Harold Walter Poulter Letters - 1950's
LETTERS 1950s
HAROLD WALTER POULTER Deputy curator of Colchester & Essex Museums 1934-1962 residing at
Hollytrees Mansion Museum & Colchester Castle, the Park
Written to Miss Greta Ransom `British Maid of All Work` the Museums = Roman Britain CAMUL ODUNUM Colonia Victricensis
Sent to Miss <i>Greetah</i> Ransom, Saint Edmund House, 50 Lancaster Gate Square, the Charity workshop under the wing of General de Gaulle & the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster employing Andre Malraux in charge & London home of Andre Malraux & staff 1952-1961

laugh, no body ever smiles.

Ye Culture Centre Colchester 9.3.56

Your letter was a breeze from heaven, tho! I'm deeply sorry if your world cruise has gone wrong after all the hopes and preparation you made for it, maybe something will still come along. I never liked the idea of the Eastern Mediterran ean in the winter, I know what it can do there, you would be

better in a little bed in Essex. The Castle gets worse, terrible gloom has decended on it :



The Ancient Spinster now wears a sort of wool shawl from which an inquisitive nose projects two pesticoats and funny sort of Russian boots : she sure looks a sight. She cannot type and scutt round pushing her nose



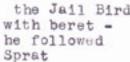
Chapman still holds the fort French retired to

the hospital two months ago, for examination

and the hospital will not say what is the matter As a matter of fact (the grape vine talks) he has that cancer

of the blood for which there is no cure. He will live not more than three years. He does not know this

the Jail Bird with beret he followed



Hull, who complains he

has four digs

on his hands

Sprat has slipped a disc - whatever that is - and goes to a specialist in Ipswich to get it put back. Thank heamens I took Sprat when I lost Harding the Jail Bird would make a mental case of me in a week.

Mrs Blake cracked up under the strain and was away seven weeks she was really bad. I looked afetr myself and had the time of my life, I could do just as I liked

St Nicholas Church is down and the Co-op are now building on the site. All Caints is about ready as a natural history museu - stuffed bird eggs and dried butterflies - Hull went to Worthi and bought £300 of second hand cases

1957 ?

My Spanish classes packed up, we got a dirty deal. We were so exclusive and refined they shut us down just when I was on the point of trimming my beard a la Velasqueth you know a long this imperial 16th century style I thought this would be a delicate compliment to our instructor. I gave the class a bottle of Tarragona wine each at Xmas, they were thrilled.

A month ago we put up the photo show of the Ministry of Works and the Times (Historic Buildings) quite good. We open on Staurday with the Colchester Camera Club annual show: Clacton will gnash their teenth with envy: its terrific: two little things of mine in - no one has mentioned the word masterpieces yet but I have hopes. It was a great disappointment to me that you could not see them to pour cold criticism on them

A month ago Colchester Camera club had a competition with Clacton on coloured slides. They put the slides thro! two at a time one Colchester and one Clacton and then one Glactonian and one Colchestrian criticised them and the company voted at to which of the two was the better. George was infernally clever, he talked Colchester to a standstill, you would never believe what he said about some of the Colchester slides. By the way Clacton won on the voting that I reckon was due to George.

Thanks for the Valentine, I waved it rould the Castle. It wqs Mr Dansie- who will be our chairman again in two months, who said I was to send you a copy of the R post - I would have sent you one in any case - Hull wails every week that he has not still got you, things happen and Hull says "That would not have happened if we'd had Miss Ransom no one has any sense now"

Bushell still occupies too much air space in a nautical way she overhangs on the counter too much. If you want that interpreting ask the commander. They have all had big pay rises you would have been in the super income tax class if you were with us now.

I'm going to the Scottish Highlands, this has taken a lot of courage, had you been here you would have encouraged me but I've decided on my own. I am learning to pronounce "bottle" in Scottish, you drop the "t" and say "Boh- 11" according to Pulman this is a misplaced glutative or something like that he explained

Mening to me

He deciding whither
15 wear a Tam
o' Shanter or a
Decrolather

The bulding is a distilling

POULTER, HONOLD WILLIAM MUSTUHE

History man at work ...

Mr. Poulter



A characteristic study of Mr. H. W. Poulter taken in his cellar workshop at the Holly Trees Museum.

ESSEX COUNTY STANDARD 11.5.62

Colourful and clever assistant curator

dies at

A SSISTANT Curator to Colchester's museums, Mr. Harold William Poulter (82), died on Tuesday at the Essex County Hospital, where he was taken on Sunday after collapsing in his flat on the upper floor of Holly Trees Museum on April 29,

Mr. Poulter was a well-known personality in the town, held in affectionate esteem. Many of his friends came from outside the county and were people eminent in the realms of science and archaeology.

Versatile in his talents, he was also notably reticent about himself. What little his friends knew of him was obtained during the course of conversa-

Mr. Poulter was born at Fulford, Yorks. After leaving school at York he made a world tour and when he was about 30 he went to Camborne Mining School. Mining School,

MINED ALL OVER THE WORLD

He developed great experi-ence of mining in many aspects. He worked in most of the mining areas of the world, including mining for silver in Honduras, asbestos in Canada, solfram in Burgus and A. M. solfram in Burma, gold [Australia and tin in Cornwall]

He came to Colchester [6]
1930. Mr. Hull met him when
he was working as a technician
in a scientist's laboratory and
persuaded him to come as a
technical assistant to Colchester museums.

Tangible memorials to him comprise the remarkable models he made for the museums, including a Roman thip at the Hythe which wal the product of four years research, the Balkerne Gate he Roman times, and the Temple of Claudius, He lectured on

the models on television, It was the delight of his

is to call

Death of assistant. curator.

* Continued from page 1

museum and — if among the privileged — to go down into the basement where, like an alchemist of old, he bent over his bench with his skull capsuff dusted waistooat and glasses on forehead working with his chemicals, restoring some Victorian "has-been" or, with infinite mitence travers. with infinite patience, reassem-bling the shattered remains of some ancient burial urn.

A GREAT HUMORIST

One of the endearing quali-ties of Mr. Poulter was his vast fund of humour, exploited in many a leg-pull at the expense of those who did not know him too well,

This capacity was even revealed in his name, for he was popularly known as Horace, a legend he originated.

He leg-pulled over much of his improvisation in the museum. Many a mystery chemical formula for cleaning exhibits and bubbling over a bunsen burner he would, after building up the mystery, reveal as a popular washing powder in

This habit did not disguise the remarkable ingenuity to which he resorted to overcome many quaint problems generated by his museum work.

Friends have beard many tales, including the shooting of leopards and his claim to be the only one alive who could still operate some of the medieval navigation instruments.

He also had a considerable knowledge of old Harwich. He was a member of the Liberal Club and of the Colchester Photographic Society.

RECENT TRAVELS

the ease and comfort of air travel and visited Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain,

He was numarried and

to Miss Crieta Ransom 50 Lancasten gate Square nous brom Camulodunum C.U. Hollytrees Colchester

New Years Day 1959

Child.

If you dont die friendless and impoverished hawking boot laces and pencils on the curk if will not be your fault : I am thinking about you wasting your money buying liquor chocolates for me : I'm shocked at the extravence : a Chistmas card is much appreciated but liquor chocolates are only given by municipalities to visiting royalty one does not know what to say. I have never been visiting royalty

Thanks also for the photograph of me at Jaywick, it is very good and has been filed on the tablets.

I have booked out to go with Wings fly to Pisa and 4 days Home, 4 days Florence & 4 days Venice, fly home leaving on May 15 : also I have bookedfly to Vigo and caoch to Santiago and muck about in Portugal, leaving Sept 19 - Oct 4

I have always vanted to go to Santiago, that is the tomb of St James of Compostella, it was the geatest English pilgramage in the 11th & 12th century :you got two years indulgence if you went : thats no use to-day as the pilgrims had to walk all the way, I fear the airoplane and motor coach will not qualify for the relief

Did you go and see the new Cardinal installed at Westminster yesterday Skinner went up and had a wonderful time- she had a ring side seat

Big Stirring in the Castle, it is suggested that the whole of the south end (inside the columns) in front of the Lucas Vault be closed in for offices and the bookstall be made twace the size - we now sell pseudo Roman brooches and the Castle be floored with red pammets boiler to be closed in etc between £3000 - £4000 it looks as if it will be done. We live in moving times

Good Wishes for 1959 I hope it will be a Happy Year for you and your fortunes improve I worry a little bit for you thinking the Fates have not been too kind you ought to be bursting with the Joy of Life at your age with the world in front of you

A blithe New Year

W Toulle H.W.Poulter

Hollytrees Colchester

On the Feast of St Valentine 1957

to Greta Frobisher Neddell Rangom &

Child.

I was going to write you and send you a Valentine and then I got stopped and had to go the Norwich yesterday so it did not get done.

We have had a bit of bother - about five weeks ago Mrs Blake had a stroke, I found her on the bathroom floor and she has been in St Mary's for this last three weeks, whether she will ever come back I dont know she is very feeble and her eyesight is worse (she is almost blind) I manage by myself until we see how things go but I dont get a lot of time.

The Sprat went out with Rush and they both had two pints of beer and then the barman said they must have one with him that amde three, then Sprat went and met Chapman who put more liquor into hime and the result is we have not seen Sprat of three weeks: I have told the Castle what I shall do if they lead the little man into trouble again - the big stiffs Sprat has no business to mix with the rough Castle crowd

Me- I have arthritis in the knee, how I suffer and no one does anything about it. I know eight doctors and none of them is any good. I got a potatoe and carried it for a fortnight (am told this is a wonderful cure) but in my case it would nt work possibly the potatoe felt itself in strange surroundings and did not get down to business. Then another cure is to wear a red silk string round ones middle - this also did not work but then I found I had been supplied with machine twist and it was not genuine silk so that method did not have a real chance. I must be fair about the method.

We are getting out the report for last year that covers the Miss Sinnonds stuff, I will send you a copy when we get it. Bushell get the mediaeval section out and made an incredible mess of it, numbers, descriptions and verything wrong it has been an awful trouble to get it right. What we ougt to have done was to scrap the Bushells work and started again and we would have done it much easier: trying to get Bushells stuff into shape was a mistake.

I ought to have George Martins address and that him for that pot of Photophake. I wish he would let me pay for it, I dont like taking a whole pot
from him. When he mentioned it I thought he had half an eighteenpenny jar
he could let me have, I did not grasp he was sending an unopened 6/6 pot.
See if I can pay for it if you see him as I dont like to take so much from him.

Thanks for the Valentine and we still miss you Yours, suffering

H.W. Poulter

AOSE NA

Shop, JAYWICK, (a copy of Dickens Old Curiosity Shop) owned since 1890 by Mr Fritchard (who lives in Chas.Lamb's

house at Endfield) Colchester
(Fritchards-Dyes etc. Ferkins Thursday Aug 21
Purple:)(Friestly used to have a house with Mum)

Dear Miss Ransom,

Hi Hi Greetings fromthe

Oldest Town

Thanks for your invitation to visit Jaywick I will come on Tuesday next (if fine) leaving Colchester, by bus, at 1 p.m. so you will know at what time I get to Glacton 1 return (by bus) about 5 The idea is 1 am not any trouble, at my age 1 must not become a nuisance

Looking forward to seeing you

Yours

Typed with my own hand

He's anxious-having had his student-And Malraux-ill (They had a little Paper going on the painting of Chu TG(R) has undertaken a disastrous summer at Jaywick/I against wishes leave Leg. and go help/ Summer, July 1958 she poisons George (AMx) in an ommlette one evening-he has been fund-raising with rich Fastenders (since 1947; (John Constable 100th) and comes to see Mr Smith(1e)(2nd coz.millionare) . THE stuff anger of the 1920s rises-he goes to Mrs Blake's bed in Hollytrees...and by 2 am was so sick Mr Foulter called Dr da-da-da...who got Dr da-da-da... they felt AMx (having been an adventurer out Fast too) a might have taken "a bit of poppie"...OH NO: They've not touched a drop! #Its Mrs Gordon-CORDON with her BLOOD-STOCK connexions and Clifton-all-at-seas (old Ma Astor's place Yah know)...at her tricks-JFAIOUSY. 1937-1976...onwards _

'ollytrees On the Peast of S.Cecilia 1956

Me Child.

M"any thanks for your letter : I was only thinking of you yesterday, I was protographing some of the Simmonds stuff for the report, its difficult to make a selection and 1 wish you were here.

Last night I went to the Photographic Annual Party : it went fairly well but it is difficult to arouse a realy festive spirit on Lemonade and Nescafe 1 thank Heavens they did not danse - to see the photographers dancing reminds one of an old cabhorse turning skittish and pretending to shy at a motor car - 1 was home by 10-30 so there are no after effects this morning. Not like your week ends in London that took you until Wednesday to get over.

I enclose the current Viewpoint with an anonymous article that you will never guess who wrote it on the "Photo Alliance Show" You are supposed to be amused by this article

We look forward to seeing you at Xmas : we have a large quart bottle of Tarragona - el vino muy fuerto, that does'ng want translating - waiting for you. Sprats Xmas tree in the hall is going to be a winner

with vicans drughtants

At Colchester and Red Lion ... (Meetings-Master and sad Mrs Greene 1940s/50s) eep cheerful "Master Greene, Child-thinks he's 20-Chapman has instructions to keep him away from you" . . ? May be refs. in Master Graham Greene's archives (Norman Sherry-100 boxes-USA) 1953 Nov. onwards/ (MS and private print/ 'For this is Child, creme-dela-creme intellectually ... you can go no higher' ... (George & Creetah H.W.Poulter 1937-1976) (5 weeks summer 1937 when GMCae.H. takes GAMx and JoJO& JO (who got out of France disguised as a sailor-boy) to see The Landmarks-of John Constable's Fast-Anglia... I am 42 ... and have been at school since before 2 years ... Quaker school, and then St Clare's Convent, C/Sea... THUS IT WAS SO... 1937...but it was SHUT...1953 Nov-Dec. Foulter looks up the Museum diaries to "see where Hull and I were..."...(He had his Samian Red sports car the 1930s fudsdale and he wd. go dancing Blue Lagoon Claton...)



apl 1 56

I flaunted it round the Castle who were green with rage and envy, no one had () or them an Easter Egg.

Photographic Show going strong, would like to hear what George says about it.

Good day in the Castle yesterday, £12.



ADSENTA

Shop, JAYWICK, (a copy of Dickens Old Curiosity Shop) owned since 1890 by Mr Fritchard (who lives in Chas.Lamb's

house at Endfield) Colchester
(Fritchards-Dyes etc.Perkins Thursday Aug 21 1918
Purple:)(Friestly used to have a house with Mum)

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Oldest Town

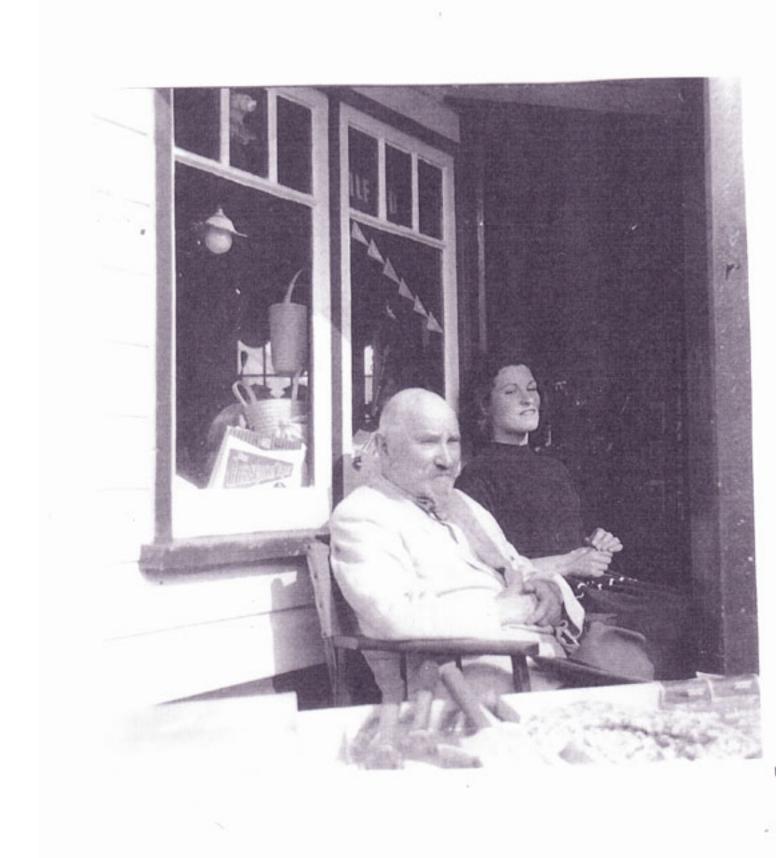
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2.2.61

Hollytrees Colchester

Dear Greta,

Got your note and looked forward to seeing you today but you must have been prevented coming.

I think it would be a stout idea to visit the Rice Bowl on Wonday Feb 13, would say 6.45 p.m. suit you, park the chariot on the car park and I will meet you in the restaurant. Have been trying to find the museum chop sticks (we have a terribly posh set) but I cannot find them - can get a pacqet of incence sticks

I was at the Rose Bowl on Monday last and was very well treated, bamboo shoots and all kinds of nice things

Looking forward to seeing you

With Cheers

Sincerely

h.W. Foulter

THOUSANDS FOR NEW UNIVERSITY

Mr. Harold Poulter, of The Holly Trees, Colchester, Essex, Assistant Curator at the Colchester, Museum who died last May, aged 82, left £29,809 (net £29,679, duty £6,619)

After bequests totalling £5,500 he left the residue to the new University of Essex, when established to form "the Poulter Scholarship Pund" and be applied "in perpetuity for the promotion and encouragement of education at the said University." 1942.

greta Kanson

I ought to tell you I have booked for Spain Plying boat to San Sebastian
Private coach via Burgos to Madrid
The Cordoba, Sevilla etc to south
Ship to Tangler
Back to Malaga and up the coast to barcellona
fly home from Parcellona

The last flutter of a silly old man will send you a post card from Sevilla

H.W.P.

Lordy Byron's Wedding - H. Poulton

THE BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

President:

Dr. C. F. Slade, F. R. Hist. S., F. S. A.



Hon. Secretary: F.M. Underhill, F.S.A. "Turstins", High Street, Upton, Nr. Didcot, Berks. 'Phone: BLEWBURY 680.

1st March 1973

Dr Peter Whitehead Pillar House Harwell, Didcot.

Dear Dr Whitehead,

Thank you for your letter of 26th February enclosing application for Mrs Whitehead and yourself to join the Society together with Bankers Order for current year's subscription. Your names will come forward for the formality of election at our next meeting on March 17th. I hope you will be able to attend some of our meetings; that on the 17th is specially interesting, John Wymer lived in Berkshire for many years when he was an assistant at Reading Museum, he is the Old Stone Age expert.

You should have a village Society at Harwell and long ago you should have thought about drawing up a Village Plan. The Hendreds have both and have been quite successful in preserving many aspects of their villages.

I hope that you may be successful in doing something about your Chapel graveyard but doubtless at this stage the chapel itself will have to go. As to the other old houses, if they are Listed Buildings the owners are liable to keep them in repair under the 1969 Town & Country Panning Act, if they don't the County Planning Authority can compel them to do this. As yet I have not heard of a Planning Authority going to these lengths but the threat should be sufficient. Individuals can do little, but a Village Society once formed can take such matters up with the County Planning Officer, Alpha House, 120 King's Road Reading and some notice will be taken. The area officer i/c the Wantage district is Mr Mash who is most sympathetic towards the retention of any Listed Buildings in his area.

We believe that Mrs Whitehead may have lunched with us years ago when we lived at Datchet. The late Mr Poulter frequently came to see us there and on one occasion we recollect him bringing his assistant when en route to collect some Essex antiquity in the West Country.

Zour sinancy Martine

BERKS. HARWEL. PILLAR HOUSE

7th April 1973

Dear Mr Underhill,

I had intended answering on hearing the news of our successful Thank you so much for your letter of over a month ago. election to the Society but at that time my mother had just died (she lived here in Harwell) and the subsequent weeks have been filled with letter-writing and clearing up her affairs.

We were very heartened to hear that the Town & Country Our parish council either do not Planning Act of 1969 makes owners liable to keep scheduled realise this or are not sufficiently interested. buildings in good repair.

Colehadir Window now that my affairs are in better order, to be able to begin I hope, You are quite right about a village society. organising this soon.

Yes, Greta does remember calling on you with Mr Poulter If not round, the world and having lunch many years ago. certainly esems to be ofreular.

to Harold Poulder DeptCurator Yours sincerely, 1952 "most important post-he'll go far" was "young Underhill"

Sums

had brown hair, threw balls for a dog, and had baked 17th piecrust pork pies for exhib, Peter J. Whitehead

POULTER, HAROLD WILLIAM
MUSEUMS

...ESLARCH CIVES YOU ETLECTTY "perpetual machines ... " We had them at Colchester, a feature of middle-class enlightened soc ... Vicars and scuh. .. BUT the svil TAKE-CFF at the FOIRT E

·AFRIVE..."



W. H. Soar's painting of the late Mr. H. W. Poulter. — See: "The

The Alchemist'

ONE of the best-remem-bered pictures taken by "Essex County Standard" Esset County Standard hotographers was the one of the late Mr. H. W. Poulter, assistant curator of Colchester Museums. It showed him wearing his skull cap and standing in a typical pose over a bench in the cellar of Holiy Trees Museum, mending a Noorman pot.

Hot Standard and science.

Not only would the painting commemorate the donor of the first scholarship, but it would also reflect his activities in archaeology and science, for which the scholarships are to be awarded. Norman pot.

The photograph was a favourite in the office, and we christened it "The Alchemist".

Mr. W. H. Sour, well-known local artist who died recently, painted a picture from the photograph and until his death this was hanging in his home at Balkerne Gardens.

The suggestion has been made that the painting should be presented to the Museum. But in view of Mr. Poulser's will, published a short time ago, a more appropriate place might be the new Essex Uni-versity.

Mr. Poulter left about £20,000 "for the promotion and encouragement of education at the university by the establishment of the Poulter scholarships, to be awarded for proficiency in archaeology and science".

emmonistration.

ESSEX Co. STD. 25.1.63