

Editorial

Throughout almost five centuries of existence Christ's College has been a breeding ground for inspired ideas and creative genius. Steeped in the tradition of notables such as Milton and Darwin, the College has nurtured and aided a variety of individuals to 'think outside the box' and use their vast array of the talents to the full.

In this issue of pieces, the cutting edge focus (page 5) is **Robert Hunt**. A Fellow of the College, Robert's boundless enthusiasm and desire to help others learn epitomises the educational ideals Christ's College espouses.

The Master, **Malcolm Bowie**, shares some thoughts on his academic research, but also on his passion for art (pages 6-7). **Huw Williams'** gift is to enchant and inspire people through music. As an organist at St Paul's Cathedral, he reveals that life is never dull (page 10).

Creative talents can lead to niche markets being filled. **Laurie Ayling** founded his own business based on his ability to think laterally and find solutions to problems with which others struggled. (Page 11) **Peggy Vance's** decision to go freelance in the world of editing and printing gave her greater freedom to involve herself in what she saw as worthwhile projects and led to the establishment of her own printing and editorial companies.

Something of a household name for many, **Colin Dexter**, creator of Inspector Morse, explains the influences behind his characters. It seems though that what he really enjoyed was not writing novels, but inspiring others through teaching classics (page 9).

As the College nears its Quincentenary it is an ideal time to celebrate the diversity of talents of those who have passed through its gates, and pondered awhile beneath the mulberry tree.

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Front cover picture
Angle Poise, a sculpture by Professor Philip King CBE PRA

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in the news

From Russia, with love

Sir Rodric Braithwaite (1952, Honorary Fellow) talked about his experiences as British Ambassador to Moscow at the time of the Soviet Union's collapse on BBC Radio 4's *Leading Lives* (9 July 2003). Describing the endless round of diplomatic receptions and dinners as "very hard work", Sir Rodric also recalled how his wife joined protesters in the streets of Moscow during the coup against Mikhail Gorbachev. He admitted that this wasn't strictly allowed but confessed "I couldn't have stopped her".

Higher Doctorate

John Clarke (1961, Honorary Fellow) was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science from the University of Cambridge on 13 December 2003. The ScD degree is a higher doctorate which may be supplicated for by proving "distinction by some original contribution to the advancement of science." Professor Clarke, who read Natural Sciences at Christ's and later returned as a fellow, holds the Luis W Alvarez Memorial Chair for Experimental Physics at the University of California, Berkeley, USA.

Great poets?

Described as "one of the finest living literary critics", Professor Christopher Ricks (Honorary Fellow) was interviewed on BBC Radio 4's *Front Row* (23 September 2003) about his controversial new book. The 'celebrated editor and interpreter of Milton, Tennyson, Keats and Eliot' has now turned his attention to... the lyrics of Bob Dylan. Ricks lauded the songwriter as "a prophet" and confessed he would rather Dylan wrote a new song than read the book, *Dylan's Visions of Sin*.

We will remember them

Former chaplain Nigel McCulloch (Chaplain to Christ's 1970-1973) made national television in the presence of HM The Queen in November 2003, when he officiated at the annual Festival of Remembrance. The event, in the Royal Albert Hall, paid tribute to Britain's servicemen and women, and this year included footage of British troops in action in Basra. Bishop McCulloch became Bishop of Manchester in October 2002, and also holds the post of Lord High Almoner to Her Majesty The Queen.

Pro-Vice Chancellors

Two Christ's fellows have been appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellors of the University of Cambridge.

Professor Andrew Cliff became a fellow of Christ's in 1974. He gained his BA at King's College, London, his MA at Northwestern University and his PhD and DSc at the University of Bristol. Since 1972 Dr Cliff has been a member of the University of Cambridge's Department of Geography. His research focuses on spatial statistics and, currently, on applications of spatial diffusion models on the spread of epidemic diseases. He holds a Chair in Theoretical Geography.

As a Pro-Vice-Chancellor, he has special responsibilities for personnel issues.

Professor Ian Leslie became a fellow of Christ's in 1985. Born in Canada, he gained his first degree in Engineering Science and his Masters in Electrical Engineering at the University of Toronto. He came to the University of Cambridge for his PhD and stayed on at the Computer Laboratory after completing it in 1983. He has founded two companies to exploit the work done in the department: Nemesys Research Ltd and Cplane Inc.. Professor Leslie is currently Head of the Computer Laboratory at Cambridge and serves on the University Council and a number of its committees.

As a Pro-Vice-Chancellor, his special responsibilities cover research issues.

The time to hit the target



The Development Director, **Elizabeth Norris** writes:

" This edition of pieces is the first since my recent appointment as Development Director and I am delighted to have this opportunity to introduce myself and tell you about the progress of the Quincentenary Campaign.

In the very short time that I have been here, I have been made to feel at home and have been welcomed into this wonderful community. Whether you matriculated many years ago or very recently, you are all part of that community and I do hope you will celebrate the 500th anniversary of Lady Margaret's re-founding of the College with a sense of pride and belonging. My colleagues and I are already planning several exciting events for 2005 and I hope that, if I have not had the chance to meet you before then, we do meet during the Quincentenary year.

The very good news is that the Campaign has passed the half way mark in terms of money raised...so a very, very big thank you to everyone who has supported it, both financially and in other ways.

May I just remind you that we need the £15m not for new projects but to allow Christ's to continue to offer the same high quality teaching and student care and support in the future as now. Your gift, however large or small, will be vital in enabling us to keep our place as an outstanding college of the University and a renowned centre of excellence world wide. Over half the money needed has been very generously donated by just 10% of our members, so, if you are one who has not yet given, I'd ask you to consider a gift now please. Some can afford a great deal, some rather less. We have addresses for nearly 7,000 alumni and a donation of just £10 each would fund nearly 3 student bursaries, £100 each, if gift aided, could raise another million. An average gift of £1,000 from each member would mean we exceed our target and secure the future of Christ's! Please do what you can to help your College and give as generously as possible.

If you are visiting Cambridge, please do let us know. The Development Team would love to meet you."

Target £15 million

Amount left
to raise

£7.03m

Amount
raised

£7.97m

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Thank you for your support

For further information on any aspect of the Quincentenary Campaign please contact The Development Office, Christ's College, Cambridge CB2 3BU, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1223 766710, Fax: +44 (0)1223 766711, Email: campaign@christs.cam.ac.uk
www.christs.cam.ac.uk/quincentenary

Progress of the Campaign as of 1st February 2004

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 use the form opposite, or contact the Development Director, Elizabeth Norris, who will be delighted to hear from you.

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Living Mathematics



Dr Robert Hunt, Fellow, Tutor and Director of Studies in Mathematics, Christ's College Cambridge; Lecturer in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics; and Deputy Director of the Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences. Born 1965. B.A., M.A. and Ph.D., Trinity College Cambridge.

"A lecture is a piece of performance."

Robert Hunt's work on fluid dynamics places him firmly at the applied end of the mathematical spectrum. "If I were working at any university on the continent, I'd be classed as an engineer," he says. His work is on the very theoretical side of fluid dynamics: "I haven't touched an experiment since A-level Physics, and I'm quite proud of it!" In 1997, Robert took over running the University's Computer-Aided Teaching of All Mathematics (CATAM) programme. From the time when he started his Ph.D., he has been involved in teaching maths, as well as researching it. Not only does he clearly enjoy teaching, but he considers it to be vital for a researcher: "If you don't do any teaching, you don't have to keep your mind active in the sense of really understanding in depth what you're talking about. Teaching forces you to think about what you're trying to achieve."

"I reckon that to prepare a one hour lecture (and to do it properly) takes about eight hours." Robert clearly takes great pride in meticulous preparation for lectures, and he is at pains to ensure that his lecture is accessible to all the students in the lecture theatre: "sometimes, lecturers are only interested in the brightest students, but in a good lecture, you really have to present the basic material so that everyone can understand it while at the same time keeping the brightest students interested and challenged." Robert uses his experience of

theatre (he is an avid Gilbert & Sullivan performer and enthusiast) to great effect in a lecture: "It's not about simply reading out your notes, you've got to be so enthusiastic that your students will actually see why you find the material fascinating." Robert's lectures resulted in him winning a Pilkington Prize for University teaching in 2001: he is one of only four lecturers currently in the Mathematics Faculty who have won this award.

At Christ's, Robert is Director of Studies in Maths, and regularly supervises all the first and second year students. He applies most of his ideas about lecturing to supervisions as well: "you have to accommodate both the strong and the weak students, so you have to tailor each supervision very carefully. A supervision is actually incredibly wearing if you do it properly – you've got to be fully alert all the time, interacting with the students."

"Imagine a washing machine..." When not supervising, lecturing or running the Isaac Newton Institute, Robert researches fluid dynamics. More specifically, he looks at spatially varying fluid flows, and he says that a washing machine is perhaps the easiest analogy to understand! "Visualize a machine that uses hydraulics, with vibrations in one part of the system. In some situations, those vibrations will radiate out and spread to other parts of the system, and might end up

destroying it. In other situations, the vibrations might spread a little bit, but remain contained and not affect the whole system. The same ideas apply to much more complex machines. As a mathematician, I'm interested in being able to predict in advance which of these two situations will prevail, so that you don't have to build lots of test machines: you can model it either on paper or on a computer.

Robert also enjoys his role as Deputy Director of the Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences, the UK's national research institute for mathematics based at Cambridge University. The Institute runs research programmes in six-month phases, inviting carefully selected experts from around the world to take part. Another of Robert's activities is the Executive Editorship of *Plus*, a mathematics magazine on the internet. This is part of the Millennium Mathematics Project, which was begun by Peter Landshoff (another Fellow of Christ's) with the aim of raising the profile of maths. One of the ways this is done is by two online magazines, *Nrich* (for schoolchildren) and *Plus* (for the general public, and especially sixth-form students). In July 2001, *Plus* won a highly prestigious Webby award from the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences.

weblink
www.plus.maths.org



Master-Piece

Malcolm Bowie, Master of Christ's since 2002. Born 5 May 1943. MA, University of Edinburgh (1965), DPhil, University of Sussex (1970). Fellow of the British Academy, and of the Royal Society of Literature.

"I can't remember a time when there wasn't a French book or two lying around the house."

As Master of Christ's, Malcolm Bowie's activities range from running the College to researching Freud, and his artistic interests extend from Romanesque churches to the music of Mozart. Within his main specialist field, French Literature, he becomes particularly excited by authors that are often seen as being difficult and demanding. His love of art (and of certain painters) has caused many an art-exhibition-related diversion in the course of his globetrotting; and his collection of books on the History of Art makes quite a spectacle!

"I can't remember a time when there wasn't a French book or two lying around the house." From a very early age, Malcolm has been reading French, starting with some short children's works brought back by his father, who participated in the Allied landings in Normandy in 1944. French continued to be an intriguing subject throughout Malcolm's schooldays, and formed an obvious basis for study at University. He says that one major stumbling block in learning a foreign language is the ability to read a book in this language as easily and as pleasurably as one can read a book in one's own native tongue. For Malcolm, this obstacle was overcome whilst on a year abroad at Caen, in Normandy. Caen later became a holiday destination of choice for Malcolm, as he discovered two 'sublime' Romanesque abbeys in this town!

Malcolm's academic career has included a good deal of work on some very tough authors, notably Mallarmé and Proust. Rather than studying one aspect of a book at a time, he likes to look at how a variety of strands within a work interact (or indeed don't interact) with one another. His research

does not usually encompass sources and influences, but tends rather to concentrate on the impact of the text in the here and now. With an author such as Proust, this can get very complicated. Psychoanalysis is also one of Malcolm's major interests, and reading Freud (and Lacan, Freud's principal French follower) as literature, rather than as a textbook, has been one of Malcolm's more fascinating explorations. Studying Freud in this way can help show more sides to his work: he can become a dramatist, a novelist, or a rhetorician rather than simply the pioneer of the 'science of psychoanalysis'. Malcolm's account of the work of Lacan is particularly notable, and took him an 'exasperatingly' long time to write! This was mainly due to the need to get inside the textures of the original French of Lacan in order to understand fully his contribution to psychoanalysis. For this book, the originals of Lacan and Freud (in French and German respectively) were employed, together with the translations in which these authors are best known internationally.

Writing academic books is not Malcolm's only passion, though: art and painting form one of his major interests. "I came to Georges Seurat by way of his bizarre technique – here was someone who spent hours placing tiny dots of colour on a huge canvas. Later, though, I found in his work an exquisite pictorial imagination, and a seemingly free power of invention that was never quite reconcilable with his dotty obsession." Malcolm is very fond of paintings, and of the works of Seurat in particular. A Seurat canvas that he particularly likes is *Les Poseuses*, which is now at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia. If asked to name an earlier

painter that he admires, Malcolm would choose Titian – the "Prince of Painters", and another astonishing colourist. Malcolm has travelled far and wide to view Titian's works, and has now seen most of his surviving paintings.

A particular interest of Malcolm's is the way in which knowledge of a given art form can lead to precise and useful observations, as distinct from incoherent ramblings, about works in other art forms. The Master has been involved with a number of research centres and institutes that focus on dialogue between different disciplines and art forms. He dreams of having this kind of discourse, not just for the purposes of 'down time' conversation, but as a 'prime time' critical language that allows people to think outside their regular subject boundaries in new and exciting ways.



Literary Love Affair

Peggy Vance, Managing Director of Apollo Publishing Ltd and the Writing Bureau. Born 3 April 1964. Studied English and History of Art at Christ's College, 1983-87.



"One of the things I love about publishing is that you are called a professional but don't have any responsibility whatsoever for people's health, wealth or happiness. Fabulous!"

"When I graduated I had no sense of anything except aesthetic pleasure and I had developed an overdraft worthy of today's students. The day before I left College I was thinking, 'how on earth can I sort this situation out?' I went into David's Bookshop and the first book I picked up was a really cheap but interesting monograph on William Blake. I bought it, and, not knowing what else to do, telephoned the company who published it and said, 'Would you like to employ me? I really love art, am quite clever and would be keen to work for you if you have a job!' They said, 'Yes, that sounds fine, come down tomorrow to our offices in Oxford Circus.' So I went and was taken on as an editor at Studio Editions, an art-publishing house!"

If Peggy's entry into the world of publishing seems to have been beginner's luck, her success since then can be ascribed to her own hard work, her keenness to be involved in everything that is going on and her contagious enthusiasm. "I was the only editor and I had no experience of business whatsoever. I had an office to run, and didn't know what I was doing. I pretended to be an expert, so as to stay in the job long enough to find out how publishing functioned. It was great, and it worked!"

After leaving Studio Editions, Peggy spent some time as a curator in the Department of Design, Prints and Drawings at the V&A. During her year out at the Sorbonne in Paris she had developed a real passion for art. Consequently she found being surrounded by boxes of sketches by Constable, Turner and numerous other British artists, which she could peruse at will, "absolutely out of this world!" As a curator she was asked to write a book about William Morris wallpapers, which she followed with one on Gauguin. Being on the other side of the editor's desk, it must have been a surprise when a reader's report came through asking, 'Is English Peggy's first language?' Nevertheless, *Gauguin: The Masterworks* went on to be a great success, and she has written several more books since.

Returning to publishing – as senior editor at Conran Octopus then commissioning editor at Thames & Hudson – gave Peggy a network of contacts that were to prove vitally important when she decided to set up as a freelance editor after the birth of her first child. "Having children kicked me up a rung because I had to go out on my own. It turned me into an MD, into an entrepreneur." Peggy's inability to say no to a challenge meant that she was offered far

more work than she could handle on her own, so she started to pass it on to other talented people. The Writing Bureau now has 65 writers and editors on its books and Peggy sees the business as a virtuous triangle, ensuring quality, continuity and security for all three parties: the publisher, the writer/editor and the bureau. "That's the way I believe business should be, if it possibly can be. I think my personal principles have informed my business principles."

"I try to do things that are life enhancing, genuinely informative, and not just a waste of trees." This approach applies as much to Peggy's own publishing company, Apollo Publishing Ltd, as to her editorial operation. Apollo hit the headlines when it brought out *The Country Flowers of a Victorian Lady*. "On a 'spread a little happiness as you go by' basis, I thought that this book would give great pleasure to people, particularly older people, and we decided to sell it at a very reasonable price so that those who weren't well off could also enjoy it." 40,000 copies were sold in the UK, winning it a place in *The Sunday Times* bestseller charts. Not one to take herself too seriously, Peggy spent a week promoting the book at the Frankfurt Book Fair, wearing Victorian costumes borrowed from the RSC (see photo).

"The thing of which I am most proud," she says, "is the book I wrote with my mum and stepfather, called *Your First Grandchild*. It was quite confessional for us as much of it is about our own experiences when my children were born." Not only are the children, Sky (9) and Biba (7), an intrinsic part of her life, but also of her career. With her husband, Dharminder Kang (Christ's '83-'89), she is currently writing a book on parenting, though in a few years time her interest may shift to the problems of adolescence!

It is typical of Peggy's zest for life that she perceives combining motherhood and her career as an entirely positive experience: "Having children has made me more successful than I would have been otherwise. Now, if I get a moment I work, there's no prevaricating! It may have affected my earning power, but I definitely have a more fulfilling career."

Morse Magic



Colin Dexter, creator and author of Inspector Morse. Born 29 September 1930. Studied Classics at Christ's College, 1950-53.

"You probably don't know this, but my only great claim to fame in life is that I have been good at crosswords and, for several years in the late '60s and the '70s, I was a national crossword champion." It's an odd way for the man who created one of Britain's best loved television dramas, Inspector Morse, to describe himself; and yet for Colin Dexter it is clear that his literary talents play a relatively small part in the way in which he would choose to define himself.

Having realised one dream by coming up to Christ's to read Classics, Colin went on to fulfil his ambition of becoming a teacher, taking the Diploma of Education in Cambridge before going on to teach in the Midlands for 13 years. This was his real passion in life. But a profound deafness taking hold almost overnight meant that it became untenable to continue teaching, so he moved to Oxford where he was appointed to the University Examinations Board to oversee Latin and Greek up to A-level. "There was something about the Latin and the Greek languages that caught me from the word go, and I loved them. I still do."

Despite claiming "I took most of my ideas from a bottle of Single-Malt Scotch or something like that!", his classical education shows through in the plots for the Morse books. Inspired by two mediocre crime books he read on a family holiday to North Wales, Colin had a go at writing his own. Morse and Lewis (named after two fellow crossword champions of his era) were not based on anyone in particular. "It was only meant to be one book so you take the fundamental things about yourself: whether you believe in the Almighty or not, whether

you are on the left or the right in politics, whether temperamentally you are miserable or optimistic, and then you reflect them from yourself for the simple reason that you only have yourself to go on. And you add some other details perhaps because you don't want your hero to be too goody goody!"

"You can go with what Aristotle said, 'every story needs a beginning, a middle and an end', or with what dear old Larkin said, 'a beginning, a muddle and an end', but if you are writing a whodunnit your first chapter is determined by your last. It doesn't matter where you go in between, as long as you exploit the mystery." In 1987 the mystery was transferred to the television screen. For its success Colin says thanks should go mainly to the casting director for the selection of John Thaw and Kevin Whateley. Colin is clearly still deeply saddened by the death of John Thaw, but feels he was privileged to work with such a good man, and indeed such a supportive team throughout the filming of Morse, a sentiment he feels that other crime writers may not share.

Interestingly though, it has never been the success of Morse, the accolades and awards from the Crime Writers' Association, his involvement with charities and good causes, or even his achievements throughout the rest of his career, that has brought Colin Dexter the most pride. It is a measure of the man that it is not personal success that brought him happiness, but the success that he helped others to achieve. "The most rewarding times in my life were after the exams when the pupils would come up to me and show me their exam results. I would

tell them that it didn't matter and there had probably been a mistake that year, but they would say, 'No Sir, I've done wonderfully well'. It brought tears to my eyes to know I had been a part of that success."

"I take a tremendous amount of pride in the awards and prizes I received for my writing, but teaching classics was my true passion in life and I would never have given it up if it hadn't been for the onset of deafness."

Loud Organs

"I think that for a cathedral organist, if you don't love playing the Psalms, you don't love doing anything properly"



Huw Williams, Sub-Organist, St. Paul's Cathedral (since 1998). Born 2 June 1971, Studied Music at Christ's College 1989-1992.

Since leaving Christ's in 1992, Huw has continually been involved in Cathedral Music. His current post as sub-organist at St. Paul's means that whenever you see a service from St. Paul's on the television, Huw will be at the organ console, providing the music. However, Huw did not always have a career as a cathedral organist in mind, even when he came to Christ's as organ scholar in 1989. "I have always taken things one step at a time, and when I took four A-Levels, the fourth one was music, which I took on the basis that if it didn't go very well, I could always drop it! But I did music A Level and went on to do the degree; then I went to the Royal Academy to study the organ a bit more, then I got the St. Paul's organ scholarship, but thinking that if I didn't like the way that things were going, I could always get out of it!"

Most sub-organist posts involve a lot of playing the organ, and little or no conducting, but at St. Paul's, things are a touch different. In addition to playing for about five services a week, Huw also conducts two or three, as well as taking a number of rehearsals. The most regular rehearsal in the life of the choir is the 7:50am boys' practise, of which Huw says: "I learned when I was in Hereford that it doesn't matter how early you get up in the morning, you can never combat them being more bright and alert than you are!" The importance of the daily rehearsal with the choristers cannot be understated though, and

Huw really sees it as the 'engine house' of the choir, where the choir's style is defined.

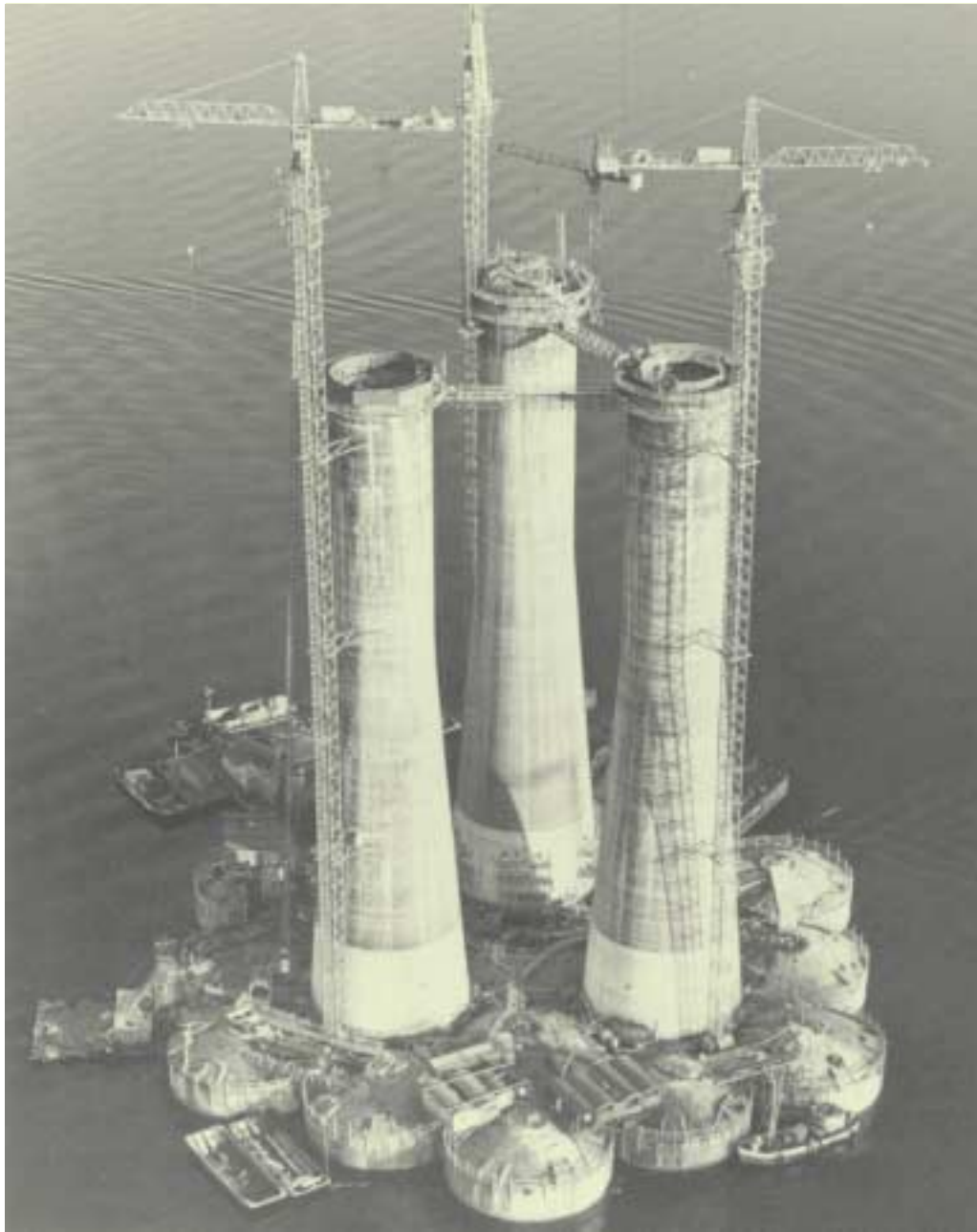
When Huw is in the organ loft, he has at his disposal one of the three largest organs in the country. The St. Paul's organ of today is mainly the work of 'Father' Willis, (dating from 1872), although it has been modified and rebuilt a fair bit since. Mainly 'romantic' in character, yet suitably versatile to cope with music from any period, the organ is a spectacular solo instrument. Huw has just released his first solo organ CD "Christmas Music from St. Paul's Cathedral", though has recorded some six or seven other CDs with the choir. He says of making a recording: "It is intensive, but it seems to be a much more relaxed form of music making; in fact I think it's probably the most relaxed thing we do with the choir, because the pressure is off from making it bang on right first time."

As St. Paul's is the Cathedral of London, it finds itself hosting a number of services for the nation each year. These services range from the rejoicing at the Queen's Golden Jubilee service in 2002 to the poignancy of the September 11th service in 2001. This was produced to an exceptional standard in a very short time: "In 48 hours, we produced a service that captured the mood of the nation. Ludgate Hill was closed, and people were just sitting there in silence listening to the loudspeakers. It was an amazingly moving experience." Huw finds it very exciting to be

involved in a cathedral that has the ability and the gravitas to produce a religious service in response to major events in the world. "It's probably the post Diana age, the search for spirituality, and I'm not saying that we're exploiting this in a vulgar way; I think we are actually providing something people really want."

"Funnily enough, the routine services (daily evensong and the Sunday services) probably give me more buzz than the mega services on TV, maybe because you feel slightly more clinical with the televised things." Huw greatly enjoys the daily round of services, and takes great pleasure from an evensong well done. He particularly enjoys playing for the Psalms each day, which is one of the largest single chunks of music in the average evensong. A recent innovation is that St. Paul's now allows people with suitable credentials to come and observe the work of the choir for a short period, so that they can be more imaginative with their own choirs. "It's a wonderful thing to be doing as a kind of musical mission and an evangelical Christian mission as well. But it's also a very scary responsibility, people watching both the choir and my organ playing, evaluating us and then going away again!"

Huw Williams' latest organ CD "**Christmas Music from St. Paul's Cathedral**" is available from the St. Paul's Cathedral Shop www.stpaulsshop.co.uk



Ayling's Folly



Laurie Ayling, Managing Director of Maris Companies since 1977. Born 27 July 1939. Studied Mechanical Sciences at Christ's College, 1958-61.

"For years I tried to lose the image of being an 'engineer', if only to avoid being asked 'please will you mend my car engine?' However, when I called myself a 'scientist', no-one took my business skills seriously and, when I was dubbed an 'inventor', people wanted to relegate me to the back room!" A summary of Laurie's career shows that he has all the skills of an engineer, scientist, inventor and businessman. He believes that Cambridge allowed him three valuable years in which to look at life without restriction, and think "out of the box". He habitually solves problems by taking a step back, and then a step sideways. "It's all about lateral thinking. We all have the ability within us, but were taught to suppress it at an early stage in our childhood. Anyone can develop it again if they want to."

From automated rail tanker filling systems, to emergency fuel handling systems for the armed forces, to offshore diamond mining, to continuous circulation drilling, to seabed located drilling rigs, to saving the fisheries, Laurie has come up with solutions to an array of problems. When he explains what he has done and why he did it that way, he makes every idea sound so obviously right that it is hard to understand why it was not always done that way. "It's all about technology transfer," he explains. "In designing a practical emergency pipeline for use by the armed forces, you don't need to

reinvent the wheel; Just watch a New York fire fighter trying to put out a blaze in a skyscraper and you realise that the idea already exists for a durable, high pressure, flexible pipeline. You just have to adapt it to meet your needs."

However, having a good idea isn't enough. "The best inventions and innovations are simple, but it is also a matter of having the right idea at the right time, and the willingness of others to accept your ideas. Innovation requires change, which is seldom welcomed in large organisations." In Laurie's early days at Shell, he and five others were sent to business school. They all returned wanting to change the way in which Shell was run. Unsurprisingly, they met with inertia and resistance and all six left! "Oil companies are dependant on lateral thinkers and change for their survival" explains Laurie, "but their actual willingness to change is limited and goes in cycles." He decided to go freelance.

Working for Mobil, as the Construction Manager for the Beryl 'A' Condeep Offshore Gravity Platform, provided Laurie with the highlight of his career. "I was 34 years old, standing on top of a 150metre high substructure, weighing 200,000 tons, floating in a Norwegian Fjord, at 3:30 am on a starry night, whilst the people all around me were slip forming concrete. In 1975, it was the first platform of its kind in the world, we

were three months ahead of Shell next door, spending £100million a year, and I was in charge!" Laurie decided there and then to set up his own company to provide a permanent source of expertise and innovation for the Offshore Industry.

Maris, founded by Laurie, 27 years ago, became that source. Nowadays the company has extended its remit to include fisheries and is already studying how to develop the deep-sea resources of bio-chemicals and alternative energy. As for Laurie, he's looking forward to "retiring, sitting back, relaxing and having more time – to invent!"

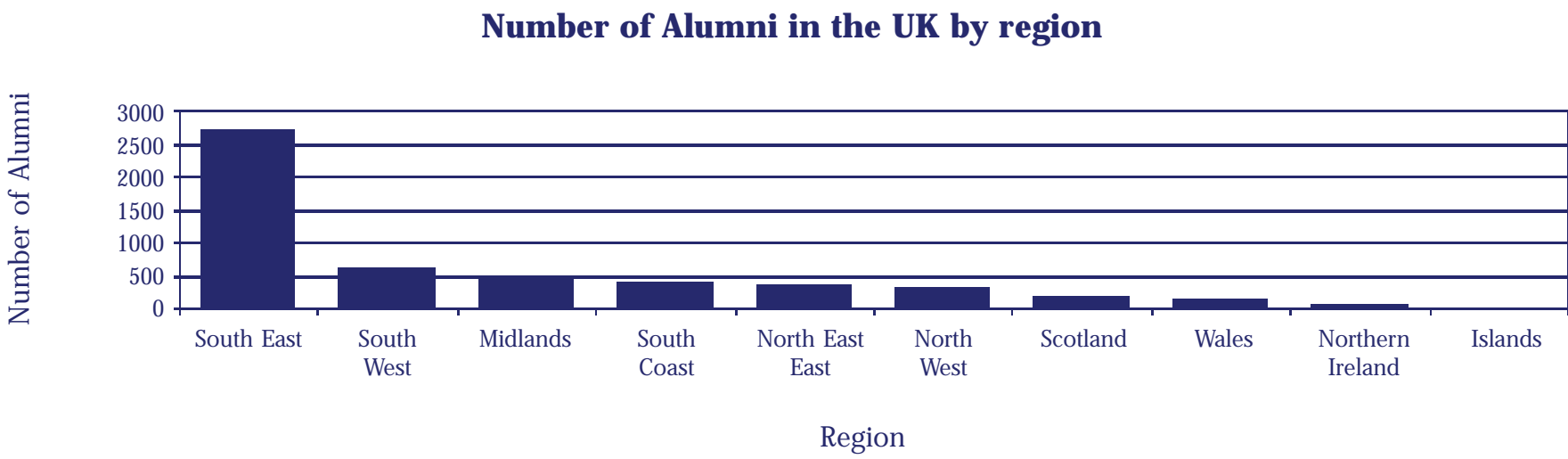
The illustration on above left is the Mobil Condeep Oil platform, 1975, for which Laurie was the Construction Manager.

"If man hasn't thought about it before, nature almost certainly has."

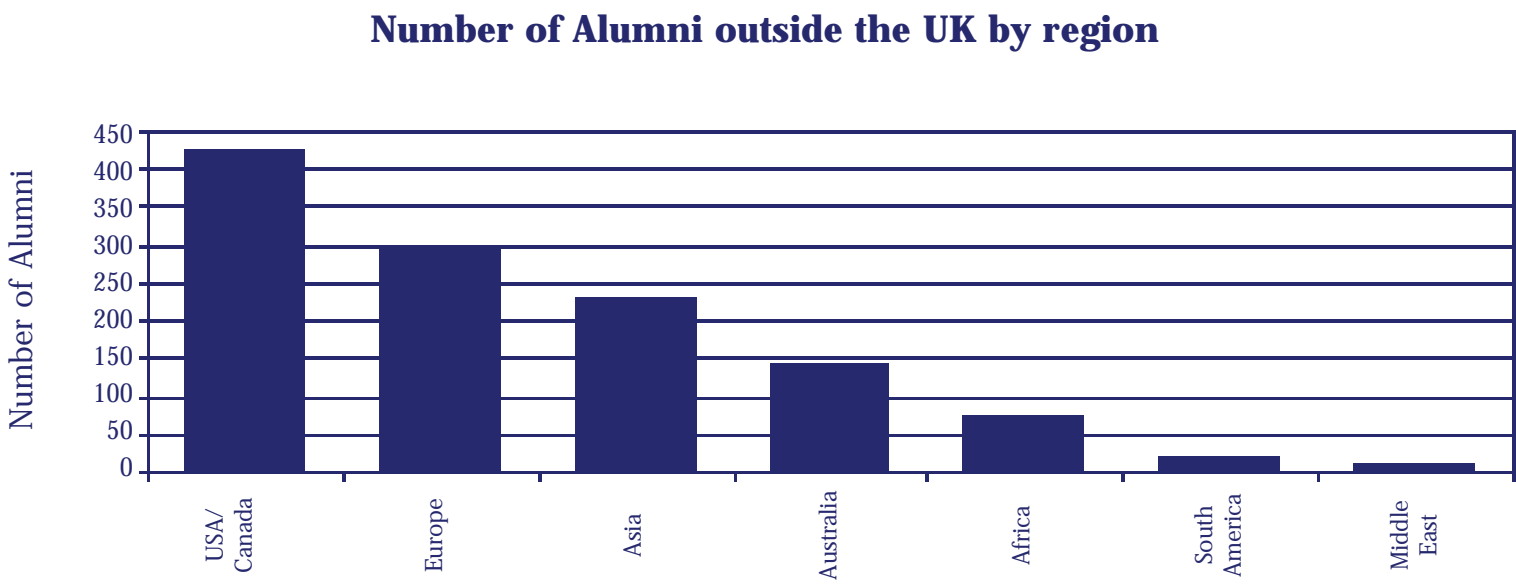
Where are you now?

Nathalie Walker, the Alumni Officer, writes:

Did you know that 42% of Christ's Alumni live in South East England? A recent survey of the database revealed addresses for 6975 members. 5744 of those live in the UK, and the table below shows just where:



Of the 1231 members who are spread around the rest of the globe, the most popular locations are the USA (321), Australia (110), and Canada (104).



Thank you

to those of you who continue to use the MBNA Credit Card and who travel with Swan Hellenic. The Data Protection Act means that the companies cannot tell us who you are, but we really appreciate your support.

If you move house, please do let us know. You can write to the college, email alumni@christs.cam.ac.uk or fill in an online update form by following the links at www.christs.cam.ac.uk/alumni