

Museum volunteer Norman Clarkson has organized the most recent donation to the Museum collection, a school blazer belonging to the late Lady Angela Pullen. The blazer was uniform for the Modern School in Surbiton and was kindly donated by Lady Pullen's life-long friend Jacqueline Hoegarts. Both Lady Pullen and the school have an interesting history.

The Modern School was opened in 1924 with Ralph Page (1904-97) as its headmaster. Page had a vision of a school with a broad curriculum where he could develop pupils' characters. As an early prospectus announced: "The great aim of the school...is to make the young people think for themselves, and to develop a sense of responsibility". Subjects taught included French, Latin, Elocution, Singing, Music, Drawing, Physical Drill, Swimming and Boating. Classes were kept deliberately small. The school ran a boarding facility that accepted boys, and a mixed day facility. By 1929 the school was still small with approximately 32 pupils, only 8 of them girls. In the 1930s the number of pupils within the school increased. Cyril Duke - inventor of the white board - was a pupil at the Modern School from 1930-1937 and a staff member from 1946 -1954. In an article paying tribute to Ralph Page, Cyril said: "At the age of 10 years I was in some awe of the might and majesty of a new Headmaster." The school closed in 1955 with Page allegedly worn down by state interference.

Angela Hebron, known at school as 'Jelly', was born on August 24th 1927 and died on March 24th, just before her 80th birthday. She attended the Modern School between 1938 and 1944. Her father was the Registrar of Westminster Abbey during the war, and Angela and her best friend Jacqueline Hoegarts were confirmed in the Abbey together. After school Angela worked in the Bentalls Fur Department and then for one of the London Furriers. In 1948 she married Reginald Pullen, the son of family friends. Jacqueline was her chief bridesmaid. Upon the death of Angela's father, Reginald was appointed the Registrar of Westminster Abbey. He kept this title until retirement, when he was knighted by the Queen. During his period as registrar, the couple entertained many visitors to the Abbey, including the Japanese Emperor Hirohito. Angela was involved with the charity Age Concern over a long period, and was at one time its President.