuck in the lift for an hour."

I am sure The Queen saw the funny side, I hope Grace did.

More of Granny's unbelievably generous supporters were Seymour and Nesta Obermer. They lived at Plumpton and did not have children of their own. One day, Seymour was walking across Chailey Common when he met a group of Chailey boys who stopped and bade him good afternoon. So struck was he with their

manners and their ease of communication that he asked where the founder lived and went and knocked on her door. He was a man of few words and when the door was opened by this purple clad lady, instead of introducing himself, he said "I would like to help you, is there anything you want?" to which the reply was instant, "Yes, I would like a new building". Hey presto, Obermer appeared, another Comper masterpiece housing the printing schools downstairs and the remedial gym above.

Seymour and Nesta became involved for many years. They were on the Council and also involved with building the Princess Elizabeth Clinic for tiny babies. On the occasion of The Queen and the two princesses visited Chailey in 1945, there is a beautiful picture of Princess Elizabeth with one of the tiny babies in her arms, a little boy called Maurice Occleshaw, I do wonder where he is today?

The tiny babies at the Girls' Heritage were magical, often pitiful but cherished by Sister Roake who later married our Medical Director, Dr Quibell. Also at the girls' Heritage we were fascinated by Mirror Grange. A huge dolls house built in 1929 by the Daily Mirror for their cartoon characters Pip, Squeak and Wilfred, to raise money for The Princess Elizabeth Clinic for tiny babies. Pip was a penguin, Squeak was a cat and Wilfred a rabbit. I don't suppose many people remember them, but they were national celebrities.

Pip, Squeak and Wilfred's Home Sold!

Mirror Grange, the home of the children's cartoon strip in the Daily Mirror was sold recently at Bonhams in London.

In 1928 the Daily Mirror decided to build a model house, furnish it and exhibit it for charity. It was built by Higgs & Hill and completed in 1929 and exhibited in various parts of the country. All profits were assigned to Chailey Heritage and were put towards a new unit for handicapped babies. The Daily Mirror dedicated the house to the characters of the popular cartoon strip Pip, Squeak and Wilfred.

The house has been sold to a private buyer who has seen it on show in the past and has always loved it; he and his wife were fans of the Pip, Squeak and Wilfred cartoon strip. They have postcards of the interiors and are planning to restore the house to its original condition. The purchasers would also be very happy to lend Mirror Grange to museums which might be interested.

The price realised was £8000 and this will go into the Chailey Challenge.

After it had toured the country to raise money it came to rest in the toddlers' ward. It was 7'6" high, 8' wide and 7' deep, huge and totally absorbing.

Two attics with suitcases, boxes and trunks, scaled 1 inch to 1 foot and perfect in every way. An unopened income tax envelope, hand blown glasses, a 28 page reproduction of the Daily Mirror with letters clear to read. A portrait of George V by Sir Arthur Cope, Queen Mary by Walter Russell and the three occupants by Sir

William Orpen. I just remember the enormity and the detail that went into this masterpiece. When I came back to Chailey in 1961, the Grange was in the big hall at St George's which proved quite a problem when St George's was sold. It was far too big to go anywhere on the Old Heritage site so sadly we decided to sell. It was sold at auction in 1996 for £8,000 which went towards the new residential bungalows. It had worked for Chailey for over sixty years and ended up in private hands in Forest Row.

****

By the end of the Second World War my memories are clearer, even if now fading with old age.

HRH The Duchess of York who first visited in 1927 was now HM The Queen and our Patron. During World War two her majesty suggested we build The Queen Elizabeth Building for Blitzed Babies which was opened by HRH The Duchess of Gloucester in 1942. By now, Granny had built a relationship with the American British War Relief Society. This is a dark memory, not because they gave a recreation hall for St George's called Liberty, but because they gave sweets and clothes for Chailey which to my acute embarrassment we shared.

I went back to school in widely striped flannel pyjamas suitable only for Alcatraz but free of clothing coupons and was further embarrassed when I received a parcel at school from Granny containing a huge tin of barley sugars when sweets were not only not allowed, but also unavailable. These had to be discreetly shared after lights out and are probably the cause of my very inferior teeth.

In 1940 Alice Rennie died and it is my belief that this was the start of the final chapter for Grace. Her best friend, her treasurer and her guide in all things practical had gone. Finances were difficult and she was getting tired but to all intents and purposes her dream had become a reality.

- Pupil numbers had risen from 7 to 500
- A Boys' and Girls' Heritage
- A majestic boys' residential block
- A nurses' home, Warren Wood, given by the Warren family
- The acquisition of two more fields at the Old Heritage , bought from the Council with an eye to the future

- Two beautiful chapels
- Two operating theatres
- Facilities for tiny babies
- The Foundation of Rehabilitation for the Wounded
- £1.5 million raised in 40 years

The Ministry of Education allowed the fees to rise to £250 PA and £12,500 was received in compensation for Tidemills.

I guess the highlight came in 1945 when she was able to show every corner of it to her Queen and the two princesses.

In 1946 Grace decided to retire as administrator. She was shocked and saddened by the prospect of Mr Atlee nationalising the hospitals and engulfing her school. Her baby and her home were to be taken away and put into strange and materialistic hands, completely conflicting with her single-minded faith in her work and all those around her. She certainly did not see this as a compliment, which strangely it was as it was the excellence of her work that caused Chailey to be listed as a national asset. Sadly by now some of her closest friends had lost faith in her, but to their credit they had the courage to say so which prompted her letter of resignation. I wish she had made the most difficult decision of her life before they did.

Once again, she looked for good in bad. She had no one to take her place. She asked my mother but she had just got my father back from the war, he was going back into the film business and family life was starting again but not at Chailey. Grace saw that the State would solve the lack of finance that had accrued during the war, and would ensure Chailey's future, whatever that might be. Of course she did not like her protégé becoming a tiny pebble on a huge beach but better that than no pebble at all. For a time she was allowed to stay in her house with most of it turned into a nurse's home. She was looked after by Mr and Mrs Keating who previously were house parents at St George's. Jim and Keaty, as we called them, were wonderful, real Chailey people who understood this fading but gallant lady. Keaty was known by the Chailey children as 'Mum' and in later years when living in South Chailey, she would come home, to Cogans, and cook wonderful sponge puddings.

1947.

THE HERITAGE CRAFT SCHOOLS

Hospitals and Homes for Cripples

CHAILEY, SUSSEX

Founder and Hon. Secretary:
Mrs. C. W. KIMMINS, D.St.J., C.B.E.
to whom all cheques should be made payable

Telephones: NEWICK 111 (4 lines)
available in Office Hours: 9 am–5 pm.
Telegrams: Kimmins, Chailey, Sussex
Visitors (preferably by appointment) 2–4

Patron, HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
President, THE DUKE OF NORFOLK, P.C., K.G.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen

It has been brought to my notice from various sources that there is dissatisfaction amongst certain members of the Governing Body and Staff regarding the administration of the Heritage.

Since Miss Rennie and I first founded Chailey 43 years ago, and particularly since she died, though her indelible influence on the place will live for ever, I have been its chief Administrator and I hope I have reason to be proud of the work.

At the same time I hope I shall always be the first to face facts and there can be no doubt that advancing years and certain physical disabilities now make it

HAYWARDS HEATH STN.
should be used—and Southdown Buses, which pass the doors of the Boys' Heritage, leave the Station at 35 minutes past each hour.

THE HERITAGE CRAFT SCHOOLS

Hospitals and Homes for Cripples

CHAILEY, SUSSEX

Founder and Hon. Secretary:
Mrs. C. W. KIMMINS, D.Sc., J.C.B.E.
to whom all cheques should be made payable

Telephones: NEWICK 111 (4 lines)
available in Office Hours: 9 am–5 pm.
Telegrams: Kimmins, Chailey, Sussex
Visitors (preferably by appointment) 2–4

Patron, HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
President, THE DUKE OF NORFOLK, P.C., K.G.

impossible for me to continue with the day by day administration as I have done in the past. I feel that this is the age for youth. I therefore feel that in the best interests of the Heritage I should be relieved of those administrative responsibilities as soon as possible.

At various stages in the growth of the ~~Society~~ School I have asked you, who are sitting round this table, to become members of my Governing ~~Body~~, and I should like to take this opportunity of expressing my great thanks for all you have done to help me in my work.

HAYWARDS HEATH STN. should be used—and Southdown Buses, which pass the doors of the Boys' Heritage, leave the Station at 31 minutes past each hour.

THE HERITAGE CRAFT SCHOOLS

Hospitals and Homes for Cripples

CHAILEY, SUSSEX

Founder and Hon. Secretary:
Mrs. C.W. KIMMINS, D.Sc. J., C.B.E.
to whom all cheques should be made payable

Telephones: NEWICK 111 (4 lines)
available in Office Hours: 9 am–5 pm.
Telegrams: Kimmins, Chailey, Sussex
Visitors (preferably by appointment) 2–4

Patron, HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
President, THE DUKE OF NORFOLK, P.C., K.G.

When one has given up the best years of one's life to a work of this kind and has watched and been responsible for its growth from the condemned workhouse to the Public School of Crippledom which exists today, you will understand that it is not easy for me to take this decision, but I trust that far in any way from diminishing my close connection with Chailey, it will in fact enable me to devote my remaining years to the broader aspects of its welfare which I hold so very close to my heart.

HAYWARDS HEATH STN.
should be used—and Southdown Buses, which pass the doors of the Boys' Heritage, leave the Station at 35 minutes past each hour.

THE HERITAGE CRAFT SCHOOLS

Hospitals and Homes for Cripples

CHAILEY, SUSSEX

Founder and Hon. Secretary:
Mrs. C. W. KIMMINS, D.Sc.J., C.B.E.
to whom all cheques should be made payable

Telephones: NEWICK 111 (4 lines)
available in Office Hours: 9am–5pm.
Telegrams: Kimmins, Chailey, Sussex
Visitors (preferably by appointment) 2–4

Patron, HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
President, THE DUKE OF NORFOLK, P.C., K.G.

Mr chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,
I ask you herewith to release me from my responsibilities as chief administrator of the Heritage and hope that you will see your way to arrange as soon as possible for the necessary personnel to take these responsibilities from my shoulders.

So ends the first chapter of Chailey, Mr chairman. I wish all good luck to the second.

HAYWARDS HEATH STN.
should be used—and Southdown Buses, which pass the doors of the Boys' Heritage, leave the Station at 35 minutes past each hour.

The Board of Governors in the late 1940's with my mother and uncle Brian

Finally, it all got too much for Granny and she was moved to Hayward's Heath hospital. My cousin Biddy and I used to visit her there, we came to Hayward's Heath by train and walked to the hospital, eating Newbury Fruits and discussing Mrs Dale's diary; why do these random memories last so long?

In 1954, her extraordinary life came to an end. The flag flew at half-mast and staff and scholars who knew her were deeply saddened. So often, saying goodbye is truly goodbye, but in my book she never left.

Believe it or not this is true. In 1958, 4 years after she died, two student nurses, who knew nothing about Granny, were walking in the garden when they saw a lady coming towards them. They were about to greet her when she faded away. Shocked and scared, they ran to Tom Galletly, the chaplain, who had been at Chailey for years. He asked them to describe her and all they could come up with was a purple dress and a white hat. He took them to her portrait and explained who she was and they were sure it was her.

I am too, because they saw her in the spot where she always took her evening walk.

My childish memories of Chailey are not extensive but deeply penetrating. A complete delight in this very unusual Granny mixed with an essence of fear and absolutely no wish to follow in her footsteps... famous last words.

Obituary

DAME GRACE KIMMINS

FOUNDER OF CHAILEY SCHOOLS

With the death of Dame Grace Kimmins yesterday in hospital at Haywards Heath at the age of 83 there passes one of the most remarkable women in the field of social endeavour.

It was due to her inspiration, her faith, and her indomitable will and purpose that that most famous of all the modern institutions of its kind—the Heritage Craft Schools and Hospitals, at Chailey, in Sussex—was conceived and established more than 50 years ago. Under

her leadership, Chailey developed into a model centre for the care and training of crippled children, and to the schools and hospitals came men and women from all parts of the world in order that they might learn, profit from, and follow her example.

Grace Thyrza Hannam, the daughter of James and Thyrza Hannam, was born into a comfortable middle-class family, and she inherited the instinct for social service as a tradition. Even in her early days at Wilton House School she was moved by the neglected suffering of the poor, blind, and crippled in London, and much individual voluntary work on her part in their service brought to her side a number of willing helpers and supporters. On St. Martin's Day, in 1894, when Grace Hannam was still in her early twenties, and inspired largely by Mrs. Ewing's famous book *The Story of a Short Life*, she called the first meeting which led to the foundation of the Guild of the Brave Poor Things, with its motto: *Laetus sorte mea*.

With the aim in mind of bringing together as many maimed people as possible, irrespective of age, creed, or any other limit, to make them truly "happy in my lot," she gathered about her an impressive collection of notable people to aid her in her task. They included Mrs. Henry Fawcett, wife of the blind Postmaster-General, Adeline Duchess of Bedford, Lady Henry Somerset, Emmeline Pethick, later to become Lady Pethick-Lawrence, Mrs. Hugh Price Hughes, Lady Lunn, and many others. From the hall of the West London Mission in Cleveland Street to the headquarters of the Bermondsey University Settlement, and finally to the Chapter House of Southwark Cathedral, moving as it grew, the Guild flourished. Branches were established in many parts of the country, and out of it came Mrs. Kimmins's dream of establishing her school for crippled children.

In 1903, six years after Grace Hannam had become the wife of Dr. Charles William Kimmins, the noted educationist, she was able to open in the most modest and primitive way at Chailey, the first residential school with hospital treatment for cripples. It began with seven boys drawn from the Guild of the Brave Poor Things housed in buildings which consisted partly of an old workhouse and partly of an industrial school—buildings which had already been condemned as unfit for habitation. In 40 years the numbers had increased to more than 500—boys and girls housed in magnificent modern buildings, drilled in the arts and crafts to become intelligent, independent, self-supporting citizens.

ROYAL PATRONAGE

Warmly supported and aided by her husband and their friends, Mrs. Kimmins was able for some years to finance the early stages of development and to continue operations by private benefactions, but as the fame of Chailey grew and its commitments increased, public assistance was appealed for and was speedily forthcoming. No great charity in British history has had warmer or more generous support, or a greater variety of well-wishers. Moved by the astonishing energy and driving force of Mrs. Kimmins, quickly advancing from one achievement to the next and always undaunted, some of the most influential people in this country and in America gave it their blessing and their money. Queen Mary was an early friend, and for some years Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother has been its patron, taking the closest personal interest in its welfare and progress. The Duke of Norfolk was president, and for 45 years, until the Heritage was taken over by the Government under the National Health Service, Dame Grace remained at the administrative helm. Nominally honorary secretary, there she was, well into her seventies, still inspiring and directing the vast operations of this unique centre.

Grace Kimmins was that rarest combination, a masterful, methodical, driving woman with, as one of her candid friends once remarked, "a resolute knowledge of what she wanted and a tremendous belief in her own powers," but her personality was tempered by deep compassion for suffering humanity in every sphere, and an astonishing capacity for making and holding friends who appreciated her candour just as much as her devotion and her ability. Even after the Government had taken over her beloved schools and hospitals, and relieved her colleagues and herself of the responsibilities which they had so gaily and devotedly discharged, she was still busy, often from a sick bed, devising ways and means by which in her own way she could add to the comforts and happiness of the Chailey children, who adored her. In 1927 she was made a C.B.E. and in the 1950 Birthday Honours promoted D.B.E. For years she had been a Dame of Grace of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

Her two sons are Major-General B. C. H. Kimmins, C.B., C.B.E., and Captain Anthony Kimmins, O.B.E., R.N., the author and dramatist.

The Times
March 4th 1954

After Grace

My life until Chailey had gone pretty much in one direction. A hasty retreat from a deadly day school, the Bice Bellairs School of Dance, child dancer in pantomime, Elmhurst Ballet School, a year failing to become 'a young lady' in Switzerland, two years in the Windsor Repertory Company, two films in Australia and eight years stage managing in the west end of London. What better?

Until along comes Benjamin John Hanbury, a handsome, kind and loveable man with two proposals on offer. First – Will you marry me? Second – It's me or the theatre. Goodbye career, hello married life. I could not have been happier; the prospect of married life seemed all that I wanted.

My dad knew better – Anthony Kimmins, sailor, actor, film director, WW2 broadcaster and author, knew that to perfect my life I would need another dimension which led, thanks to his and my mother's guidance, to fifty wonderful years of marriage, five pretty wonderful children and Chailey Heritage, all growing up together at Cogans, Piltdown, East Sussex.

From 1954 to 1962, I don't think I ever went to Chailey. I was busy being a luvvy and Chailey was a childhood memory, Granny's latter days were not Chailey.

Ben and I were married in 1962 in Cuckfield Church. It was a Tuesday because that was a no matinee day and our theatre friends would be free. I had 12 unruly bridesmaids and pages including five great grandchildren of the founder. The sun shone, the service went without a hitch except for Ben's home vicar causing quite a disturbance by falling off his chair. The Chailey Choir sang superbly, Mr Leggatt the Choirmaster and Organist had written us a personal descant to Praise my soul the King of Heaven at which point my cousin, Bishop Geoffrey Tiarks, who was marrying us, handed me his hanky and told me to get a grip.

On our return from honeymoon, we moved to Cogans and reality set in. My first morning at Chailey was at the Girls, now called the New Heritage, as a voluntary helper. With me, also on her first day, was Rosalind Shand. We were both very apprehensive and at lunch time agreed to give it a week before we gave up. Ros became a big favourite with children and staff, often inviting them home to play with her daughters at Plumpton. Ros remained invaluable to Chailey for many years until ill health overtook her. Chailey missed her.

As for me, because of my family connections, I was invited to join the board of school governors who ran the school, and the NHS House Committee which ran what by then was known as the hospital.

Amongst the Governors were some awe inspiring and quite alarming people. Dame Ruth Buckley and Gabriel Reed, both of whom would position their Times crossword beside their agenda, and would never fail to complete it while providing the wisest of advice when appropriate. There was Rendell Jones who delighted in drawing attention to a typo, and a fault in the figures made his day! My favourite was Corny Shelford who exercised his humour on me mercilessly, to the extent of making me kneel at his feet if I was late. He was the past master of playing devil's advocate to spice up a meeting. I recall a rather sensitive discussion involving the possibility of selling the New Heritage to rebuild everything at the Old to save on transport. Corny was against this proposal and when asked what his alternative would be, he replied, without a flicker of a smile, "a funicular".

Wouldn't Granny have loved the vision of 100 wheelchairs flying through the air, over Chailey Common over the A272 and descending into the Chapel courtyard!

Corny also founded the Friends of Chailey Heritage to raise money to build the hall in memory of Granny. It was a much needed building for speech days, assemblies and the many productions until now performed without stage or lighting. The stage curtains for the Memorial Hall were spectacular, made at the Royal School of Needlework, depicting St Martin, the windmill, the yew tree and the beggar, to whom he gave half his cloak. They were made using the technique of spontaneous representation in needle and thread, developed by Mr D Holt.

I was the baby and the new girl amongst these people who tried to teach me about committees; I wish I had learnt more.

The House Committee was an NHS Committee with governors mixed in. This mix of health and education worked well because unlike today, the sole interest of both parties was the same; the children at Chailey. The day all House Committees were disbanded and regional and area alternatives took over was a sad day for Chailey. I was on the mid-Sussex Hospital Management Committee and the Area Health Authority which demonstrated loud and clear how difficult this unique marriage between health and education was going to be for us. In the early days I did not get the welcome I had hoped for. The last thing the NHS wanted was a

young thing thinking she owned the place and quoting the past. I had to tread very softly and prove I was there to learn, not to know.

****

My father was by now quite unwell and had resigned from all committees. He had given as much time as he could to Chailey and had successfully used his theatrical friends to raise money.

On one occasion Evelyn Laye came to open the annual fete in aid, that year, of a swimming pool. She concluded her opening remarks by inviting everyone to spend their pennies to make a beautiful pool. I thought it was funny; I'm not sure about her. All my father's plays and film premieres were in aid of Chailey, which spread the word far and wide.

His last effort was the nativity play he wrote for the children to perform in the chapel. He directed, I stage managed; though I say it myself my lighting plan was a masterpiece. Every move or line spoken was preceded by a light prompting those whose memories were not too good and those who could not hear. For those who could not see, other cast members were at hand. I was back in my past with eight dimmer boards all working at once and Mr Leggatt giving the organ its full scope.

During rehearsals I learnt the reality of the thalidomide era. One evening I had set a lamp to dramatically light up the Angel Gabriel, the following evening she was in the dark. "Tara", I said, "we did this last night, stand straight and get in the light." Out of the darkness came a giggle, "Sorry, Mrs H, I left my legs at St George's." This was the resolute approach that these very bright, limbless and sometimes bitter children adopted. They had every reason to be bitter because they knew their problems could have been avoided if their mother had not been prescribed Thalidomide; it was that which was so hard to come to terms with.

Their determination was second to none.

Tara won two bronzes and a silver swimming in the 1984 and 1988 Paralympics, and at Barcelona in 1992 she won silver in the 100m freestyle and gold in the 50m breast stroke, a world record. Peter Hull and Peter Cordice were also proven athletes as recorded in this article.

Picture by Gray Mortimore/Allsport

Barcelona '92

Every newspaper, every magazine, every Radio and T.V. Station gave enormous coverage to the Olympic Games in Barcelona last Summer. Never had they been so well and so imaginatively staged in front of huge audiences. They were followed shortly by the Para Olympics and the mass media – with a few honourable exceptions – were no more to be seen or heard, happily back to the midden or reporting on man's inhumanity to man and spiritual wickedness in high places. And so all credit to the Spaniards themselves who welcomed the large numbers of handicapped athletes from all over the world with the same warmth and enthusiasm and royal patronage.

Two old scholars of Chailey distinguished themselves and brought fame and honour to the Heritage. Tara Flood won a gold in the fifty metres breast stroke, a silver in the 100 metres free style and a bronze in the fifty metres free style, while Peter Hull won three Golds – all world records – in the fifty metres back stroke, the fifty metres free style and the hundred metres free style. Peter Cordice who had taken part in the Korean Olympics and who had trained so hard for Barcelona ran in the two hundred metres sprint and the relay but just failed to achieve a medal. But his picture appeared in full colour on the sports page of the Daily Telegraph to the eternal credit of the Sports Editor.

H.C.D.

Tara's swimming ability showed at a young age, when she and her friends asked me to sponsor them for a sponsored swim. I asked how many lengths they might do, "Oh, just a few", she said. I dutifully filled in the form pledging a pound a length. I could not go to the event and Matron handed me the result in chapel on Sunday. I looked at it standing for the first hymn and promptly sat. They had swum 100 lengths. I forgave her later when she carved me a wooden sign saying Cogans. I have no idea how she did it but I treasured it.

Her friend Alison Lapper also became a friend of mine; she became an admired artist and sculptress. She could be scathing about Chailey but I think she appreciated the help it gave her to achieve her very talented life.

Ian Dury, another pupil, founded Ian Dury and The Blockheads and had a No 1 hit with "Hit me with your rhythm stick".

Another Old Scholar wrote to Granny telling her he had made a large oak Crucifix with three steps, standing 13ft high and 5ft wide which was erected in St Pauls Church Knightsbridge in memory of the fallen in the First World War. He also made small crucifixes that took apart to go in a chaplain's haversack when attending the dying during battle. Granny quotes this letter in an article written by her in the Cripples Journal in 1925. These are a very few of the many old scholars of whom Chailey is so proud.

****

The Fifties and Sixties were times of change – new schemes between education and health came & went, the title Chailey Heritage Foundation, with us from 1952 – 1959 was dropped but is with us again today. The school achieved independence from the NHS and became a charitable trust and guess what; we went co-ed.

Wheelchairs were more and more numerous which rocked the management because no buildings were wheelchair friendly.

Relations between school and NHS also became a little rocky because the children were no longer genuine hospital patients in beds, but pupils with medical needs. Parents naturally preferred their children to be registered as pupils rather than patients, which delighted me as it was a sign of a swing back to the original concept.

After daddy died we continued doing the nativity play until the actors' disabilities started to take over from their performances, so to avoid exploitation we decided to call it a day.

Before we did, I was asked to take the play into Lewes Prison to perform in their chapel. I spent some evenings before setting up with the help of some inmates being regaled with, I am told, much exaggerated accounts of their crimes.

One told me how successful he had been 'doing the pubs' until he discovered I was married to a brewer. They also made it clear that nativity plays were not really their thing, so you can imagine when we arrived on the night I was more than a little nervous. As the door slammed behind us I thought this must be the biggest mistake of my life. The prisoners were wonderful with the children and all went well until we were ready to start.

They filed into the chapel glum, noisy and definitely under a three line whip. The key had been turned and there was no escape; we had to go on. I took the lights down and a very small child with a live lamb on his knee wheeled himself up the aisle; you could have heard a pin drop. At the end, when I went out to thank them for being such an appreciative audience, I saw a very large, very dark gentleman with tears streaming down his face. I told him there was nothing sad about our children "No" he said "that's the point - I am here angrily serving a year's sentence for being bad ; your children are serving life sentences , through no fault of their own, with smiles on their faces. I am ashamed."

A few weeks later Ben and I were invited to their carol service. This same man sang the most beautiful rendition of *Silent Night*. Afterwards, Ben went to congratulate him and said he hoped to hear him again next year. "I hope you bloody don't!" came the reply.

I would like to say at this point that Ben did more for Chailey than anyone will ever know. What is more, he did my typing. How devoted was that?

****

As years went by, staff started to ask about the history of Chailey. At the same time, there was still this feeling outside our gates that no one was welcome inside, a myth we were desperate to dispel. An idea to address both situations was to stage a 'Son et Lumière' guiding people round the Old Heritage site with a

recorded commentary telling the story, lighting to indicate the various points of interest and music from the chapel for atmosphere.

The soundtrack was brilliant, going from the pony and trap arriving with Grace and Alice in 1903, through to gunfire and sirens and The Last Post. I wish I knew where it was now.

I was happy again with my dimmer boards and also overjoyed to witness the change in people's views of Chailey. For the Lumière bit to be effective, it happened in the evening followed by a barbecue. We ran for a week and had the maximum number allowed every night. I think it was one of the most successful PR events we have done.

We also had fun times like taking a 7 a-side team to play football at Temple Grove, our sons' prep school. Of course Chailey won easily using sticks and crutches to their advantage. The days when the P.U.P.S. organisation took the whole school to Littlehampton. I remember carrying children down steep steps to whizz around the harbour in boats.

Health and safety? Forget it! P.U.P.S legitimately stood for something to do with the United Press but in their world it was the Piss Up Pudding Society because they always had steak and kidney pudding and ale after their meetings.

****

Then came the time I am a little ashamed of. Eighteen years as Chairman. I should have retired sooner when Chailey progressed from a campaign to a business and needed a business brain in the chair, but there always seemed to be one more thing to complete before I did.

They were not easy years. Four different Heads, the undeserved trauma arising for parents having to go to tribunal to achieve funding from Education and Health. The pupil forecast did not look good and most depressing of all was the increasing severity of the children's needs, making their achievements less apparent.

Children were coming to Chailey because we had the NHS on site and the school needed to take these increasing medical problems on board. Radical decisions had to be made.

First, how to continue to be considered a unique national need in today's world; secondly, how to do it keeping excellence as a priority.

The first was not too difficult remembering our marriage with the Health Authority is unique but we had to specialise in areas not widely catered for elsewhere.

Cerebral Palsy was affecting our largest number of pupils and their needs were clear – communication and mobility. Gradually technology was becoming our route to success and clarifying our route to the future.

Suddenly, a feeling of rather static decay turned into an exciting prospect with technology providing remote access to powered chairs, computers, voice activators, the sound beam, eye gaze, 3D printers and more. Each child needed personalised equipment and training to activate a remote control. This was right up the street of our technicians but needed finance which was not forthcoming from any authority.

The second decision was more complicated. The majority of the children were sleeping at St George's, schooling at the Old Heritage and going to the New Heritage for treatment, riding and swimming. They were constantly loaded on and off buses with all hopes of acquiring independent mobility and any sense of control over their own lives merely a pipe dream. The buses had to go, independent access to all daily needs had to be available to wheelchairs, and four sites had to reduce to one.

It was a unanimous agreement at Governor / Trustee level that a One Site Chailey Heritage was the way forward, but this could never be achieved without enthusiastic backing from all corners. Most importantly, the staff must be fully involved and confident that this was not just a cost-cutting exercise, but truly in the interest of the pupils. Parents had to be fully in the picture and confident that today's child would not suffer for tomorrows, and public opinion was crucial in terms of planning permission and traffic problems, to say nothing of fundraising.

Most of all, Education and Health had to come closer together. No longer would there be a hospital and a school separately serving the same group. There would be a residential / day school with clinical services onsite, which would also be creating new services of their own.

The first step was to have the two major sites surveyed to get a professional decision on which site should be developed. This was a tense moment for me as I am not sure I would have had my heart in it if the original site, where our foundations lay, had not been chosen.

After months of frustrating discussion with the NHS, we produced a joint report entitled 'The Way Ahead', known better to some as 'The Way Astern'. Finally, Julia Cumberlege and I, as the two chairmen involved, retired to Cogans and wrote to each other asking our relevant boards to agree two points. She would ask me, or rather the Governors, to take back all residential responsibilities from the NHS and I would suggest to her that we would agree, subject to new residences being built on the Old Heritage site. To our amazement, it worked, and the one site development started to roll. The following year, Julia was moved on to chair the Regional Board so had to resign from the Area and also as their representative on our Board; she had done a brilliant job for us.

This agreement made it obvious that the first phase of a major appeal would be new residences in the hands of the school. This worried the NHS because they found it difficult to have faith in our fundraising abilities continuing to complete their needs. I don't blame them because at that time, it was just me and the school facing the millions of pounds needed. To try to instil a little confidence, the school decided to raise the first million to move all the very young children from the hospital site to the Old Heritage before launching the first major appeal and putting anyone at risk. This involved converting the so far unstructured basement of the class room block, to house the pre-school assessment unit and the NHS crèche side by side.

This gave facilities for staff children to play amongst those with disabilities, who could then move across to the assessment unit where, from the age of two to four, their future placements could be prepared for by a multidisciplinary team and parents together. This was very successful for the parents, the NHS and for the school. The Primary children, for whom Chailey was the chosen option, went into the classroom above to allow easy integration into the main school. This preliminary phase was opened by HRH The Duchess of Kent in 1992.

****

During this time, life had gone on. We celebrated our 80th anniversary with a Chapel service attended by our Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, who then planted a magnolia tree and had tea in the Memorial Hall. She departed by helicopter, having given permission for her backup car to give my son Timothy a lift up to London. All went well until the driver forgot he had a

passenger and drove through the palace gates. "I don't actually live here", came nervously from the back, followed by a hurried U turn and a re-route to Hans Street.

A group of children and I had a fun day taking part in Simon Williams's " This is Your Life" program and an Old Scholar, Dennis Gobbee , who was a respected rose grower, created a Grace Kimmins Rose . Ben and I planted some at Cogans but sadly, unlike their namesake, they wilted. Dennis also made a new "Ship of Chailey Dockyard" to replace the original stolen from the Chapel. The ship was received and presented to the Chapel by our Lord Lieutenant, Admiral Sir Lindsey Bryson.

To celebrate The Queen Mother's 90th birthday, the Dean and Chapter of Westminster asked her what she would like as a present. Her reply was "a gift to one of my charities, Chailey Heritage".

After many discussions with the Dean, we came up with a sculpture of a wise owl on a wooden plinth sculpted by John Skelton. It should be at wheelchair height for children to touch and tactile for those who couldn't see.

Originally it sat in the Primary Department with room to practise driving around it; now it sits outside Llangattock for all to see and touch. The fact that we were chosen by our Patron to receive the gift was heart-warming. Her Majesty had watched over Chailey since her first visit in 1927. Witnessing poverty related problems, war related problems, the 1947 polio epidemic, spinabifida, the introduction of wheel chairs and then the horror of the thalidomide drug affecting the growth of limbs, HM had seen us through it all with encouragement and understanding.

****

One of the most stable and reliable elements of Chailey are the Friends because they support the school, now the foundation, and clinical services equally. It was, therefore, ideal when Clifford Dann, their Chairman, offered his committee to head our first major appeal for the single site, The Chailey Challenge.

This was agreed and we immediately started to plan the launch. We decided on one formal one, with the permission of our Patron, at St James Palace. Queen Elizabeth attended, preceded by five corgis that mingled with the guests as graciously as their owner.

Then we thought we would have a slightly lighter hearted one in Sussex. The Buxted Park Hotel offered their services and we sent out invitations saying that the Guest of Honour would be announced at a later date.

Television impressionist Janet Brown donned her best Margaret Thatcher guise on Monday to help the League of Friends of Chailey Heritage launch a £5million appeal. Held at the Buxted Park Hotel, the launch was attended by Wealden MP, Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, the Rt Rev Peter Ball, the Bishop of Lewes, and the Lord Lieutenant, Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson. They and the other guests heard of the work that Chailey Heritage does with severely handicapped children and young people. The Chailey Challenge appeal aims to raise £5million to fund the centralisation and improvement of facilities, which are currently provided on four widely separated sites in North Chailey. At the launch on Monday the fund-raising was given a head start when George Wilson from the UK Charities and Lotteries Ltd presented the Heritage with a cheque for £35,000. Janet Brown is pictured (waving) with the great-grandchildren and grandchildren of the founder of the Heritage, (back row) Simon, Ben and Timothy Hanbury; front row, Verena and Lucinda Hanbury and a cousin Biddy Chittenden

When all the great, good and lowly of Sussex were gathered we asked them to welcome Margaret Thatcher who had just arrived to launch the appeal. Some were impressed, some decidedly not. It was of course Janet Brown, her No1 impersonator who, very well briefed, had every one laughing and launched the appeal in style.

Our last meeting with our Patron was to celebrate her own 100th birthday in 2000, when we paraded with all her many charities on Horse Guards Parade. My day was made meeting Desert Orchid!

On the 30th of March 2002 our Patron died and an era came to an end.

Her Majesty visiting Chailey on our 80th Anniversary

Now I had a problem. I was advised that you do not expect another Royal Patron in these circumstances, but to wait and see. I felt that because we were one of her smaller charities we probably did not deserve one but there was one person whose mother in law, Princess Alice, had been closely connected in the past, who I truly wished to be our Patron. In 2003 I plucked up my courage and wrote to HRH The Duchess of Gloucester; to the joy of us all, she accepted.

That same year, on Founders Day, we celebrated our centenary with circus and fair attractions; a true carnival spirit ending with a huge birthday cake cut by the oldest and the youngest there. Believe it or not, I did not qualify.

My job was to release ten doves to represent ten decades and we would all watch them fly off into the sunset. With a flourish I opened the basket expecting a flurry of white feathers, they just sat there. I picked one up and propelled it into the air, it took one look and returned to the basket! Anti-climax to say the least, but bringing much merriment to the end of a great day.

Earlier in our discussions with the NHS, we had achieved an agreement signed by Alan Bedford and myself, which was of no value but stated that the school should sell St George's to contribute to the new residences and the NHS should sell the New Heritage, or the Hospital Site as it was known, to fund their needs at the Old Heritage. Anything left over should come into the development.

Sadly they did not sell until years later, so it did not work out quite according to plan. The School kept their side of the bargain and sold St Georges which helped towards the start of the appeal, achieving six bungalows, one of which was given by The Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust, named Nightingales, which was Joan Kleinwort's maiden name.

This appeal for £5 million, The Chailey Challenge, was to build six bungalows, the Bradbury Medical Unit, the swimming pool, and to cover the secondary courtyard. At the same time, the top of Obermer was to house Administration and money had to be raised for Clinical Services.

One new friend to this appeal was Richard Stamp, Founder and Conductor of the Academy of London Orchestra. He recorded *Carnival of the Animals*, which Sir John Gielgud generously narrated for us, then later he recorded *Peter and the Wolf* which Sir Paul Schofield narrated, and lastly *Babar the Elephant*, for which Sir John again did the voiceover; but sadly it could never be published because Sir John died and the letter of authorisation to use the recording was mislaid. The sales from the first two were very influential to the appeal.

I was amazed by the amount of enthusiasm and support around us, not least from the Hanbury young. They ran four Piltdown golf days, raising around £7,000 each; Timothy got Canford School to do a sponsored walk; Simon gave a talk about us in Chapel at Wellington College; Lucinda organised Tim Ackroyd's One Man Show at Kensington Palace; James, Lucinda and Marcus ran the London 10k

marathon and so they go on. Forgive me for mentioning them, but these are my memories!

****

The first sign of the new Chailey was the bungalows. Exciting, but they came with difficult times. The care staff from St George's, employed by the NHS, had to transfer to school employment. This involved difficult discussions with both of our unions as both structures of employment were so very different.

Another setback was the swimming pool roof, agreed by the planners but complained about on completion, so further money had to be found to replace it. At this time, I realised how much I disliked asking people for money. I did however get a huge kick out of showing potential donors around a place I was so proud of.

A successful visit had to be carefully planned. It was important to get an idea of what the visitor would be interested in – technology, education, buildings, or may be just the AAH factor. You had to know which and where classes would be that would welcome a visit. The class teachers needed to be fully briefed and encouraged to talk about their work, and I had to be very careful not to bore the visitors to tears! It was truly satisfactory when it all went well.

I dreaded the planning meetings, I am hopeless at plans and always wanted to make new suggestions at the wrong moment. Worst of all, I knew at each meeting costs would rise, a nightmare for a fundraiser.

By now, luckily for all, a professional fundraising team was being put in place, chaired by a trustee and crucial to the future of Chailey. The trustees agreed to pay the administration costs which enabled donors to be confident that their donation would go, in its entirety, to the project in hand. In today's troubled world of fundraising, this is important.

The second phase of the one site development was the Centenary Appeal for £2.5 million to rebuild St Martins, now 92 years old and creaking.

To see this building, the first to be built by Granny, demolished, taking all its WW1 history with it, was one of my saddest days.

However, the day HRH The Duchess of Gloucester, our new Patron opened the new St Martins more than made up for it. St Martins became a state-of-the-art primary department admired by many. I did not like the view of it from the road but was outnumbered and told for once I could not have my own way.

HRH The Duchess of Gloucester

Also in that appeal was the development of the Hanbury Building for over sixteens and the Hanbury Link for nursing and therapy which needed a further £1.5 million.

A bonus to that appeal was my cousin Malcolm Kimmins joining the fundraising team, bringing badly needed new contacts and ideas.

I have always felt that fundraising should be a two way exercise and our children and staff excel in raising money for others.

The event that lasts in my memory is a sponsored swim for Help for Heroes. Everyone in the swimming pool, in army uniforms, tin hats, camouflage, marching,

halting, and forming fours to a sound track of war time songs. Suddenly this changed to air raid sirens and bombing causing wonderful mayhem of splashing in the pool until the all clear regained peace. It was brilliant, raised a lot of money which was received by the Help for Heroes Director of Fundraising, who arrived with a Help for Heroes teddy in thanks.

Another vivid memory is going with Sally Anne, our appeal director, to the new Daily Telegraph offices to do a presentation for their Christmas Appeal. We were asked to wait with six other groups plainly doing the same thing. Seeing their clip boards, white boards, flip boards and every other board, I plainly had got it wrong. I had a postcard in my pocket to remind me of the Chairman's name. Don't ask me how or why, but to our joy we got the Appeal, which raised £200,000.

Before this, thanks to Piers Morgan, we had the Daily Mirror Christmas Appeal which raised £40,000. I found this appeal particularly moving because, unlike the Telegraph, the letters came direct to us, some with a cheque, some with a pound coin, but all with lovely letters which I could answer, often prompting further interest. I loved reading those letters, many from people who had known Chailey from day one.

By now mercifully for all Bill Shelford had taken over as Chairman of the Governors. After my last meeting I purposely missed the next Trustees meeting to retire in peace. This was my mistake as in my absence I was given the honour of becoming President, I agreed to remain a Trustee and was to continue to chair the Fundraising. So much for retirement!

In 1992 my Mother had died and she always encouraged me not to give up so I didn't.

In 2007, the Centenary Appeal for the Hanbury building, housing the over sixteens department and the medical and therapeutic rooms, was complete and opened in 2008 by HRH The Duchess of Gloucester.

By now our new Patron had already visited three times at her request. First in 2003 to meet the children, then in 2006 to meet the staff and then in 2007 to meet the parents. Each visit was truly appreciated and had a lasting effect on us all.

When fundraising is going well you become engulfed in the kindness and generosity of all. This was swiftly shattered for me when forwarded this letter.

H M CUSTOMS & EXCISE
VAT Business Advice Centre
Martello House, 315 Portland Road,
Hove, BN3 5SZ
Direct Dial
Telephone (01273) 430011 Fax (01273) 431425

Dear Ms Bridge

CHAILEY HERITAGE SCHOOL

I apologise for the delay in response to your last communication, but this has been unavoidable.

Having considered the points raised in our various correspondence, the ruling as initially given in my letter of 1 March 1996 to Mr M J Denyer of Fowler Bros Ltd has been maintained: non-maintained special schools are seen as providing their services in the course or furtherance of business. They make a charge to the local authorities that refer special needs pupils to them and the charge is directly proportionate to the number of pupils referred. Thus the local authorities derive unique and specific benefits from their funding which enable them to carry out their statutory duty, and the payments they make are directly related to the level of benefit they receive. All these factors indicate that a non-maintained special school provides its services in the course or furtherance of business and that the charge it makes can properly be regarded as consideration for the supply of education. It has therefore been confirmed that there is no entitlement to issue a certificate to obtain zero rating under Note 6 to Group 5 of Schedule 8 VAT Act 1994.,

We do not agree with your contention that the pool and its activities should be treated as separate from the main supply of education. We regard the provision of the hydrotherapy facilities as an integral part of the provision of education. All the information in the brochure relates to the provision of education and there is no suggestion that the school provides welfare, nor is there any indication in the Trust documents that it is part of the school's objectives to provide welfare services.

With regard to the final paragraph of your letter, although you have not named the school in question, if it is grant maintained, then its supply of education would be seen as non-business and therefore potentially eligible for relief under Group 5 Schedule 8. A non-maintained school is seen to be in business because it make a charge for its services - to the local authority. The local authority then discharges its statutory obligations as described earlier. A grant maintained school does not make a charge for its education - it is directly funded by Government. As there is no consideration for a supply of education, there is no business activity and the funding is regarded as outside the scope of VAT.

In conclusion, although there is no relief for VAT under either the educational or welfare provisions, there may be scope for zero rating the supplies of certain specialised goods under Item 2 Group 12 Schedule 8 of the VAT Act 1994, and possibly an apportionment of some of the construction, for example where part of the pool incorporates a ramp.

Should you need to discuss any potentially qualifying items, we shall be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely

MIRANDA PRIM
OFFICER OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

Looking at the signature, I decided on a light-hearted reply:

Dear Miss Spice

I've had a brilliant Christmas with family all around
Only made imperfect by a letter that I found
Forwarded to me from Customs & Excise
Which made so little sense, it ruined my mince pies.

I'd applied for zero rating for a therapeutic pool
For children, all disabled, at Chailey Heritage School.
The answer came back "No, it's clear you'll have to pay
Because you're charging fees to the pupils' LEA."

"Your school is non-maintained, exemption there isn't any.
If you were grant-maintained, you would not pay a penny."
We've raised £600,000 for this special needs provision
And fail to understand the tax man's harsh decision.

Non-maintained, grant-maintained, special education
We're doing the same job up and down the nation.
The Government pays the fees or they run the schools,
Yet some are taxed, some are not, barking jobsworth rules.

Many generous people have donated to this pool
To help The Chailey Challenge update this special school.
We thank them for responding to children much in need
Instead of blindly quoting the HM Customs creed!

Surprisingly, no answer!

****

There are circumstances at Chailey that never have and probably never will change. The most outstanding is the need for reserves to enable prompt action in unforeseen circumstances, to support essential building projects but essentially to create stability in our world of uncertainty. We have an obligation to fulfil the

needs of children who come to Chailey but we have no idea what those needs may be in the future.

In 1913, Princess Louise appealed for £25,000 to create an endowment fund. In 1927, Granny appealed to schools and in 1989, I did the same. I called it the Schools of Britain Campaign.

We had a minibus donated by John Burbage to be presented to the school which won a spot the ball competition which they could enter having completed a fundraising event for us.

Granny's idea of children helping children was spectacular. Our endowments or reserves were building slowly when I got a call from a solicitor saying a certain lady, living in Babcary in Somerset, had decided to leave her estate to Chailey. I rang my cousin Biddy, another granddaughter of the founder, who lives near Babcary and by chance knew this lady, describing her as 'decidedly eccentric'.

However she arranged for her to come to lunch to meet me so that I could thank her. Unfortunately she forgot to come. Before we could rearrange, I got a further call from her solicitor to say his client had fallen from a window and there would be £2million, plus some buildings coming to Chailey. We received a million for the school and our reserves got the foundation they needed. The other half went to the NHS as this was a shared legacy.

Now what are we doing? Fundraising for legacies to support our reserves. No change there.

****

In 2011 a lovely thing happened. A call from Clarence House to say that HRH The Duchess of Cornwall would like to visit Chailey to remind her of the happy years her mother, Ros Shand, had spent there.

I managed to find a few of Ros's old friends, with whom she had worked at Chailey, who were able to attend. Having opened the new secondary hall

for us HRH spent a happy time reminiscing with friends from her childhood.

This was a day I remember with happiness. HRH had lunched at Cogans, Ben was his usual gracious self and the sun shone. Sadly the following year Ben died and future occasions were never quite the same.

Now, three major appeals later, with all the educational, medical and residential needs at the Old Heritage, technology transforming lives, pupil numbers increasing, being an "Octogenarian" it was time for me to go.

I mentioned this to Sylvia Lamb, the Head at the time, who apparently did not hear and started to make dates for us to visit recent leavers in their care homes. There were two at our first call.

Firstly Belma, who had spent ten years of her life at Chailey, achieving the ability to make herself "heard" by fixing her eyes on a series of pictures in her Chailey communications book until she got the word she wanted.

This was the first Chailey Heritage communication system. When we arrived, she grinned from ear to ear until I asked her where her book was. She looked at her bedroom door where I found the book under her bed. On enquiry, the staff felt it took up too much of their time. Her success in achieving a life of telling, rather than being told, discarded under the bed.

Our other friend was Tommy who, against all odds, had learnt to drive a powered chair. He did not move when we arrived which was strange, only to discover the staff had switched off his power in case he damaged the paintwork.

By the time we got back to Chailey, Sylvia's mind was set on further provision at Chailey for young adults from the age of 19 to 25 to be used by external and internal students alike, offering opportunities to achieve and improve skills, gain experiences, make new friends and achieve the transition into adulthood with help at hand, so that by the age of 25 they would be prepared and able to influence their own futures.

This whirlwind decision coincided with a continuing dilemma of what to do with the old house. This building, so full of cherished memories was empty, deteriorating, full of history and totally unfit for use.

There was a threat to sell it if we did not use it, the Charity Commission rapped our knuckles for letting it fall into disrepair and painful though the situation was, we had to prioritise our spending. Suddenly and joyfully, the house where it all began became a priority.

Luckily it was listed so could not be demolished. The planners were naturally tricky but happy that it was to continue its original use.

The architects did a brilliant job re-using the original bricks and tiles and the original front door bearing the original motto, Laetus Sorte Mea, Happy In My Lot. This was to house "The Life Skills Centre" consisting of a specialist gym, kitchen, IT department, spa, hairdressing and crafts. Also a café, named by the students "GK's", I like that. Best of all, it was agreed to rename the old house Grace Kimmins House.

Sylvia's plans included "Futures" a 52 week residential provision, allowing students to use the Life Skills Centre if they wished, meet those new to Chailey, socialise in the café and generally feel they had left school and reached adulthood.

Another appeal for £3.1 million loomed but I felt confident, this was not more for the school, it was repeating history, a new step forward to a truly national need so far sparsely catered for, and best of all, re-establishing Grace Kimmins House as the senior citizen of the foundation.

This I had to be part of.

****

2013 saw the completion coinciding with the Centenary of the consecration of St Martin's Chapel. Naturally I asked our Patron if she would agree to attend a centenary service in the chapel followed by opening Grace Kimmins House. Her

reply surprised me - she suggested I ask HRH The Duchess of Cornwall. My reply was instant, "Ma'am that would be wonderful but unthinkable if you, our Patron, were not with us as well."

This apparently was unusual but to our joy Their Royal Highnesses came together. Our Patron unveiled a plaque during The Centenary service in the chapel and welcomed HRH The Duchess of Cornwall to Chailey who then opened Grace Kimmins House.

The sun shone, the children and staff excelled themselves and their Royal Highnesses were, in theatrical terms, a smash hit. All Granny's living grandchildren were there recalling their childhood memories. I hope they thought we did Granny and Chailey proud. My only regret was not having Ben there on such a special day.

****

Now I am languishing in Gloucestershire, thinking about "The Public School of Crippledom" becoming "Chailey Heritage Foundation" when at times it could so easily have disappeared. The new look Chailey took twenty years and fourteen million pounds to complete. We now had the Ofsted graded outstanding school, the children's home, Futures, the Life Skills Centre; all still married to clinical services. I hope Granny feels the seed she sowed has grown healthy and strong.

I cherish my memories, such as when HRH Princess Alexandra asked to visit us. As we walked down the path our ponies were looking over their stable door. HRH broke ranks to go and talk to them only to find the riding team, sitting on the stable floor, hoping not to be seen.

I remember my pride of Martin Langer's early work, his tracking system, a safe driving course inside and out, his speaking signposts offering that same safety to those without sight. He then developed powered standers allowing wheelchair users mobility in a standing position and then the pains taking work of giving each individual their own access to remote control. I remember the thrill of hearing a group of children making music at the Brighton Festival using their preset sound beam played with a single movement to break the beam.

I remember, most of all, my pride in our teachers when talking to visitors, with their knowledge and their caring so often the success of our fundraising.

The first meeting of trustees separated from governors was memorable. Having chaired the governors while they were also trustees, I knew we were distracted by trustee work, resulting in neither job being done as well as it should. This separation was a welcome move, particularly as Julia Cumberlege had agreed to chair it, quite like old times.

Other random memories I don't want to forget are the making of the BT film to demonstrate the need for the single site. This was an incredibly generous gift of time and finance. Amongst many examples it shows a wheel chair user trying to cross the road followed by a BT executive running across Oxford Street or the effort our children take to go swimming followed by the man from BT just diving in. It made you think. Then there was Henry Blofeld and Peter Baxter at Cumner House, very funny, if you liked cricket! Lastly a great friend of mine, Cannon Bill Peters who gave the Old Scholars so much pleasure preaching to them on Old Scholars day.

My personal memories lie with my family in the chapel with my father preaching to the old scholars and the horror of doing it myself. The happy days Dad and I spent doing the nativity play together and the sad times of Granny and Grandpa, my mother, father and Ben's funerals and the truly happy times of all our children and four of our grandchildren's christenings.

Lucinda's was memorable because it was freezing cold; we all huddled in the chapel waiting for my father to bring Bishop Geoffrey Tiarks from the vestry. Ten minutes late they arrived, a little sheepishly, asking if we would like to know the winner of the Grand National.

Lucinda's agreement to become a trustee is a joy, knowing the family connection continues; her input will be invaluable.

****

Back to Granny, the purpose of these ramblings. As her granddaughter, I may have made her appear praiseworthy. In reality anyone who nicknames her granddaughter 'Her pocket duchess' deserves no praise at all! Truthfully Granny had a heart of gold and an exterior of steel remarked upon by Her Majesty the Queen when honouring me with an MBE mentioning that my grandmother was 'the most frightening lady she had ever met'.

What she achieved throughout her life was extraordinary. She was awarded a CBE in 1927 and a DBE in 1950, having been made a Dame of St John and Jerusalem while still with the guild.

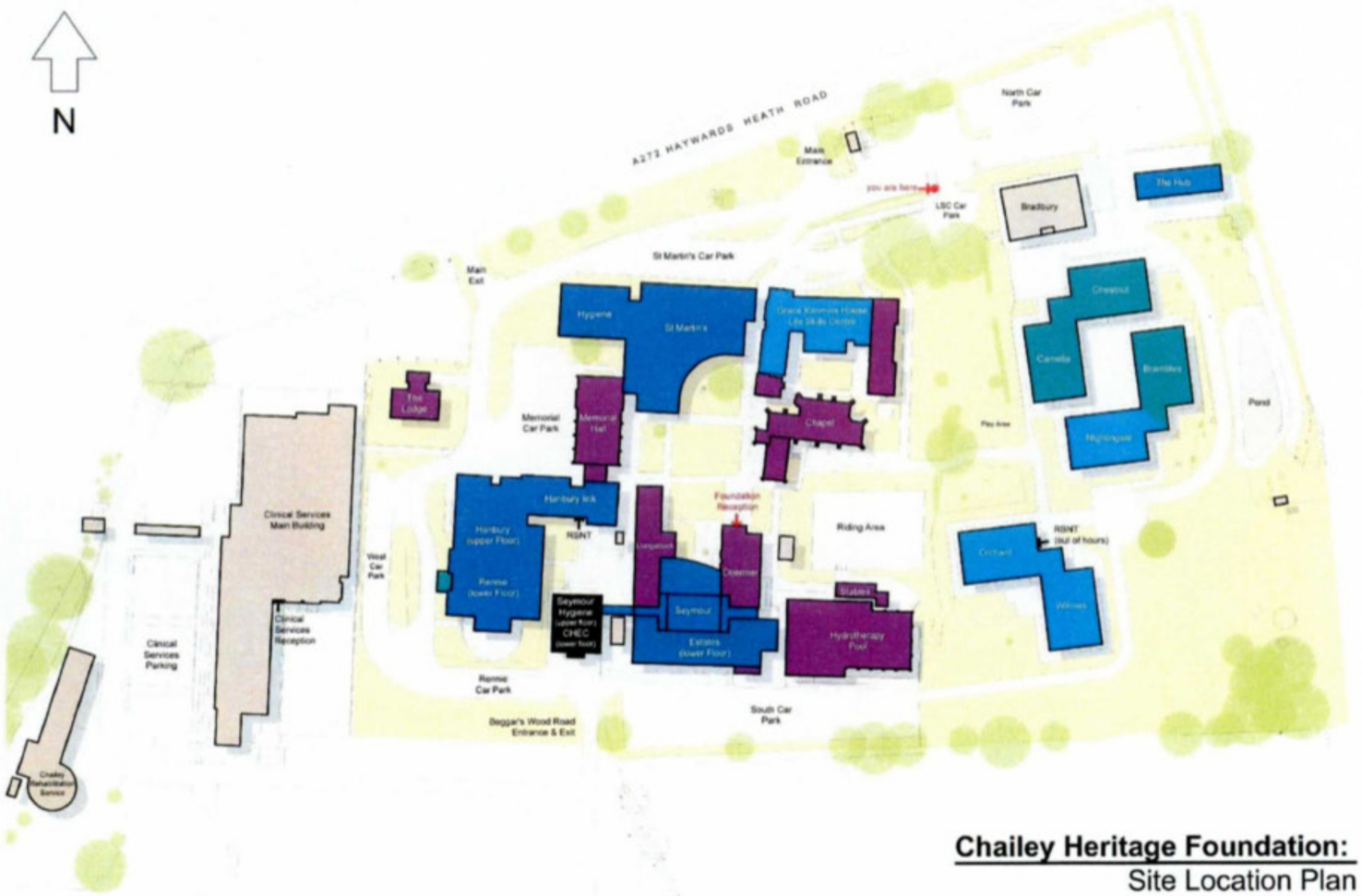
The international awareness of her work was made evident by the American lecturer Helen Keller, who wrote to Granny describing Chailey in these words:

"The human being who does not use his limbs or faculties is less than human; the man who makes the best of his incomplete self-rises to the highest moral stature of our race."

Helen was the first deaf/blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree and be a political activist. She had never been to Chailey but clearly appreciated the work from afar.

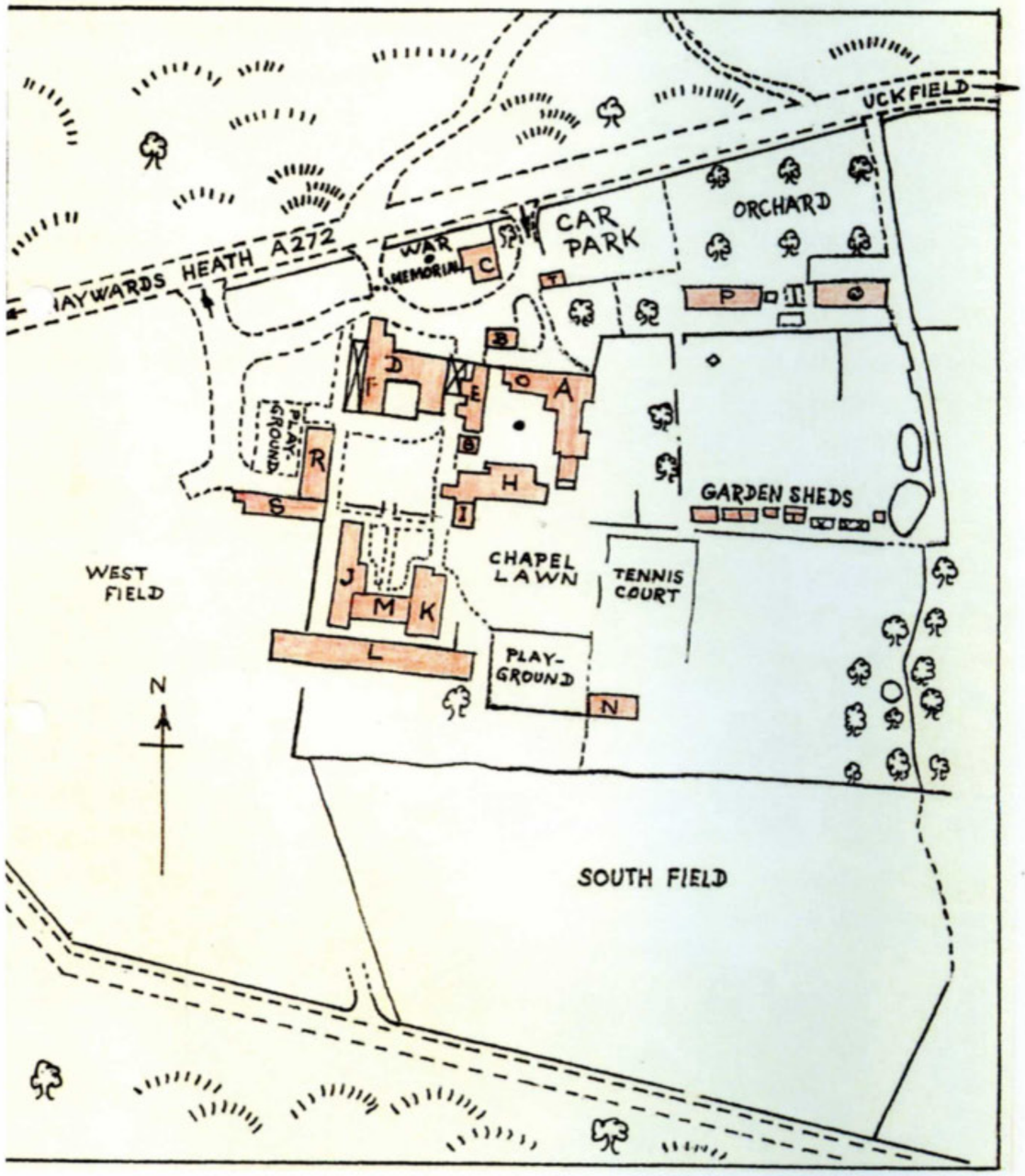
To me , the best illustration of her vision and inspiration came from an ex-serviceman who, as foreman of the building company re-building The House of Commons after the war, took a piece of wood from the remains and made it into a jewel box which he presented to Grace." It's a thanks offering", he explained, "after being sent to The Heritage on a stretcher I'm now helping to build The House of Commons."

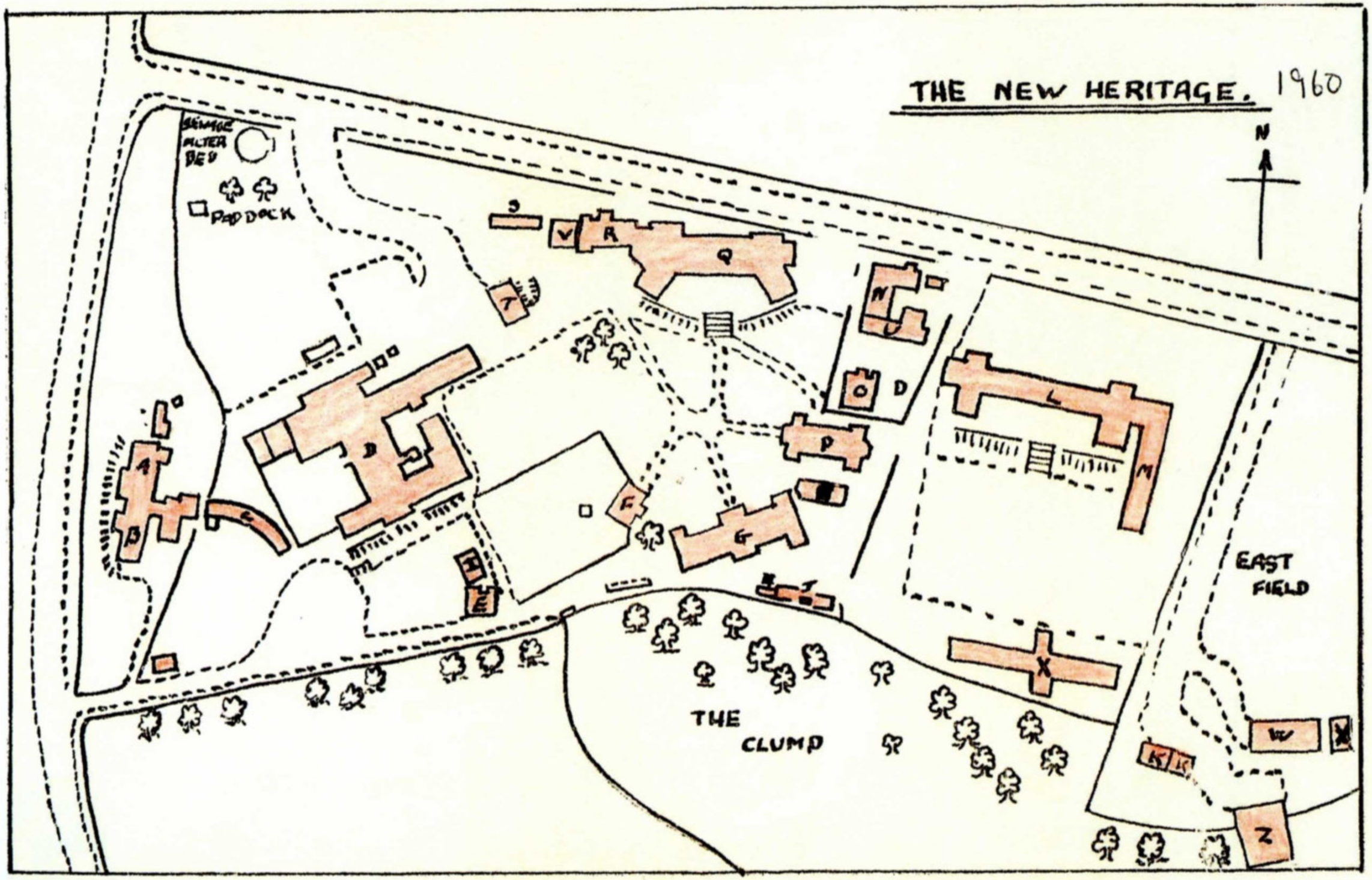
It was Grace's spirit of compassion and determination that achieved her dream. At her memorial service, the Bishop of Chichester said of Chailey *"So long as it is true to the spirit of the founder, it will remain supreme"*. A big ask, but Bill, I am so happy it is in your hands. Now as chairman of the Trustees, you can give others the grief your father gave me while I sit by the fire with my dog on my knee watching the racing. VH



Chailey Heritage Foundation:
Site Location Plan

THE OLD HERITAGE 1960

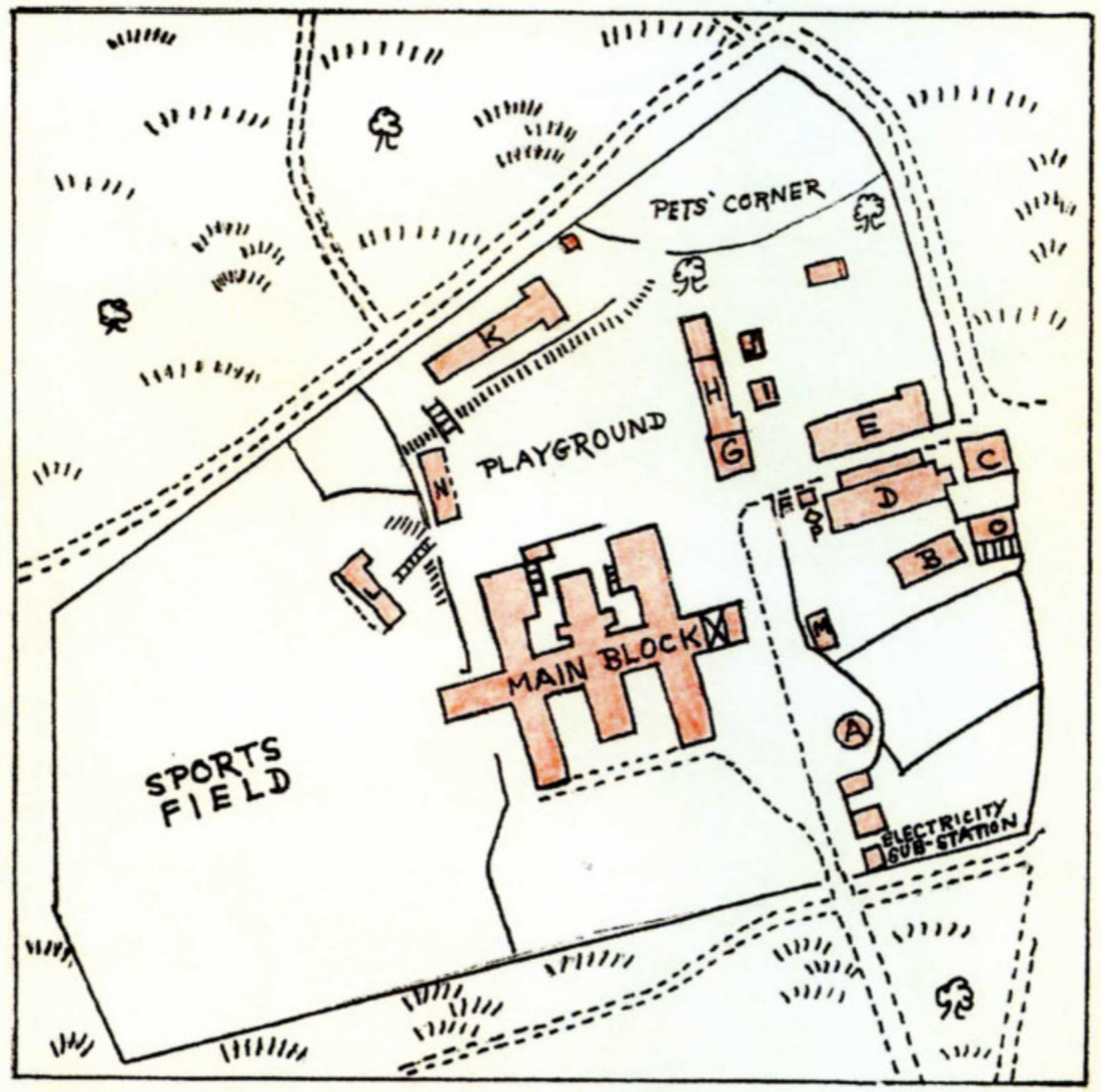



THE NEW HERITAGE. 1960
N
SEWAGE FILTER BED
PADDOCK
EAST FIELD
THE CLUMP

CHAILEY HERITAGE

ST. GEORGE'S

1960



INDEX

THE OLD HERITAGE

A. Administrative Offices
B. Gate House
C. Bungalow: Clinics
Head Porter
D. Junior Dormitory
E. Waterloo: Physiotherapy
F. Kitchen
G. Vestry
H. St.Martin's Chapel
I. Song School
J. Llangattock
K. Obermer:
Grd.Flr Printing Shop
1st.Flr Gymnasium
L. Secondary School
M. Headmaster and
School Reception
N. Greenhouse
O. Flat - 1st floor
P. Social Club Hut
Q. Works Department
R. Memorial Hall
S. Primary School
T. Garage

ST. GEORGE'S

A. Windmill
B. Mill House
C. Garage
D. Staff Hut
E. Sanatorium
F. Garden Hut
G. Old Dispensary
H. Linen Room
I. Scout Hut
J. Pets Corner Store
K. Liberty
L. Pavilion
M. Workshop
N. Playground Shed
O. Garage
P. Water Storage Tank

THE NEW HERITAGE

A. Matron's Cottage
B. Mirror Grange
C. Princess Elizabeth
Clinic
D. Main Block, including
Rennie Ward
E. The Bothy
F. Pax Est
G. Kitchen/Dining-Hall
H. Administrative offices
J. Water Storage Tank
K. Clump Cottage
L. Queen Elizabeth Block
M. Queen Elizabeth Block :
Nurses' Home
N. Allardyce
O. Housewifery
P. St. Helen's Chapel
Q. Jubilee Block:
Grd.Flr. P.M. Ward
1st.Flr. Tidemills
Ward
R. Alexandra Block
S. Workshops -
Works Department
T. X-Ray Department
U. Laundry
V. Linen Room
W. Thalidomide Workshop
X. Coxen House
Y. Deaf Unit
Z. Swimming Pool

- - - - - - - -

BOOKS WRITTEN BY GRANDPA K

- Children's Dreams
- The Home and School Library 1926
- The Chemistry of Life and Health
- The Spring of Laughter
- The Child in the Changing Home 1926
- The Triumph of the Dalton Plan 1932
- University Extension Library 1934
- The Mental and Physical Welfare of the Child 1927