

Issue 4 Michaelmas Term 2002

● Christ's College Cambridge

pieces



Crossing the pond
Trans-Atlantic links

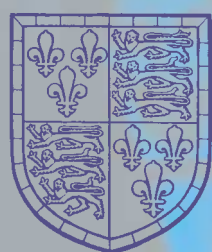
Cutting edge
The 'special relationship'

Tales from the City
Fiona Meyrick in New York

Archbishop of Canterbury. Chairman of Unilever UK. Chief Executive of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People. Captain of Queen's Park Rangers Football Club. President of the Royal Academy of Arts. Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service. Professor of Physics at Princeton University. Lord Chamberlain. Chairman of the Cambridge Enterprise Conference. Chief Scientific Officer, Medicines for Malaria Venture. Director of the National Gallery. Adjutant General of HM Army. The first face on Channel 4. British Ambassador to Armenia. Olympic gold-medallist and World Champion rower. Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain. President and Managing Director of Goldman Sachs Asia. BAFTA award-winning comedian. Minister of Trade and Industry of the Government of Singapore. Creator of *Inspector Morse*. Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons. Headmaster of Charterhouse School. Director of the Tate Galleries. Group Treasurer of Citigroup. Jordanian Ambassador to the United Nations. Lord Justice of Appeal. Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge University. Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of The Penguin Group. Vice-Chancellor of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Middle East Correspondent for the BBC.

Q. What do they all have in common?

A. Their College



Editorial

As the College looks to the future with the launch of its Quincentenary Campaign (page 3), the common interests that bind the Christ's community throughout the world are a source of strength and inspiration. Trans-Atlantic links, in particular, are flourishing. In the last six months, there have been gatherings of alumni on the East and West coasts of the USA, and academic exchanges between Christ's, Canada and the States. This edition of *pieces* celebrates the ties between the College and North America through the careers of Christ's members – people like Fiona Meyrick, who left the UK for the buzz of New York (pages 6–7).

Learning and research depend for their vitality on the exchange of ideas, and Christ's remains at the forefront of such activity. Each year, the College welcomes one or more Distinguished Visiting Scholars who bring an international perspective to its academic community. A recent visitor, Peter Sabor, compares the university experience in Canada and Cambridge, and reveals what he liked best about his return to Christ's (page 10). Frank Kelly went the other way, spending a year as a visiting professor at Stanford University (page 11).

The relationship between the UK and the US has been a defining feature of world politics for most of the last century. There can be few historians better qualified than David Reynolds to explore the complexities of this phenomenon and its contemporary relevance (page 5). In recent years, Cambridge has sought to emulate the success of America's university-based high-tech regional economies. John Snyder has been at the heart of the so-called 'Cambridge phenomenon' (page 9), while his exact contemporary at Christ's, Hugh McIntyre, offers us a first-hand account of life in the original technology cluster – Silicon Valley (page 8).

Building bridges and breaking down barriers between countries and cultures is what a university education does best. Christ's is determined to play its part in this, now and in the future.

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Front cover picture
Trans-Atlantic links

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for facilitating the original design of *pieces*; and to John Murray, President and CEO of
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in the news

O tempora, o mores

Duncan Kenworthy (1968), producer of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, and *Notting Hill*, was interviewed on BBC Radio 4's *Today* (Wednesday 20 February) about the changing public reaction to bad language in the media. This followed a controversial radio interview earlier in the week with Ali G, the character played by Sacha Baron Cohen (1990).

Perfect pitch

Former England cricket captain Tony Lewis (1959) was the guest on BBC Radio 3's *Private Passions* (2 March 2002). A talented violinist, he recalled how he nearly chose music as a career instead of sport. His selections of music included a medley of Welsh hymn tunes, reflecting his love of Wales.

At the Prime Minister's right hand

The appointment of Sir Andrew Turnbull (1965) as Cabinet Secretary was covered in detail by *The Times* (19 April 2002). The paper reported that 'The Prime Minister... was said to have been impressed by Sir Andrew's enthusiasm for public service reform.' It went on to describe the personal qualities of 'Britain's most powerful civil servant': 'armed with a good sense of humour, he is both approachable and charming and rarely loses his temper.'

Sale of the centuries

The auction of the late Sir John Plumb's effects generated significant media interest. Noting in particular the portrait of Sir Robert Walpole and the Minton garniture, *The Times* (9 May 2002) commented that the sale reflected 'the interests of an avid collector'. All proceeds went to the Glenfield Trust, established by Sir John to benefit future generations of scholars.

From First Court to White House

Christ's received an unexpected mention in the Emmy award-winning US drama series, *The West Wing*. In the final episode of the third series (broadcast on Channel 4, 26 May 2002), the character of the American President, played by actor Martin Sheen, was talking about a theatrical production called 'The Wars of the Roses'. He mentioned that there was a song in it he particularly liked, and that it was the sort of thing 'they ought to be singing in the dining hall of Christ's College, Cambridge'. Someone on the programme's production team has obviously been to formal hall.

Credit where it's due

There was widespread media coverage of the attempts by Dr Robert Hunt (Fellow) to calculate a credit card bill. *The Financial Times* (19 June 2002) reported that 'even a Cambridge mathematician found annual percentage rates were not straightforward'. Dr Hunt commented: 'doing even a standard calculation took me for ever'; little hope, then, that the average person who receives a credit card bill would be able to check its accuracy.

From Wales to Canterbury

The Times (20 June 2002) was the first paper to leak the news of Rowan Williams's appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury. Dr Williams (1968) was described as combining an 'air of mystical spirituality' with an 'ability to deliver inspired and intellectually authoritative speeches'. The paper praised him in fulsome terms: 'the man chosen to be the next Archbishop of Canterbury is one of those rare inspirational leaders who provoke awe and affection in almost equal measure.'

Biting back

A poem written by Arthur Shipley (Master 1910–1927) was quoted on BBC Radio 4's Saturday morning programme, *Home Truths* (3 August 2002). Taken from an article on the hazards of life during the First World War, the poem ran: 'The lightning bug has wings of gold, / The June bug wings of flame; / The bed bug has no wings at all / But it gets there all the same.'

Facts and figures

'Simon Schama has overtaken his rival David Starkey to become Britain's best-paid television historian', the *Sunday Times* announced (4 August 2002). Professor Schama (1963, Honorary Fellow) agreed a £3 million book and television deal following the success of his 'critically acclaimed series', *A History of Britain*.

For faithful service

Details of the late Sir John Plumb's will were published in *The Times* (6 August 2002), which revealed that, in addition to establishing the Glenfield Trust for educational purposes, Sir John 'also made bequests to the staff below stairs' – but only on condition that 'the legacies were to be spent... on a party to be held in his memory'.

Northern nuncio

Richard Whiteley (1962) took a few days off from being a television presenter to fulfil a more unusual role: cultural attaché for Bradford. Based in Trafalgar Square, London, at the 'Bradford Embassy', his efforts were part of the city's campaign to become City of Culture in 2008. Interviewed on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme (18 September 2002), he revealed that his trademark jackets are cut from Bradford cloth... but made in Germany.

The Campaign for Christ's

Earlier this term, the College launched its Quincentenary Campaign. To mark the 500th anniversary of the re-foundation of God's House as Christ's College (by the Lady Margaret Beaufort in 1505), the College has embarked upon a £15 million fund-raising campaign. Its aim is to secure the future of Christ's as a centre of excellence in teaching, learning and research.

'Three pints of beer'

In early October, a brochure explaining the Campaign was sent to every member of Christ's throughout the world. In his accompanying letter, the Master stressed that gifts large and small were equally welcome. If every member of College were to give just £7.50 per week (the price of three pints of beer), the Campaign target of £15 million would be reached by the end of 2005.

Launched in style

The official Campaign launch took place on Thursday 24 October at a reception hosted by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg (1962, Honorary Fellow since 1996), in his Residence at the House of Lords.

The Master, Professor Malcolm Bowie, discussed the twin themes of the Campaign: the need for the College to increase its provision of bursaries, to support students from less well-off backgrounds; and the need to secure the future of small-group teaching by endowing the College's Teaching Fellowships.

A call to action

The Chairman of the Campaign Board, Sir David John (1959), urged all members of Christ's to rally behind the Campaign. He stressed that the continued existence of world-class universities in Britain was essential for the country's long-term prosperity, and that members of College could make all the difference to the future of Christ's.

A flying start

Thanks to the generosity of members and well-wishers, Christ's has already raised £5.1 million: over one third of the Campaign target. This has enabled the College to endow 40% of its Teaching Fellowships and to provide additional bursary support for dozens of students in greatest need. Generous gifts have also been received for unrestricted purposes, to support areas of greatest need, as they arise.

Excellence in Engineering

To coincide with the formal launch of the Campaign, Dr Michael Lynch (1983), founder and CEO of Autonomy Corporation, and a member of the College's Campaign Board, announced a magnificent gift of \$500,000 to Christ's. This will be used to provide bursaries (with preference being given to students reading Engineering), and to endow one of the College's Teaching Fellowships in Engineering.

Christ's has a particularly strong track-record in Engineering education, and Dr Lynch's benefaction will ensure that this excellence is maintained for the future. He explained the reasons behind his gift:

Target: £15 million



“By supporting the Campaign and its twin themes of bursaries and College teaching, I hope that students in the future will have the same opportunities that I enjoyed during my time at Christ's.”

Dr Michael Lynch

Talking business

Members of Christ's achieve success in a wide variety of careers, as the interviews in this and previous issues of *pieces* illustrate. For some time, the College has been considering how it can best tap into this wealth of experience, for the benefit of alumni, academics and current students alike. Following suggestions and offers of support from many members, we are delighted to announce the launch of the Christ's College **Business Briefings**.

This is a new series of early evening seminars, at venues in central London. Each Briefing will focus on a key business sector or theme, and will feature leading professionals who will explore the subject from different angles. Although the hosts and speakers will all be members of Christ's, the events are open to everyone. To confirm a place, please contact Nathalie Walker at Christ's:
 telephone 01223 334937
 fax 01223 766711
 email alumni@christs.cam.ac.uk



Appropriately, on **Tuesday 19 November** the first Business Briefing will focus on the issue of **Intellectual Property**, a hot topic in academia and business. Speakers:

Ian Harvey (Christ's 1964), chief executive of BTG plc, will explore the theme of technology transfer – taking good ideas from academia and turning them into successful businesses.

Dr Christopher Eyles (1957), a partner with WP Thompson & Co patent agents, will look at the patenting process.

Christopher Rees (1973), a partner and expert on IP law with City lawyers Herbert Smith, will examine the legal issues surrounding Intellectual Property.

Professor Ian Leslie (Fellow), head of the Cambridge University Computer Laboratory and founder of two successful spin-out companies, Nemesys Research Limited and CPlane Inc., will give the academic's perspective.

Time: 6.00–7.30pm
 Venue: BTG plc, 10 Fleet Place, Limeburner Lane, London EC4M 7SB.

At the end of the presentations, there will be plenty of time for questions from the floor, and a chance for guests to mix more informally with the speakers.

The Business Briefings will allow College members at all stages of their careers to share the collective experience of Christ's alumni. It is hoped that they will introduce students to potential future employers, and vice-versa. They are also designed to provide useful networking opportunities to the wider community of Christ's graduates.

Next term's Business Briefing, on Tuesday 25 February 2003, will focus on the Media. The host will be John Makinson CBE (Christ's 1970), Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Penguin Group. Check the College website for details:
www.christs.cam.ac.uk/alumni/events.shtml

If you are interested in hosting or speaking at a future Business Briefing, please contact Nathalie Walker in the Alumni Office.



Good relations

‘The calculation behind the special relationship has really been a ‘yes but’ attitude to Washington.’

Dr David Reynolds, Reader in International History, University of Cambridge (since 1997) and Fellow of Christ's College (since 1983).

“Winston Churchill wrote six volumes about the Second World War, published between 1948 and 1954. They have shaped our understanding of the War ever since. It's now possible to look at the various drafts of Churchill's chapters, to see how his ideas evolved; it's also possible to look at the archives that are now available and see in what ways we might write a rather different account than he did.” Dr David Reynolds's current research, for a book about Churchill's war memoirs, grows out of earlier work on the creation of the wartime alliance, the experience of American soldiers in Britain, and a BBC/PBS series on Anglo-American relations in the twentieth century.

David's research has given him a close understanding of the evolving ‘special relationship’ between Britain and America, beginning with its very creation. “In the winter of 1939, rather reluctantly, the British and the French were coming closer together – not just in military terms but across the board. The fall of France ruptured that whole relationship. By the summer of 1940, the Foreign Office was saying that maybe we'd have to think of some kind of special association with the United States in future, rather than with the French.” As David points out, such an idea was not universally popular in the British establishment: “There was a strong anti-American feeling at the time. Baldwin and Chamberlain were keenly suspicious of the Americans.”

Cometh the hour, cometh the man: Churchill's readiness to look to America was unusual and, David explains, a result of his background. “He was half-American: as was said at the time, ‘half American but all British’. A trans-Atlantic orientation came naturally to him. He was ready to seize the opportunity with both hands.” But what exactly did Churchill mean by the term ‘special relationship’? “In his more grandiose visions he'd talk about common citizenship, common currencies, all that sort of thing. More practically, he was interested in ensuring that the two military establishments didn't break apart after the War. He wanted to see the shared use of military bases, a continuation of the Combined Chiefs of Staff – what he called ‘a mixing up of Britain and America for mutual advantage’.”

“Immediately after the War, the relationship began to break apart again. What pulled it back together was the Cold War.” The new threat posed by Stalin's Soviet Union formed the background to Britain and America's continuing closeness in the 1950s; but, as David's research has shown, there was another reason why the ‘special relationship’ survived: “the network of very close personal relationships that were established during the War by bureaucrats and the military on both sides, especially in the intelligence community.”

Britain has since lost an Empire and joined the European Union but, David argues, still

has strong reasons to maintain its trans-Atlantic alliance: “When the chips are down, particularly on crucial military and intelligence matters, it's Washington that matters, not any European capital. If the European Union had developed a defence or security capability to match its economic development, things might have been rather different. But, as recent wars in the Balkans have shown, the real military capability – not just in terms of weaponry but also in transport – is American.” There is also what David calls the British conceit: “that in some way we can manage the Americans. The way you do it is by never saying ‘no’; you say ‘yes but’. You say the ‘but’ quietly behind the scenes, while in public you say ‘yes’ and you say it loudly.” David adds, “Tony Blair is simply the latest in a long line.”

“While the language and the culture make it natural for the British to talk to our American counterparts, that is by no means as exclusive a relationships as it used to be.” Membership of the EU and “a realisation that the Channel isn't wider than the Atlantic” have brought changes in British foreign policy. But for practical as well as historical reasons, David believes the special relationship with the USA will continue, “both out of inclination and calculation”. As for the circumstances of 1940 that gave birth to the trans-Atlantic alliance, are we about to see a major re-analysis of what World War II was all about? David answers with a smile: “Well, you'll have to wait for the book!”



MANHATTAN MALL

New York reflections

NEW YORK REFLECTIONS

"It's definitely sink or swim here. There's very little patience shown for someone who doesn't know the system. There is also surprisingly little help for people arriving in the United States – they mean it when they call expatriates aliens!" For Fiona Meyrick, being posted to New York was exciting, but not without its challenges. Settling down in Manhattan threw up some unexpected obstacles, as she recalls: "Just to take one example, the retail banking system is light years behind Europe. You find yourself back at square one when it comes to obtaining basic services like a credit card, bank account or insurance."

Despite these initial hurdles, Fiona rapidly came to appreciate the positive aspects of life in New York. She was struck, in particular, by its multi-ethnicity: "As someone who has spent most of my career travelling round the world, I was glad to see so many international cultures represented, and to be able to sense I was moving across international boundaries just by walking a few blocks." This diversity may explain the tolerance which Fiona cites as one of the city's best qualities: "It has room for every eccentric to practise their particular fetish and no one bats an eyelid! I don't know if this is because people are simply too busy to notice someone walking down the street looking completely bizarre, or whether it's just accepted that people have come here in order to be free to be themselves."

"There is dire poverty and absurd flaunting of wealth, but that is the same in most cities. However, ostentation is far more acceptable here than in London." While New York and London are both 'global' cities, they are very different places, as Fiona explains: "There is much less emphasis put on class here, and therefore a greater acceptance of you for who you are. Of course, there is still old money and new money, but my sense is that the boundaries are more fluid and it is money that rules." Another difference is more recent, and especially welcome: "While a lot of people say that Giuliani's zero tolerance policy has killed part of New York's character, it is now a very safe city in which to live and I feel far more comfortable from a personal security viewpoint than I do in London these days."

From her time in SoHo, Fiona offers a British perspective on the New York mindset: "There is a great capacity for respect. The fire servicemen were always treated like cult-heroes even before 9/11 and this extended to hero worship afterwards. There is a great sense of esprit de corps amongst

the emergency services and I don't sense that is the case in the UK. There is also a stronger sense of national identity, gratitude and pride which marks the US out from most countries I have lived in. However, that pride took a dent when many realised, perhaps for the first time, that not everyone shared this somewhat naive view of America."

"I was a mile away from the World Trade Center when disaster struck." Fiona's first-hand experience of life in New York on and after 11 September 2001 makes a remarkable and moving account: "We had to help quite a few members of the public and some customers who came in looking increasingly dusty as time wore on. We soon became a centre for our other downtown offices as they made their way up to SoHo, and we kept a phonenumber open to our security desk up in Buffalo while we accounted for everyone. We found it rather amusing when the Buffalo office told us they would have to go, as they had been told to evacuate the building. They were eight hours away by car, but the insurance company had advised that, as they were in the tallest building in Buffalo, it was a potential target. I finally left the area at about 3pm and walked home, planning to take a book and join the queue at the local hospital to give blood. I bumped into British friends who told me that I would be wasting my time because, as a Brit, I might have been tainted by Mad Cow Disease and my donation would be unwelcome! Our office was shut down for the next three days when they cordoned off anything below 14th Street, but I was very proud that all my staff made it into work at one branch or another the next day, even though they were in varying degrees of shock."

The aftermath of the attacks also brought great challenges. "The most harrowing thing was helping the families of the victims who needed financial help. Dealing with young widows whose broker husbands had been killed was heart-breaking. Our organisation raised \$2 million within a few days, and we also had a loan assistance programme for small businesses affected by the disaster; so it felt good to be able to do something constructive to help. A few days later there was a memorial service for the British victims at St Thomas' Church. It was pouring with rain, but in true British fashion, there was a long line of Brits who were not to be deterred." One year on, another memorial service took place, but this time with a strange twist, as Fiona recalls: "It was attended by 350 or so British police officers

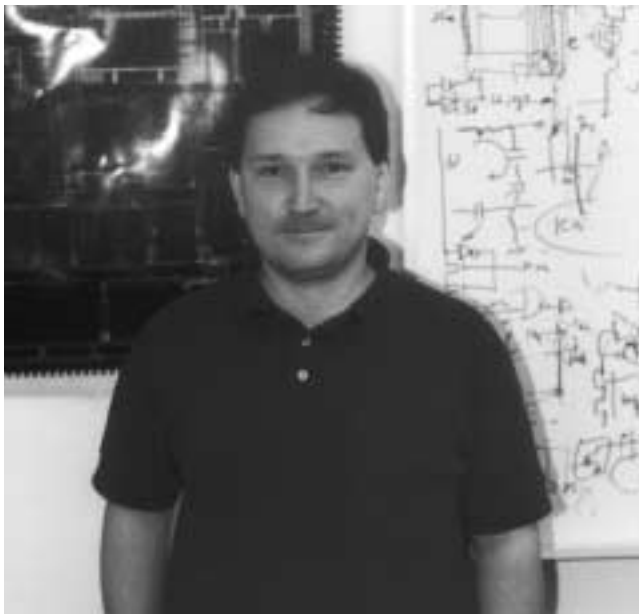
who, at their own expense, had come out to support their American colleagues during the anniversary period. To emerge afterwards and see hundreds of British bobbies all over 5th Avenue was a surreal but strangely uplifting experience!"

"People suddenly had the time of day for each other, and got to know the guy they'd bought coffee from for the past five years." The terrorist attacks brought out the best in New Yorkers, and Fiona senses some permanent changes. "I think America has woken up to a few home truths and has a better self-knowledge now as a result of having to see itself from others' perspectives. A lot of the optimism I first sensed has evaporated and people are a little more cynical now. But," she adds, "the honking of the horns and the general impatience as everyone tries to get on has returned." After two years in the Big Apple, Fiona is heading back to London, but feels she has learned a lot from her trans-Atlantic experience: "It was a unique time to be here."

"New York is certainly not mainstream USA – you only have to watch daytime TV chat shows to realise that!"

Fiona Meyrick (née Kitt),
International Manager,
HSBC Holdings plc
(Manager, SoHo office,
New York City, 2000–02).
Born 11 February 1967.
Studied History at Christ's
College 1985–88.

Silicon Valley



“40 years ago this area was small towns surrounded by orchards.”



Hugh McIntyre, circuit design manager, Sun Microelectronics, California (since 1996). Born 29 December 1965. Studied EIST at Christ's College 1984–87; Diploma in Computer Science 1988. Previously with Inmos and STMicroelectronics (in the UK) 1988–96.

“One of the reasons the industry started in this area was because of Stanford.” For Hugh McIntyre, a circuit design manager working on Sun Microsystems’ new microprocessor, good links with academia are a crucial factor in the continuing success of Silicon Valley. He explains: “We try to get involved with universities to hire good people and make use of the research ideas they have. This includes local universities such as Stanford and Berkeley. But we also have links with universities elsewhere, including those with strong computer-aided design courses.”

The sheer concentration of high-tech companies in the area generates its own advantages, as Hugh is quick to point out: “Here, when we hire people, they come from a variety of different companies; you get that mix of knowledge and experience that helps to advance things. Also you feel very aware here that the competition is just next door. There’s a lot more of the semiconductor industry here; it’s more established. I think that’s the challenge for companies in Britain.”

“In late 1999 and 2000 things got a bit crazy.” During the dot.com boom and the subsequent crash, Hugh had a ring-side seat. He believes the experience has taught people some important lessons: “There have always been start-ups here, and only a fraction have ever been big successes. For a while people seemed to forget this. And some of the highest profile failures contributed to their downfall by their own excess. One company had a \$15,000 slide in the entrance hallway just as a gimmick – it got a bit silly. That has gone away now.”

The downturn in technology spending has

affected everyone, but Hugh notes that there have been small silver linings to this particular cloud, at least at first. “For example, people outside the technology industry struggled to afford housing at the height of the boom, while artists’ studios and town-centre shops had their leases bought out to be converted into offices. This has now stopped. It has also provided an opportunity to get rid of some waste, for example the millions of dollars a year Sun was spending on pagers, an avoidable expense.”

“It’s going to be a slow recovery. But there have been recessions, big recessions here before.” Hugh is philosophical about the current economic situation in Silicon Valley: “There tend to be big recessions in the technology industry because it’s very capital intensive, although this is the longest and deepest most people can remember. And for now, the bad news continues, with the expected recovery receding into the future and those companies that had hoped to wait things out being forced to make more painful cuts. But things will eventually recover, even though technology will probably recover more slowly than the rest of the economy – just because things got so far ahead of themselves. As always, innovation will provide the key to future success, with the future growth areas probably not being the same as before the crash.”

Hugh misses some things about Britain, but is not in any hurry to return: “I like living here. I would say that, having been different places in the USA, it is easier to fit in here; there is such a diversity of people. There is also what people call a ‘can do’ attitude. A greater willingness to take risks.”

Silicon Fen



“Cambridge now has 1600 high-tech companies; in the mid-1980s, it only had 100.”



“When I graduated, most people were encouraged to join the Civil Service, management consultancies and the like. No one said ‘there is a vocation and it’s called being an entrepreneur’. Whereas now, a lot more people do leave university and join small start-ups. CEC [the Cambridge Entrepreneurship Centre] teaches something like 3,000 student hours at a post-doctoral level. The student body now run their own business plan competitions. So the whole business culture is very active among the younger sector of the academic population.”

John Snyder – entrepreneur and business angel – has played a key role in what has been dubbed ‘the Cambridge Phenomenon’: the huge growth of high-tech firms in and around the city over the last two decades. After founding a search software company and heading a dot.com, he decided to share the benefits of his experience with other budding entrepreneurs. So, two years ago, he joined CEC as head of business creation. He recalls “We were very much inspired by what they were doing at MIT in Boston. When I joined, we developed a business model whereby we could use the goodwill in Cambridge and channel it to early-stage entrepreneurs.”

“There are a lot of venture capitalists knocking on doors, asking how to get into deals in Cambridge. They don’t really know who to meet.” With his unerring ability to spot gaps in the market, John has embarked on a new venture called Library House. “As the name suggests, it is a library full of information, and it’s like a home where people can start networking with others who use us like a club. Library House is really an example of organising external interests to

the benefit of local players.”

‘Silicon Fen’ has been coined to describe the Cambridge high-tech cluster, but John points out important differences with its Californian counterpart: “In Silicon Valley, you can create large industrial partnerships very quickly. Cambridge has no large companies; but, being a small place, people get to know each other well. It’s almost self-regulating. Deals happen very quickly. Whereas, if I visit Silicon Valley as an entrepreneur, it’s hard to get plugged in. You’ve got too many different groups.”

“At the early stage which Cambridge excels in, it’s a fantastic time to be in technology.” According to John, the current downturn in the technology sector is having very little impact on Cambridge. He talks of the upbeat mood at the Cambridge Enterprise Conference which he chaired in September 2002 and explains what makes ‘Silicon Fen’ different: “First of all, the dot.com explosion didn’t really affect Cambridge, because that was just re-working existing business models to use a new medium. Cambridge is about new inventions that have a new paradigm: disruptive technology. Whether you’re in boom or bust, that excites investors.”

Already thinking about his next venture – “a fund to co-invest alongside business angels in early stage deals” – John isn’t tempted to cross the Atlantic like many of his generation. “My family is American on my father’s side – in fact, I’m related to George Washington! I used to travel to the States ten or twelve times a year. I know most people study at Cambridge and then leave for the bright lights of London or New York. But, actually, Cambridge is a great place to be.”

John Snyder,
Co-Founder and Director,
Library House (since
2002); Founder of Muscat
and CEO of WebTop.com;
Entrepreneur-in-Residence,
University of Cambridge.
Born 19 January 1966.
Studied Geography at
Christ’s College, 1984–87.

weblinks

Cambridge Entrepreneurship Centre:

www.cec.cam.ac.uk

Library House:

www.libraryhouse.net

Cambridge Enterprise Conference:

www.cambridgeenterprise.com

Enterprise Accelerator:

www.enterpriseaccelerator.co.uk

Foreign exchanges

Professor Peter Sabor,
Director of the Burney
Centre, McGill University
(from 1 January 2003).
Born 18 December 1949.
Studied English at Christ's
College 1969–72.
Academic positions at:
University of Port

Harcourt, Nigeria 1977–78;
Queen's University, Ontario
1978–80 and 1983–95;
University of Calgary
1980–83; Laval University,
Quebec City 1995–2002.
Bye-Fellow, Christ's College,
Cambridge, 2002.



“Originally, I planned to spend my sabbatical leave this year in Oxford, because my collaborator Thomas Keymer is there (we are editing Samuel Richardson’s works and correspondence together), and because the Bodleian Library is slightly better for my research than the Cambridge University Library. But of course Cambridge is superior in every other respect! In retrospect, I’m very glad it worked out that I came back to Christ’s.” For Professor Peter Sabor, spending two terms at Christ’s as a Distinguished Visiting Scholar was something of a home-coming. Although based in Canada for most of his academic career, the College where he first studied offered a welcoming haven for a period of uninterrupted research.

He has been impressed, above all, by one particular aspect of the College’s academic life: “The fellowship here is extraordinary. The way in which one can get to know people in different disciplines over the lunch table I find very congenial. In Canadian universities, Faculty Clubs offer similar opportunities, but in practice they are mainly used as meeting-places for people you know already, usually from the same discipline. Here in College, you never know whom you’ll be sitting next to at lunch or dinner. I find that a wonderful part of the whole Christ’s experience.”

‘One great controversy in Canada is over student fees.’ From his trans-Atlantic

perspective, Peter is well qualified to compare Higher Education in Britain and Canada. Some issues are all too familiar: “In Canada and especially in the province of Quebec, where I live, student fees are low, even by British standards and certainly by American standards. The federal and provincial governments don’t want to allow universities to raise their fees, but of course the universities would like to do so. The most successful universities feel that they could still attract plenty of students, and with higher fees they would be able to function more efficiently and be less dependent on government grants.”

Trans-Atlantic interaction between educators and students is dominated by the UK–US relationship, but Peter explains that there are significant three-way links, including Canada as well: “American and British students who enroll in Canadian universities are generally happy with what they find. They can get an excellent education without having to pay the high fees charged by leading American universities. Canadians, of course, have often studied in the States, especially for their PhDs, and a fair number have gone to Britain, including Oxford and Cambridge. Canada, however, generally has a low profile in the world, so British students are more likely to gravitate towards the States, simply because they know more about it.” In the past, Peter acknowledges, “this has had a negative effect on the cross-fertilisation of

ideas that lies at the heart of academic inquiry.”

The Canadian Federal Government has responded by taking a radical step. In order to boost high-level research at its universities, it has spent billions of dollars on the creation of Canada Research Chairs. Peter explains how they work: “They are seven-year, renewable chairs, offered to senior academics, both to attract top scholars from abroad and to encourage researchers to remain in Canada. There are also five-year, non-renewable chairs, designed to attract leading junior scholars. It is up to individual universities how they use the chairs allocated to them and which subjects are endowed.”

The effect on hiring patterns has already been dramatic: “Canadian universities can now compete with leading American and British institutions for exceptionally promising or established senior scholars. And because the chairs are federally funded, universities have more money to invest in regular positions.”

In the continuing debate about maintaining world-class universities in the UK, perhaps this Canadian idea is one the British government might like to study...

"After the events of September 11th, the reaction of Stanford was interesting to observe." Frank Kelly spent last academic year at Stanford University in California. His experiences led him to reflect on the similarities and differences between two great universities.

"I was very impressed with the way in which the President of the university and the central offices took the lead in the local community in articulating the grief that was felt. There was a gathering of thousands a few days after September 11th in the main quad at Stanford, at which all the major world religions were represented, each with its own prayer or statement concerning the events. It was moving, and it brought the community together at a time when there were possibilities of fragmentation, of people from different backgrounds feeling angry with each other. Stanford made itself available as a focus for the whole community. That is one aspect of American universities that I noticed as being rather different."

Frank believes Cambridge could learn from this example: "The intelligence, the ability to put things into words that you expect of a university – I think it is reasonable for a community to look to a university to articulate certain messages. In this case, Stanford's ability to bring together people of

many faiths and of none was important. Its emphasis on tolerance gave a lead to a much wider community."

"On a flight from LA, I sat next to three 17 year-olds who were travelling up to Berkeley for a summer school on Mathematics." Frank recounts how a chance encounter brought alive the issue of 'access' that currently exercises Oxford and Cambridge universities. "A Latino boy, a girl of Chinese origin and a black girl: they each told me about their backgrounds, and how much they were looking forward to the summer school. I had seen from the academic side the attempts that Berkeley and UCLA made to reach out – into communities within California that might not have thought of sending their best students to these campuses. It was very clear that these young people regarded the University of California as *their* university. They were realistic about their prospects of getting in, but there was no sense of the university being separate from their community. The issue on their minds was entirely whether they would be good enough, rather than any notion of whether they would fit in." The Californian approach contrasts with British initiatives where, Frank believes, "the educational aspect of university – the quality of education you're going to get – doesn't seem to be of the first order in discussions about access."

Spending a year abroad brought into focus the best aspects of the Cambridge system: "Discussions in College between people in very different disciplines – that was one of the things I missed while I was away. The small size of an individual college also allows you to interact with undergraduate students particularly, at a reasonable scale." However, for Frank, Stanford had definite advantages in other respects. "It is a very good place for interaction between industry and academics. There is also the impact of recent graduates who maintain their relationship with the university as they make their way in entrepreneurial activities. Cambridge has certainly developed this interaction in the last decade, so I'm not sure there is any longer a qualitative difference. But the scale of things in the Bay Area is so much larger."

Returning to Cambridge with "renewed enthusiasm", Frank has plans for new courses and inter-disciplinary seminars on the Stanford model. His year in California was an eye-opener, but he cautions against too much navel-gazing: "In both Cambridge and Stanford, we discuss in huge detail the differences between the two places, when to most of the population of the US or UK they would look like very similar institutions!"



Frank Kelly FRS,
Professor of Mathematics
of Systems, and Clayton
Fellow at Christ's College
(since 1976). Visiting
Professor, Graduate
School of Business,
Stanford University,
California, 2001–02.

"Stanford is a private university but nonetheless has a very strong sense of its responsibilities to the local community, to the state and to the nation."



The new Alumni Officer writes:



Arriving last summer, I seem to have joined Christ's at a very exciting time! With just over two years to go until we celebrate the Quincentenary, it is a time for looking forward to the celebrations that lie ahead, and to the ideal that the College will continue to flourish for centuries to come. However, it is also a

time to reflect on the achievements of the last half-millennium, and to be justly proud of the Foundation of which all Christ's alumni are members for life.

There have been several members' reunions in the last few months (a Garden Party, the Family Day, and a Dinner).

September also saw the first-ever conference of Year Group Representatives. As a result of the discussions, we have decided to adopt a statement of purpose for the YGR scheme and for the Campaign, so that all members know how the two initiatives operate with different, but complementary, objectives.

The Year Group Representative Scheme is run by the Alumni Office with the sole purpose of encouraging and fostering contacts *among* members of Christ's and *between* members and the College. Members of Christ's are a community whose ideas, advice and support are always welcome to the College, and through which the College is strengthened. In turn, Christ's is keen to continue providing networking opportunities, knowledge and hospitality to members after they graduate.

In clear distinction, fund-raising for the College is managed by the Development Director. Naturally, the current Quincentenary Campaign will seek to mobilise the whole membership in support of Christ's and its long-term objectives, but this support can take many forms: promoting the College's reputation as a centre of excellence; introducing Christ's to a company or charitable trust sympathetic to the College's aims; identifying potential individual donors; and making a personal gift to the Campaign.

Every member remains equally welcome to visit Christ's and enjoy the benefits of the College community, at all times.

Events and reunions

Tuesday 19 November 2002, 6.00–7.30 pm

Christ's College Business Briefing #1 ALL WELCOME

Intellectual Property

Venue: BTG plc, 10 Fleet Place, Limeburner Lane, London EC4M 7SB

Please contact the Alumni Office to apply for tickets (no charge).

Wednesday 20 November 2002, 5.00 pm

Lady Margaret Lecture ALL WELCOME

Professor Paul Kennedy (Yale University)

"The conundrum of American power in today's fragmented world"

New Court Theatre

Saturday 30 November 2002, 2.00 pm

Special Guest Lecture ALL WELCOME

Dr David Starkey (historian, best-selling author and broadcaster)

"The six wives of Henry VIII: a new look at an old subject"

Tickets priced £10 available from the Alumni Office.

All proceeds from this event will go towards the conservation of the College's unique collection of historic documents and manuscripts.

Tuesday 25 February 2003, 6.00–7.30 pm

Christ's College Business Briefing #2 ALL WELCOME

The Media

Venue: Pearson plc, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL

Please contact the Alumni Office to apply for tickets (no charge).

Wednesday 26 February 2003, 5.00 pm

Lady Margaret Lecture ALL WELCOME

Professor David Cannadine FBA (Director, Institute of Historical Research, University of London)

"The College and the Two Cultures: Christ's in the era of Todd, Snow and Plumb". New Court Theatre

Thursday 1 May 2003, 5.00 pm

Lady Margaret Lecture ALL WELCOME

Professor Barry Supple CBE FBA (Honorary Fellow)

Title to be announced. New Court Theatre.

Saturday 21 June 2003, 12.45 pm

Reunion Buffet Luncheon and Garden Party

For members who matriculated in 1973, 1978, 1983, 1988 and 1993

Fellows' Garden (Hall, if wet).

Places are limited, so those wishing to attend are encouraged to reply as early as possible.

Saturday 28 June 2003, 6.45 pm for 7.30 pm

Christ's College Association Annual Dinner OPEN TO ALL

Master's Garden (sherry) and Hall (dinner).

Please contact Mrs Susan Clements in the College Conference & Accommodation Office to apply for tickets to this annual event.

