Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of *pieces*. This new publication is designed to complement the College Magazine, which will remain the official College record. *Pieces* focuses very much on the present and the future. It aims to reflect the richness and diversity of experience to be found at Christ's College today. As well as interviews with leading academics and graduates of Christ's working in a wide variety of fields, *pieces* brings you news about the College, and details of forthcoming events.

Pieces is intended for a wide audience: members of Christ's both in and out of residence, fellows and staff, parents of current students, and well-wishers. Produced by the Development and Alumni Office with the assistance of junior members of College, this is a bright, new venture, designed to inform and entertain. Above all, *pieces* is intended to promote the College's excellent record of achievement, allowing those who have an interest in Christ's to become involved in the College's present and future success.

contents

The editor welcomes
all comments on the newsletter and suggestions
or material for future editions. Please contact:
Dr Toby Wilkinson,
Development Director,
Christ's College,
Cambridge CB2 3BU
Telephone: 01223 766710
Fax: 01223 766711
E-mail: tahw1@cus.cam.ac.uk

Front cover picture
Autoportrait (1996) by Lachlan Goudie

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in the

First class

The publication of the 1999 Tompkins Table, which ranks Cambridge colleges according to results in final examinations, saw Christ's return to pole position. 'Christ's College reigns in Cambridge' was *The Independent*'s headline. The paper described the College as 'alma mater to John Milton, Charles Darwin and Channel 4's Richard Whiteley' (11 August 1999).

Delighting down under

The Choir's tour of Australia and New Zealand last year received widespread acclaim in both countries' media. *The Canberra Times* praised the choir's performance as 'excellently shaped, as spirited as it was assured' (16 July 1999); while the New Zealand *Daily News* decribed the choir members as 'an extraordinarily committed and adventurous lot' (21 July 1999).

Indian summer

The reputation of Christ's academics stretches far beyond the UK. Dr Susan Bayly's new book, 'Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age', was hailed as a 'majestic treatise' by *India Today*, India's leading current affairs magazine (27 September 1999).

Secrets of the pyramids

Do you believe in Atlantis? With the help of two Christ's fellows, the BBC's flagship science programme *Horizon* sought to debunk the myth that has intrigued historians since Pliny. In 'Atlantis Uncovered' (28 October 1999), Dr Toby Wilkinson scrambled up an Ancient Egyptian pyramid to explain the process of trial and error that led to the creation of these spectacular monuments. In the sequel, 'Atlantis Reborn' (4 November 1999), Dr Kate Spence pointed out the practical and geological reasons for the location of the Giza pyramids, helping to disprove the New Age theory that they mirror the stars in the constellation Orion.

Burning ambition

Christ's has produced many famous people throughout its history. Occasionally, exact contemporaries achieve success and prominence in their respective fields. Sir Martin Sorrell and Professor Simon Schama (who both came up to Christ's in 1963) were interviewed for *The Independent on Sunday*'s 'how we met' feature. Sir Martin recalled: "We lived on opposite sides of the same courtyard... Once Simon allowed a gas ring to burn through the saucepan he'd left on it, almost causing a fire" (21 November 1999). With fire alarms still set off by burning toast in the early hours of the morning, some things haven't changed!

Cadmium concerns

Professor Peter Lachmann was interviewed on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme about concerns over cadmium contamination at Porton Down, the government weapons research establishment (19 November 1999).

On air

The Chapel Choir gave a magnificent performance when BBC Radio 4 broadcast its *Sunday Morning Worship* live from the College Chapel (21 November 1999). The occasion was highly appropriate: the Feast of Christ the King. Before a large congregation in the Chapel and a radio audience of over a million, the Choir performed music by Benjamin Britten, accompanied by harpist and second-year music student Laurette Pope, who is a member of the National Youth Orchestra. The service was scripted by the Chaplain, Owen Spencer-Thomas, an experienced religious affairs broadcaster. Interviewed by *The Cambridge Student*, he was in no doubt that the service was a major coup for the College: "This broadcast represents a huge vote of confidence in the Choir's professionalism."

The Choir was heard by its biggest ever audience in March, when a concert recorded with the Thames Chamber Orchestra in London, at St John's, Smith Square, was broadcast as Classic FM's *Evening Concert* (10 March 2000). The programme featured anthems by two of England's greatest composers, Purcell and Handel.

news

Above
Christ's fellows unlock the secrets of the pyramids

Above
The Chaplain makes his radio debut

Above
International acclaim for the Chapel Choir

Top of the form

Following the leaking of the Baxter Tables, commissioned by college senior tutors to monitor performance in different subject areas, *The Times* published a 'rough guide to Cambridge Colleges'. Christ's came out top. The newspaper's verdict was based on the College's excellent results across the board: 'no obvious weaknesses in any area. Top results in history in past five years and outstanding in natural sciences, but also best for music' (23 November 1999).

The Vicar of Dolby

The Chaplain, Owen Spencer-Thomas, made his debut on BBC Radio 2, with an appearance on *Pause for Thought* (23 February 2000) and a series of weekend broadcasts on social issues (beginning 11 March 2000). A veteran of Anglia Television, the Chaplain has a wide experience of journalism and broadcasting. The launch of his new radio career was marked by an interview in the *Cambridge Evening News* (21 February 2000).

Queen's counsel at Christ's

The Queen has approved the appointment of Mr David Yale FBA as Queen's Counsel *honoris causa* (*The Times* 21 April 2000). In March this year, Christ's celebrated David Yale's 50 years as a Fellow of the College.

The college for communications

Two Fellows of Christ's, Ian Leslie and Frank Kelly, have spearheaded a ground-breaking, £40 million funding deal between the University of Cambridge and Marconi plc. The deal represents the largest ever corporate investment in the university, and will finance a world-class Communications Research Centre and a programme of research into communications technologies. The presence of Professors Kelly and Leslie on the Fellowship at Christ's gives the College a unique expertise in the communications revolution.

Christ's College: Past, Present and Future

What is Christ's College? It is the trustee of a rich inheritance, a living community of people, and a training ground for future success. The following paragraphs are intended as a summary of the College's past, present and future, for all those interested in the well-being of Christ's.

A glittering history

From its foundation in 1505, Christ's College Cambridge has nurtured people of talent and vision, people whose lives have changed the world. The wisdom and foresight of our foundress, the Lady Margaret Beaufort, have found eloquent expression in the achievements of the men and women who have passed through the College's Great Gate at the start of their careers.

Great thinkers and innovators, from John Milton to Charles Darwin, have experienced at Christ's the perfect atmosphere to stimulate a lifetime of endeavour. Over the course of five centuries, Christ's has fostered some of the greatest pioneers in the world of learning, including Sir Thomas Baines, one of the founders of the Royal Society; Alfred Haddon, the 'father of anthropology'; and Lord Todd, Nobel prize-winner in chemistry. The College has also had a major influence on world affairs, through the subsequent careers of its students: the longest-serving Prime Minister of South Africa and the last Viceroy of India were both educated at Christ's.

This tradition of excellence continues today. Academically, Christ's College leads the field. While Cambridge is consistently placed top in independent surveys of UK universities, Christ's continues to be ranked in the top three Cambridge colleges, in terms of final examination results. In the calibre of its fellowship, the quality of its teaching and research, and the success of its students, the College has a world-class combination.

The College's reputation for excellence extends far beyond the supervision room and examination hall. In sport, music, theatre and the arts, Christ's students are at the forefront of activities, both in Cambridge and on the national stage. Graduates of Christ's occupy senior positions in every walk of life, from medicine and law, to industry, the media and the church. Many Christ's students also decide to continue in academia, teaching and inspiring future generations.

A commitment to the future

The founding charter of Christ's College expresses its determination to be at the forefront of 'education, religion, learning and research'. For the last five hundred years, the College has worked hard to fulfil this vision, winning for itself an enviable reputation. Christ's is committed to maintaining its record of achievement into the next century and beyond. Christ's is determined to continue attracting the best teachers, the best researchers, and the best students, irrespective of economic or social background. At the heart of a great university, the College provides an environment of encouragement and stimulation. Its mission remains to develop the full potential of all its members, enabling them to transform their own lives and the lives of others.

Respectful of tradition, but eager to embrace new opportunities, Christ's College offers its members a richness and breadth of experience to equip them for the challenges of the future.

A lasting legacy

The future of Christ's College depends very much on the support of its members. Among the many generous gifts Christ's has received throughout its history, legacies from members and friends of the College have been particularly important. If you would like to help secure the future of Christ's College by leaving a legacy in your will, there is a specially designed booklet to help you. Entitled *I often remember*, it is available free of charge from the Development Director, Dr Toby Wilkinson (contact details on page 1).

The Many Body problem

"Being a fellow here means being part of an academic community."

Garnet Chan, Todd-Croucher Junior Research Fellow in Chemistry. Garnet Chan was reputedly the youngest fellow at Cambridge for 200 years when he was appointed to a Junior Research Fellowship at Christ's College in 1998. His research is at the cutting edge of theoretical chemistry, and his enthusiasm for it is obvious. But he is the first to admit that his subject is not particularly accessible to the layperson "Theoretical chemistry isn't well known outside academic circles. It always takes a bit of explaining."

Subhead to go here

Garnet's research is a world away from the popular image of chemistry – lab-coats, test-tubes and the like. "It lies on the interface between theoretical physics and chemistry. It's the application of the principles and methods of theoretical physics to try and predict various aspects of chemistry." In particular, he is grappling with a fundamental problem known as the 'many body problem'. He explains its significance with a familiar example: "If you hold a ball above the earth and let go, there is an equation that predicts how the two bodies will interact – it predicts that the ball will fall to earth under the influence of gravity. When you have more than two objects, the solution to this equation becomes a much more difficult task. If you have 100 particles, you can use a computer to solve it. But if you want to predict 200 particles interacting together, you'll have to wait another ten years for the necessary computer power. Chemistry deals with atoms and the particles inside them, protons and electrons – clearly there are lots of them. We are faced with a specific case of the 'many body problem'. There is a huge conceptual problem in trying to tackle it."

For Garnet, the challenge goes to the very heart of chemistry "If you don't tackle it, whenever you want to treat a more complicated chemical system you are going to be faced with the same old problem."

What of the practical applications for 'blue skies' research of this kind? Garnet is well aware of the need to explain the significance of his work, and is quick to offer several examples. "Theoretical chemistry is very useful in drug design. Without having to go through time-consuming and expensive experiments to produce hundreds of drugs, drug companies can just test new products on computers, to see how they will interact with molecules in the body. At Cambridge we also had a collaboration with the nuclear fuel industry. They were trying to find better ways of reprocessing spent fuel. But obviously they didn't want to carry out the experiments because of the dangers. It was safer to do it by computer."

The unique characteristic of Garnet's research is his multi-disciplinary approach. "I'm looking at drawing on new techniques from mathematics and computer science. This problem is so general: it concerns all sorts of people. To tackle it you have to have some awareness of other techniques, a broad understanding." Here, he admits, the unique academic community provided by a college like Christ's has been invaluable: "The College offers a good environment for bringing people together from lots of different fields."

Garnet also has high praise for the concept of junior research fellowships: "One of the advantages of a four-year research fellowship with this kind of independent funding is that it gives you a chance to explore ideas that may well take some time to come to fruition. The things I'm working on now won't produce results for another four years or so, I would guess. But I have enough time to think very deeply about my subject without the pressure to write another paper or worry about my next meal. There are very few places in the world which have this kind of research fellowship. It's a good thing."

A portrait of the artist

Lachlan Goudie, artist. Born 15 March 1976. Studied English at Christ's College, 1995-98; Levy-Plumb studentship in the Visual Arts, 1998-99.

"Since childhood I've always been fascinated by the Orient – minarets, palaces and maharajas. Also, some of my greatest artistic heroes, like Delacroix and Matisse, were attracted to the exotic. That was another reason I became fascinated by this world that was so apart from the drab and dreary November afternoons of Glasgow that I was so used to."

Above L'abondance (1999)

Left Rajasthan (1999) Prize-winner, Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts.

"The problem with life today – and not just with painting – is that we're all expected to be boy wonders."

During his one-year, post-graduate art scholarship at Christ's (funded by the Levy-Plumb Fund for the Humanities), Lachlan Goudie had the opportunity to turn his childhood fantasy into reality, with a two-month trip to Rajasthan. "It was absolutely mind-boggling, bewildering, terrifying, inspiring, shocking, invigorating, life-affirming – it was everything. I was overawed by the intensity of the light, the colour, the number of people, the crowds. In the bustle and noise of India there is simply an affirmation of human society alive."

Lachlan particularly recalls the scene that prompted his painting of a vegetable-seller (which now hangs above the staircase to the Plumb Auditorium in the Todd Building): "I walked out of my hostel and there was a woman selling vegetables in her sari under a parasol. It was a masterpiece waiting to be painted." When it comes to recording the immediacy of real life, Lachlan insists that photography cannot compete with the creative process of an artist. "The fact that you're having to draw and note it down – you suddenly become part of the whole scene. Sometimes it works and you manage to capture it in a sketch. Then it's infused with the kind of life and vitality that you can't really find in a photograph."

As someone who works unashamedly in the figurative tradition, Lachlan regards the shock tactics of the 'Brit Pack' with some disdain. "I don't think there's much integrity to it", he comments. "Artists like Picasso and Matisse were bucking trends, but they were doing it for different reasons. They weren't doing it so that in five years' time they could open a restaurant. They weren't doing it so they could win the Turner Prize. They were doing it because they were inspired by a deep desire to create something new."

To be fair to contemporary artists themselves, Lachlan pins much of the blame on the media: "They are searching for controversy and for young stars. The Brit Pack art world has been so wonderfully packaged and so beautifully designed; it's so magazine and media friendly."

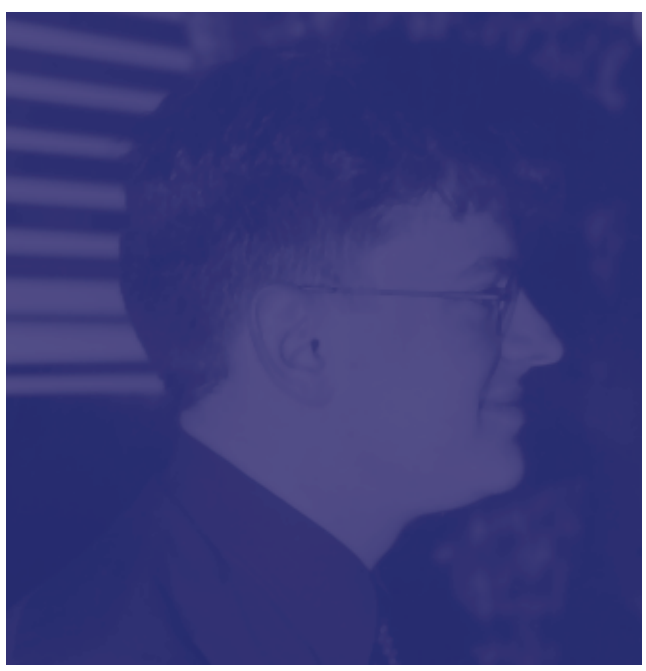
After his energising experiences in India, Lachlan wanted to spend more time away from Britain and has taken a studio in Paris, in the quintessential artists' quarter of Montmartre. "I stumbled across a lovely flat at the top of an old Parisian building that looks out over the city. You'll find me looking out of the window, painting a view simply because it's there. I don't have to leave the studio because everything's in front of me." Yet, even in Paris, Lachlan finds echoes of the Orient. "Where I live is just up from an area called Barbès, with large African and Algerian populations. Here the colours are fantastic – it's almost like being back in Delhi. There are African women in their great swathes of coloured, patterned material, with turbans and head-dresses. I've come from India to Paris and yet there is still this wonderful exoticism that I'd found out there."

When Lachlan talks about his life as a young artist, his enthusiasm is clear for all to see. "I'm just delighted that I've got a passion like this that can feed me – not only in the material terms of filling the fridge, but giving me the energy to get up every morning and confront a new canvas."

Below Les reflets d'Udaipur (1999)

Family values

"Scientists didn't create BSE. It happened, and we are investigating it."



"It's perfectly conceivable that a query in the Chamber could be in Welsh. I think I could cope with that!"

"Most patients are very grateful for what you do for them."

JOHN LLOYD, CB

Clerk to the National Assembly for Wales (since 1999). Born 24 December 1940. Studied Natural Sciences at Christ's College,1959-62. Civil servant at the Treasury, then at the Welsh Office (Assistant Secretary 1975-82, Undersecretary 1982-88, Deputy Secretary 1988-99).

Sitting in front of a large map of Wales, in a bright, new office overlooking Cardiff Bay, John Lloyd views his new role with obvious relish. As Clerk to the National Assembly for Wales, he occupies one of the most important positions in Welsh public life. Behind the scenes, John's department provides library, research, information and translation services for the Assembly Members: "looking after the needs of members individually and the Assembly collectively", as he puts it.

But his job also has a very public face. Eagle-eyed viewers who watched the television coverage of Alun Michael's resignation as First Secretary of the Welsh Assembly last February may have spotted John Lloyd in the background. For, during sittings of the Assembly, he is, quite literally, the Presiding Officer's right-hand man, advising Dafydd Elis-Thomas on the finer points of standing orders.

As Clerk to the Assembly, John has a unique perspective on the workings of this new British legislature. Have the Welsh really moved away from the overtly partisan, Westminster-style politics? "There has certainly been an attempt to achieve a more consensual and less adversarial style. The layout of the chamber epitomises that, and the more modern and less formal styles of address – Christian names are almost universally used among the members, even in formal sessions: no 'honourable gentlemen'."

As befits the National Assembly for Wales, speeches are made, and debates conducted, in both Welsh and English, with simultaneous translation. To outsiders, Welsh does not look like an easy language. How does a man who only learned Welsh as an adult cope with the Assembly's bilingual proceedings?

"We did have an opportunity to try this out, in the early days before the Assembly elections, when we ran seminars for the candidates from each of the main parties. In the case of Plaid Cymru, not surprisingly, some of the candidates wished to speak in Welsh. I was a little apprehensive as to whether my Welsh was good enough to cope in a public forum. But I think I just about got away with it, although I wouldn't say I was 100% happy!"

In learning Welsh, John was greatly assisted – or, rather, motivated - by the fact that his children attended Welsh-language schools. "I certainly tried always to stay one step ahead," he confesses. In terms of university education, though, the influence has been in the other direction. For John, choosing Christ's "seemed the natural thing to do" because his father, Ellis, had been to the College. When it came to John's own children, he found that gentle persuasion won the day: "I tried not to pressure them to go to Christ's rather than anywhere else, but they probably got the impression that I would be quite pleased if they did."

Turning back to his new career, John is evidently proud of the Welsh Assembly, and of the part he has played in its first year of existence. Questioned about the future direction of Welsh devolution, he sees little appetite for outright independence. "It's quite possible that the Assembly might evolve into something more like the Scottish Parliament, but I don't think that the Assembly has been a disruptive factor in the fabric of the UK as a whole." In the 1999 referendum on devolution, nearly half the voters opposed the plan, but John thinks the Assembly is beginning to win over the doubters: "Only a few of those who voted against it being established would now vote to abolish it. To that extent, ground has been gained, but the process of winning the respect and regard of the public is still going on, and it needs to go further."

Dr SARAH LLOYD

Research Associate, Medical Research Council Prion Unit. Born 24 October 1968. Studied Natural Sciences at Christ's College, 1987-90; PhD 1990-93.

"It's a novel concept that a disease can be caused by an agent other than a bacterium or a virus." Dr Sarah Lloyd explains the fascination of working in one of the most high-profile areas of current scientific research. At the MRC Prion Unit, Sarah and her colleagues are working to understand diseases like BSE and its human form, new variant CJD. There is still some disagreement among scientists about the infectious agent involved, but the balance of opinion favours prions. Sarah explains that a prion is "a completely normal protein that everybody has, but it has an altered structure in the disease form."

Surprisingly, the subject of prion diseases is not new: "People had been working on scrapie in sheep since the beginning of the twentieth century, but it wasn't considered that exciting. If it wasn't for BSE, it would still be very much a minority interest." Due to recent events, all that has changed: "all that old data suddenly became very important," Sarah notes, with a wry smile.

With research into BSE in its infancy, there are still big questions about how the disease is transmitted to humans. A geneticist by training, Sarah is interested in why, to date, so few people have manifested new variant CJD. "In the human population, there have been only fifty or so cases. Those people haven't done anything different from the rest of us, on average. So we think there may be a genetic reason why they are more susceptible. I'm trying to identify possible genetic factors."

Unfortunately, the answer is unlikely to be simple. "The genetic factors are likely to be subtle differences, completely natural variants. What we're trying to work out is the combination that makes people more susceptible.

Such complexity is the stuff of cutting-edge research, but it sits uneasily with the public's demand for greater openness and accountability. The media are caught in the middle of this paradox, and Sarah believes they do not always live up to their responsibilities: "Because the media are trying to make science simpler, they often leave out aspects which are important. Over-simplification can lead to misunderstanding."

Winning the public's trust is a challenge for scientists, and Sarah is convinced that greater education is the key. "People have to be prepared to learn. Sometimes people say 'I'm not clever enough to understand science.' Of course people are!" Sarah rejects the popular perception of scientists: "There is this image of mad scientists with white hair, surrounded by bubbling chemicals. A modern molecular biology lab is nothing like that! There is a need for more people to know what modern scientists really do."

Despite the pressures of public scrutiny and funding, Sarah is not tempted to desert academic research for a more lucrative post in industry. "If you're working in academia and a subject is interesting, you'll pursue it. In industry, it might be interesting but if somebody else has a patent on it, you won't waste a second thinking about it. Industry is very product oriented. For me that is not satisfying. What I do is very pure research. Most of that will probably always be done in the public sector, because it's very long term and very expensive. What I'm doing now will be ultimately useful, but it may take ten or twenty years."

As she hangs up her lab coat at the end of the day and heads home for dinner, Sarah adds, with a chuckle, "incidentally, I do eat beef."

Dr GERAINT LLOYD

Junior doctor. Born 4 December 1973. Studied Medicine at Christ's College, 1992-95.

"In a busy district general hospital, running acute medical intakes, you're basically flat out. When you're on call, you grab food when you can. But sometimes you're so busy in casualty that you miss the canteen. Then you're scraping around in the larder for something to eat."

The life of a junior hospital doctor sounds unenviable, but Geraint Lloyd evidently enjoys his job. He talks with great pride about some of the more difficult cases he has treated, and bubbles with enthusiasm when discussing current medical advances. "What excites me in particular is interventional radiology. Massive surgical procedures – opening people up on the operating table – will be increasingly replaced by MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) tied to laser and keyhole surgery. It will greatly reduce complications in surgery."

Even when such techniques have become commonplace, doctors will still have to deal with human suffering on a daily basis. Geraint sums up the dilemma facing health professionals: "I think any doctor who didn't feel a human response would be a terrible doctor. But you do have to stand back to a certain extent." He recalls instances when it has been hard to maintain his professional reserve: "The cases that have really got to me are when people have been terribly sick, and over time have got better. You think 'this is amazing.' And then, suddenly, you come in one morning and someone says 'your patient died last night', without there having been any warning. Then you have to try hard to keep you emotions in check."

The doctor-patient relationship lies at the core of successful medical treatment, and despite the fall-out from the Harold Shipman case, Geraint does not think this relationship has been seriously undermined. "I think doctors are more worried than patients. Most people still trust their doctors."

The immediate aftermath of the Shipman case did cause him some personal difficulty, however. "The day after the verdict was announced, I was seeing a patient in casualty with acute cardiac failure. The family were quite concerned and were asking me 'what can you do?' One of the first things you give a patient is dimorphine, because it takes away the pain and eases the breathing. I said I was going to give the patient some dimorphine and the relatives' reaction was 'that's what that murderer gave his patients!' It was a tricky moment."

Another major difficulty facing doctors is the rise of antibiotic-resistant 'superbugs', such as MRSA. "They are not pathogenic in most people", Geraint explains. "Most health professionals probably have MRSA, because you're working around it all the time. But it'll be harmless carriage in your mouth, throat, or wherever. In most people it's not a problem. It's when it gets into a wound that it can be pathogenic, and then you have big problems." Geraint thinks the best solution is also the simplest: "basic hygiene. Something simple like washing hands more regularly would make an enormous difference."

Asked to suggest one single change that would dramatically improve the health of the nation, Geraint does not hesitate: "Smoking. If you could wave a magic wand and stop everyone smoking, it would make such a huge difference. Heart disease, bronchitis, strokes, cancer – smoking is a risk factor for all these."

Yet Geraint is not in the least judgemental, and his commitment to his patients is obvious. "With all the pressures on the NHS, it's difficult to give people as much attention as you'd like. Doing your best in difficult circumstances: that's what it's all about."

If, like the Lloyds, your family has multiple ties with Christ's College, we would like to hear from you. Please contact Mrs Annette Tattersall, Alumni Officer, Christ's College, Cambridge CB2 3BU (Telephone: 01223 334937/ Fax: 01223 766711 E-mail: alumni@christs.cam.ac.uk).

Above
Passionate about opera

In the director's chair

Annilese Miskimmon, freelance opera director.

Born 8 March 1974.
Studied English at Christ's College, 1992-95.

"With opera, I have had some of the most exhilarating moments in my life and also some of the darkest."

"The public perception that opera is only for the rich few is about as accurate as saying that only rich public school boys go to Cambridge." Annilese Miskimmon is passionate about opera, and defends it vigorously against what she sees as popular misconceptions. "Football matches and pop concerts: take a look at the ticket prices for those events! You can get into an opera for £10 easily, and see a live event with seventy people in the orchestra, forty chorus members on stage, and ten principals, all supported by a crew of a hundred."

Although she was closely involved in several opera productions at Cambridge, Annilese did not initially set out to become a director. It was while studying arts administration at the Barbican that she realised something was missing. "I was miserable. I wanted creative experiences rather than management," she remembers. Thereafter, a combination of dedication, hard work and flair gave Annilese the lucky breaks she needed to make a career in the close-knit world of opera. Now working as a freelance director, she divides her time between Cardiff, London, Belfast and Glyndebourne: "I cling to my diary a lot," she admits.

Opera is renowned for its larger-than-life characters. How does a director cope with the personalities involved? "Managing egos is a big part of the job. Negative energy, in the rehearsal room or in life, comes from insecurity. It's part of my professional role to work with those insecurities. I have to convince the performers that I'm not playing games with them." Confidence, thinks Annilese, is one of the most important qualities for an opera director. "There are so many things that can go wrong. So much depends on the director. You have to convince people that you have the big picture. The worst thing that could ever happen would be for self-doubt to creep in."

Annilese has experience both of traditional and modernist productions, and she dismisses the notion that Classical operas should always be performed in period costume. "If you want to do opera as period pieces, then you will kill what the pieces are actually about. There is no right and no wrong way to do an opera in my opinion. The only test I apply to a production is whether emotionally it transmits the piece to the audience". Part of the problem, she confesses, is the lack of new operas being written. "We are forced back to the repertoire all the time. The 'Wagner in jeans' phenomenon comes from people looking at an opera that has been done lots of times, and thinking 'we can't do it the same way.'"

Recent controversy surrounding the redevelopment of the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden has not helped opera to win public support. This frustrates Annilese: "It's very hard when places like the Royal Opera House are seen to be wasting public money. You try not to get frustrated, but to present your own work to the best of your ability. Consider Welsh National Opera with their out-reach projects: it's amazing how many people they reach while maintaining a high artistic standard."

As for her own approach as a director, Annilese's philosophy is simple: "Leave all the doors open, let people see what they want to see, learn what they want to learn." She believes in following her instinctive reactions to a piece, and then working with the performers and production team to bring the work alive. "It's a mark of a very immature director when they go in and nothing changes. The best approach is to look for the ambiguities in people – that's when things become real on stage."

From our own correspondent

Gaby Rado, foreign affairs correspondent, Channel 4 News (since 1992). Born 17 January 1955. Studied English at Christ's College, 1973-76. Journalist with *Kentish Times*, BBC Radio Leicester, BBC TV News, and Thames TV; then career with ITN and Channel 4 News (producer 1985-88, reporter 1988-90, Moscow correspondent 1991-92).

"Chechnya sounds exotic, but I wouldn't recommend anyone to have a holiday there."

"We took a wrong turning and ended up right on the front line between the Muslims and the Serbs. Our armoured car was peppered by about twenty bullets, and we got taken prisoner." For most of us, the conflicts of recent history are rather distant events, witnessed only indirectly through the medium of television. But for Gaby Rado, foreign affairs correspondent for Channel 4 News, covering wars in the world's trouble-spots is a way of life.

It is surprising, then, that apart from the occasional unforeseen incident – like the wrong turning in Sarajevo – Gaby does not often feel in personal danger. "For a start it's very difficult to get to a war zone. So you spend most of your time nowhere near bullets or shells. Actually, the biggest danger is traffic accidents. The roads are bad because of the war: the better roads always get cut off or bridges get blown up, and you end up having to take country roads or tracks. We drive around in armoured vehicles; they're very heavy and tend to slide over the sides of hills."

As a journalist covering world events, Gaby lives out of a suitcase much of the time: a strange way of life. "It's fairly irregular," he agrees, with typical understatement. "You have to have an understanding wife and family. I think many of us become 'adrenaline junkies'. When the phone rings and they say 'you've got five hours to get to the airport and get to Moscow', you look forward to that. After two or three weeks back home I'm always itching for something unexpected to happen."

It is easy to take news coverage for granted, as part of our daily ritual. However, the logistics of news gathering, particularly in war zones, are formidable. Local guides are invaluable, both for their language skills and their knowledge of the area. Gaby has learned that the choice of interpreter is critically important. "There's a kind of brutal reality that if you have an attractive female translator with you in the Balkans it can be an enormous help. Armies of every description are far more courteous and polite."

Gaby acknowledges that the medium of television poses its own challenges to journalists, trying to give balanced coverage of complex international issues: "What you report has to have immediacy; it has to grab the attention. It helps people to relate to the story if it is presented in fairly simple terms. Then I suppose you can be accused of taking sides or being too simplistic. But you have to be realistic about journalism. It is not an academic treatise."

He has experienced at first hand many of the pivotal events of the late twentieth century, and yet one conflict in particular has made a lasting impression on Gaby. "The story which had the most effect on me was the Bosnian War. It lasted so long, and.it was the first conflict I had covered. It was a very emotional thing: you saw families who had been suddenly uprooted, walking barefoot from a village they had just been expelled from."

Having covered "the great Yugoslav story" from the very beginning, Gaby's ambition is to be there when it ends. "I first went to Yugoslavia in 1988 when Milosevic started having his rallies. I'd just love to be still working in this job when the time comes for him to fall. If Milosevic were toppled and I were lying on a beach in Corfu, I think I might find myself phoning up and saying I would like to go and cover the story."

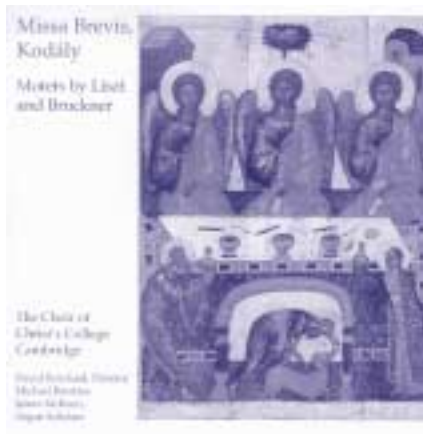
Above
The 1688 Loggan view of Christ's College

Members' page

Keep in touch!

As part of the College's wider efforts to increase contacts with members, we are establishing a scheme of year-group representatives. We are looking for one or two representatives from each matriculation year-group to join this scheme. The College will provide the year-group representatives with up-to-date contact details for their College contemporaries. The representatives will be asked to collect information of significance and interest from their year-group on an annual basis. This news will be posted on each year-group's dedicated web-page, accessed via the Christ's College alumni website. If you are interested in becoming a representative for your year-group at Christ's, please contact Mrs Annette Tattersall, Alumni Officer, Christ's College, Cambridge CB2 3BU (Telephone: 01223 334937/Fax: 01223 766711/ E-mail: alumni@christs.cam.ac.uk).

Below
Acclaimed compact disc recordings by the Chapel Choir



Gifts of distinction

The College has a range of gift items available to members and well-wishers.

Loggan Print

A limited edition of 500 hand-printed, etched reproductions of the famous 1688 Loggan 'view' of Christ's College. The prints are by the Edinburgh Printmakers' Workshop, on high quality paper. Each is individually numbered and embossed with the College shield. The print measures approximately 16 x 18 inches.

Prints are available to members of College at the special price of £47 (inclusive of VAT), plus £3 for postage and packing if required. Framed versions are also available on request. Any enquiries relating to the Loggan Print should be addressed to the Master's Lodge (telephone 01223 334940). To purchase one or more of these prints, please send a cheque for the appropriate amount (made payable to 'Christ's College') together with details of your order to: The Master's Lodge, Christ's College, Cambridge CB2 3BU.

Compact disc recordings by the Chapel Choir of Christ's College

Three acclaimed collections of sacred choral music by one of the best mixed choirs in Cambridge:
Romantic Church Music From Europe. Music by Brahms, Fauré, Liszt, Verdi.
Missa Brevis by Kodály & Motets by Liszt and Bruckner
Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts. Funeral music and laments from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
Compact discs may be purchased from the Porters' Lodge, and are available to members of College at the special price of £8. To order CDs by mail within the UK, please add £1 for postage and packing. Please send a cheque for the appropriate amount (made payable to 'Christ's College Choir') together with details of your order to: Dr David Rowland, Director of Music, Christ's College, Cambridge CB2 3BU.

For details of other benefits and services available to members and well-wishers of Christ's College, why not visit the new alumni website: www.christs.cam.ac.uk/alumni.