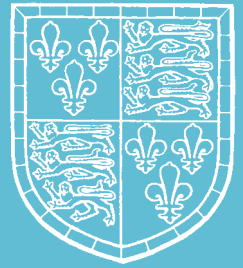


pieces

Christ's College Newsletter



Issue 26 Michaelmas Term 2013



'Sleuth on Skates'

Children's series set at Christ's

Bees – in College and 'in decline'

'The Three Students'

A Sherlock Holmes mystery



From the Master

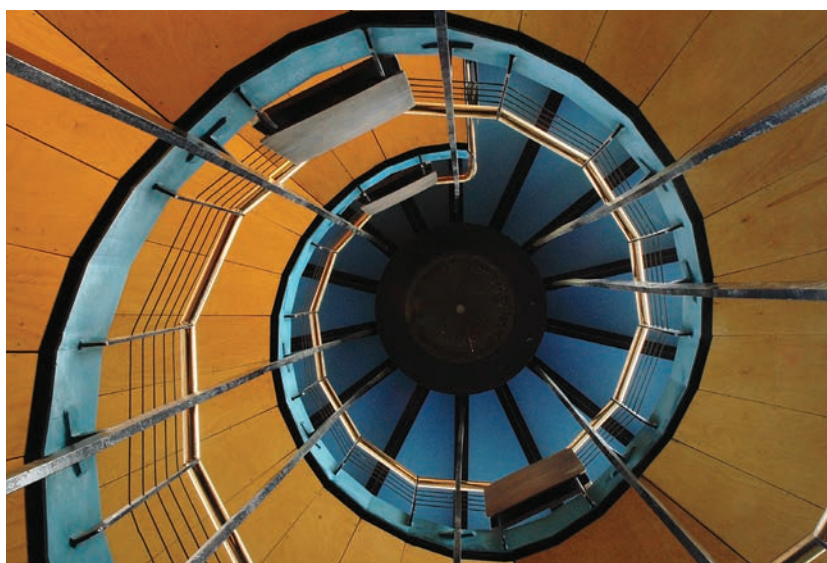
Welcome to the 2013 Michaelmas edition of *Pieces*. This is always a special time of year in Christ's as our new students arrive, eager and excited, to make themselves at home in College. The College looks particularly beautiful this Autumn, and the gardeners have recently been harvesting a bountiful crop of mulberries from 'Milton's Tree'. There is also honey from the College's bees. We hear from one of the College Gardeners, Lottie Collis, about the bees and their home in the College on Page 9. Accompanying this feature is an insight into the much reported decline of bees from alumnus Stuart Roberts, an entomologist who has been researching pollinator numbers, on Page 8.

Author and Journalist Sathnam Sanghera has just released his first novel *Marriage Material* and talks about this on Page 6. Recent graduate Clémentine Beauvais was inspired to set her new children's series *Sesame Seade* here in Christ's (Sesame is pictured rollerblading round First Court on the cover of this edition!) and talks to us about this on Page 7.

Many of you will have heard the sad news about our Head Porter, Jeremy Taylor, who died peacefully after a short illness at the end of the summer. Jeremy took a keen interest in our students from Matriculation through to Graduation and then as alumni, and under his leadership our Porters were recognised as the most helpful and supportive in Cambridge. He was a calm, friendly and reassuring presence for all of us in College. He will be greatly missed by generations of students, staff, fellows and alumni.

Professor Frank Kelly CBE FRS

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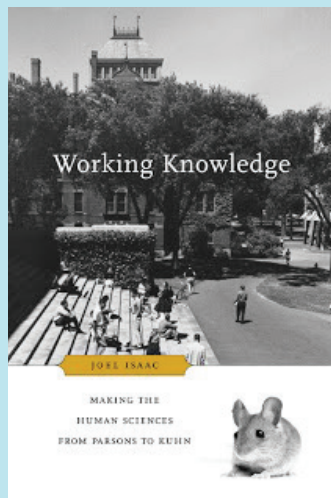
Spiral staircase in the entrance to the Plumb Auditorium: a striking photograph by Professor Dick Clements (m. 1966) which was contributed for the College's 'Self-Shot 3' photography compilation.



Fellows' News

The Royal Historical Society's Gladstone Prize for 2012 was awarded to **Dr Joel Isaac** for *Working Knowledge: Making the Human Sciences from Parsons to Kuhn* (Harvard University Press, 2012)

Working Knowledge explores how influential thinkers in the twentieth century's middle decades understood the relations among science, knowledge, and the empirical study of human affairs.



Dr Steven Murdoch (featured in *Pieces* issue 25, 'Security Matters') is one of seven Royal Society Research Fellows to receive further research funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) in what is a new collaboration between the Royal Society and the EPSRC.

This funding will be used to support Dr Murdoch's research on analysing and quantifying security of complex systems, and will include creating a PhD studentship for research on measuring the security of anonymous communication and censorship resistance systems.

Dr Alan Winter abseiled 130 feet down Battersea Power Station to raise money for Cancer Research UK on Saturday 31 August.



At the last count Dr Winter had raised £1275 for Cancer Research UK, beating his target of £500 by some way!

The International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering has awarded the IABSE Prize 2013 to **Dr Mauro Overend** "for pushing the boundaries in the structural use of glass in façade design, and for related research". Dr Overend has a leading, international reputation in the field of structural glass. After working as a structural and façade engineer on a number of notable buildings he returned to full-time teaching and research. He now coordinates the Glass and Façade Technology Research Group at Cambridge University undertaking fundamental, application-driven and interdisciplinary research using his knowledge as a designer of "cutting-edge" façades and other glass structures.



One of the real world façades/structures to which Dr Overend has contributed – BBC Broadcasting House

Professor Andrew Cliff's co-authored volume *Atlas of Epidemic Britain: A Twentieth Century Picture* is the BMA Medical Book of the Year.

Dr Vivienne Nathanson, Director of Professional Activities at the BMA, commented: "This is a wonderful book which presents complex information clearly and visually. It is a joy to use."

Honorary Fellow **Professor Simon Schama's** new publication *The Story of the Jews: Finding the Words 100 BCE – 1492* was recently one of the 18 books to be nominated for the prestigious Samuel Johnson prize for non-fiction.



Professor Schama's BBC Two documentary series of the same name started this September in the UK.

Awards Galore!



Best JCR Committee Award

We are proud to announce that the Christ's JCR Committee have won the award for being the best JCR Committee at this year's CUSU Student Awards, announced at the annual CUSU Garden Party held during the afternoon of Monday 17 June.

This is the first year that CUSU have had such awards and there were over 50 nominations across the four categories: Best JCR Committee; Best MCR Committee; Best Individual Officer and Best Campaign. Congratulations also to James Stevens, (m. 2011) Christ's JCR web master, on winning the Best Individual Officer award.

www.thejcr.co.uk

Fulbright Award

We are delighted to report that Christ's alumna **Anna Carden (m. 2009)** has been awarded the prestigious Fulbright Award to study International Relations at Georgetown University in Washington DC. Anna studied Arabic, French and Middle Eastern Studies while at Christ's College and graduated this summer with First Class Honours.

Some of our alumni will have spoken with Anna back in April as she was one of the callers on the 2013 Telephone Campaign. Anna said:

"I am delighted to have received this scholarship to study in the USA and owe this honour in large part to the formative education I received at Cambridge. As a Fulbright scholar of International Relations, I will enhance and expand my study of Middle Eastern politics by examining the impact of international social, legal, and economic frameworks on Arabic-speaking nations.

I hope this work will prepare me for a future career in cross-cultural dialogue and diplomacy."



Catering Department Success

The Christ's College Catering Department have been awarded a Gold Certificate for Ethical & Environmental Practices in their department, one of only five colleges to do so.

The award is given by the Catering Managers' Committee of the University of Cambridge and this is the second year running that Christ's has received the award.

Exam Success

This year 91% of final year students at Christ's graduating class achieved Firsts or 2.1s; a record high.

5th year Medical students also did particularly well in their Final MB Pathology exams. In a cohort of over 150 students on the pass list for the examination, there were 28 distinctions awarded – 7 to Christ's students and 1 to a Christ's alumnus – James Jones (m. 2005). Given that the Christ's students make up less than 10% of the cohort and represent 25% of the distinctions, this is an impressive achievement. Congratulations to them and their supervisor Madeleine Malina (m. 2007).

Changing Faces

The Admissions Department here have the crucial job of attracting the best and brightest to Christ's. Our outreach/ access programme aims to ensure that applicants from all backgrounds are encouraged to consider studying at here. This Summer there have been some changes in the team.



Director of Admissions **Paula Stirling** has moved to London as her husband is due to become Provost of Imperial College. Paula said "I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped make my time at Christ's so rewarding, and who have contributed to the admissions and outreach programmes."

Paula has been replaced by **Andrew Spencer** who joins us from Corpus Christi College. Andrew said "I am excited by the prospect of joining the community of Fellows, students and staff at Christ's and seeing to maintain the College's proud traditions of academic excellence and outreach to ensure that those bright enough to thrive at Christ's should be able to do so whatever their background."



Ed Sharpe (m. Christ's, 2004) who has been the College's Admissions and Schools Liaison Officer for the last five years has moved on, to study for a PGCE in order to become a History Teacher.

Ed's replacement **Andy Avery** graduated this summer with a BA in English, after spending three years at Downing College. Andy said "I'm really excited for the chance to continue to promote wider participation for both the University and Christ's in particular. I hope to continue the good work Ed has been doing with schools in our link areas and beyond, as well as harness Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to promote open days and the College in general to prospective applicants."



Twitter: @christsaccess

Domestic Arrangements

Domestic Bursar **Geoffrey Payne** will be retiring this December.

"I have been Domestic Bursar for 12 years now and have enjoyed every minute (well, almost every minute!) The role is pretty broad in scope, so I have been involved in all the major events and activities that have taken place during my time here, including: the refurbishment of the kitchens and New Court in 2007, the introduction of Bed and Breakfast, the purchase and conversion of Hamied House, the design and installation of the new signs, and, of course, organising and taking part in the visit of HM the Queen and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, as part of the quincentenary celebrations in 2005, was a high point. It has also been huge fun (if sometimes frustrating) working with our students, particularly the May Ball Committees, and also to be able to meet them socially at dinners and other events in College. As I cast my mind back to 2001, it seems to me that the College has changed quite a bit since I arrived. Apart from the obvious physical changes, I have worked with three Masters and four Bursars and the Fellowship seems much more youthful; or perhaps I am just much older!"



The new Director of College Services position will partly replace the Domestic Bursary post, leading on the College's service operations and facilities management. Taking on this new position is **Martin Spooner**, who joins the College following an extensive career in hospitality management.

"It's been a really inspiring experience so far working at Christ's. I have been made to feel very welcome by everyone I have met. I am fortunate to have inherited a great team and I can see that everyone is really passionate about working at Christ's. It is also really humbling and such an honour to be able to work in a College with such history and presence. My own experience and background is from hospitality, entirely within hotels. I have worked in several hotels around the UK and United States. My experience stretches from working in the longest standing 5 Star, 5 Diamond hotel in the USA to the being the General Manager of a Holiday Inn property in East Anglia. Whilst working in a College environment is very different to hotels, I hope that my skill set can be transferred to benefit College life for all members. Being the newly named Director of College Services, I have set out with my teams the vision I have of the future; "Helping Students Reach their Full Potential" which is taken out of the College's own strategic mission statement. Everything we do should be geared with this in mind. I can see that all the various departments work hard to this ethos already and I hope to help guide and develop my teams to enhance this vision and make it much brighter. I have a real passion and desire to improve the experience of College life and the services we provide for students and Fellows and I hope that over the coming years you will be able to see a difference."



Sathnam Sanghera (m. 1995, English) is a journalist and writer, whose debut novel *'Marriage Material'* was released in September this year.



You've described your debut novel *Marriage Material* as a reimagining of *The Old Wives Tale* by Arnold Bennett. Why did you choose the 1908 novel as your inspiration?

The Bennett book was given to me by a friend a few years ago and it totally blew me away. It's a great story, beautifully written, in a realistic style that seems to belie its age. The setting – the Midlands – chimed with my upbringing in Wolverhampton, and its central themes – marriage, family, duty, trade – struck me as curiously Indian. It may be a seminal provincial English novel, but I also felt like I was reading a Punjabi story. Even the surname of the family at the heart of the book – “Baines” – is close to the popular Sikh surname “Bains”.

At the time I was trying to find a way of linking what had happened during the riots of 2011 with what had happened in my home town in 1968, where Enoch Powell was an MP. And the Bennett book, in the end, provided a great structure. The original is set around one family in a shop in the Midlands between around 1850 and 1910. Mine is set around a family in a Wolverhampton shop between around 1960 and 2012. They are, in the end, very different books, but I would like to think both say something important about Britain.

You read English at Cambridge. Which authors have inspired you as a writer?

It's strange how the writers you admire change as you get older. At university I was a big fan of Martin Amis, Hanif Kureishi, and VS Naipaul – show-offy male writers who have very striking styles. But what you like to study as a critic is very different from what you like as a normal reader and as a writer seeking inspiration. Nowadays I increasingly value clarity, honesty and humour. You can be intelligent without being pretentious. My favourites now include people like Jonathan Coe, Nick Hornby, Jhumpa Lahiri, Catherine O'Flynn and Rohinton Mistry.

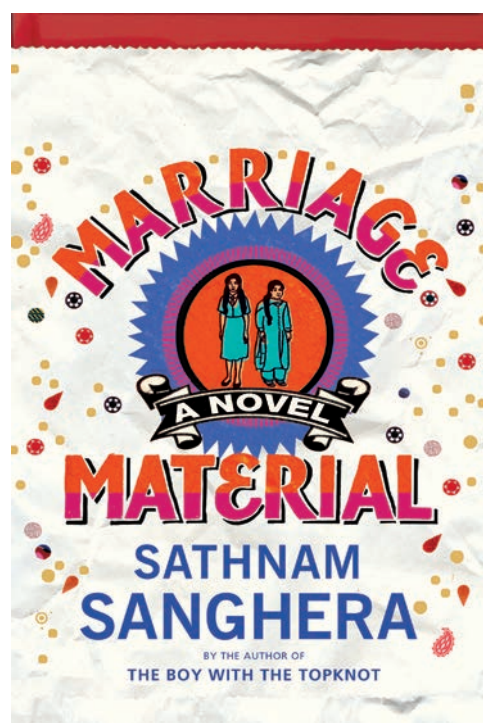
This is your first novel, your previous publication being a memoir; *The Boy with the Topknot: A memoir of Love, Secrets and Lies in Wolverhampton* – are there biographical elements to *Marriage Material*?

The problem with writing a memoir, quite an intimate one in my case, is that you end up invading your own privacy. I was very careful about what I said about my family – nothing appeared without their permission. But I didn't think enough about what I revealed about myself. And I probably revealed too much. In a way, writing a novel was a way of changing the subject, to stop people asking me personal questions, or at least have something else to say. But while writing it I realised the questions would never stop.

Everything is based, in part, on personal experience. So I have tried to be postmodern about it... the narrator seems to be me, but is also obviously based on a Bennett character too. At the risk of sounding like a literature student – I wanted to raise questions about truth, and play a metafictional game with it. I hope it works.

You are also a journalist and have written for the *Financial Times* and *The Times*. Where you involved with any student journalism/writing while at Christ's?

Yes, I was. I was music editor at *Varsity*, and wrote across a wide range of subjects. I also freelanced, providing news stories for *The Sunday Telegraph* and the now defunct *Sunday Business*. I think that hard work was what meant I could go straight onto the nationals after university – it probably saved me years of toil on local papers. Another good thing about it was that I got a lot of juvenile writing out of my system before I got published more widely. Thank God the internet was only just taking off then!



Clémentine Beauvais (m. 2006, Education and English) has created a trilogy of children's books based around the character 'Sesame Seade' and her adventures in Christ's College and Cambridge! The first in the series – 'Sleuth on Skates', was published earlier this year. (Illustrations by Sarah Horne).



Sleuth on Skates is set at Christ's College. Why did you choose to set the novel here?

Walking through Cambridge every day, I kept thinking it would make an amazing 'playground' for a child who would be more or less free to roam the whole place – with all the cellars, attics, roofs, secret passages, Fellows' offices and students' rooms to invade and explore, all the trees to climb, all the funny

ceremonies and Formal Halls to gatecrash. I had the idea of a young supersleuth who would be able to do that, and to solve mysteries linked to the university. It was important that my superheroine should live somewhere in the University, and since I'd been at Christ's seven years by then and loved the College, it felt very natural to set up her home there.

Her mum became the Head of Christ's, her dad the Chaplain – and she was now inside the walls of a College, ready to start exploring the rest of the city. I took some liberties with describing the Master's Lodge, and I made the College more child-friendly perhaps than it is at the moment, but I had a lot of fun playing around with the various features of Christ's – the round lawn became a roller-derby track, the fish in the Master's Garden became Sesame's worst enemies, and in the next book the wisteria helps the kids climb down the wall from Sesame's bedroom window. I based a few things on stories I'd heard about Christ's from Fellows and students. And two of the Porters kindly agreed to lend their names to their fictional equivalents!

How did you come up with the character of Sesame Seade?

I wanted a very strong and very funny supersleuth, and one who reflected some of the characteristics of the university. Sesame is precocious, very active, extremely curious – she wants to know everything and isn't satisfied, most of the time, with the half-hearted replies that adults give. But she's also slightly obnoxious and self-confident – she knows she's smart, and she takes advantage of it.

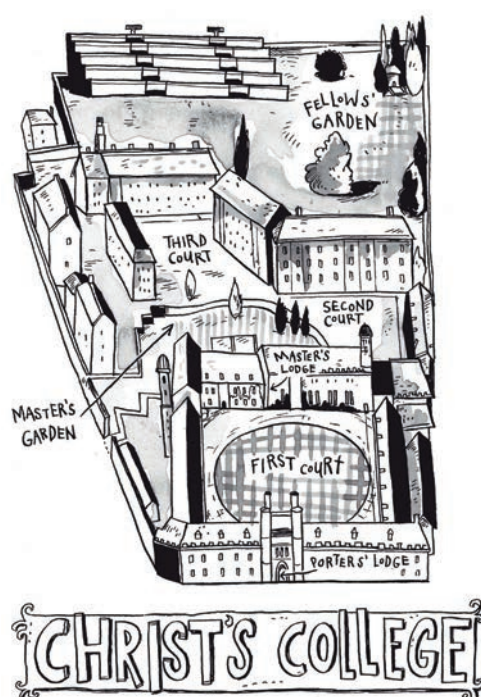
She abhors any kind of authority and always thinks faster than most people. I also wanted to show a kid who was very active physically – partly because I'm rubbish at any kind of exercise! – so I put her on rollerskates. Her personality is somewhere in-between Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking and my all-time

childhood favourite, French superheroine Fantomette, by Georges Chaulet. Like them, a lot of Sesame's quirky characteristics also arose naturally from the setting of the story, from her family situation and from her friends as I wrote on. So I tried to develop the backdrop and secondary characters as much as possible, to get her to respond to it in imaginative ways.

You have also written five children's books in French – how does writing in English compare?

I've been writing and publishing children's books in French for quite a while now, and the differences with the UK are staggering – and very interesting. In France the children's publishing industry is very tolerant of dark, political writing – and many of my books are along those lines. I write for all ages there, from picturebooks to Young Adult – my YA books in particular are extremely dark. But being published in France is far from fun. We don't have agents, so authors are very much left to their own devices. I like writing in French because it's my mother tongue and I can write about pretty much anything I want – there's hardly any taboo. But in the UK the situation is very different – authors have agents who constantly guide, accompany and encourage them, and think about their career-building. As a result, authors have much more power and their relations to editors are much healthier.

It's a real pleasure to work with publishers here. Contrary to France, though, books have to have a real commercial aspect to them – the publishing industry here is huge, there are barely any independents, and books have to sell. It puts a lot of pressure on authors and also means that there's less risk-taking from narrative and ideological perspectives. I love writing in English, though. It's a lovely feeling, writing in a language that you don't master fully. And English is an incredibly rich and malleable language – you can make up words, chop them up, glue them together; nothing like the extremely rigorous French syntax. I like both for different reasons – French for the clarity and purity, English for the messiness and the quirkiness.



“The demise of bees”



Stuart Roberts (m. 1976) is an entomologist working in the Centre for Agri-Environmental Research at the University of Reading. He is also Chair of the UK Bees, Wasps & Ants Recording Society (BWARS – www.bwars.com).

You would have to have been living on Mars for the last few years not to have seen apocalyptic headlines somewhere predicting the end of everything, and all because of the demise of bees.

In my work at the University of Reading since 2004, I have been a collaborator in a Europe-wide team investigating pollinator decline: seeking to establish whether the declines are real or not, whether they are localised or global and whether they affect all bees (there are about 19,500 described species worldwide).

Research was published in *Science* in 2006 which demonstrated parallel declines in pollinators and insect pollinated plants in parts of the UK for which we had sufficiently robust matching data spanning both the pre-1980 period and also from 1980 onwards.

This much publicised work showed that whilst the majority of bee species were not changing much, the number of species that were in decline was about double the number that were increasing. Add to this the story of the decline in the number of honeybee colonies in UK (about 50% in England between 1985 and 2005) and a gloomy picture emerges.

Whilst the basic research highlighting the decline has been generally accepted, it is the putative causes that have dragged the research community into the public sphere as a raft of possible drivers of decline have been suggested.

As a fellow researcher observed when chairing a session at a large conference “Science would be much easier (and a lot more boring) if everything fitted on a single regression curve”. Sadly, it is often true that accuracy is sacrificed for the sake of a good story or good copy.

Some of the postulated drivers are unsupported by any evidence (phone masts, aircraft con-trails and high tension electricity cables), and some are quite loopy (Osama bin-Laden and Bee “Rapture” have been suggested in some US based sources).

More mainstream science has looked at Neonicotinoid pesticides, parasites and pathogens, poor beekeeping husbandry, the practice of migratory beekeeping, land use change, habitat destruction and shifting climate patterns.

The truth is that in all probability it is a combination of these things. For solitary species the biggest threats almost certainly come from habitat modification and urban development, and that honeybees are affected primarily by disease, exacerbated by stressors such as pesticides and poor husbandry.

Many people I speak to want to know what can be done by individuals, and there are a number of options open. Modification of how the garden is planted and maintained are obviously good places to start: a rich floral diversity, with as few showy “double” flowers as possible, and nectar and pollen available from March to October, as well as cutting out use of neonicotinoid insecticide sprays would help.

The provision of “Bee Hotels” too, is great for providing nest sites for mason and leaf-cutter bees, which can be wonderful pollinators in garden and allotment alike.

The wider public is now well aware that bees are facing some serious problems, and the profile of pollinators has moved up the academic, media and political agendas of late. The real proof of whether we can inculcate sustainable attitudes in the future is if we continue to work for the benefit of bees, and the places they live, when the spotlight of attention is turned on to the next big thing.

Picture below: A female of *Anthophora retusa*, one of the most endangered bees in north western Europe

Photo: Mike Edwards



More information: www.bwars.com

Keeping Christ's sweet...

Christ's College has been keeping honey bees in the Fellows' Garden for centuries.

This year we followed one of the College Gardeners, Lottie Collis as she began the process of collecting honey from the bees in September. Lottie has been the bee keeper at Christ's for the last six years and has observed the effects of changing weather patterns on their population and health.

"The last two years have been particularly bad for the bees as we had cold springs and poor summers. This year's warm summer has meant that the bees are much healthier.

Bee keeping is happily now on the increase – Emmanuel College have recently got hives and the Cambridge Bee Keepers Association is over-subscribed. Bees are really fascinating insects – the way they communicate with each other about the distance and direction of nectar sources is astounding.

There is still much we don't know about bees, which is why the research around them is so important."

More photographs from this set can be found here:
<http://bit.ly/beeschrists>



'THE THREE STUDENTS'*

The Curious Case of m. 1974 and Sherlock Holmes...

It was recently brought to the attention of the Editor (by a tip-off from Year Group Rep **Paul Littlewood**) that three alumni from 1974 had, by a striking coincidence, all become involved in the world of Sherlock Holmes. We investigated to find out more...



Hugh Ashton, m. 1974



"I wrote my first published Sherlock Holmes pastiche *The Odessa Business* in January 2012, though I had always loved the adventures of the great detective, and had sometimes written short parodies as advertisements for companies and organisations here in Japan.

The story was swiftly taken up by my American publisher, Inkbeans Press, and bound together with two others in my first volume, *Tales from the Deed Box of John H. Watson MD*. Since then I have now had over half-a-dozen volumes of Sherlock Holmes stories (including two lengthy novellas) published, all as sincere homages to Sir Arthur's work (and approved by the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd.).

I am a member of the Japan Sherlock Holmes Club, the John H. Watson Society (US-based) and of course the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, of which Jonathan has recently been Chair. Though Jonathan and Nick and I knew each other – and Jonathan and I in our first year were part of a group that met every Sunday evening in the rooms of Martin Holmes (m. 1974) (yes, really!), I do not remember that any of us expressed any particular interest in 221B Baker Street and its inhabitants.

The fact that three of us have, in our different ways, all contributed to the literature and the scholarship surrounding Dr Watson's reminiscences, is an amazing coincidence.

I can only put it down to some quality of the College port in that year ("when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth").

More information about Hugh's books can be found at <http://221BeanBakerStreet.info>

Nick Rennison, m. 1974

"I first encountered Sherlock Holmes when I was 8 or 9 and found a Penguin edition of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* on my parents' bookshelves.

I loved everything about the book. By the time I arrived in Cambridge a decade later, I had read the 56 stories and 4 novels about the detective many times over and had also become an unacknowledged expert on the old Hollywood films starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce as Holmes and Watson.

I read English when I was at Christ's and Conan Doyle was very definitely not on the syllabus. Favoured novelists for the late Victorian and Edwardian eras were Conrad, D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. Rather shamefacedly, I have to admit that I've rarely returned to these writers in the years since graduating but I've continued to read and re-read the Sherlock Holmes stories.

I am forced to the conclusion that I must be an essentially frivolous man since I much prefer tales about giant hounds on Dartmoor; leagues of red-headed men and life-and-death struggles at the Reichenbach Falls to more obviously serious literature.



In 2005, I was given the chance to write an 'unauthorised' biography of Sherlock Holmes, combining elements of the Conan Doyle stories, the real history of the period and my own imaginings to create a life of the great detective. One of the chapters covered his university career: Conan Doyle doesn't make clear which College his character attended.

He doesn't even make it clear whether he went to Cambridge or the other place. I decided Holmes had to be a Cambridge alumnus and I was strongly tempted to make Christ's his alma mater.

In the end, I bowed to a weight of recent Sherlockian scholarship which suggests that he was at Sidney Sussex. Now, I rather regret this decision.

Why shouldn't one of the finest intellects of his age have been a Christ's man? It seems entirely plausible.

Perhaps, if I get the chance to produce another edition of my biography, I shall make him exactly that."

Nick Rennison is the author of 'Sherlock Holmes: An Unauthorised Biography' (Atlantic, 2005). His own crime novel set in the Victorian era, 'Carver's Quest', was published by Corvus in June this year.

Jonathan McCafferty, m. 1974

"Any nine year old is very impressionable; and at that age I first became an enthusiast for Sherlock Holmes. This was entirely attributable to the BBC broadcasting a total of fourteen dramatisations of Holmes stories with Douglas Wilmer as the Master Detective and Nigel Stock as Doctor Watson.

Cambridge University will recommend itself to anyone with an enthusiasm for Holmes, containing as it does a Sherlock Library (at St Catherines and alas mostly containing theological works) and a graveslab dedicated to John Watson to be found in Great St. Mary's.

The question of which University Holmes attended – sometimes referred to as the 'controversy' – has never been entirely resolved, but some may speculate, given the College's long associations with the north of England, that Holmes was a Christ's man, as he was the product of a long line of country squires, possibly with Yorkshire origins.

It was only after leaving Christ's that I joined the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, serving as Chair of the Society many years later.

In my time I have edited and contributed to *The Light is Dark Enough* a handbook for the Society's visit to Cambridge in 1989; arranged a joint visit to Cambridge with the Dorothy L Sayers Society in 1996, as well as running a symposium on the topic 'Sherlock Holmes and Music' at Madingley Hall (University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education).

These have led to some out-of-the way experiences, including participating in mixed bathing in the University Rugby Club changing rooms; listening to early Edison

experimental recordings of opera divas mentioned in the Sherlock Holmes stories; and subsequently discovering my tongue-in-cheek scribbles published as serious research in another College's history.

I retired as Chair of the Sherlock Holmes Society two years ago, after celebrating our Golden Jubilee with a dinner hosted in the House of Lords by Baroness Rendell of Baburgh (better known as Ruth Rendell).

There are many happy memories, including Mark Gattis attending one of the Society's Annual Dinners where he discussed the idea of updating Holmes for TV – now a resounding international success for the BBC starring Benedict Cumberbatch in the title role.



On a more sombre note I recall an evening spent looking at recent photographs of the Maiwand battlefield, where Watson, an army doctor, was wounded and his regiment annihilated in 1880.

The photographs had been taken by a commissioned officer who had completed his service in Helmund Province, suggesting that there is much that may still be usefully learned from Sherlock Holmes by modern decision makers."

French Connection

Professor Michael Edwards OBE (m. 1957) was recently made an Honorary Fellow of the College in recognition of his becoming the first man born in Britain to become a member of the prestigious 'Académie française'. Professor Edwards is a poet, literature critic and translator. He read Modern and Medieval Languages at Christ's.

"My most vivid memories of Christ's are endless conversations in rooms and in Hall, the latter to the frustration of Mr Kimberley, the person then in charge of Hall and anxious, once dinner was over, to depart in peace. 'To do a Kimberley' became shorthand for curtailing any pleasurable activity however reasonably. I especially remember the College grace, the most beautiful of all College graces, of which I have written in the French magazine *La Vie*.

I had come up to read French and Spanish, though I spent a great deal of time on English literature, on Dante, and on theology. My room, M4, was above that reputedly of Milton, where Wordsworth is supposed to have become drunk for the first and only time.

Both poets have greatly influenced me, and I have attempted to repay the debt, in many essays, by trying to understand them anew.

I was already publishing poems in English, but realizing at the same time that, as Pascal was teaching me to think, and Racine to feel, in a strange and foreign way, the French language and French literature opened my world to a quite other world.

I wrote my PhD on Racine, completing it in Paris, a city which struck me as being one of the two sites, with Cambridge, of the earthly paradise. (The old filing system in the British Museum Library described me as 'Michael Edwards of Cambridge and Paris'.) This led to marrying a French wife, and to everything since.

A desire to explore English as well as French literature, and indeed many other things, took me to the then new and interdisciplinary universities of Warwick and Essex.

I have been concerned always to pose fundamental questions (my very first article, published while an undergraduate, was entitled 'Asking the Right Questions'), and have done so in numerous books on the nature and finality of literature and of art, the relations between English and French representations of reality, translation, philosophy (notably the metaphysics of repetition, wonder and happiness), along with monographs on writers who have meant a great deal in my life and work, from Shakespeare to Beckett.

Most of these books are in French; after publishing several volumes of poetry in English, I became equally a poet in French.

All this led to my election as professor at the Collège de France, thanks to the support of the major French poet and thinker Yves Bonnefoy. I am the first British person, with the first chair in English, elected to the Collège, France's most prestigious academic institution, where we are appointed for life by the President of the Republic.



And now, out of the blue, the Académie française; again as the first British person; it seems unreal. I am particularly happy that my election reinforces the presence of poetry in the Académie, and that the first Academician to hint of my becoming a member was the poet François Cheng.

I have always looked on the Académie as the home of Racine, La Fontaine, Hugo, Claudel, Valéry... The formidable Jacqueline of Romilly campaigned for me and, after her saddening death, Marc Fumaroli. The President of the Republic needs to ratify my election, which he has done simply by inviting me to an audience at the Élysée Palace.

My seat is that of the novelist Jean Dutourd, and my other predecessors include Cocteau, Edmond Rostand, Condillac and Antoine Furetière, author of the famous dictionary of 1690. Two rather splendid ceremonies are to follow: the presentation to me of my Academician's sword, on which I intend to have engraved the College motto, 'Souvent me souvient', and the official Reception under the famous dome.

Many regard my election as almost a political event (the first person to congratulate me was Valéry Giscard d'Estaing), an act of Franco-British friendship at a difficult moment in the relations between the two countries.

I also regard it as a moment to think back to Christ's whose praises I sing whenever I can."

Around the Americas in 10 months

Danny Longman (m. 2005) & Megan Wilson (m. 2011) are planning an epic cycling challenge for 2014...

"As final year students, we're asked more and more what we plan on doing when we graduate. While this question inspires trepidation and insecurity in the vast majority of our friends, for us it can't fail to cause an excitement that no amount of library time can dampen. Last year we began preparations to celebrate graduation by cycling the length of the Americas.

In addition to a shared love of travel and adventure, the idea was inspired by Mark Beaumont, an ocean rowing team mate of Danny's. Mark set a world record for cycling 18,000 miles around the world in 194 days. Initially, Danny was to attempt to row the Pacific Ocean with Mark and two other crew members after completion of his PhD, but a training accident saw the boat irreparably damaged. This left an expedition-shaped hole, that the Americas Cycle was to fill.

The plan is to cycle from the southern-most tip of Argentina to Canada, a journey of approximately 12,000 miles over 10 months. While this isn't as ambitious as Mark's world record, it promises to be a great adventure. We will be travelling on a minimal budget, wild-camping the vast majority of the way. While the distance involved will be a huge challenge, both physically and mentally, we could think of no better way of exploring one of the most culturally-rich and geographically stunning parts of the world than by bike.



We hope to use the trip to raise money for cancer research, and can be followed via our blog, which will be updated in preparation and during the expedition itself americascycle.wordpress.com. Following an intense vetting process, the trip has been officially approved by the University of Cambridge. At present, we are looking for supporters to help us bridge the gap between summer job savings and our costs. If you'd like to give us a hand please get in touch!"

Hamied Lodge

A fantastic new set of accommodation for graduate students has been created in St Andrew's Street thanks to the kind generosity of Dr Yusuf Hamied Hon FRSC (m. 1954).



This much needed new development is directly opposite Christ's Lane and provides 9 bedrooms for College Graduates.

Jeremy Taylor

Some members of Christ's will already have heard the very sad news about Jeremy Taylor, our Head Porter who passed away peacefully after a short illness on 19 September this year.



Jeremy, who had been leading the Lodge at Christ's since 1989 was one Cambridge's longest serving Head Porters. It is clear from the emails we have had since Jeremy died that he will be much missed by our returning alumni community, as well as by those living and working in College.



Sports

Alumni v Students Football Match

On Saturday 9 March a group of alumni who matriculated between 1986 – m. 1994 took on the current CCFC in a football match.

The alumni team (top picture)

Back row L-R

*Mark Davies (1990), Paul Ruane (1986),
Damian Murphy (1989), Adam Cohen (1986),
Peter Kneale (1989), David Rowlands (1989),
Paul Davis (College Butler), Jon Webb (1989).*

Front row L-R

*Tim Robinson (1989), Bryan Williams (1988),
Paul Carter (1989), Gavin Allen (1988),
Richard Hughes (1989), Barry Williams (1989).*

The teams played on despite the gloomy weather conditions on the day and the final score was 2-1 to the 'Old Boys'!

Many thanks to Richard Hughes (m. 1989) and to last years Football Captain Owen Morgan (m. 2010) for organising the event.



May Bumps

Our annual May Bumps Picnic was well attended by a stalwart group of alumni and supporters who braved the somewhat inclement weather conditions to cheer on our boats and enjoy fleeting moments of sunshine with drinks and a picnic.

Christ's M2 and W2 did particularly well this year finishing +4 and +2 respectively. Next year's May Bumps Picnic will be on Saturday 14 June, so put the date in your diaries now!



Varsity Rugby at Twickenham, 2013

Christ's rugby fans may be interested to learn that there will be a Christ's member in the First Team Varsity Squad this year! Nick Codrington (m. 2010, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies) is in the line up for the match on the 12 December at Twickenham Stadium. We hope attending alumni have a great day and wish Nick and the rest of the light blues the best of luck!



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Christ's Choir Tour 2013 Report – East Coast of America

Charly Halliday (m. 2011)

www.cambridgechoir.co.uk



"In July 2013, Christ's Chapel Choir toured the East Coast of America. Our first stop was Boston—where the choir were able to join in with the Independence Day celebrations—and over the stretch of the tour we worked our way down the coast, ending in Washington DC. Having last toured the East Coast in 2009, it was a particular pleasure to revisit some of the churches that had hosted us previously. It was at our last stop in Arlington that the traditional and fiercely contested Decani versus Cantoris football match took place, where Dec retained the title in an exciting 2–1 victory.

The East Coast in July is hot, and just as luck would have it, they were experiencing a heat wave when we visited – I think it's fair to say that some of our fondest memories of churches were those with air conditioning! In addition, the itinerary of this tour was a particularly gruelling one; the choir did not have a full day off at all. That said, our spirits were not dampened as we sang 14 concerts and five services over the 20 day period.

A particular musical highlight this year was singing *Take Him Earth For Cherishing* by Herbert Howells, which was composed for John F Kennedy's funeral – the haunting piece holding particular significance in the 50th year after his death. We also very much enjoyed singing Hubert Parry's *Songs of Farewell* – which the audiences appeared to concur with as we sold out of our CDs of the Parry about halfway through the tour!

As always, we were completely spoilt by American hosts and Cambridge alumni alike. With a list of kindnesses that includes lunch hosted for us at the World Bank; Lobster on the Lawn in Falmouth; inviting the entire choir to a pool party; countless trips to ice-cream shops and the beach, we were certainly well looked after! One highlight was a barbeque hosted by Janet Satterthwaite – a Christ's College and choir alumna – at her house after we had sung evensong at the National Cathedral in Washington DC.

The resounding success of the tour was undoubtedly due to the sincerely warm reception we received from many American hosts, churches and Cambridge alumni in America, as well as the hard work of the choir. We would love to extend our warmest thanks to all who enabled this year's tour to be hugely enjoyable. We can't wait to come back soon!"



Dates for your diary

For more information and to book a place at any of these events please go to alumni.christs.cam.ac.uk

Wednesday 27 November 2013 Winter Drinks Reception, Oxford and Cambridge Club, London

Wednesday 11 December 2013 Medical Alumni Association Event, London

Thursday 12 December 2013 Varsity Rugby Match, Twickenham

Saturday 25 January 2014 Sporting Colours Society Alumni Dinner

Friday 7 March 2014 Law Society Alumni Dinner

Saturday 15 March 2014 Marguerites Alumni Dinner

Saturday 22 March 2014 Classics Alumni retirement Dinner for Professor David Sedley

Saturday 29 March 2014 MA Congregation Ceremony for alumni who matriculated in 2007

Saturday 14 June 2014 May Bumps Picnic, Osier Holt, Fen Ditton

