

pieces

Christ's College Newsletter



Issue 12 Michaelmas Term 2008

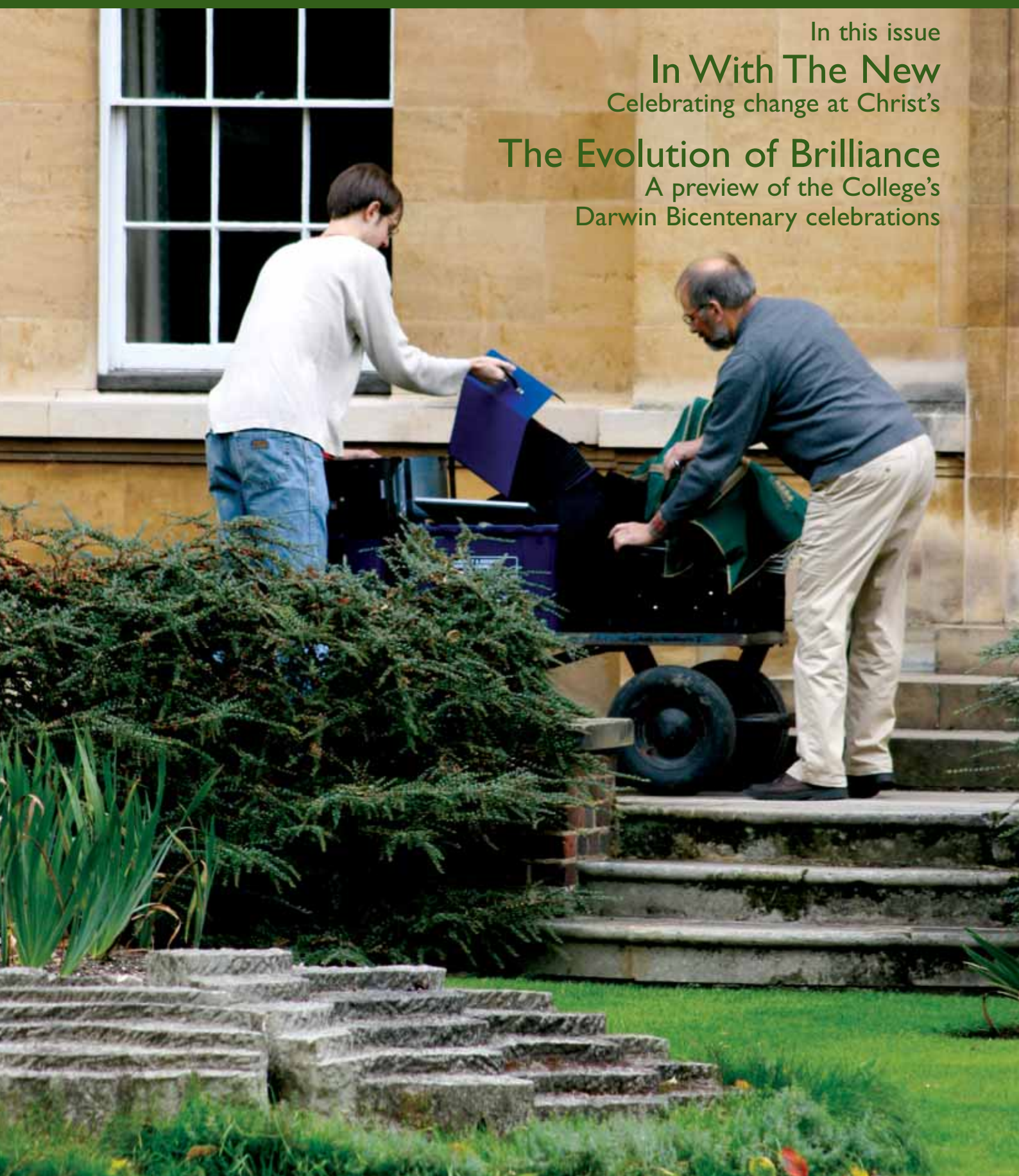
In this issue

In With The New

Celebrating change at Christ's

The Evolution of Brilliance

A preview of the College's
Darwin Bicentenary celebrations





From the Master

I'm delighted to welcome you to the second issue of our re-vamped *Pieces* magazine, which celebrates some of the developments in College over the last few months, and profiles further changes in the year ahead.

This is an exciting period of transition for Christ's: as the year of Milton draws to a close, we look forward to celebrating the life of another remarkable Christ's alumnus in 2009 – Charles Darwin. February 2009 will see the launch of a varied programme of events and projects, including the refurbishment of Darwin's old room in first court. You can read a full preview of the Darwin bicentenary celebrations on pages 5–8.

The fabric of the College has been changing too, and on page 10 we profile the refurbishment of New Court and the development of the Yusuf Hamied Centre in full.

Michaelmas term is a fitting time for change, of course, with new undergraduate and graduate students arriving in October to embark upon their studies. We wish them all the best for the next few years, and hope their time at Christ's is a rewarding and enjoyable one. We have also welcomed a number of new faces to the Fellowship and staff over the summer, including a new Development Director: Mrs Catherine Twilley, who introduces herself on page 14. We also have a new Bursar, Dr Reg Hinkley, a new Senior Tutor, Dr Robert Hunt, and new Admissions Director, Mrs Paula Stirling.

It has been a real privilege to meet so many alumni at events over the last few months, from the family day in June, to the reunion dinners in September: Our Womens' Dinner on July 18th celebrated 30 years since the admission of the first female students to Christ's, and the occasion was marked by inspirational speeches from alumni and former fellows alike. As we continue to celebrate the careers and remarkable achievements of women at Christ's, Emma Burstall discusses the route to a first novel on page 11. Please do visit our alumni blog at <http://christsblog.locosun.com> to read further articles.

Finally, I would like to extend a warm thank you to everyone who returned last issue's 'Alumni Survey'. We received an overwhelmingly positive response to the new design. If you have any further comments, or would like to write for 'Pieces', please contact the Development Office directly. We do hope you enjoy the issue.

Professor Frank Kelly, FRS



Darwin celebrations Pages 5–8



Emma Burstall Page 11

3–4 What's New?

News articles and stories from Christ's

5–8 The Evolution of Brilliance

A preview of the Darwin bicentenary celebrations

9–10 In With The New...

Changes to the fabric of the College

11 A Novel Approach

Emma Burstall's route to a first book

12 Access Report

Encouraging students of all backgrounds to apply to Christ's

13 Sports Report

Results and achievements from sporting Christ's

14 Letter from the Development Office

15 Donation Form

16 Dates For Your Diary

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Adams Prize

Professor Tom Bridgeland (m. 1991), of the Pure Mathematics Department at the University of Sheffield, has won Cambridge's Adams Prize, one of the oldest and most prestigious prizes in the University. Professor Bridgeland was awarded the prize for his highly original, deep and wide-ranging contributions to two branches of algebraic geometry, classical and non-commutative.

The Adams Prize is named after the mathematician John Couch Adams, and commemorates Adams' discovery of the planet Neptune, through calculation of the discrepancies in the orbit of Uranus.

Graduation 2008



The weather stayed mostly fine for this year's graduation on 27 June, in contrast to last year's squalls and showers. The ceremony took place in the Senate House at lunchtime, with Praelector David Sedley and the Master presiding. We hope to see many of this year's graduands returning to College before too long!

Darwin Beetle found at Wicken Fen

Almost 200 years after Charles Darwin discovered the species, one of Britain's rarest beetles has been found at Wicken Fen, near Cambridge. The crucifix ground beetle is endangered, and thought to be surviving at only three or four other sites in Britain. The last sighting of it at Wicken Fen was in 1951, and it seems fitting that the beetle should choose to make its appearance as Christ's gears up for the Darwin bicentenary in 2009! For a preview of our Darwin bicentenary celebrations, turn to pages 5–8.

Blaze on King Street

Fire fighters were called to Christ's on the morning of August 12th after a blaze started in neighbouring D'arry's Wine Bar, King Street. The fire threatened to spread from the pub to Z basement, a century-old building at the back of college where a number of staff work.

Maintenance Manager Tony Weaver smelled smoke and called the emergency services at 8.29 am. More than 40 firefighters tackled the flames at the former Cambridge Arms which was refurbished last year. Staff were evacuated while the fire brigade used the roof of Z building to fight the fire. There was no significant damage to the College buildings.

Photo by Domestic Bursar's Assistant, Amanda Burton-Palmer



Christ's On Song

Paul Sutton (m. 2005) reports on the Choir's recent trip to Ireland

The Choir rounded off a successful year of high-profile concerts with a visit to Ireland this summer. After a blearily early flight to Londonderry, the week-long tour kicked off with a well-attended lunchtime recital in St Columb's Cathedral. Heading east along the north coast of Northern Ireland, the following two nights were spent with generous hosts in Portstewart, where the Choir were well-received in the packed-out Church of St John the Baptist.

After a lunchtime recital and sung Mass in St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast, the Choir continued south along the road to Dublin, stopping for one night to give a concert in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh.

The remainder of the tour was spent in Dublin. Under the direction of Julian Black, a lunchtime concert in St Patrick's Cathedral offered a wonderful opportunity to experience the building's marvellous acoustic. In the south of the city, a concert in St Bartholomew's Church completed the performance schedule, leaving the choir to enjoy the vibrant capital city; in particular, the customary Decani v Cantoris football match, in which Dec retained the hard-contested title.

Next stop for the choir will be the East Coast of America in July 2009. The tour will last more than two weeks, taking in New England (including Boston), New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, and many surrounding towns. If you know of a good church or other concert venue, or orchestra, or would be willing to host choir members for a night or two, please email Edward Turnham (ejat3@cam.ac.uk).



An early start at Gatwick

Cooking Up a Storm

The Cambridge Colleges Chef's competition was held at Christ's on October 30th, with prizes up for grabs in several categories including canapés, afternoon tea, and a Front of House competition, as well as the usual starters, main courses and desserts. Medals will be presented later on in term – for a full report, see the next issue.

Christ's College Medical Alumni Association

Abteen Mostofi (m. 2002) reports on a new initiative for medical alumni



Chris Allen's after dinner speech in Hall

The inaugural meeting of the CCMAA took place in College on Saturday 6th September 2008. The main idea behind the initiative was to provide a familiar and informal environment for contemporary alumni in medicine and related subjects to reunite and re-establish old ties, whilst giving younger members still in training the opportunity to meet those further up the career ladder.

The meeting opened with high tea in the Lloyd Room, the weather predictably ambushing plans for a sunny reception in the Fellows' Garden. Over 50 returning alumni from six decades of matriculation then proceeded to the Plumb Auditorium where the main business meeting was held.

In the opening session, chaired by Fazal-Ali Hasan (m. 1979), the aims and objectives of the Association were discussed and approved. With unanimous support, Vis Navaratnam, Emeritus Fellow, former Director of Studies, and familiar face to generations of Christ's medics for over forty years, was elected as inaugural President, whilst centenarian former Senior Tutor, Lucan Pratt, was appointed as Honorary Patron. It was commented that between them, Drs Pratt and Navaratnam were responsible for the admission of almost every alumnus/alumna in the room!

We were extremely fortunate in being able to host two highly eminent yet 'in-house' keynote speakers. Margaret Stanley (Fellow) delivered an absorbing and accessible talk on the development of human papillomavirus vaccines for the prevention of cervical cancer; a very topical subject in which she has been a vital contributor. This was followed by Martin Evans's (m. 1960) clear scrutiny into the enormous therapeutic potential of stem cells, his work on which was recognised by the award of the 2007 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

The main meeting was rounded off with an engaging and contentious debate chaired by Ian Johnson (m. 1967). Stephen Jenkins (m. 1958) and Peter Lachmann (Fellow) argued for and against, respectively, the motion: "this house believes that as a state monopoly, the NHS is poorly equipped to face the future." Interestingly, despite their differences of opinion, both parties were in agreement that the NHS should not be run by politicians. Diverse views from the floor gradually emerged and the debate intensified only to be drawn to a premature close by the impending arrival of dinner.

After the main meeting, the members were reunited with their guests who had spent the afternoon touring the College and exploring the Milton exhibition in the Old Library. Following a quick change into black tie, members and guests regrouped in the Hall for a convivial dinner during which both the wine and the conversation were freely flowing. A particular highlight was the hilarious and witty after-dinner speech delivered by Chris Allen (m. 1967), well-known to recent graduates of the Cambridge Clinical School as the former Dean.

The meeting closed the following morning with the kind invitation of the Master, Frank Kelly, to coffee in the SCR and, for those who braved the drizzle, in the Master's Garden – a final chance to meet new faces and say farewell to old ones, and reflect on the events of the day before.

A great deal of thanks must go to those who made this hugely successful gathering possible. Now that the ball is rolling we eagerly anticipate hosting more events in the College and further afield, so watch this space! For more information, suggestions for future meetings, or details on how to contribute to the newly-formed CCMAA travel and research fund for alumni in medical training, please contact the Development Office. We look forward to hearing from you.

Doctors Strike Gold

Christ's graduand Chris Lane (m.2002) has been awarded the 2008 Gold Medal for Medicine by the University of London; an accolade which recognises him as the best graduating student in the University. Chris read Medical Sciences at Christ's before going on to study at University College Medical School, who nominated him for the prize.

The medal is decided by a special exam, taken by the best final year medical students in London, and which involves being interviewed by experts on pathology, medicine, surgery, clinical pharmacology, obstetrics and gynaecology and paediatrics.

More remarkable still, Chris inherits his title from another Christ's alumnus, Chris Hai Hu Chang (m. 2001) who won the medal in 2007. An impressive double for the College!



This year's Gold Medal for Medicine winner, alumnus Chris Lane

In other news, Dr Jin Liang James Tee (m. 1999) was recently awarded the Crombie Medal at the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, in recognition of gaining the highest mark in Part I Fellowship exams for the year 2007/2008.

A Radio History of America

Professor David Reynolds is the writer and presenter of *America, Empire of Liberty* – a ninety-part series about the history of the United States currently airing on BBC Radio 4 (Monday to Friday 3.45pm to 4pm, with a weekly omnibus hour on Fridays at 9pm). From the hunter-gatherers to Sarah Palin, from slavery to Barack Obama, the series covers the gamut of American development, with a particular focus on three themes – empire, liberty and faith. The first segment of thirty programmes was on air from 15 September to 24 October, taking the story up to the beginning of the Civil War in 1861. The second segment starts on 19 January and the third will be aired in the spring. Further details and podcasts are available on the series website at www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/america/

Darwin Bicentenary Dinner

We are delighted to announce that on 12th February 2009 Christ's will host a unique fundraising gala dinner to mark not only Charles Darwin's birthday, but also the birth of College's exciting collaboration with the Galapagos Conservation Trust. This event will undoubtedly be the highlight of the Bicentenary celebrations for both organisations.

There will be a full programme of activities throughout the afternoon and evening, including a discussion led by Sir David Attenborough and Andrew Marr; tours of the refurbishment of Darwin's student set in College and a lavish black tie dinner in Hall. Places are strictly limited. We are hoping to raise around £500,000 to establish a Charles Darwin and Galapagos Islands Trust to promote scholarship linked to present-day aspects of the work originally undertaken by Charles Darwin (Christ's 1827–31, 1836–37).

Further information is available from Alex Cullen in the Development Office: ac597@cam.ac.uk.

The Genius of Charles Darwin

Alumnus Russell Barnes (m. 1987) produced and directed a series for Channel Four this summer celebrating the genius of Darwin. The series, presented by Professor Richard Dawkins, concentrated on Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection: a theory which Dawkins considers the most important idea ever to have occurred to a human mind. It was shown as a three part series in August 2008.

Russell read history at Christ's in the 1980s, and went on to Johns Hopkins University, Bologna, Italy for post-graduate study in International Relations. Back in Britain he first started working in television as a runner on the BBC Nine O'Clock News and then found his way into documentary production. He began producing and directing in 1996 and has made films on a diverse range of subjects - from the Mini motor car to the dodo.

Russell's next project is a film about the Armistice; a project written and presented by College's own Professor David Reynolds. This film intends to look beyond the sombre clichés of Remembrance Day to uncover the unexpected and often tragically absurd story of what really happened between the German request for ceasefire in early October 1918 and the Armistice on 11th November.



No Horizons

Nicholas Saunderson, whose bust is next to the swimming pool in the Fellows' Garden, became Lucasian Professor of Mathematics in the early 1700s despite being blind from the age of three. The fascinating story has been turned into a musical, 'No Horizons', by Andy Platt, a teacher at a primary school in Thurstone, the small rural village near Barnsley where Saunderson was born.

"We have 'test-driven' the show with considerable success," said Andy. "James Lomas, fresh from his West End role as Billy Elliot, played the lead role to considerable acclaim. We ran it to full houses, standing ovations and excellent reviews. The power of the story is that it works on several different levels – it entertains, educates and inspires. It also says such a lot about the willingness of Christ's to recognise and embrace an individual based on talent alone."

Taking it to the next level is now Andy's goal, using the educational aspect and the support already gained from the likes of David Blunkett and Lord Low at the RNIB. Andy is keen to hear from any alumni who might be interested to be involved: he can be contacted via the website www.vibetheatre.com

A Life in Poems

Award-winning writer Ruth Padel (right) has a special connection to Christ's – as well as being an acclaimed poet, she is the great great granddaughter of Charles Darwin. Her volume 'Darwin: A Life in Poems' will be published in February 2009. Ruth hopes to work with the College throughout the Darwin bicentenary celebrations. Here, she shares a poem written about Darwin's remarkable room in G4, first court.



Held

Stand a moment in the centre of these panels.
His room's empty now, being restored.
Just the mahogany table and carved doors –
leading, if you open them, one to a tiny bedroom,
one to a brick wall. A stone fireplace, chest-high -
just right for a gentleman to warm his behind

in cold weather. Outside are pale wood stairs
and steps to an upper floor
with a vertical iron bar to hold when drunk.
We're here. The mantle of antiquity, of always.
These rooms, once on a time, belonged
to William Paley, Archdeacon of Carlisle.

Dark oak. Bayonet geometries. Ionic capitals
like a set of watching owls. Like comfort.
Like never knowing what it is
to be hungry. Latin books and a Bible, un-
opened on a desk. "I used to throw my gun
to my shoulder before the looking-glass.

Or fire with a cap on the nipple at the flame
of a candle, held by a friend. If my aim was accurate
the little puff of air blew it out. The explosion
caused a sharp crack. If a Tutor passed below
he'd imagine I was practising a horsewhip."
Think being twenty-one,

reading Paley's Natural Theology. Quite soon
you'll be a vicar, pursuing Natural History part-time.
But now the world is vivid and particular: In the corner
an empty fishing net on a pole, like the dug
of a breeding bitch. Scratches in oak reflect a glow
from brass glitter on his Coddington's Microscope –

his first true scientific instrument, even more
prized than his gun. (Or as much.) He goes in
for manic beetle-gathering in the Fens. He's friends
with Botany and Geology Professors. He dreams
of Natural History expedition to Tenerife
before he gets down to parsoning.

Walk him out to the quad – to the embrace
of jade lawn, scarlet geraniums and black stone
walls familiar, once, to Milton. Everything in its place.
College history. The Laws of Nature and of God.
A regard for understanding order stirs in him
like a sleeping bird. A roc perhaps. Or a phoenix.

Ruth Padel



"Upon the whole the three years which I spent at Cambridge were the most joyful in my happy life: for I was then in excellent health, and almost always in high spirits."

Charles Darwin
Autobiographical notes

The Evolution of Brilliance

Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882) –
Chr: 1827-1831, 1836-1837.

By Dr David Norman, Fellow



Some might say that Charles Darwin was simply a product of his time. A cynic might say of his theory of evolution: 'if not him, then someone else'. While it is true that Robert Chambers and others were articulating 'progressionism' or 'transmutationist' views in the decades leading up to Darwin's theory of organic evolution (1859), I do not subscribe to this view. Darwin was *special* – no matter how he claimed to be nothing out of the ordinary. But he was undoubtedly also *made special* by circumstances, intellect and, in significant measure, collegiality.

It is curious that Charles Darwin's period of intellectual training saw him admitted to Christ's to read for an ordinary degree. His father had withdrawn him from his medical studies at the premier British university of the time Edinburgh because of Charles'

disenchantment with the style of teaching and revulsion at what he saw as the barbaric nature of surgery. It seems that Charles and his father Robert saw the move as a passport to a relatively assured and comfortable career as a clergyman, with plenty of opportunity to pursue his many hobbies.

Darwin was admitted to Christ's as a 'pensioner' in October 1827 but did not formally take up residence until January 1828. Living at first in rooms on Sidney Street, he soon moved into a very pleasant set of rooms (G4) in 1st court. The particular choice of Christ's probably reflected the fact that his elder brother Erasmus (Raz) took a medical degree here in the mid 1820s, and his cousin William Darwin Fox (a keen entomologist and shortly to become a curate at nearby Bottisham) was still in residence when Charles arrived.

Charles was a popular and extremely sociable member of the student body in College. Firmly affiliated to the huntin' and shootin' set, and an enthusiastic devotee of wine and good food (becoming a founder member of the "Glutton Club") we can easily imagine him as a high-spirited and energetic young student – rather far removed from the cautious, dyspeptic, deep-thinking older man whose iconic image now prevails. Of course, there was also a more serious side to the young man, judged by his professed interest in art, music, poetry and, of course, the legendary enthusiasm he had for the collection of beetles.

It was during this time that Charles struck up acquaintance with Professor John Stevens Henslow (whose reputation as "a man who knew every branch of science" went before him). Charles soon obtained an invitation to attend Henslow's Friday evening

open-house, where he met and conversed with such Regency and Victorian 'greats' as William Whewell, Adam Sedgwick, Charles Babbage and John Herschel. During the latter half of Darwin's time in Cambridge his afternoons were spent more often than not walking and talking with Henslow, often followed by an invitation to the family dinner – gaining him a reputation as “the man who walks with Henslow”.

The academic demands of the ordinary degree course were not particularly onerous, and to get a comfortable pass mark it was necessary for Charles to read up some of the Classics, some algebra and geometry, as well as William Paley's classic *University* had to remain in Cambridge to complete his terms of residence before graduating.

Between January and June 1831, Darwin's life was dominated by Henslow. Charles had been encouraged to read Alexander von Humboldt's *Narrative* an enchanting account of a scientific expedition to tropical South America; and the highly influential *Discourse on the study of Natural Philosophy* by John Herschel. He was also instructed to learn some geology by attending Adam Sedgwick's wonderful lectures, and arranged for him to become his field-assistant on a geological excursion to map the rock formations of north Wales in the summer of 1831. A passion was rising in the young Darwin to 'do something' in the field of science, and also to visit exotic foreign countries.

The summer of 1831 proved infinitely more exciting for young Darwin than even his wildest imaginings would have allowed. Henslow was approached by the Admiralty with the offer to serve as naturalist aboard the survey ship *HMS Beagle* during a cartographic survey of South America and a chronometric longitudinal survey of the globe. Having a young family of his own Henslow was reluctant to leave England and suggested Charles Darwin as someone who showed considerable promise for such a role and the rest is, as they say, history!

Charles returned to Cambridge in December 1836. He took up residence in Fitzwilliam Street and became a Fellow Commoner at Christ's while collating his extensive notes, starting his journal of researches and organising his prodigious natural history collections. Later in the spring of 1837 he transferred to London moving first to Great Marlborough Street, close to his brother Erasmus, then to Upper Gower Street in 1839 with his new wife Emma. He finally settled at Down House in Kent in 1842.

Darwin had a rare genius, nurtured to a considerable extent by his experiences and the friendships generated during his time at Cambridge and Christ's.

Commemoration of Charles Darwin

To celebrate that friendly, outgoing, energetic, fun-loving undergraduate (not quite posterity's image of Charles Darwin) we are planning a number of activities for 2009:

Christ's-Galapagos Islands Trust Fund

On a very large scale (as befits the great man) Christ's is collaborating with the Galapagos Conservation Trust and the University of Cambridge in organising a major fund-raising event to coincide with the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birthday (12 February 2009). The intention is to establish a Christ's College-Galapagos Islands Trust that will promote research between Cambridge and the Galapagos Islands, in perpetuity. This initiative recognises and wishes to commemorate the immense importance of Darwin's time spent collecting and observing on the archipelago. This initiative came about following an expedition that Dr Norman led to the Galapagos Islands in 2007.

The Lady Margaret Lectures

A series of four lectures on the general theme of Charles Darwin by Professor Richard Fortey FRS, Professor David Sedley FBA, Dr Marsha Richmond, Randall Keynes / Ron Laskey FRS (Charles Darwin Professor at the University of Cambridge).

Charles Darwin aet. 22 in bronze

As described in this issue, Anthony Smith (Chr: Nat Sci – Zoology) is creating a bronze statue of Charles Darwin, which is to become a permanent and unique memorial at Christ's.

Charles Darwin Memorial Garden

The garden area of New Court is being converted into a permanent memorial garden to the young Charles Darwin. It will become the permanent site for the new bronze sculpture, and the garden itself will be planted with shrubs and trees that echo the sequence of countries visited by Charles Darwin during his epic voyage on the *Beagle*.

Charles Darwin's Room

Darwin's former student room is being restored to the condition it would have been in during his time as a student with the aid of Interior Historian, Joanne Poole, and Dr John van Wyhe.

Darwin Portico

The area in the garden behind 3rd court, close to the laundry, has a famous and classically imposing bronze bust of Darwin as an old man that was donated to the University by the American Museum of Natural History for the 1909 celebrations. This area is to be renovated and new displays and interpretation boards are to be erected to inform visitors to the college about our famous alumnus.

Christ's College Library: "Charles Darwin on land and at sea"

The Old Library will be presenting displays of some of Darwin's original correspondence, particularly that which reflects his life in College and the importance friendship with this cousin William Darwin Fox, and his correspondence whilst aboard *HMS Beagle*, as well as early editions of Darwin's works, and the extensive archive associated with the 1909 Darwin celebrations in Cambridge.

The Christ's College Darwin website

Our student members are constructing a new website to provide an approachable and accessible set of pages that explore Charles Darwin, his work, his life and some of the implications of his work and discoveries. This is intended to be read by people of all ages and interests, but will specifically include sections for use by school-aged students who are interested in the general topic of Darwin and his theory of evolution (and will offer practical guidance about what it all means).

The Darwin Festival: July 5-10, 2009

The College will be involved in a range of meetings and receptions associated with the major University-wide festival here in Cambridge. Among these will be the staging of "Re-Design" and newly commissioned stage-play sponsored by the Darwin Correspondence Project. This will be performed throughout the week of the festival in the newly renovated Yusuf Hamied Theatre in New Court.

Darwin's *Beagle* Correspondence

A commemorative volume of Darwin's *Beagle* Letters has been sponsored by Christ's College and is being published by the Darwin Correspondence Project.



Anthony Smith

Portrait Of The Artist

Anthony Smith (m. 2002) has spent the last year crafting a sculpture of Darwin as a young man to celebrate the bicentenary. His work will be unveiled in February, when the Darwin garden opens. Here, he talks to Helen Mort about the project, and his life as a sculptor.

What was the process of sculpting Darwin like?

The very first thing we decided was that we wanted to depict a young Darwin, because that's so much more relevant to the College. In the sculpture, he's depicted at 20 or 21, in his final year at Christ's before he went off on the Beagle. It's fairly unique in this. There are lots of depictions of Darwin, but always as an old bearded man. I always think that's a great shame, because I tend to think of him as the youthful, energetic Darwin who

travelled on The Beagle, making discoveries.

What's the most challenging commission you've taken on to date?

This is certainly the most ambitious commission that I've done. At the moment I'm also working on something for the Royal Mint. I like trying completely new things. I recently did a commission of Ian Fleming for his centenary, that's in Edinburgh at the moment and it will be going to New York and LA.

How did you feel when you were approached to take on the Darwin sculpture commission?

I actually approached the College with the idea: I've been a fan of Darwin since forever. I came to Christ's in the first place to read zoology because of my interest in Darwin. I knew that the bicentenary was coming up, and Dr David Norman and I thought it would be wonderful to mark it with a sculpture.

Why has Darwin been such a big influence on you?

I read 'The Origin of the Species' when I was sixteen and evolutionary theory became my passion for a long time. As an artist, that background has proved invaluable. I don't think of myself as a wildlife artist, but they do figure in my work and it's nice to know more about the animals beyond a superficial understanding.

I don't really like the way a lot of people classify themselves as either artists or scientists. Quite a few sculptors that I've met actually come from a science background. Anthony Caro, for example, read engineering when he was at Christ's.

How did you discover your talent for visual art?

I started off painting and drawing, and I only really discovered my passion for sculpting when I was about fifteen or sixteen. After that, I devoted a lot of time to sculpture at school, and I carried on throughout my time at Christ's. I was very fortunate that the visual art studio here became available just as I graduated, and I was able to start renting a space from the College and working on my sculpture full time.

Anthony's rendering of the young Darwin



In With The New...

After more than a decade in the job, Maintenance manager Tony Weaver decided to bid farewell to Christ's this summer and enjoy a well-earned retirement. Here, he talks to Helen Mort about the challenges of seeing the College through all its recent structural changes.

Tony Weaver (left) with the new Maintenance Manager, Wayne Burrows.



You've been Maintenance Manager at Christ's for 13 years now, what was the first big job when you arrived?

The worst thing when I arrived here was those freezing, frosty mornings when you'd see students wandering about the courts in dressing gowns, looking for showers! So one of our first jobs was to make sure that staircases like R, S, T and V had showers installed.

Much more recently we modernised C, D and E staircases in second court to coincide with the big Christ's Lane development. The rooms there had very few facilities for students. In fact, when I first came to College, I was looking through an old architectural description of the buildings and one of the notes said: "as you walk through the screens, the block on the right hand side of second court need not detain you!", which I thought was quite telling at the time!

What other big changes have you seen over the years?

There have been changes to the Buttery over the years, to The Hall, to the area that is now the Visual Arts Centre....Probably the most significant job was the refurbishment of the Master's Lodge. It was a much bigger task than we'd thought, bringing the facilities into the 21st century, but now I really do believe that we've got one of the nicest Masters' Lodges in Cambridge.

New Court is undergoing massive refurbishment at the moment, with the new Yusuf Hamied Centre being built. What can we expect when the building work is finished this autumn?

Instead of a 1968 building on its last legs, we will have a very modern building with a beautiful theatre, with all the audio visual facilities that one could expect from a lecture or drama theatre, and with toilet facilities close by. There will also be a very nice function room in the basement, where students will be able to have bops and meetings with a full bar and a small stage

facility. I think both the theatre and function room will prove very popular for College events. The other thing I'm really pleased about is that we have been able to build a brand new fitness suite, which is bound to be popular with the students.

But it turned out to be a tougher job than anyone thought...?

There were plenty of challenges when we began work on New Court. There was a very high voltage cable running underneath the theatre, and to make things worse, the engineer's drawings showed the concrete in that area to be less than 30 cm thick, but in some places, it turned out to be 120cm thick! It took much, much longer than anticipated to drill through it and added something like a month on to the work in that area.

Christ's has an amazing mixture of buildings, both historical and modern. Which part of College do you find most interesting?

The College never ceases to surprise me. Almost every week we seem to find new things to deal with, or come up against things that are interesting. Deep down, my favourite part of Christ's is first court. It's just wonderful. I used to have an office at the back of L and M staircases, and even the piece of wall near there is one of the most interesting things in College.

If you walk through the College as I've done many times, on a summer's morning, very, very early, the light in first court is stunning; second only to the light you find in places like Tuscany. The buildings are absolutely breathtaking. It is one of the finest courts you'll ever come across.

Christ's is a wonderful place to work, like working in a village. We've been under pressure many times over the years, but I've never felt stressed and I think that's largely due to the ambience of the place; the buildings, the surroundings and the atmosphere created by the people.

Is it ever difficult, working with so much history and tradition?

You always have to bear in mind the way the College has evolved. People often think it's hardly altered in its basic form, but in fact the College has changed many, many times over the years and to say that it's as it always was is just not true. What we do have to do is bear in mind the sensitivity of the buildings, the sensitivity of people who work here, the requirements of the people who live here, and make sure that we deal with each job appropriately.

The maintenance department of a Cambridge College is a particularly special place to work. There is nowhere better to work in the building and construction industry, in my view.

What kind of changes do you think the College will see in the next 13 years?

There are two things I'd love to see, one of which I wish I'd been able to do while I was here: to refurbish the Great Gate on the outside, and all the coat of arms and stonework above. I always wanted to see that done before I left.

I'd also love to see the Courts site redeveloped into something that befits the College, to see the end of the famous 'tin shed'. Of course, the shed is interesting in itself. I was told that when students were here originally, they would go from here to the army, and one of the things they would need to be able to do was ride. So apparently the tin shed was an indoor riding school. I don't know if that's true, but it would be great if it was!

Where next for you?

I've always done planning drawings, and I'll continue to do some of that. I hope I'll get time to read all the books I've not had time for, and improve my foreign languages. I have a beautiful granddaughter, sixteen months old, who I want to spend more time with. Hopefully, my wife and I will be able to travel a bit as well. Lots of things to look forward to, and I hope I have time for all of them!

The Yusuf Hamied Centre

Development Fellow Elizabeth Norris reports on the new Yusuf Hamied Centre, and the generosity of the donor who made it possible.

Anyone who has had reason to visit the theatre at Christ's in recent years will appreciate just how grateful we were when Dr Yusuf Hamied generously offered to fund a new one. That offer was made in July 2006 and the new theatre along with all the public rooms – the MCR, JCR, function room, bar, music practice room, gym – which, during the course of the building work Dr Hamied agreed to provide as well, were ready on schedule at the start of this academic year. The official opening will take place in Spring 2009 but many will have the opportunity to use The Yusuf Hamied Centre before then.

The centre occupies the site of the old theatre at the side of the Lasdun building, but it is completely new, not just refurbished. Builders dug down several metres and the enormous hole there last autumn gave the first real sense of the vast scale of The Yusuf Hamied Centre. The finished theatre provides a modern space for lectures, film, concerts, drama, with easy access by lift to the function room and bar below. It is a real asset to the life of the college, as the new generation of students will be able to testify!

Dr Hamied, a Lady Margaret Beaufort Fellow, matriculated at Christ's in 1954 to read Natural Sciences, and remains grateful for the support and encouragement he received during his 6 year stay here, particularly from Dr Lucan Pratt and Lord Alexander Todd.

Dr Hamied is now Chairman and Managing Director of Cipla, a major pharmaceutical company in India which provides affordable drugs for millions of people throughout the world.

Dr Hamied and Farida Hamied

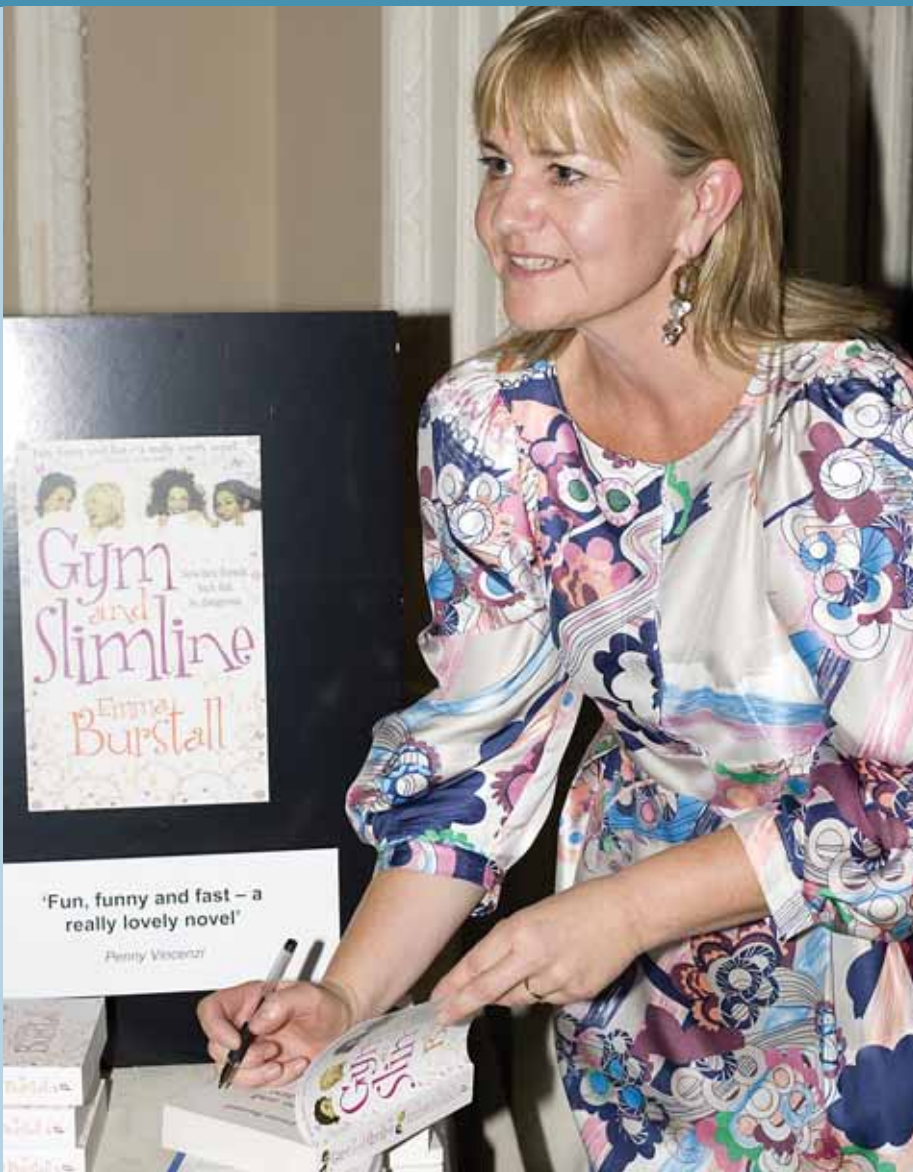


The theatre, approaching completion



Putting finishing touches to the Function Room





Emma Burstall signs her first novel.

The route to a first novel

Emma Burstall (m. 1980) read English at Christ's. Since graduating she has worked as a journalist on national newspapers and women's magazines including *the Guardian*, *Independent on Sunday*, *Red* and *Good Housekeeping*. Her first novel, *Gym and Slimline*, was published by Preface last summer. She is now working on her second book, due out next year.

I was on holiday in France with my family in August 2007 when I got the call from my agent that I'd been waiting for: Preface Publishing loved my novel, *Gym and Slimline*, and they were offering me a two book deal. I was thrilled. I'd been working on the book on and off for two years. It hadn't been easy to slot in with my job as features editor of a women's magazine and raising my three children. I've had a few sleepless nights and my youngest has probably watched too much TV, but there was never any doubt in my mind that I would see it through.

I'd planned to write novels for as long as I can remember but kept putting it off. My excuse was always that the time wasn't right: first I was too busy studying, then working and having babies. The truth, however, is that at the back of my mind I think I felt that I needed to

gain more life experience first. And having spent three wonderful years at Christ's steeped in Shakespeare, Hardy, Tennyson and Dickens, I had to get over the idea that unless I could produce a literary masterpiece, there was no point trying to write at all.

Two decades in journalism helped to knock that out of me and in many ways, I think, working for newspapers and magazines is an excellent preparation for would-be novelists; you need to be able to write fast when publishers expect a book a year; as they so often do. On the downside, however, I was surprised by how difficult it was at first to adapt my style and to 'unlearn' some of the lessons I'd learned during my career. It seemed strange, for example, to be able to take my time, savour words and linger over details. Initially, passages of description felt self-indulgent. Later, however,

they became a joy, a rediscovery.

I loved my time at Christ's. I appeared in a CADS production, helped set up a magazine (long since defunct) and wrote for Stop Press; my first story was about a riot on Midsummer Common during a Specials concert. In my third year, an in-depth interview with Sir Jack Plumb, former Master of the College, helped to secure me a place on a postgraduate journalism training course at City University. I then started out on a regional newspaper before moving back to London.

They say that it's best to write about what you know, and the inspiration for my novel was very close to home. I'd joined a local gym after having my third child and it dawned on me that this would make an excellent setting for commercial women's fiction; bringing together a disparate set of characters in a setting people could relate to. What's good about the gym as a metaphor is that it's a place where people both work to change themselves and also are confronted with the reality of who they are, so there's lots of scope for soul-searching and life changing decisions.

My book is ultimately a celebration of female friendship - particularly the New Best Friend who can come unexpectedly into your life and be strangely alluring. However, my four main characters learn to their cost that before you open up your life and share your loved ones with your New Best Friend it is wise to ask yourself - what hasn't she revealed?

At my book launch in Soho in September I was delighted to see a fair few Old Best Friends from my Christ's days. We've remained close down the years and some of us went to the wonderful dinner back in July celebrating thirty years of women at Christ's. My launch was a jolly, if very different, affair. And furthermore, I'm delighted to report that there were absolutely no nasty revelations whatsoever!

Gym and Slimline is available from most good bookshops or you can order online at Amazon or at www.emmaburstall.com

Love, Secrets and Lies in Wolverhampton

In other literary news, alumnus Sathnam Sanghera (m. 1995) sees his first book reissued in paperback in March 2009. Sathnam's book, *If You Don't Know Me By Now* is a memoir of growing up in a working class Sikh family in Wolverhampton. It will be reissued in March by Viking as: *The Boy with The Topknot: a memoir of love, secrets and lies in Wolverhampton*. Sathnam read English Literature at Christ's, and is now a regular columnist for *The Times*. He lives in London. www.sathnam.com/

A New Era for Access

For the first time ever, the College has appointed both a new Senior Tutor, Dr Robert Hunt, and a new Admissions Director, Mrs Paula Stirling, who both started their jobs in Michaelmas term 2008. Robert and Paula are pictured below.



Paula says: "I am very much looking forward to working with the Senior Tutor and everyone in College, especially our JCR Access Officer Stephen Harrison and his team of student volunteers, to build on our access and outreach initiatives – Open Days, school visits to college, bringing teachers here, shadowing schemes (where pupils shadow an existing undergraduate) as well as going out to schools. I'm sure my time at Christ's will be a rewarding one... I've already taken up rowing!"

Ed Sharpe (m. 2004) was also appointed as the College's new Access and Schools Liaison Officer, shared with Jesus and Homerton. Having read history at Christ's, he's now experiencing College life from a different perspective!

Ed says: "Since taking over as Access and Schools Liaison Officer from Selina Hawkins in August, I have been continuing with our regular program of events, as well as working on ways of expanding Christ's Access program. Having been schooled in Lincolnshire, I have found myself well placed to continue the college's work in this area.

Last week, I attended an Oxbridge conference at William Farr C of E Comprehensive School in Welton. This was organised in conjunction with Lincoln College, Oxford and over 100 Sixth Formers were able to attend to learn about admissions procedures and what it's like to study at Cambridge. This event was very successful and I was ably assisted by several Christ's undergraduates, who were able to give a lively and entertaining description of life at the College.

Over the course of the coming term I look forward to welcoming several school groups to the college. The opportunity to look around the college was vital in my own decision to apply, so I am keen to increase the number of school visits we are able to host. Finally, the college will be expanding its access work to a London borough in the very near future, as part of a university wide review of the link area scheme. This will be a valuable opportunity to promote the college in an area which has very different issues to Lincolnshire and will present many new challenges."

Students who are thinking of applying to Christ's can now get a taste of College life by visiting the JCR website, where they can take a video tour of the College, and see what Freshers' Week 2007 was really like! The website now features a number of videos for prospective students, including extracts from the Freshers' Play 2008, as well as a range of photos: www.thejcr.co.uk/



Courtesy St John's College

In Memory of Our Foundress

By Professor Martin Johnson

On 27 June 2009 the College will celebrate the life and generosity of its foundress Lady Margaret Beaufort, who died 500 years ago, almost to the day. Her extraordinary life, spanning seven decades of the most turbulent period of late medieval English history, culminated in the accession of her son as Henry VII, the first of the Tudor monarchs. Her great personal wealth was then put to good use – founding professorships in both Oxford and Cambridge, supporting the development of printing, newly arrived in England and, in 1505, re-founding the impoverished Godshouse as Christ's College. Her generosity laid the foundation for the continuing success of our College, helping it to maintain and develop the quality and range of its education.

We invite you to join with Dr David Starkey CBE, FSA, Dr Francis Woodman FSA, Professor Lisa Jardine FBA, Charles Saumarez Smith CBE, Miss Penelope Keith CBE, DL, and Professor Geoffrey Martin FSA, on this day of celebration which will be varied, interesting and entertaining. These experts will talk about Lady Margaret's family background, her portraits, her political significance, her sponsorship of printing, the founding of the College, her gifts and benefactions and her personal writings and beliefs. There will be displays of period plate, archives and rare books, and tours of the older College buildings. There will also be entertainment with Tudor music and readings. Later, as a separate event, there will be a liturgical celebration in the Chapel, followed by a suitable Feast in Hall.

In the spirit of Lady Margaret's foundation, and of the many subsequent benefactors that have enabled the College to survive and flourish, we are also inviting attending College members, alumni and friends to follow in her generous footsteps by supporting a fund for a College junior teaching fellowship in history. The College is grateful to the distinguished speakers and performers on the day, all of whom are generously giving their time free to support the fund. Opportunities to reserve places will open in the new year. For more information, contact the Development Office.

Beagles on Fire

After a successful outing in this year's Turing relay, the Christ's College Beagles donned their trainers again to compete in the historic Chariots of Fire event on September 21st.

The charity race, now in its 16th year, was inspired by the famous 'Chariots of Fire' film, which tells the story of a Cambridge runner's bid to win a gold medal in the 1924 Olympics and includes an iconic race around Trinity College Great Court. The current course goes rather further, consisting of 6 laps around the colleges and backs, each 1.7 miles long. The Beagles clocked an impressive 1 hour and 12 minutes, finishing 109th out of 420 teams.



The team were (from left to right): Kevin McHugh (Barman), Chris Austin (Stewards' Clerk), Matthew Higgins (Fellow), Nick Gay (Fellow), Helen Mort (Publications Officer) and Brenda Bradley (Fellow). Their speed around the course was only matched by their swift departure to the beer tent after the race.

Blades

Members of Blades (formerly Friends of Christ's College Boat Club) met for drinks and a buffet supper at the Bishop of Norwich Pub in Moorgate on October 3rd. The event, organised by Dan Eves (m. 1997) was a chance for generations of former CCBC members to trade stories: all the year groups were well represented from 2005 to the 1940s!

For more information about Blades, please contact the Development Office.



Dan Eves (m. 1997), Robin Kerr (m. 1962) and Duncan Bull (m. 2005) prop each other up.

In at the deep end



Following our report in the last issue of *Pieces*, Michael Mann (m. 2001) tells us about his successful channel swim attempt.

It started in a pub, with a bunch of Cambridge students, as many great ideas do. But unlike Watson and Crick, we did not end up with worldwide fame and glory. We ended up on a beach in France, shortly after midnight, 25 miles from Dover, grinning and shivering in Channel Swimming Association approved Speedos.

The six of us had trained every other weekend in Dover, setting off at 6am, swimming in the freezing water for up to 3 hours, as our hands, then feet, then face went numb – with only a 2 hour shiver to look forward to on exit. We swam through jellyfish stings, seal bites and waves, past ferries, rip tides and floaters, in the fog, rain, wind and darkness.

And it was amazing. Eight hours in, when the French cliffs reared up above the horizon, we knew we would make it. There was a lot of vomit, but a lot of courage, and we overcame some hefty currents and darkness to arrive near Cap Gris de Nez 14 hours 11 minutes and 30 seconds after we set off.

I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who donated. Captain Webb, the first person to cross the Channel in 1875, famously said 'Nothing great is easy'. I'm not so sure. When you clicked on our website to donate, or signed that cheque, you did something really great. The first payment went off to Nepal last month and they are already well on their way to repairing the school roofs and building the libraries that will help hundreds of children's lives.

For more photos (including of the repairs): <http://swimteam2008.blogspot.com/>

To donate:
www.justgiving.com/michaelswimsthechannel

Rowing Round Up

Boat Club Captain Jack Eyre (m. 2005) reports on the club's recent success



Christ's M1 bear down on First and Third Trinity M2 on the final day of the May Bumps, 2008.

The mixed fortunes of college boat clubs are nowhere more succinctly displayed than in the tangled web that is the Bumps chart. The confusion of lines, the trails of bumps, overbumps, and painful rowovers, bear no evidence of the hard work, time and energy put in by the scores of obsessive boaties across Cambridge. All they offer is the cold, hard fact of results – the only thing that any club will be remembered for in years to come.

Some careful study of the charts will show that consistency is rare. Looking at any club, the fluctuations in the positions of their different boats over time are huge. However, looking in particular at Christ's College Boat Club, for this years Lent and May bumps, it becomes clear that 2007–2008 has been a successful year for us. But this doesn't quite tell the full story...

The 1st Women's crew won very nearly every race they entered, including Fairbairns, the climax of Michaelmas term competition. They rose 7 places in 8 bumps races, and to crown it all they qualified for Henley Women's Regatta, went on to beat Osiris B (Oxford University's 2nd women's crew) and lost narrowly to Osiris A. They will be remembered as one of the most successful crews Christ's has ever produced.

The 1st men rose two places in the Lents, maintained position in the Mays, and had wins at Leicester Regatta and the St. Radegund mile along the way. However, what was really pleasing to see was the strength in depth that the club possessed. The 2nd men and 2nd women each rose 6 places in 8 bumps races, and were worryingly close in speed to their respective 1st boats. Our men's and women's novice crews came 4th and 1st respectively in Fairbairns, and the Rugby and Fellows' crews put in some serious training for the May bumps. Both gained places overall, with the Rugby boat narrowly missing out on bumping the Fellows in a hugely exciting and controversial final day's racing. Ask Marguerites president Jonny Thompson and MCR president Mike Housden for opposing and hugely biased first hand reports!

www.christsbc.co.uk

Looking Forwards

Development Director Catherine Twilley joined the College in September, having previously been Associate Development Director at St John's. Here, she reports on the Quincentenary Campaign and looks forward to a new chapter of College development.

Thanks to so many members and friends of Christ's, the Quincentenary Campaign has now been drawn to a close. At the Foundation Dinner in June this year the Master was able to thank some of those who had contributed so generously and announce that the £15m target had been reached. The plaque commemorating and celebrating our most generous benefactors will soon be on display in the Yusuf Hamied Centre.

The aim of the Quincentenary Campaign was to celebrate the past, engage the present and build for the future, to guarantee that Christ's remains a centre of excellence in education, learning and research, for generations to come. Its major goals were:

- Attracting talent: increased provision of bursaries and studentships;
- Advancing knowledge: permanent endowment of the College's teaching fellowships;
- Broadening horizons: better facilities for sports, music and arts;

- General funds to provide the financial flexibility to respond quickly to new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

The themes of the campaign prevail, of course. Recently the College has agreed a strategic plan which sets out our aspirations. Central to this vision is the development of an integrated community that encourages adventurous thinking and scholarship in all the disciplines and across the disciplines. The core themes are free-thinking, creating and fostering opportunities, realising potential and encouraging excellence.

What is clear to all at Christ's is that fundraising is an ongoing activity. The only way we can be even better and compete more effectively nationally and internationally is by securing additional resources. The Development Office, and indeed everyone at Christ's, is looking forward to achieving our aims.

As the new academic year begins it is the ideal time to look to the future. We are looking at ways of engaging alumni and



Publications Officer Helen Mort, Development Director Catherine Twilley and Development Officer Alex Cullen outside the new offices in V Staircase, third court.

others in the work of the College so that they feel part of the community. We will be expanding the range of events on offer, hoping to provide more interesting ways for members to interact with each other and with current students, Fellows and staff. Ideas of how we might do this are always welcome so do please get in touch.

Catherine Twilley

Fellow and Development Director
(BA St John's, 1992)

College Photo Gallery

You can now see a variety of photos showing life in College on the new, improved Christ's website, www.christs.cam.ac.uk.



College signwriter at work



lunch break in the gardens



New kitchens



The only cross words you'll find in the Porter's Lodge....

Dr Alan Winter ran a competition earlier this year for pictures of 'College at work', won by Wu Qian. The photograph on the far left of signwriter Brian Roberts, taken by Alan Winter, appeared in the gallery.

Signwriter Brian Roberts says:

I have been pleased to be associated with Christ College for the past five years. I became a signwriter as a youth when I answered an advert in a paper, and have been doing the job ever since, working mainly at Christ's and Peterhouse. My favourite part of Christ's is the gardens – the greenery makes the courts so pleasant to work in. It's always an interesting job and you never know what you are going to be asked to do next: I came in out of season earlier this year to paint some of the college sheds.

Photographer Dr Alan Winter says:

There are more photographs of the College at work on www.christs.cam.ac.uk/college-life/college-galleries/

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Christ's College



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Please pay the sum of £ _____ on the same day each month / quarter / year (delete as appropriate) on the _____ (day) of _____ (month) _____ (year) until further notice OR until _____ payments have been made (delete as appropriate).

For Office Use: Please make the payment to Christ's College Acc No. 03322253 at Lloyds TSB, 3 Sidney Street, Cambridge, CB2 1BQ.
 Sort code 30-91-56 quoting reference no. _____

Online Giving

Christ's College website now carries online facilities for single and regular gifts.

If you would like to make a gift online please visit www.christs.cam.ac.uk/alumni/supporting-christs/donations and follow the appropriate link.

Single gift

☐ I enclose a cheque / CAF donation payable to Christ's College Cambridge for £ _____.

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* Located on the signature strip on the back of the card. For security reasons you may wish to phone, e-mail or send separately.

Please return this form and direct any enquiries to:

The Development Office
 Christ's College
 Cambridge
 CB2 3BU
 UK

Tel: +44 (0)1223 766710
 Fax: +44 (0)1223 766711
 e-mail: campaign@christs.cam.ac.uk

Saturday 6th December 2008

Bose Symposium

A commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the birth of distinguished alumnus Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose – widely regarded as the founder of modern Indian science. The programme will include eight talks aimed at non-specialist level, on a range of topics including what plants teach us about climate change and how butterflies get their colour. Lunch will be provided. Places for this event are limited, but for more information, please contact Clare Kitcat: ck359@cam.ac.uk

Saturday 6th December 2008, 8pm

Milton at Christ's Concert

Readings of Milton's poetry and prose by renowned actors, and Music of Milton's time performed by Fretwork, David Rowland and the Choir of Christ's College.

Tickets available from the Development Office: 01223 334937

Thursday 11th December 2008, 11am

College Carol Service in Chapel

A small carol service for members of College. Places may be limited, but please contact the Chaplain for more details: cmw66@cam.ac.uk

Thursday 18th December 2008

Old Library Exhibition ends

The last chance to see the College's extensive Milton collection before the exhibition closes.

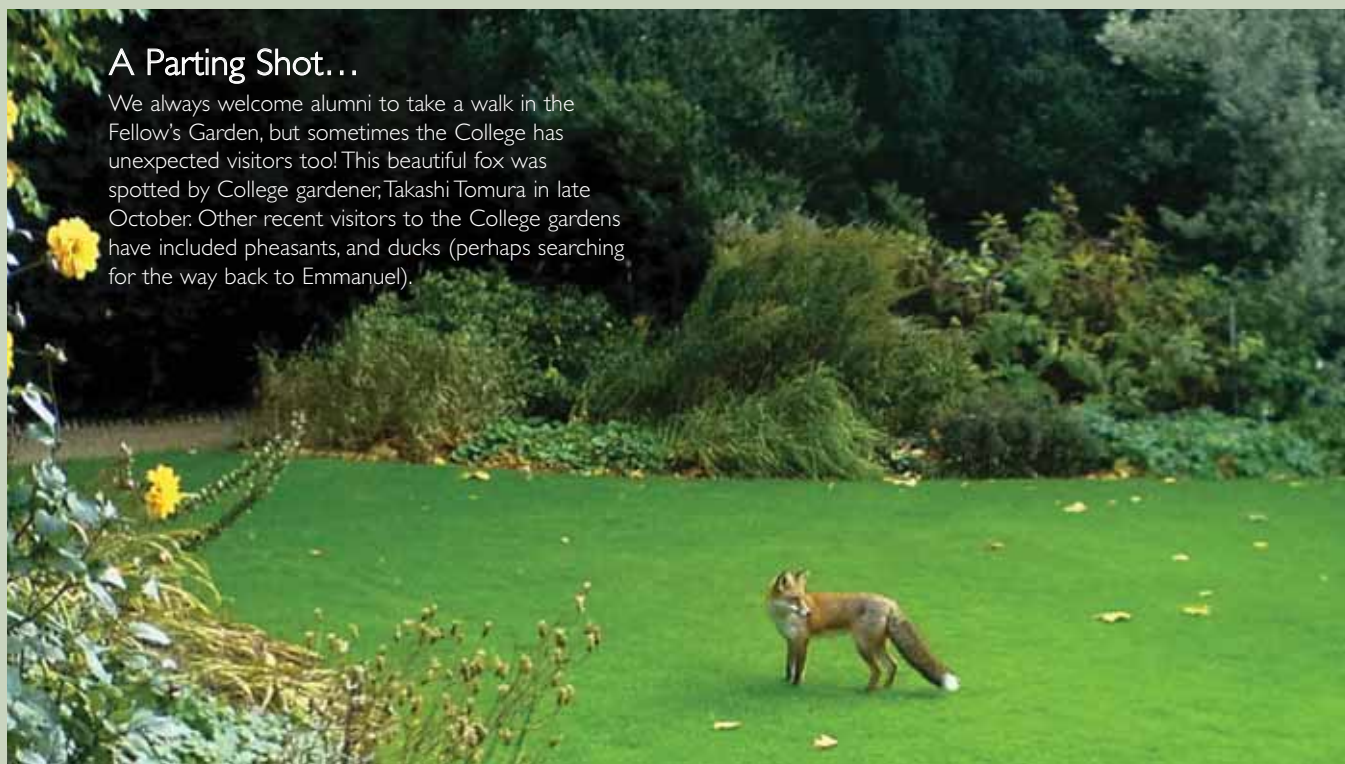
Tuesday 12th February 2009

Darwin Bicentenary Dinner

In conjunction with the Galapagos Conservation Trust. More information available from the Development Office.

A Parting Shot...

We always welcome alumni to take a walk in the Fellow's Garden, but sometimes the College has unexpected visitors too! This beautiful fox was spotted by College gardener, Takashi Tomura in late October. Other recent visitors to the College gardens have included pheasants, and ducks (perhaps searching for the way back to Emmanuel).



FRIENDS OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE OLD LIBRARY

Become a Friend and help the College protect its valuable collection of books and manuscripts for future generations.

As a member you will receive:

- exclusive access to lectures and exhibitions
- mailings with updates on work in the Old Library
- opportunities to become involved in the Old Library as a volunteer

To join or to enquire about volunteer work, please contact:

The Development Office, Christ's College, Cambridge CB2 3BU, UK