



Issue 5 Easter Term 2003

# pieces

from Christ's College Cambridge



**The pioneers**  
Christ's women 25 years on

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**Cutting edge**  
Vietnam unveiled

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**Shattering myths**  
Hannah Crawford goes to school

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[www.christs.cam.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.christs.cam.ac.uk/alumni)



A Reunion Garden Party and 2 Reunion Dinners,  
3 London Business Briefings, Christ's in the City,  
Christ's in New York, the Alumni Weekend lunch,  
Friends of the Old Library lectures and events,  
a subject reunion, the MA Congregation...



... and the Family Day

# Come and join in!

THE CHRIST'S COLLEGE ANNUAL ALUMNI PROGRAMME

# Events and reunions

**Saturday 12 July 2003, 2.00 pm–5.00 pm**

## **Family Day OPEN TO ALL**

Entertainment for children and adults, followed by High Tea.

Fellows' Garden (Hall and Upper Hall, if wet)

Tickets are available from the Alumni Office; early booking is advised.

**Saturday 20 September 2003, 6.45 pm for 7.30 pm**

## **Reunion Dinner**

For members who matriculated in years up to and including 1945, and in 1948.

Fellows' Garden (sherry) (Upper Hall, if wet) and Hall (dinner)

*Please note that this event is now at full capacity.*

**Saturday 27 September 2003, 6.45 pm for 7.30 pm**

## **Reunion Dinner**

For members who matriculated in 1953, 1958, 1963 and 1968.

Fellows' Garden (sherry) (Upper Hall, if wet) and Hall (dinner)

*Please note that this event is now at full capacity.*

**Wednesday 29 October 2003, 5.00 pm**

## **Lady Margaret Lecture ALL WELCOME**

Carl Djerassi (Emeritus Professor of Chemistry, Stanford University)

"Sex in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

New Court Theatre

**Wednesday 3 February 2004, 5.00 pm**

## **Lady Margaret Lecture ALL WELCOME**

Professor Sir Tony Atkinson FBA FES (Warden of Nuffield College, Oxford; formerly Professor of Political Economy, Cambridge)

will give a lecture in tribute to the late Professor James Meade

(Honorary Fellow of Christ's College), Nobel laureate in Economics.

New Court Theatre

**Saturday 20 March 2004, 11.45 am**

## **MA Congregation**

Members who matriculated as undergraduates in October 1997 will be entitled to proceed to their MA.

Details will be sent out in November 2003.

**Saturday 3 April 2004, from 4.00 pm**

## **Medics' & Vets' Reunion**

Graduates in Medical Sciences and Veterinary Medicine are cordially invited to an informal reunion, including dinner in Hall with guest speakers.

Further details and tickets will be available from the Alumni Office.

**Michaelmas Term 2003 & Lent Term 2004, 6.00 pm**

## **Christ's College Business Briefings #4 and #5**

Please contact the Alumni Office for details.



# in the news

## Survival of the fittest

Reviewing a new biography of Charles Darwin (1827), the *Financial Times* (14 December 2002) remarked: 'Of the three 19th century sages who shaped the modern world view, two – Marx and Freud – are now utterly out of fashion, while the third, Charles Darwin, is a figure of ever-deepening fascination.' The review went on to praise Darwin as 'the human and intellectual source of ideas in the forefront of contemporary science.'

## Three wise men

The *Court Circular* (18 December 2002) recorded a unique royal audience at Buckingham Palace for three distinguished members of Christ's: 'December 17: The Queen received the Bishop of Manchester (the Right Reverend Nigel McCulloch) who did homage upon his appointment. Her Majesty received the Archbishop of Canterbury (the Most Reverend Rowan Williams) who did homage upon his appointment. The Lord Irvine of Lairg (Lord Chancellor) administered the oaths.'

## The Empire strikes back

Niall Ferguson (1979) presented his re-evaluation of Britain's impact on the modern world in a six-part Channel 4 series *Empire* (9 January–13 February 2003). While not going as far as another Christ's alumnus, General Jan Smuts – who argued that the British Empire was 'the widest system of organised human freedom which has ever existed in human history' – Professor Ferguson did suggest that 'empire enhanced global welfare – was, in other words, a Good Thing.'

## Degrees of freedom

In advance of his Ford lectures at Oxford, Quentin Skinner (Fellow) was one of the guests on BBC Radio 4's *Start The Week* (20 January 2003). He explained that our modern concept of freedom is but a watered-down version of the 17th century concept, as espoused by Milton and others. According to this earlier view, 'no power that has discretionary authority is legitimate'. Professor Skinner acknowledged that, today, such a view of freedom 'demands too much', so it is Hobbes's concept that we have inherited.

## GM OK?

Sir Peter Lachmann (Fellow), former President of the Academy of Medical Sciences, was interviewed on BBC Radio's flagship current affairs programme, *Today* (31 January 2003), about the British Medical Association's decision to review its advice on the safety of genetically modified (GM) crops. Sir Peter said that to apply the precautionary principle too broadly would lead to 'complete stasis', and he argued that 'the difference between GM technology and conventional crop breeding is not as great as most people might imagine.'

## 'Respect' in the USA

The American television debut of comedian Ali G (alias Sacha Baron Cohen, 1990) was marked by an extensive preview in the *New York Times* (3 February 2003). The paper described how 'Ali G's hilarious interactions with his guests play off the disconnect between black and white culture, young and old, street smart and book smart, hip and square.' However, some of the show's unsuspecting guests were left dumbfounded; one described the experience as 'perhaps the most surreal interview I have ever done.'

## Respected in the USA

Profiling Sir Martin Sorrell (1963), *The Wall Street Journal* (3 March 2003) noted that the chief executive of the advertising and marketing conglomerate WPP plc was 'a dire prognosticator of the ad climate – but also one of the most accurate.' In an uncertain world for advertising companies, the paper said that Sir Martin had gained respect for his 'attention to detail' and 'hands-on management style.'

## Taking his cue

Former England cricket captain Tony Lewis (1959) swapped his more usual surroundings for the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, in his new role as a director of the World Snooker Championships. Interviewed by *BBC Sport* during a pause in the final (5 May 2003), he was asked if his renowned skill with the cricket bat extended also to dexterity with the snooker cue. 'I'm very good at that, too!', he joked.

## Art mirrors life

Duncan Kenworthy (1968), producer of the hit movie *Notting Hill*, spoke about the film's star Julia Roberts on Channel 4's *The 100 Greatest Movie Stars* (5 May 2003). In a strange case of life imitating art, Kenworthy's film – itself the story of a movie star trying to reconcile her fame with her personal life – proved to be strangely prescient for its female lead.

# Gathering momentum



In the six months since the launch of the Quincentenary Campaign, many hundreds of gifts have been received from members and well-wishers. The total raised currently stands at **£6.5 million**, and one of the four Campaign objectives – £1 million in unrestricted funds – has already been achieved.

At 1 May 2003, donations to the Campaign had been made for the following purposes:

## Attracting Talent: £1,372,896

Purpose: To ensure that Christ's remains accessible, on the basis of talent alone, to the brightest young people from the UK and overseas, by increasing the College's provision of bursaries and studentships; these will enable Christ's to support those from less well-off backgrounds who might otherwise suffer financial difficulties.  
Target: £5 million.

## Advancing Knowledge: £3,726,597

Purpose: To ensure that Christ's continues to recruit, retain and develop the best academics, by providing permanently endowed, teaching and research fellowships across all disciplines.  
Target: £8 million.

## Broadening Horizons: £42,255

Purpose: To strengthen the quality of the overall learning environment, by enhancing educational and cultural facilities (libraries, sports, music and the arts).  
Target: £1 million.

## Unrestricted Funds: £1,059,632

Purpose: To ensure that Christ's is well placed to seize new opportunities, from inter-disciplinary projects to innovative business partnerships, by boosting the general endowment fund.  
Target: £1 million.

## Other specific educational projects: £277,310

including the Law Fund (for the support of needy students reading Law, the teaching of Law at the College level, and the endowment of the College Law Library).



Left  
The 1954 year-group enjoying an afternoon together, punting on the Cam

# 1954: a star year

Alumni from nearly every year-group, from 1930 to 1998 (the single exception being 1986), have made gifts to the Quincentenary Campaign; but one year stands head and shoulders above the rest. Members of the 1954 year-group have not only contributed the most towards the

Campaign (just under £500,000); the year also boasts the highest participation rate, with 18% having contributed so far to the Campaign. As it approaches its 50th anniversary reunion, the 1954 year-group is setting the standard for other years to follow.

If you would like to help guarantee the future provision of the key aspects of College life—financial help for students in need; College-based, small-group teaching; and up-to-date facilities for extra-curricular activities – by contributing to the Quincentenary Campaign, please contact the Development Director, Dr Toby Wilkinson, who will be delighted to hear from you.

Telephone +44 (0)1223 766710

Fax +44 (0)1223 766711

Email [campaign@christs.cam.ac.uk](mailto:campaign@christs.cam.ac.uk)

Website  
[www.christs.cam.ac.uk/quincentenary/campaign](http://www.christs.cam.ac.uk/quincentenary/campaign)

## Playing on

There has been a fantastic response to the Music Challenge Fund, announced in issue 3 of *pieces* (Lent Term 2002). The College is delighted to report that donations totalling £35,000 have been received in the last twelve months, matched by a gift of an equal amount from an anonymous benefactor. The total sum of £70,000 will now be earmarked as a permanent endowment for music, with the hope that this will be augmented by future donations.

The funds raised through the Music Challenge Fund will support the provision of Instrumental Awards and Choral Exhibitions to promising young musicians, and grants to the College Music Society.

A big thank-you to all those who contributed so generously to this initiative.

### weblinks

Christ's College Music Society  
[www.christs.cam.ac.uk/mussoc](http://www.christs.cam.ac.uk/mussoc)

Christ's College Chapel Choir  
[www.christs.cam.ac.uk/choir](http://www.christs.cam.ac.uk/choir)



# Hanoi horizons

“What interests me is the legacy of colonialism in contemporary cultures in different parts of the world.”



Above  
Dr Susan Bayly (far left) with colleagues from the Department of Anthropology, Hanoi University

Dr Susan Bayly,  
Lecturer in Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge; George Kingsley Roth Fellow and Tutor, Christ's College (since 1986).

“This College is a remarkable place in which to be a Cambridge social anthropologist. It is the college of A C Haddon, who is widely known as a founding father of the discipline.” Dr Susan Bayly, who came to Christ's in 1986 as the College's first female tutor, speaks admiringly of this Victorian polymath, who serves as a role model not only for anthropologists but also, more widely, for those passionate about the education of women. Susan explains: “He came to Cambridge from a modest background and very rapidly became an ardent campaigner for the rights of women: votes for women, and university degrees at Cambridge for women. This was very much not the majority view at that time in academic life, and it rather blighted his career. It was Christ's that kept his career alive with a fellowship.”

Susan's own academic interests bridge the disciplines of history and social anthropology, with a particular emphasis on colonialism and the cultural afterlife of empire in post-colonial societies. After early fieldwork in southern India, studying religious conversion, her next project was hugely ambitious: a survey of the Indian caste system. As Susan recalls, “It was a long time in the making!” The resulting book, with its important insights into the legacy of colonialism, was to shape her current research project.

“I found myself giving lectures on empire and colonialism, with an emphasis on the distinctiveness of French colonial life.” In an example of the interplay between teaching and research, Susan's lecture course sparked a growing

interest in France as a colonial power. The discovery of cultural links between India and Vietnam lent added focus: “I decided that I wanted to do ethnographic fieldwork in Vietnam. The project is an exploration of the cultural life of the Vietnamese people during and after the period of revolution, with particular emphasis on teaching and education.” In keeping with her remarkable track-record of wide-ranging studies, Susan's core research in Vietnam will eventually form part of a much broader project, “an interpretative, synthesising account of French colonialism and its after-effects as experienced in a wide range of settings.”

While the recent history of Vietnam has not been without anguish, Susan has experienced nothing but friendly cooperation during her visits: “The people I know are extremely welcoming and hospitable. They have been enormously generous with their time and their interest in the project, and I've also had many fruitful encounters with academics and students at Hanoi University and other important scholarly institutions.” Through interviews and taped conversations, Susan is building up a detailed picture of the Viet Minh movement of the 1940s and 1950s, which eventually led to the overthrow of French colonial rule.

“A key part of the Viet Minh strategy was a mass literacy campaign. Women, in particular, played a key part in the fashioning of an educated Vietnamese society.” Drawing on some of the most important strands in her own, and Haddon's,

intellectual career, and building on exciting developments in anthropology both within and beyond Cambridge, Susan's research in Hanoi is set to make a notable contribution to our understanding of the forces which both made and unmade the great colonial empires of the modern era. “People are remembering for me things they did not necessarily feel were anything more than mundane or routine at the time; but this, in many ways, is what being a social anthropologists is all about.”





# A man's world?

**Clare Morrow** (née Brocklehurst), Controller of Programmes, Yorkshire Television (since 1993). Born 16 September 1960. Studied Law and English at Christ's College 1979–83.

"It's that choice people have, the Mrs Thatcher choice: whether you become a man in a man's world, or whether you do it your way in the hope of persuading people that there is a wider way of looking at things. I have always taken that second view, and just ploughed my own furrow."

"It's important that you have people who really care about the regions."

Since Clare Morrow started working at Yorkshire TV ten years ago, she has successfully transformed the atmosphere of the newsroom from that of a 'boys' club' to a more family-friendly environment for the 150 employees who report to her; that's in addition to overseeing the production of 450 hours of news and 150 hours of other programmes made by Yorkshire TV each year.

"You are only worth what you have done most recently. That's the way it is in the commercial world, and I quite like that; it means you've always got to keep on your toes otherwise someone else will come in." Clare relishes the challenge of working in commercial television, but remains full of praise for the BBC where she started her career in TV journalism. However, at the time when she was looking for promotion, there were few opportunities with the BBC to remain in the North where her young family was settled. So Yorkshire TV, with its large production base in Leeds, was a natural move, and Clare has never looked back.

As creative director, Clare spends much of her time thinking of ideas and discussing them with other people: "In our multi-channel world, I am having to work really hard to make people choose to watch the things I am producing. That's a big challenge." On a daily basis, Clare decides which stories make it onto the news and which get cut, and has to ensure that reporters and resources are in the right place at the right time. She also takes her responsibilities to her colleagues very seriously, explaining "There is nothing more satisfying than spotting somebody who is talented, creating the right conditions for them to thrive, and knowing that you helped to nurture their talent."

"A big question is what do we do with the power we have in television to change people's perceptions about all sorts of things." Clare

believes that one of the biggest challenges in the coming years will be to promote tolerance and understanding. She explains "We have a big Muslim community in Bradford, but most people living in this area don't really understand how a Muslim community works. We have a power and a responsibility to inform and educate, but you have to do it in such a way that is engaging for people rather than preaching."

Clare's commitment to local issues dates back to her first job, writing for a local paper in Beverley. She recognises the importance of listening to local people, finding out "what makes them tick" and, where possible, using the media's influence to change things for the better. Recently, as Chair of a Home Office project to protect older people from con-men, Clare successfully raised awareness of the problem and attracted the support of organisations throughout the community. Now many of the ideas developed in the Leeds project are being adopted around the country. Clare sums up her personal philosophy: "I think you can often make the most change at the grass roots of a workplace or a community, and living and working in a region allows me to do just that."

# Putting the children first



**Julia Chisholm,**  
Consultant Paediatric  
Oncologist, Great Ormond  
Street Hospital for Sick  
Children, London (since  
1999). Born 7 July 1962.  
Studied Medical Sciences  
at Christ's College  
1980–86.

“The nice thing about kids is that they don’t behave as patients, they behave as themselves.”

“About 70% of children with malignant disease can be cured these days, so the emphasis is not just on making the kids better but on preventing the long-term side-effects of treatment.” For Julia Chisholm, treating children with solid malignancies at the biggest children’s hospital in the UK is only a part of the invaluable work she does. Julia is responsible for the diagnosis and individual care plans of her very young patients, which involve complex combinations of chemotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery. However, she also plays a key role in establishing what she calls the ‘care environment’, working with the whole team of people including junior doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, pathologists, surgeons and radiologists, to ensure her patients have the best possible care. Much of the day-to-day medical care is carried out by junior doctors and Julia is part of a team responsible for their induction and supervision.

However, Julia still spends plenty of time with her patients. She runs a weekly clinic, and two weeks out of six she is in charge of the overall care of the patients on the wards. She is also particularly proud of her involvement in improving cooperation between the four paediatric oncology centres in London and the district hospitals in the southeast. The hope is that patients, who often live a long way from Great Ormond Street, can have certain aspects of their treatment equally well in their own hospital. Antibiotic treatment, blood transfusions and some simple chemotherapy are among the treatments that can be offered at a local hospital, which can make a huge difference in making life easier for the cancer sufferers and their families. As Julia says, “Standard guidelines produced by the four centres will mean that our cancer patients get uniform standards of care wherever they are looked after”.

“A single institution cannot take things forward; it’s a case of chipping away at the block and providing the right infrastructure.” Julia is very keen to be involved in an integrated health care system where knowledge is shared and continual improvements are made. Her involvement in the UK Children’s Cancer Study Group (UKCCSG), an umbrella organisation to which all UK paediatric oncologists belong, is an indicator of the cooperative approach being taken in order to improve care throughout the country. Through this, Julia has recently been involved in developing a new clinical trial looking at a particular drug in a tumour type where it hasn’t been used before. The academic nature of the specialty means that the majority of patients are treated on standard protocols or in UK or European clinical trials. Analysis of the resulting data ensures that treatment can keep evolving to improve the outcome for the patients.

Julia freely admits that her work is occasionally draining: “There are emotional ups and downs of looking after children with life-threatening diseases.” Yet, she emphasises that those working in the oncology department are self-selected: “People who find it uncomfortable probably wouldn’t want to work in this area.” And while there are necessary barriers to becoming too emotionally involved, she is clear that engagement is absolutely vital: “The moment I stop caring and become completely detached from the whole situation, then I stop being able to do my job effectively”.

“There are times when a particular child I am involved with reminds me a bit too much of my own, and it’s all a bit close to home.” However, Julia doesn’t feel that dealing with seriously ill children makes her any less sympathetic towards the normal coughs and colds her own three children experience: “I still find it quite hard to leave them at home when they are feeling poorly.” She sums up the challenge for all working mothers: “It’s not just about coping with the emotional side of work in relation to having children, but it’s also about managing the whole lifestyle issue. It’s important to me to have a little bit of time during the week with my children.”



# Totally Tango



Right

Christine Denniston dancing the Tango with Barry Jones in the ballroom of the Hotel Carrasco, Montevideo, Uruguay, at the World Tango Summit, 1986.

Christine Denniston, professional tango teacher (since 1993). Born 31 December 1963. Studied Natural Sciences at Christ's College, 1982–85.

"When I made the decision to become a tango teacher, it was something I had to justify to myself, that I was actually doing something worthwhile. It seemed to me that, through teaching Tango, I could encourage people to have a broader and deeper empathy with other people, and that was a really useful contribution to make."

For Christine Denniston, the path from science graduate (the first woman at Christ's to study Part II Physics) to tango teacher was long and complex, including a stint at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. But the decision, when it came, seemed perfectly natural. Christine recalls: "When I moved back to London, I happened to stumble across some people dancing the Tango. Quite quickly, because I took it very seriously, people starting asking me to teach – not because I knew very much, but because nobody knew very much more. I found myself spending so much of my time teaching Tango that I didn't have time for my 'career'!"

"Outside Buenos Aires, the attraction of Tango seems to be greater in countries with cooler climates, where people tend to be more reserved." Christine reveals that apart from Argentina, the countries with the strongest Tango scene are, surprisingly, Germany and Japan. Britain, too, has witnessed a huge revival, which began in the 1990s with the show 'Tango Argentino'. But, as Christine explains, the new wave of interest has been a mixed blessing: "Practically nobody learned to dance the Tango in Argentina between 1955 and 1983, when, apart from a brief period of democracy in the 1970s, the country was ruled by a military junta. Now we're reaching a point where that's a major crisis, because the old dancers are dying. We are in danger of losing the skills of the great masters, and turning Tango into just another dance. We will all be the poorer for it if we let that happen."

Christine's response to this challenge has been typically entrepreneurial. She has set up a new website, [history-of-tango.com](http://history-of-tango.com), to chart the phenomenon that began among the immigrant communities of Buenos Aires. "It's important for people to understand the process that Tango has gone through in order to be able to understand the

fundamentals of what it's about." She adds: "Tango is about much more than just the dance – it is also the music and the poetry."

Christine's total commitment to Tango has led her to write a new series of electronic books, combining expertise and technology in a novel way: "Animations with little feet that run across the screen allow you to go through movement by movement. People find it easier to understand what they're trying to achieve." But she notes that Tango is not really about learning the right steps: "Your primary purpose is to give the person you're dancing with a good time."

Tango is an international phenomenon, and Christine's career increasingly takes her abroad for long periods of time. As well as periodic visits to Argentina, she is in demand as a teacher in places as far afield as New Zealand and the United States. She comments: "To begin with I thought of myself as London based. But it has got to the point where I travel so much that it's not practical for me to retain a presence in London." How does Christine explain the all-consuming nature of Tango for its thousands of devotees? "I can quote my book", she suggests. "Tango is the expression of a fundamental human need: the hunger of the soul for contact with another soul."

## weblinks

[www.totaltango.com](http://www.totaltango.com)

[www.history-of-tango.com](http://www.history-of-tango.com)



# PR power

**Nan Williams**, Managing Partner, Four Communications (since 2001). Born 5 June 1962. Studied Modern Languages at Christ's College 1980–84.

“The morning after you finish a piece of work that you have been planning for weeks and weeks, and it’s in every national newspaper and on every broadcast, that’s a great feeling.” Nan Williams’ public relations company, Four Communications, may be less than two years old and have just twenty-three employees, but it already has £1.5 million in fee income and is involved in some important national projects. One example is the Chip and PIN scheme which, by 2005, will see all credit and debit card users in the UK entering a pin number rather than signing their credit card slip. The aim is to reduce the incidence of card fraud, which currently occurs at a rate of one every eight seconds in the UK. Spreading the message to the 42 million card-holders in Britain is a hugely exciting challenge.

Fortunately, Nan is one of the most experienced PR professionals in the business. Having worked her way from Graduate Trainee at Charles Barker in 1985 to CEO of its UK business from 1997 to 2000, she decided she missed the communications consulting that is the grass roots of PR. So, along with three former colleagues, she took the plunge and founded her own company: “By the time I left Charles Barker there were 250 people and about £19 million in fee income, so the thought of going down to zero people and starting again was exciting but completely different.”

“An average week here involves client meetings, meeting journalists or MPs, keeping track of the financial affairs of the business, appraising staff, pitching for business and lots and lots of writing.”

However, in the world of PR, there is rarely an ‘average’ week. Four Communications covers a wide range of projects, from international research alongside accounting firms to social responsibility projects for large corporations. A major activity is crisis management, and Nan explains “it’s not a case of covering things up; it’s a case of sensitivity.” From in-house problems to major oil disasters, Nan has covered the whole spectrum of issues and so speaks with experience when she says “The one thing that does not work in the media is covering up. Nine times out of ten, it makes the crisis worse.”

While a crisis can be a catalyst for change, corporate inertia is a major challenge, so Nan and her colleagues spend a lot of time helping companies learn how to approach their clients, consumers or critics. She explains “It’s about teaching companies not to retreat into corporate speak when they present themselves to an audience. It doesn’t change what they do, and they don’t have to compromise their objectives.” But bureaucracy is slow to change: “It can take a long time for companies to realise that it’s not about image, it’s about relevance and humanity in the way that corporates speak and act”.

“When I had my first son, my CEO at Charles Barker was very supportive; I could work from anywhere I wanted, and I kept thinking ‘Why isn’t this normal?’” Practising what she preaches, Nan has made changes in her own companies too. In her time at Charles Barker she won the 2000 Parents at Work Award for innovative practices,

and can’t understand why more work places aren’t family friendly. “We brought in measures like collecting people’s dry cleaning from work: very simple for the company to operate, but it makes your employees’ lives a lot easier.” Introducing initiatives such as massage (to help people unwind) and job sharing was a radical change in a large company, but the same approach has evolved naturally with Four Communications, albeit on a smaller scale.

For Nan, it comes down to a question of finding the right balance: “If you can help people achieve that, it can really help them work better as well; and there is nothing more fulfilling than creating and maintaining a really supportive, highly motivated team.”

“I guess what turns us all on is ending up in the headlines.”



# Aim high



"A lot of the project is about shattering the myths."

**Hannah Crawford,**  
Schools Liaison Officer, Christ's College, Cambridge (2002–2003). Born 2 April 1980. Studied English and American Literature at Christ's College 1998–2002.

"Tell me the rudest possible thing you can about what you think an Oxbridge student might be like. I won't be offended." This was the challenge set recently to a group of Year 12 (lower sixth) pupils by Schools Liaison Officer, Hannah Crawford.

As part of a University-wide initiative to raise aspirations and increase the pool of applicants to Cambridge, Hannah's role is to work with schools and Local Education Authorities, in order to dispel some of the myths surrounding Cambridge and encourage the brightest young people to apply to the University, irrespective of their background.

The post of Schools Liaison Officer was a new one for Christ's this year, so Hannah began from scratch. Building on the College's historic links with Lincolnshire, she has been working with 20 of the county's schools containing pupils with the potential to apply to Cambridge. She explains: "On a day-to-day basis, it's been about making contact with the schools and spending time there working with them to find out how we can support them; together we work out what the problems are, and then devise a series of events that will help them."

"The first phase of the project has been about aspiration raising and encouraging people to apply to university in general. The second phase has been much more specifically Oxbridge related, offering advice and support to potential applicants on issues ranging from choosing a College to the much-dreaded interview process." Hannah has spent time not only with sixth-formers, who may be applying to university in the near future, but also with younger children, "to encourage them to think that university might one day be something for them." She has also worked with parents and teachers; as a recent graduate, she knows exactly what it is like to be a student at Cambridge.

Hannah is particularly pleased at the level of support she has received from the Christ's Fellows. "From advice on what they are looking for in potential students, to participating in the open days at College, their help has been crucial." In recent months, College visits and contact with existing students (who have kindly given up their time) have allowed groups of sixth-formers to have their questions about Cambridge answered and some of their fears allayed. As Hannah notes, "Hopefully, next year, if they are asked about applying, they won't have negative thoughts."

"The same three problems come up over and over again in schools: teachers feel that they really lack information; there is the misconception about what Oxbridge is like; and the third problem is to do with students and their own lack of confidence." Hannah sees a challenge for the future of the project in continuing to overcome these barriers, and helping schools take full advantage of the support available. "It's not a question of handing out an easy guide on getting into Cambridge, but rather enthusing students about the subjects they are hoping to read and encouraging them to aim high."

# You asked, we listened.

Nathalie Walker, the Alumni Officer, writes:

At the Year Group Reps' Conference in September last year, a message that came across clearly from all years was that members would like to return to reunion events with adjacent year groups, rather than with those five or ten years either side of them. In response, the Alumni Office is pleased to announce that, from 2006, there

will be a new rolling schedule of reunions in which groups of three or four adjacent years will be invited back to events. This will not affect the frequency of invitations (members will still be invited back to a reunion at least every five years), but should mean that members are able to meet up with more of their College friends.



## Helping you keep in touch

If you are trying to trace a lost friend from Christ's, look in the online directory of members, accessible via the year pages at [www.christs.cam.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.christs.cam.ac.uk/alumni) (username and password available from the Alumni Office on request). If the person you are looking for is not listed, please contact the Alumni Office and we will be happy to forward

your correspondence.

If you would like your details to be included in the online directory (which is password-protected and accessible only to members of Christ's College), please complete an online update form (follow the links at [www.christs.cam.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.christs.cam.ac.uk/alumni)), or email the Alumni Office ([alumni@christs.cam.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@christs.cam.ac.uk)).



# Editorial

Twenty-five years ago, in October 1978, the first woman undergraduate entered Christ's College. An institution founded by one of the greatest women of the late Middle Ages had itself finally embraced co-education. In the quarter-century since, the young women who have come to Christ's have contributed immeasurably to the College, academically, culturally and socially. This edition of *pieces* pays a silver jubilee tribute to the College's alumnae.

Women graduates of Christ's have gone on to achieve success in a wide range of fields. From the pioneering year of 1979 (which saw the first full entry of women to the College), Clare Morrow is using her talents to educate, inform and entertain a large swathe of the UK population, in her role as Controller of Programmes at Yorkshire Television (pages 6–7).

While Clare made a conscious decision to settle outside London, the capital has proved a lasting draw for many of her contemporaries. Julia Chisholm and Nan Williams, both of whom came up to Christ's in 1980, have forged distinguished careers in the metropolis, albeit in very different areas (pages 8, 10). Christine Denniston is also based in London, although her unusual career takes her around the world for much of the year (page 9).

A recent alumna who continues to be involved in the life of the College is Schools Liaison Officer, Hannah Crawforth. Hannah's important work (page 11) complements the College's wider efforts to attract and support outstanding students, irrespective of their social or economic background. Through the increased provision of bursaries, this is one of the primary objectives of the Quincentenary Campaign, launched last October. Its achievements to date are summarised on pages 3–4.

In cutting edge academic research (page 5), as in every other walk of life, women members of Christ's continue to excel. The 25th anniversary of an historic decision is indeed a time for celebration.

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Front cover picture  
Women graduands at Christ's College (by Nathalie Walker)

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