Editorial

The optimism generated by our Visitor’s Jubilee and the Olympics only temporarily lifted the mood of pessimism hanging over the country. Housemen and women who studied PPE or Theology are perhaps used to questioning the nature and future of human existence. In this issue of Christ Church Matters we have asked a number of luminaries to give their views on various areas affecting our present and future. “Where are we now?”

As the Dean suggests in his diary, we cannot rely on the media to point us in the right direction, so where do we find our information? One of the great privileges of working at the House is being able to listen to the tutors, lecturers and JRF’s discuss matters of great importance over lunch. Setting aside the cricket scores and how well the Eight is doing, one only has to experience a single lunch during the admissions process to realise just how seriously the interviewers take coming to the right decision. And at other times the insights into the state of the economy, politics, the Church, higher education etc. are extraordinary. There is no avoidance of certain issues at the dinner table, and of course no two academics agree! Thank you, therefore, to the contributors who have agreed to share their views with us.

Some at present may well be feeling that the future merely promises the Orwellian boot stamping on a human face. Recent articles on Hilary Clinton, as she approaches the end of her term as Secretary of State, have mentioned her admiration for Eleanor Roosevelt and her belief that “the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” Optimism must be necessary for someone in her position, but reality is often ugly, as the riots in Northern Ireland illustrated. And is not the Euro someone’s dream?

Just how bad things really are depends to some extent on who we are and where we live. For some it is not that bad, but even for those who are protected from the worst the unpredictability of globalisation, growing inequalities and issues such as climate change at least make things seem worse. Of course in a democracy we are supposed to have one possible answer: where we put our cross. Perhaps we get the future we deserve.

However if the weighty views expressed in the political articles don’t clarify matters for you, perhaps some of the literature mentioned in “Books with no Ending” will.

“...and fair play to rejects – to busts with broken noses – ... powered with the purpose of having been – being, after all, stars, whose measure we may not take, nor know the wealth of their rays.”

MICK O’MAH

I for one am a “glass half full” person, especially at this time of year, and believe that the work done in centres of learning such as Christ Church and Oxford does make a difference for the better. So I hope that you enjoy having your thoughts provoked this Christmas, and that we will have the pleasure of sharing a successful 2013 with you. Season’s greetings to you all.

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FRONT COVER: Francesco Zuccarelli (1702-1788),
The Adoration of the Shepherds, By permission of the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford.

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Editorial Contents
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FRONT COVER: Francesco Zuccarelli (1702-1788),
The Adoration of the Shepherds, By permission of the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford.
It is wise only seldom to venture to the Oxford Union, that strange institution in whose high Victorian halls so many hours have been spent on intrigue and over-sharpened argument, time which could perhaps been better employed reading Plato, wrestling with an algorithm, reflecting on eternity or rowing. Among the odd occasions when I have sympathy for those administrators who pretentiously call themselves the ‘central university’, is when they have to issue their frequent statements wholly disowning the Union, the latter having just invited a member of the British National Party or a radical preacher to display his views (along with debate of course). The disowning is legally correct because the Union is a separate entity, set up originally to discuss religion and politics when the University as a whole - there wasn’t much ‘centre’ in those days - steered clear of such dangerous ground.

Yet the Union has its points, especially in a city which, for all its international aspirations, often seems caught up with what happens within the confines of the Oxford ring-road. Here is economics, politics, the odd pop star and the happy Korean rapper Psy proclaiming Gangnam Style.

I have only spoken there once before, in one of the God debates; the Almighty won as you would expect, despite our feeble efforts to support him. This time the subject was more terrestrial: ‘This House believes that Oxford admissions are still unfair’ and I was part of the opposition, pitted amongst others against a fellow head-of-house, the redoubtable Helena Kennedy. Both sides ploughed through the predictable issues using much the same evidence. If I had to sum up the conclusion in one sentence, it would be ‘Our society has its unfairnesses, and although Oxford makes more effort than any other university to do what it can in that context, more could be done’.

Some admissions are unfair in Oxford. International undergraduates from outside the UK/EU are given little help, so only those who manage to afford the considerable fees, or those with grants from their home countries, can come. Similarly with postgraduate students, especially in the social sciences and the humanities, where there is no loan scheme and precious few grants. Efforts are being made to redress this situation by raising grant money, but better coverage has been hampered by the steep increase in graduate numbers in some subjects. Admissions are fairer in medicine and the hard sciences because grants are more plentiful and may come with membership of a research group: the place at Oxford and the grant, being given at the same time.

The irony is that the target chosen by the media and others for their somewhat erratic wrath is exactly the area which is the fairest: Home/EU undergraduate admissions. The fee/loan/graduate-tax scheme puts people off, of course, but Oxford has the most generous bursaries of all. It refuses to have quotas of any sort, while putting enormous effort into access work: visits, summer schools and the like. It has a splendidly devolved system of admissions with careful tests and with interviews done by the very tutors who are going to suffer the consequences of their decisions. What is more, there is now a careful method of passing on those who should have a place at Oxford but for whom there is no room at their first choice college.

The area where more could be done is in the access work, at home and indeed abroad. Oxford’s sole aim (and its means of retaining or increasing its international reputation) is to take those undergraduates and graduates with the highest academic merit and potential. Better methods of finding them and of circumventing teachers who say ‘It’s not for you’ are being worked on in the light of experience.

Oh yes and there was that debate. We, the opposition, won by a reasonable margin. So that’s it then: admissions are fair after all.
The appointment of a new archbishop of Canterbury prompted a look at Christ Church men who have held these most senior clerical posts throughout our history. Hugh Curwen was probably the first and probably not a great example for the others to follow. A canon and notary at Cardinal College, Curwen was made archbishop of Dublin in 1555 upholding Mary’s Catholic cause but was otherwise a rather dilatory clergyman. His diocesan colleagues frequently asked for him to be recalled to England. Elizabeth relented, possibly waiting until he was too ill to cause too much trouble at home, and made him bishop of Oxford for the final year of his life. After Curwen’s death, the see of Oxford remained vacant for more than twenty years.

There have been five Christ Church archbishops of Canterbury: William Wake, who bequeathed his library of printed and manuscript books to Christ Church; John Moore, like Thomas Wolsey, was a butcher’s son renowned as a great administrator and a champion of education; particularly of the Sunday School movement; William Howley, a High Church-man who played an influential role in the formation of the Ecclesiastical Commission; Charles Longley, archbishop of both York and Canterbury, who presided over the first Lambeth Conference which dealt, among many other things, with the unorthodoxy of John Colenso, bishop of Natal; and, of course, Rowan Williams, once Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity and Archbishop of Wales, whose incumbency has been a test of diplomatic skills, at the very least.

Seven men, including Longley, have been archbishop of York, from Tobie Matthew, Elizabeth’s favourite who so impressed her with his undergraduate oration when she visited in 1566. Lancelot Blackburne’s career seems to have been remarkably exciting for an Anglican cleric: he was sent on a secret mission to the West Indies for Charles II, and tales were told of his buccaneering against the Spanish in the Caribbean and of his penchant for wine and tobacco while waiting in the vestry for services and meetings. His sword is kept in the Senior Common Room. Far more
respectable were William Markham, headmaster of Westminster School and dean of Christ Church, and Robert Hay Drummond who, in spite of his aristocratic roots and his passion for art, was very conscious of the changes in his diocese caused by industrialisation and rapid population growth.

But Ireland was Christ Church’s greatest archiepiscopal stomping ground. Apart from Curwen, another ten men have held Irish posts: one of Tuam, five of Armagh, one of Cashel, and two of Dublin. Perhaps the most famous of these, at least here at Christ Church, is Richard Robinson, whose name is inscribed over Canterbury Gate. Although there has been some doubt recently that Robinson was quite the man tradition would have, he was tremendously generous in funding almost entirely the re-building of Canterbury Quad, and for the redesigning of Armagh. Most recently, Michael Jackson, once our chaplain, has been appointed archbishop of Dublin.

But Christ Church’s archbishops have not remained within the British Isles. Two have gone much further afield. Edward Paget, son of Dean Paget, travelled to Africa, serving as chaplain to the South African forces during the 1st World War for which he received the MC. In 1925, he was appointed bishop of South Rhodesia. Paget worked hard to keep racism out of the church and, after the 2nd World War, he hoped that the church would acknowledge the close collaboration of Europeans and Africans during the conflict, and continue to fight any prejudice. His hopes were dashed, but Paget’s work was continued with even more energy by Trevor Huddleston, archbishop of the Indian Ocean and president of the Anti-Apartheid Movement whose battles were controversial and well-known.

Christ Church’s archbishops have been many and varied but one thing is for certain. Most of them tackled whatever they felt was important with faith and tremendous vigour.
Looking into the past has often led to insights which have profoundly shaped the future. And when the young William Buckland began digging fossils from the rocks of his native Devon while on natural history rambles with his clergyman father, he is unlikely to have had any idea of the role that geological discovery would play in the culture of the ensuing nineteenth century. What is unfortunate, however, is that Buckland’s remarkable personality and sociability led to his being popularly remembered predominantly as an early Victorian eccentric, while his enormous contemporary reputation as a field geologist of genius, a scientist and theologian of remarkable perception, an influential university teacher, and a dedicated Churchman and reformer has been largely ignored.

Buckland came up to Corpus in 1801, and as a young don rapidly won renown for his knowledge of natural history, and his researches into the infant discipline of palaeontology secured for him the Readership in Mineralogy in 1813 and that of Geology in 1818. In 1825 he received an ad hominem Canonry of Christ Church, moving into the house in the north west corner of Tom Quad (subsequently the Archdeacon’s Lodgings). And a few months later, he married Miss Mary Morland, the daughter of an Abingdon solicitor with brewing interests.

Indeed, had she been born into a later age, Mary Buckland could well have been a notable scientist in her own right, for since girlhood she had been seriously interested in anatomy, physiology, and geology. By 22, she was already undertaking her own geological investigations, and it seems to have been through her skills as a palaeontological draughtswoman that Buckland heard of her in the first place.

The idea of the earth being vastly ancient and populated by strange creatures not mentioned in Genesis had been around for 150 years by 1825, and to believe that everyone regarded Archbishop Ussher’s 4004 BC as the ex-cathedra Creation date is a myth. Indeed, Christ Church’s Robert Hooke, in his ‘Earthquake Discourses’ delivered to the Royal Society from 1664, argued that fossils were not only the remains of extinct beasts, but that these beasts had lived vast ages ago. The earth’s surface, moreover, had been the product of many cycles of catastrophes over aeons of time, and the date of 4004 BC was when God had actually framed the earth in its present form, complete with Adam and Eve. And this was the timescale that Buckland accepted. For ichthyosauri and mastodons were not mentioned in Genesis quite simply because these soulless brutes were long extinct by the time that the Biblical narrative began, with God’s creation of humanity in His own image.

Crucial to William Buckland’s (and Mary’s) geological thinking, however, had been the French anatomist Georges Cuvier’s work on the fossil skeletons of those creatures which, in 1840, Sir Richard Owen would style ‘dinosaurs’. For Cuvier realised that the skeletal anatomy of early dinosaurs had structural similarities to that of living creatures such as crocodiles. Cuvier’s research not only made it possible to ‘articulate’ and assemble bones found in the rock strata so that one would obtain a precise visualisation of a long-extinct creature, but he also showed how fossilised teeth, claws, and joints could provide clues to its diet, degree of agility, and lifestyle.

In addition to Cuvier’s techniques of skeletal interpretation, Buckland’s geological thinking was influenced by the realisation of William Smith, the canal...
surveyor and geologist, that each stratum – be it in Yorkshire, Somerset, or France – possessed its unique ‘signature’ fossils. In the older strata, it seemed, were primitive plants, then crustaceans, fishes, and reptiles, and in the uppermost stratum, mammals, suggesting a ‘progressive’ organic development over time. And could it be that the clear breaks that separated one stratum from the next represented great global catastrophes, wholly annihilating the fauna of each epoch, and preparing the planet afresh for an entirely new and improved Creation? And onwards and upwards, until God finally had the world ready for the human race?

This was Buckland’s massively influential ‘Catastrophist’ geology. A deeply directional, providential ‘Natural Theology’, in which science and religion were bound intimately together. Catastrophism, of course, was not evolutionary, for there was no direct biological relationship between the creatures of one stratum and those of another. Even so, it charted organic ‘progress’, or divinely-directed structural development of life from the primitive to the complex over vast ages, linking together palaeontology, botany, comparative anatomy, continental and oceanic changes, climatology, and even astronomy. For Buckland saw terrestrial organic developments as closely related to lunar, solar, and gravitational changes in the solar system.

One can also trace clear developments in his scientific and theological thinking between 1810 and 1850. In 1822, for instance, when Buckland excavated a newly-discovered fossilised hyena den at Kirkdale Cave, Yorkshire, he believed that the animals had perished in Noah’s Flood. Yet by the time of his magnum opus, *Geology and Mineralogy* (1836), he was clearly thinking of the Biblical deluge as the culmination of a series of pre-human global inundations, to one of which the hyenas had belonged.

And Buckland was also a keen experimentalist. After the Kirkdale Cave discovery, he obtained a young living hyena – destined to become a popular pet named ‘Billy’ – from South Africa, as he wanted to see if modern hyenas cracked their marrow bones in the same way as their Yorkshire ancestors. They did! And once, having a sudden flash of inspiration in the middle of the night, William, with Mary, went down into the kitchen of their Tom Quad house to cover the table top with a layer of fresh dough. Their pet tortoise was encouraged to walk across it, to see if modern tortoises left similar footprints to those of an ancient ancestor which had left its tracks in a long-fossilised mud flat. And once again, it did!

It is hard to gauge the profound influence that Buckland exerted as a teacher of science. For he was an inspired and charismatic lecturer in Oxford and to the nation’s learned societies, as well as teaching practical field geology to students at Shotover, Sonning, and elsewhere. How many men of 1860, now in Parliament, on the Judicial or Episcopal Benches, or administering the Empire – indeed, the ‘movers and shakers’ of Victorian Britain – had sat at his feet when young it is impossible to know. But this puts paid to the myth when Darwin’s *Origin of Species* appeared in 1859, it came as a bull in the china shop of uncritical Biblical fundamentalism.

Without doubt, Buckland was a colourful personality, who brought new fame to Christ Church, but many of the eccentricity stories that subsequently formed around him were probably a conflation with those about his son Frank. For it was Frank – born in Christ Church in December 1826 – who first collected exotic animals at Winchester, added more as a Christ Church undergraduate, and continued to collect both during and after his career as a surgeon in the Life Guards. The three-year-old ‘Frankie’, moreover, had amazed a visiting West Country clergyman when, on being tossed some fossils by his father as he played on the carpet, he lisped ‘They are the vertebrae of an ichthyosaurus.’

Buckland left Christ Church in 1845 on becoming Dean of Westminster, although still returning to Oxford to lecture. And there he became a ‘reforming’ Dean: within the Abbey, the School, and the wider community. He enjoyed a good relationship with H.M. Queen Victoria and with the scientifically-minded Prince Albert, as well as with Christ Church’s Sir Robert Peel and many of the leading statesmen of the age. Passionate about public health, Buckland greatly improved the primitive sanitary arrangements of Westminster School and, in that pre-bacterial age, searched for environmental correlations as possible causes of cholera epidemics. But tragically, at Westminster Buckland developed something resembling Alzheimer’s Disease. He died in 1856, in his 72nd year, and was buried in Islip Churchyard, just outside Oxford.
In September, we welcomed Canon Graham Ward as the new Regius Professor of Divinity. As well as being a distinguished theologian, Graham brings with him the recent experience of being Head of the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures at the University of Manchester. This is a return to Oxford for Graham, as he was Chaplain of Exeter College in the early 1990’s.

Also returning to familiar surroundings is the Reverend Martin Gorick, who is to take up the post of Archdeacon of Oxford and Residentiary Canon of Christ Church after Easter 2013. Martin is currently Vicar of Holy Trinity, Stratford-upon-Avon - ‘Shakespeare’s Church’ - and is appropriately Chaplain to the Royal Shakespeare Company. Martin was Chaplain to the Bishop of Oxford, also in the early 1990’s.

Next year will also see the first phase of the cathedral development project taking place. Phase one involves the less glamorous but nonetheless important aspects of the project: providing dry storage space in the Cathedral Garden and improved facilities for the flower arrangers, and revamping the kitchen-toilet area at the back of the cathedral. The latter will include providing a much needed disabled toilet. Fundraising has also begun for phase two, which will see the conversion of the Bethel (currently a storehouse) into an Education Centre and the transformation of a derelict building into a choir music library.

Among the events to look forward to in 2013 is the premiere of a new mass setting by the composer and former Organist at Christ Church, Francis Grier. The commission was made possible by a generous gift from old member Nick Pitts-Tucker, matched by a contribution by the Friends of Christ Church Cathedral. What is particularly special about this commission is that it will involve dance, and the composer is currently working with the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance on the project. The cathedral has established a close relationship with the Rambert School in recent years, so it is exciting to see the collaboration developing in this way.

At the time of writing, the cathedral is preparing for another musical project involving Nick Pitts-Tucker: the premiere of Perpetua, a dramatic cantata about the martyrdom of the third century saint of the same name. The project is Nick’s brainchild and he has written the libretto based on the saint’s remarkable first-hand account of the events leading up to her death. The project came to fruition when Nick was reunited with a friend, the composer Nick Bicât, at a recent 101 Gaudy, having not seen each other for a quarter of a century. Perpetua is a wonderful example of the good things that can happen through encounters in Christ Church, and it is highly appropriate that the premiere should take place in the cathedral. Hopefully this will lead to performances across the country and beyond.

Sadly, this will be my final contribution to Christ Church Matters as Sub-Dean. In March, I will be leaving Christ Church to become Principal of Cumberland Lodge, an educational charity and study centre based in Windsor Great Park. It has been an immense privilege to have been part of this unique institution over the past four years, and I look forward to keeping in touch in the future – not least through this magazine. The process for appointing a new Sub-Dean is underway, and I wish my successor, whoever that should be, joy and fulfilment in the role. It is certainly an exciting and interesting time to be part of the House.
Prospects for the Church of England
“wisdom ever ancient, wisdom ever new”

One of the unexpected (and in some ways welcome) aspects of the widely reported difficulties of the Church of England over the consecration of women as bishops was the degree of engagement from the wider population about the issue. For a church unsure about the level of interest in society about what it now is and stands for, it was a sharp reminder of the stake which many feel they have in it.

In an era when belief has become a highly personal matter and people work out their own often eclectic way of believing, churches have responded in broadly two ways: to withdraw and set up almost a counter-culture against aspects of modernity; or to seek to reinterpret faith and ethics in the light of the unfolding changes in society.

Sociologists point to the general movement in western societies from religion to spirituality, from association with institutions and norms to a looser and more individual way of finding meaning. Which of these two responses will thrive better in that context has yet to be seen: as ever, the Church of England is trying to embrace both.

In the confused and unpredictable situation of our society and nation, that may prove wiser than those who favour clear objectives might think. The Church of England has always aspired to meet the diverse pastoral needs of the people of England and it remains committed to what is implicit in the responsibility given to its clergy, quaintly termed “the cure of souls” in a parish. The prospects for that task are certainly not less than fascinating.

As technology further influences human living, relating and self-awareness, the future seems a mixture of an ever-extending possibility of enhancement and at the same time a threatening of the human spirit pitted against the machine. Against the horizon of progressive climate change, humanity’s vulnerability becomes ever more apparent and the mystery of how to find reasons to care gets deeper. As the prospect of longer term austerity in the economy impacts on individuals and society, there is re-calibration of our hopes and reassignment of what we think of as value. This ought to be an age of profound spiritual searching and exploration: it ought to be the moment for what the Church of England carries for the nation as a whole, “wisdom ever ancient, wisdom ever new”. Will the church...and the nation...be up to the task?

Julian Hubbard
Archdeacon of Oxford to October 2011
Director of Ministry for the Archbishops’ Council of the Church of England

Julian Hubbard
Prospects for the Church of England
“wisdom ever ancient, wisdom ever new”
Amongst the host of foreign tours the Cathedral Choir has undertaken over the past 30 years, our recent trip to China must surely rank as one of the most memorable. Once we had overcome the tortuous process of gaining our visas, it is hard to imagine a tour running more smoothly than this. The choir had been invited to give the opening concert of the International Choral Festival in the National Centre for Performing Arts in Beijing (known as 'The Egg') as well as concerts in the main concert halls in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. The tour featured in the British Council’s UK Now 2012 Festival of British Arts in China. We received standing ovations at the concerts but, perhaps of even more significance, the Beijing concert was streamed live on the internet and there was a six-minute piece on CCTV which was broadcast throughout the country. We understand that we reached several million people through the internet and television and there was also a video featuring us on all the central Metro stations. A member of the audience who attended the concert in Beijing posted this on the NCPA Twitter site:

“Several people arrived at the box office tonight to find the concert one hundred per cent sold out. The fifteen boys and fourteen men had really extraordinary charm with beautiful clear voices, a sound you could only find in Heaven.”

The view from the inside was just as enthusiastic. Here is a posting from one the choir members:

5th August 2012

“...the concert itself was delightful ... the choir took to the stage, performing a veritable smorgasbord of musical treats, from Henry VIII's Pastime With Good Company to a selection of lieder from Brahms’s Liebeslieder Walzer to Teena Chinn’s arrangement of John Williams’s Double Trouble from Harry Potter And The Prisoner Of Azkaban. Our encore, the popular Chinese song Ban Ge Yue Liang, was received with a rapturous roar of approval from the audience, which sent shivers down my spine; it was very moving indeed.”
In addition, I spoke at two receptions. The first, in Beijing, was hosted by the Beijing-based China-Oxford Centre for International Health Research and co-ordinated by Dr. Xuyu Jin, the Oxford-based surgeon. Representatives from the British Embassy and British Council were also in attendance. Attendees included Minister Rui-Chung Duan, the former Minister of Science and Technology, who was the Chinese Chief Negotiator for entering the WTO treaty, Minister Jianguo Zhang, currently Deputy Minister for Human Resources and Social Security and the Director of State Administration for Foreign Experts Affairs, and Ms Yueling Qiu, the Director General of Beijing Customs. The second reception, in Guangzhou, was organised by the Oxford alumni office in Hong Kong, and featured in a recent ‘China Thinking’ bulletin. We hope that this will be the first of many such trips to China and that our ability to reach such a vast number of people through the media there will be of some use to the University’s future strategy in the region.

Experience has taught me to collaborate with local musicians and singers wherever possible on tours, ensuring that the choir sees that establishing this rapport with others is a vital part of our remit. In the past this has been with a school choir in Bermuda or a church choir in Jamaica, or a group of children in Portugal who have never had the chance to sing in a choir before. In Shenzhen we had two such opportunities with local choirs, and this added an important dimension to the trip. I hope the people we work with feel they benefit from their experience with the choir as much as we feel we learn from them.

At the other end of the musical spectrum, the choir has been busy recording again. In the last edition of Christ Church Matters, I wrote about our recording of Mendelssohn’s version of Handel’s Messiah. This has now been released on the Nimbus label and we are already working on the final edits of the next one. For this, the choir has returned to the late 18th-century. The first disc in the series of music from the Eton Choirbook was greeted with huge acclaim by the critics and was nominated for a Gramophone Award last year. Once again we have included première recordings of previously neglected repertoire in this new project. All the editions have been prepared by Tim Symons (Ch Ch 1990). Watch out for this release in the Spring of 2013.

In the field of new music the choir continues to be very active. In the next edition I will be reporting on two newly-commissioned works from composers Francis Grier and Mark Simpson. This choir is in the business of making connections: between composers and their music, past and present, between performers and listeners, amongst the performers themselves, and between this world and a more transcendent and spiritual one. We have been doing it for nearly five hundred years and, as you can tell, we are continuing to evolve.

If you would like to find out more about the choir, may I invite you to visit the choir website at www.chchchoir.org
To mark Stephen’s 60th birthday, Simon Lawford, previous sub-organist, interviewed him for *Christ Church Matters* to find out his views on the changes in Cathedral music during his career.

**What inspired you to pursue church music?**

As a schoolboy, I was spellbound by the choral music tradition at Worcester Cathedral. Elgar was a particular passion. I have a vivid childhood recollection of passing Adrian Boult (1908) on the river towpath, head buried in a score of *The Kingdom* which he was conducting that night in the Cathedral.

**In those Worcester days, were Christopher Robinson (1954) and Harry Bramma major influences?**

Yes, there was a special chemistry between them and their pupils. Harry had very eclectic musical tastes and is highly intelligent and sophisticated. He introduced us to all sorts of music, much of which was unrelated to our course! He was complemented by Christopher, who was the archetypal professional musician. He is a wonderful pianist and was a tough teacher with incredibly high standards. I regard him as the best all-round musician I have ever worked with.

**What is it about Christopher’s methods that you admire?**

It is a combination - he’s an outstanding conductor, so he gives his singers enormous confidence. He has a remarkable ear, so his singers sense that he knows exactly what they are doing. He is a visionary musician not just in terms of the sound that he wants to achieve with his performers, but also his concept of the musical work as a whole.

**Later on – with Simon Preston and Alan Wicks (1941) - who did you learn most from?**

I can honestly say I got a huge amount from both. It was electrifying being here with Simon, and to witness the meteoric rise in standards. He had an absolutely clear view of what he wanted, and wouldn’t stop until he’d achieved it. He was obsessive about the importance of every single service being top-notch, and I learned a lot about the importance of precision.
Alan was very different as a personality. Preparation was almost anathema to him, and he liked to make musical decisions on the spur of the moment. There were some negative aspects to that kind of music-making of course, but there were also moments of extraordinary inspiration. There was much I learnt from him which I only came to appreciate in later life.

How would you describe your own approach?
It’s never been a really studied approach. One objective is to be the best advocate for the music - whether it’s Byrd, Stanford, or Tavener. I am strongly motivated by the context: there is something different about doing choral music in a sacred space and as part of the liturgy. It is a driving force for me.

In your time at Christ Church, have you changed your approach?
My priorities have probably changed. In a new job you are inevitably determined to ensure that standards do not fall. You get particularly concerned about technical details of ensemble, tuning and so on. I still regard the technical aspect as a priority, but there are ways of achieving this without being over-prescriptive.

I don’t fuss too much about creating a totally blended sound - I like to hear individual character more. Sometimes after a performance I thought was dreadful, someone will approach me to thank me for “the most beautiful performance I’ve ever heard”, which can be quite sobering.

Are there special moments that stand out for you?
We did a televised concert in Prague with Ileana Cotrubas and Placido Domingo, shortly after the removal of the Berlin Wall. The orchestra consisted entirely of dissident players who’d refused to join the Party, so could not belong to the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra – it was historic, and profoundly moving.

There was also a week of Mozart at the Casa da Música in Porto. We had recruited a choir of local children, who had been having regular rehearsals and singing lessons. It was unforgettable when this choir joined ours. One of the children, an 11-year old girl, was completely mesmerised by the music. No-one who witnessed that could doubt the power of music to inspire.

Is it important that the choir does foreign tours?
Young people enjoy touring, so it helps to attract good singers. Another aspect is the opportunity for collaboration with people from different countries and backgrounds. On our last visit to the US and Canada, several of the concerts involved other choirs. We don’t do the whole concert combined, so it doesn’t compromise what we do - but it provides another dimension to our work.

Christ Church is different from other cathedrals; what effect does that have?
Working within an educational environment reinforces an important aspect of my work – being able to foster the musical talent of choristers, choral scholars, lay clerks and organists. It allows me to explore musical discoveries: my mind has been opened to both new and early music since I have been here.

How would you assess cathedral music nationally?
The general standard has definitely improved during my lifetime, and awareness of choral music is probably more widespread than ever. Within individual cathedrals the quality varies, reflecting the resources, recruitment and the people in charge. In the 19th century, Christ Church was described as the worst cathedral choir in the country!

The music in some cathedrals has been threatened - are you optimistic about the future?
To be honest, I’m concerned. Music is an obvious target when institutions face difficult financial decisions and I think it would be a tragedy for it to be lost. I am as sure as I was when I started my career that for many people, music is still at the core of their spiritual lives. Preaching; it is hoped that the visual aspects of the liturgy will come to match this as we gradually replace our vestments with ‘garments of joy and gladness’.
David Willetts (1975)

Minister for Universities and Science discusses the present state of Higher Education

Interviewed on 7th November 2012

“I think Higher Education is a very good example of the wider approach of the present government, combining necessary discipline with genuine reform and improvement.”

After two and a half years in office Willetts is proudest of being “able to increase the funding going to universities for teaching, empower(ing) students with more information and the money going with their choices, saving funds for the exchequer, and getting rid of the detailed controls on each individual university.” “If universities had been told they would end up with having more cash for teaching by the end of this Parliament than at the beginning they wouldn’t have believed it was possible.”

The PM said to us when the new government (came) in that he wanted the need to save money to be linked to reform, and higher education is a very good example of that.”

The Minister denied there was a black hole in the finances: “Our figures have been cross-checked by the Individual Office for Budget Responsibility, and the Institute of Fiscal Studies have done their own calculations. We stand by our estimate that eventually graduates will repay about 70% and we will write off about 30% of the loans.” He also rejected criticism that his

reforms appear to be aimed at a more utilitarian form of higher education. “I’ve always found that argument very perplexing because we still have autonomous universities, and we do not try to steer people to one course rather than another and on every decision I’ve had about the balance of research funding, or the balance of funding in universities, we’ve tried to maintain a balance between the disciplines.”

When asked about the Research Excellence Framework, David Willetts responded that “The REF is largely an emanation of the academic community. It is not a ministerial edict...it is essentially an elaborate system of peer review, with a fraction of the research put in for peer review having to show some consideration of what its impact might be. It may be economic but equally it can be cultural. It’s a way of encouraging academics to think more widely about how they think the world might be different as a result of what they’re doing, and in my experience most academics care about that.”

Responding as to whether or not the REF discourages teaching he accepted that “historically we have had a system where there have been very strong incentives to research and very weak incentives to focus on high quality teaching, and that is one of the arguments surrounding reforms.” He believes that there will be pressure from parents as well as students to ensure there is enough teaching, essay writing, engagement with academics etc. but that there is “a challenge to get teaching up there alongside research.”

David stressed how much he admires and owes Christ Church, Oxford, and those who taught him PPE. He loved his time here and could only write his book “The Pinch” because he learnt to draw on different disciplines. His “great memories are of the tutorial system” but he added “there are many ways you can measure teaching quality. In hours of contact, I suspect the Oxford model doesn’t score very highly but organising your thoughts in an essay and having it analysed, dissected, often demolished, is an incredibly valuable way of learning.”
Does he think prospective undergraduates understand the value of what is on offer these days? “Well they have more information than before. I try to respect the autonomy of universities but think there is a case for students getting something like what you get with your council tax – a pie chart of where the money goes. But that’s for individual universities to decide. I realise for Oxbridge the cost is £9,000 and my view is that being a student is not simply being a consumer, but there are aspects of the treatment of consumers from which Higher Education can learn.”

Asked if there was an argument for lifting the cap on certain universities in the future Willetts referred to Lord Browne’s ingenious model of “an ever more stringent levy which Oxbridge lobbied very strongly against because they thought it would impede their ways of teaching. In fact, the cap is there to control public spending” to protect the taxpayer.

Similarly when asked about the possibility of a future loan scheme for graduates the Minister accepted this is an increasingly important issue. He believes “some of the concerns are exaggerated, misplaced, because graduates under our new scheme from 2015 will actually have lower monthly repayments than graduates in the current system, so the burden on them in their 20’s and 30’s is going to be reduced. Nevertheless there is this worry about postgraduates, we will monitor it very closely, and I’m keen to see open debate and hear from anyone about ingenious ideas of financing postgraduate study in the future. However if you bring in public finance it’s very hard to see how you don’t bring in some form of number controls alongside it.”

His reply to a further question about numbers; whether there is a conflict between the government immigration policies and the need in Higher Education for overseas students’ fees, was: “We do not have a cap on the number of overseas students. What we are doing is enforcing, rigorously, some very basic requirements; they have to speak sufficient English to participate in lessons, and they have to have the necessary qualifications to benefit from going into English HE.” He also added that “in future we will be disaggregating the (immigration) figures so that people can see a distinct line for the movement of students.”

...organising your thoughts in an essay and having it analysed, dissected, often demolished, is an incredibly valuable way of learning.

In reference to the OECD tables and a question whether it was not really the Schools that needed reforming rather than, as some would suggest, asking the Universities to reduce standards, Willetts replied: “I would never dream of asking Universities to reduce standards – I believe in the highest possible standards. Our system has always had discretion, because we attach much more weight to the judgement of academics, and whoever they think has got the greatest potential. And more widely every stage of the education process has to put their shoulders to the wheel to spot talent and support it.” His experience is that everybody blames the previous stage, but everybody has to do their bit.

David Willetts’ response to the question of how someone who believed in academic independence responded to the fact that Oxford academics passed a motion of no confidence in him was that “it was disappointing. I read the debate in the Sheldonian, and the debate, and the deep confusions and ignorance in that debate were even more disappointing.”

Does the Minister believe in elitism? “I believe in a meritocracy and I certainly believe that there are students that can benefit from incredibly rigorous and ambitious teaching, study and discipline, which other students couldn’t be expected to fully benefit from. But you can see excellence in vocational training, in sport and athletics, in design, as well as the kind of training that I had in PPE. So as I get older I recognise the manifold forms in which excellence can be expressed.” The word elitism has “associations. The real question is whether it’s an open elite or a closed elite. We all know that it’s a burden that Oxford bears, the sense that the elite brings with it expectations of a certain kind of exclusivity. That’s the problem. I think that openness and meritocracy gives elitism legitimacy. Without it it’s just a device for transmitting advantage from one generation to the next.”

A similar answer came to the question of how many top-league universities he thought the UK could sustain, and whether he thought some of our universities should simply teach, leaving research to fewer? “There are certainly some of our universities that have a particular strength in research, but meritocracy applies as much to institutions as it does to individuals. We have to allow new institutions to create, perhaps reinvest in particular skills in research, and become more research.
One of the great triumphs of modern times is our ability to communicate at the speed of light. Things burst onto our consciousness in an instant – think Arab Spring and the ability to organise mass action in a flash. But like so many things that grow fast, they die fast too. It seems to be a sad reflection of the times that our attention span is becoming shorter and shorter. New ideas race in, crowding out the old before they have had time to mature and turn from campaign to action.

Thus it seems with climate change. OK, so this didn’t emerge at the speed of light – but following a long period of almost silent gestation in the great halls of science and in the back alleys of politics, climate change issues seemed suddenly to grab the public consciousness. Ten years ago I was still explaining climate change to bewildered London cabbies who thought me a little odd. Five years ago, though, it was the other way around. Cabbies were telling me about the latest conferences on the Kyoto protocol. Newspapers were full of it, and it seems no morning on Radio 4 was complete without Roger Harrabin discussing some aspect of climate change. Then came President Obama, with his spine tingling inauguration speech repudiating the denialism of the Bush years. That moment, four years ago, marked for me the high water mark of hope on climate change. For the first time there was a realistic prospect that the world’s greatest power would take on the world’s greatest challenge. That was the moment when we could all believe that the rhetoric would turn to action; nations might stop quibbling and start saving; and we could all stop trying to negotiate with Physics and start instead using it to re-configure energy.

How wrong we were. Obama staked his presidency on Healthcare, not Climate. Endless conferences did nothing more than ooze intent to think about doing something sometime. And, it seems in no
time, climate change had moved from the front pages to the backwaters! If you ask the editors, and the journalists who write for them, it seems it’s our fault. The public had its moment of focus, and has moved on. Short tempered ministers, badly behaved celebrities, and a hundred other trivia have crowded out the most important crisis ever to face mankind. The record loss of Arctic sea ice this summer barely registered in the public consciousness. It seems that even the potential of global catastrophe can only manage its allotted 15 minutes of fame.

So what now? Obama may have a new mandate but climate change barely figured in his campaign. Here, in the UK, Her Majesty’s Government is busy disassembling any evidence that the slogan ‘Vote Blue to Go Green’ might once have mattered. For completely different reasons, both Germany and Japan have renounced nuclear power, one of the few forms of low carbon energy that could both keep our standard of living up and the temperature down. In all the talk of stimulating growth there is barely a whisper of making it green.

Thus, on the face of it, we are in deep trouble. We have no political consensus, no international agreement and an indifferent public. More campaigning probably won’t help. If anything there is a real risk it will turn people off even more.

So let’s look at what we need in a new energy economy. It boils down to three things: better ways of capturing energy from nature; better ways of using energy; and last, but far from least, better ways of storing energy. There is a huge range of exciting ideas coming off the drawing boards, spurred by those headlines of five years ago. Wind turbines can now compete with coal; solar power is becoming cheaper by the day; and although slow to start, new batteries are emerging that will match nature’s energy supply with customer demand. Add in the new generation of safer nuclear technologies, such as the Chinese are developing using Thorium, and the energy supply side looks promising.

Consumption, too, is set to change. Motoring is set for a dramatic transformation – with fuel consumption falling like a stone as the new generation of affordable plug-in hybrids hits the road. Efficient, high quality, LED lights are rapidly becoming the norm, and efficient appliances are already with us. The new gadgets will be bought because they are simply better than the old. LED lights last for years not months, efficient appliances cost pennies to run, and electric cars are quieter, quicker, and cheaper to run than petrol ones. It’s the better customer experience, not the green campaign or international conference, that will ultimately change our world.

So has the climate changed for Climate Change? Yes. But has activity evaporated? No – far from it. It’s just gone underground out of sight for a bit. When the new technologies emerge – get ready for a roller coaster ride as we ditch the old for the new faster than we dumped the horse and cart in favour of the motor car.
My entire experience of Barack Obama’s presidency has been from the outside looking in. I lived near Chicago when he was first elected, but took up my post at Christ Church on January 1, 2009, nineteen days before his inauguration. In the four years since, I’ve learned from my colleagues how deeply bizarre an American election seems from afar.

For the benefit of outsiders, here’s my best attempt to make some sense of the U.S. Presidential election: the world’s highest-stakes reality soap-opera. After all, if Americans need a cross-cultural guide to their favourite soap-opera (Downton Abbey), it’s only fitting we have one for their elections.

Religion. Religion continues to play a more visible role in American politics than most Western democracies. That was true in this election as well, though there are signs that its influence may be changing. This is mostly due to increasing numbers of religiously unaffiliated young voters—called “Nones” by pollsters. Nearly one-in-three voters under 30 is a None, and they voted overwhelmingly for Obama (70%). By contrast, evangelical Christians voted overwhelmingly for Romney (80%).

That sounds like a winnable trade-off for Republicans (keep the evangelicals on board; let the Democrats have the Nones) until one sees a deeper demographic problem: evangelicals are disproportionally older. Among under-30’s, evangelicals account for fewer than 10%. In short, the religious vote continues to be a factor, but winning this or that slice of it will no longer be enough to win an election.

Healthcare. Why are so many Americans so deeply opposed to health care reform? Health care ethics is among the topics I teach at the University, and my view is that so-called Obamacare is a significant and historic step in the right direction—even if imperfect.

Yet outsiders won’t be able to make sense of the widespread opposition unless they recall that America is not one nation, but a federation of highly diverse states. Their objection isn’t merely to government healthcare, but to the federal government’s role in it. Ask any Englishman what he would think of moving the NHS to Brussels, to be run by the European Union, and you’ll have some inkling of where the American anxiety originates. Because I think that Obamacare will be a success in the long run, I think the fears are misplaced. But that helps explain where they come from.

Numbers. For pure entertainment value, the highlight of election night was the self-implosion of those television commentators who (against all evidence) had predicted a Romney landslide. If you didn’t watch, try to imagine Sarah Palin as a panelist on Stephen Fry’s QI. Yes, it was that bad. Democrat Schadenfreude reached near fatal levels. But the outcome was never really in doubt, which made the predictions of a Romney win truly bizarre.

Correctly forecasting the result required nothing more than some straightforward arithmetic. The New York Times statistician Nate Silver had, in June, predicted the outcome with a high level of accuracy, both in terms of popular vote and state-by-state electoral votes. The intervening peaks and valleys (e.g. after the first debate) made very little difference. The lesson here is that Americans love to think of elections like sports. In football, whatever the odds makers say, once the teams take the pitch, it could go either way; sometimes Celtic will beat Barcelona. But elections are not like that. Votes are predictable in a way that sport is not, and for a simple reason: people will tell you who they’ll vote for, and they usually stick with it. (The downside to Nate Silver’s success will be with us in 2016. Watch out for the next campaign to be nothing but demographic manipulation; a triumph of numbers over ideas.)

Foreign Policy. During his first term, Obama was subject to much criticism from his own supporters for not departing from George W. Bush’s policies in Afghanistan, Iraq, and to terrorism generally. Will that change in the next four years? Those who are hopeful suggest that, without the pressure of an upcoming election, Obama can depart from hawkish ways.
that he had adopted only to please Republicans. I doubt this. The problem is deeper. This is one of the places that a third-party might make a significant difference. Without one, any military retreat, any policy that sacrifices security for privacy or justice, will be labelled anti-American. A third-party is no cure-all, as the current British government demonstrates, but it can be a moderating force in certain areas.

Public Broadcasting.
The past month has been an unmitigated public relations disaster for the BBC. Whatever we make of Jimmy Savile (a person I had never heard of until last month) allow me to risk sounding patronizing to my English colleagues: if you had followed the recent presidential campaign exclusively via American news sources, you would realize how lucky you are to have the BBC. Not only its news branch, but also its various radio programmes and TV documentaries. A healthy democracy depends on a broadly educated and thoughtful public.

I don’t mean to say that everyone needs to watch Parade’s End and sip sherry in the common room, but it is a good thing every time my children choose to watch a documentary on Bletchley Park rather than The Simpsons. (Which isn’t to say that The Simpsons doesn’t contribute to an educated public. My nine-year old daughter can explain the entire political career of Eva Peron thanks to one episode.) The alternative is America, where public broadcasting (though excellent) is poorly funded. The gap left by its absence is filled not by The Simpsons. (sadly) but rather by cable news that is so misguided as to be beyond rational engagement. Once that happens, bizarre elections are the least of the worries. ■
The House had, overall, another good season with most crews consolidating their position high among their peers and with some outstanding performances, particularly among the Women and the Lower Boats.

Loss of the Torpids Headship after three years was mitigated by the three excellent bumps made by the Women’s First Torpid (taking them back to fifth) and by the splendid six-bump blade won by the Men’s Thirds as they entered the fixed divisions. The Men’s Seconds also rose two positions in Div III.

Summer Eights saw the Women’s 1sts gain another two places and, while the Men’s 1st VIII surprisingly remained at third, the 2nd VIII were robbed of a blade in Div II only by a klaxon on the Saturday as they closed fiercely on their fourth first-boat victim. The 3rd VIII gained two further places, meaning that the House continues very strongly to hold the second and third crew headships, while the Women’s Seconds remain a mere one bump away from recapturing that position.

It speaks volumes for the progress made over the last years that the ChChBC could return the kind of results that would be the envy of other colleges – and yet be disappointed that for the first time in five sets of competitions, there was no boat burning to celebrate. But the strong foundations remain intact and the ambitions of the Club remain high. This was shown at Henley Royal Regatta where a House coxless IV allied with other old blues from the 1829 BC to enter the Visitors’ Challenge Cup. The standard was high and, unlike the last time, we did not make the final – but at least the ChChBC had again proved itself ready and willing to race against the very best.

Furthermore at the 2012 London Olympics the bronze medal in the Men’s Fours was won by the USA, with Charlie Cole, a Yale Varsity Heavyweight before gaining a Blue at Oxford, who rowed in the six-seat of the House 1st VIII of 2008, becoming our fourteenth Olympian and eighth medal-winner. He joins a line stretching right back to Sir Albert Gladstone and Harold Barker in the London Games of 1908. In his own words: “We were pleased with the result and I was happy to be representing Oxford and the ChChBC on rowing’s biggest stage.”

The bicentenary project continues at pace. Thank you to all who have already given or pledged a capital gift, and to those who have signed up to an annual contribution. If you would like more information please contact Simon Offen in the Development Office.

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Editorial

Here we are at the end of another year: a year in which GB hosted that small sports event that some of you may have heard about. To mark this event we have asked six old members who were involved in London 2012 to reflect on their involvement with the games. We even have our own House athlete in Sophie Troiano (2005) who fenced for Team GB. I thoroughly enjoyed the Olympics and the Paralympics, both watching on TV and at the ringside and so I was very excited to read the articles from those involved.

Among the many and varied Association events put on in the past few months, 530 members and friends enjoyed the Hurlingham Club Jubilee Ball in September and £80,000 was raised for the endowment fund. The Marquess of Bath (1953) opened up Longleat House for the Association and members were shown the private apartments which the Marquess decorated himself. David Peake (1955) kindly opened Sezincote for the Association and Catherine Blaiklock (1981) ran a “Norfolk” lunch in her house.

In the book reviews we have a book by Adrian Fort (1966) on the first woman MP, Lady Astor. We then switch to a current politician writing on cricket in the book by Charles Williams (1951), Gentlemen and Players. And finally the Merde Factor, written by Stephen Clarke (1978), isn’t by or about a politician but does enable us to catch up with the latest adventures of his hero Paul West, an Englishman abroad in France. In the latest instalment Paul is down on his luck amid la crise economique and living in a Paris apartment so small he has to cut his baguettes in half to get them to the kitchen.

One of my favourite pieces is the little article on Ted Cooke-Yarborough (1937) who was one of two of the original designers of the world’s oldest digital computer, the Harwell Dekatron. We find Ted watching proudly on as the reconstructed Dekatron is rebooted at its new home at Bletchley Park. So it’s good to know that the tradition of turning them off and on again is as old as computers themselves.

Thanks to Charles Wickham-Jones for stepping up to the challenge of providing this issue’s prank. Earlier I had earned my Editor’s corn by spiking at the very last moment our original prank, after a bout of due diligence had discovered that one of its perpetrators wasn’t too happy for it to be revealed. Don’t e-mail me for the details though because I’d only have to kill you if I let on.

On that note may I wish you a very merry Christmas and an even happier New Year.

Fiona Holdsworth (1981), Editor
fiona.holdsworth@btinternet.com
The Jubilee Ball

The Ball was held at the Hurlingham Club on 21st September to celebrate the Jubilee year of the Visitor of Christ Church and to support the House’s core objectives. 530 Members and friends had a great time and over £80,000 was raised for the endowment fund, split between graduate and undergraduate support, enhancement of the tutorial system at the House, and the tradition of music (including the Cathedral Choir). Thank you to all who worked so hard to enable it to happen, attended, bid, or donated items.
Association Visit to Sezincote

Thanks to the generosity of David Peake (Modern History, 1955), his wife, Susanna, and son Edward, the Association enjoyed a visit to the house and gardens at Sezincote on the 5th October. The autumn colours added to the spectacular scenery and a few glasses of Champagne in the spectacular Orangery at the end of the visit set everyone up for a convivial lunch in the nearby Horse and Groom at Boughton on the Hill.

Association Visit to Longleat House

On the 7th July seventy Members of the House and their families gathered in the rain at the Marquess of Bath’s stunning Elizabethan house in Wiltshire. Lord Bath, who read PPE at Christ Church from 1953, welcomed us before we enjoyed a guided tour of the House, and lunch. The tour included the remarkable private apartments which the Marquess has decorated himself. Both before the tour and after lunch we were free to explore the gardens and safari park. The wet did not prevent everyone enjoying a wonderful day, which finished with tea and cake back in the cellar restaurant.
The Association held their AGM and committee meeting, a drinks reception, lunch and numerous events on a cold but clear Sunday in September. Ovalhouse put on some dance routines and two monologues about the London riots, there was a wine tasting of clarets from the House cellars, a talk on the Hall portraits, an Alice Tour for children, and a Concert in the Cathedral of Italian Arias. After tea the Upper Library was open and there was a behind the scenes tour of the kitchens and gardens. Thanks to all who worked so hard to make the day such a success.

1962 Reunion
The Second Association Norfolk Lunch

Catherine Blaiklock (1981, Geography) right, with Christopher Lloyd (1964) kindly hosted the second Norfolk lunch at her lovely home in Lingwood. An enjoyable time was had by all.

Biological Sciences Dinner, 29th September 2012

A dinner was held in celebration of the teaching of Biological Sciences at the House, and to mark the retirement of Dr Sarah Randolph, Official Student and Tutor in Biological Sciences. Drinks in the Deanery were followed by a splendid dinner in the Freind Room as Members of the House from the 1960’s to the present day gathered to thank Sarah and raise a glass to their subject.


Christ Church Association, Annual Year Reps Dinner, 7th November, 2012

One of the best things about being an Old Member of Christ Church is our excellent alumni organisation - the Christ Church Association. With free and automatic membership, it plays a hugely active role in alumni activities both at the House and around the world.

On Wednesday 7th November the Christ Church Association held its annual dinner for Year Reps at the Athenaeum Club on Pall Mall. This annual event is provided by the Association to thank Reps for acting as an invaluable link between the Association and its Old Members.

Hosted by Simon Offen and the Association President Nick Nops, the evening provided a wonderful opportunity for the Reps themselves to meet other Reps, catch up, and of course enjoy a lovely dinner.

For those of you who may not be aware of it, the ‘Representative’ Scheme was set up by the college and the Association in 2003 to improve the channels of communication between Old Members, the Association and the House. All are designed to be “Friend Raisers” rather than “Fund Raisers”, with their primary role simply being to nurture links with the College, their year group and their wider college connections. The workload for a Rep is variable and entirely at each person’s discretion.

The Association is always on the lookout for new reps so if you feel that you may even be vaguely interested in representing a Year, Sport or Region, or simply want more information on the Association and what we do, then please do contact Simon Offen (simon.offen@chch.ox.ac.uk) or Paul Galbraith (paul.galbraith@chch.oxon.org) for more information.

The list of current Year Reps can be found on the Christ Church website: www.chch.ox.ac.uk/development/alumni/year-reps
Fireworks and the future generation

Remember, remember the 5th of November. This year, it was an alumni evening of dance, theatre and, significantly, rum punch at Ovalhouse in London.

We began with a tour of the various intricate theatre spaces and rehearsal rooms comprising this hexagonal tardis of a building, located just across the road from a very famous cricket ground.

Next, a fiery display of street dance from Rhona Noel’s Youth Dance Class resplendent in “I’m young, not ignorant” t-shirts. It was a pop-up performance of epic proportions as the young people surrounded the alumni and broke into dance.

A tasty Caribbean supper followed and, looking around the neon lighted Café Gallery at the heart of Ovalhouse, I realised that we really had a fantastic cross-generational mix of supporters.

As the music melted away, we were treated to a specially devised show inspired by Ovalhouse’s very successful trip to Christ Church in September. With a Boris type wig and particularly large ears the March Hare (Gareth Mort) kicks off the chaos of the tea party. When the madness of the press, embodied by the Mad Hatter (Tristan Fynn-Aiduenu), suggests that fabrication and embellishment of a story is the way forward, Alice (Alex Kampfner), as the moral compass of the piece, responds, “No. We must say what we mean to say. Otherwise that is just plain mean.” How right she is.

In an effort to be inclusive, Alice wakes up the Dormouse (Seraphina Beh) to prise a story from her lips. The Dormouse seems reluctant to talk about anything other than the eating habits of three little sisters who live down a well, “Chips, innit, Miss”. Finally, Alice extracts the real problem facing the sisters and that is the withdrawal of three letters…EMA. This is the young people’s comment on the withdrawal of the Education Maintenance Allowance. This version of Alice is true to the craziness of the original, but with a very modern spin which rounds off the evening with a thought provoking, yet exceptionally entertaining piece of theatre. As ever, Ovalhouse impresses and entertains in equal measure.

Ovalhouse are currently fundraising for their annual 33% London, Youth Leadership Programme. For more information or to contribute please contact Martyn Holland, Head of Fundraising at Ovalhouse:

martyn.holland@ovalhouse.com
020 7582 0080 x 224

Jane Dodd (1987 - 1990)
In this issue we hear from six Members involved in London 2012

On the Discreet Pleasures of Olympic Handball Protocol:

Frederick Lyons (1968)
A lifetime with the United Nations has left me with a great respect for the niceties of diplomatic protocol in Latin America, Africa, or Asia. However, it seemed somewhat unlikely, as I was interviewed (with 250,000 other candidates) by human resources volunteers at the Excel centre last year, that life in London as the Olympic Games got under way might involve similar protocol concerns, of diplomatic precedence or placement. But the offer when it came was for membership of the handball protocol team. Delegations needed to be moved from car to lounge, from lounge to their seats in the Copper Box Arena; interviews set up with media, language services provided, links established with other services also staffed by specialist volunteers, and the whole managed with grace, discretion, enthusiasm and courtesy.

Extensive training followed; Eddie Izzard spoke and motivated, Sebastian Coe spoke and motivated, as did many others. Volunteer trainers trained. Floor plans were learnt, as were flags, seating plans, modes of address, information and catering systems. Entry card and access rules were memorised. Then, as Croatian giants lunged across the French goalmouth, as Spanish forwards dazzled the crowd with embroideries of pass and feint, Argentinian, Mozambican and British handbolistas thundered up and down court, nano-summits were held in the grandstand; Handball Federation consultations hummed in the first rows. All the while, the media followed with cameras and laptops close behind.

And the protocol team together with 70,000 other volunteers helped move guests, serve them, encourage them, organise them. We ran, stood, guarded entrances, entertained, looked after, provided hospitality during our half-day shifts, sometimes long into the night. But what satisfactions! The Prime Minister said “Bye” in our general direction as he left in his Jaguar! President Hollande beamed as he left the Arena for a further bain de foule! The President of the IOC, Jacques Rogge, declared his pleasure with the way he had been received! And all the while, the crowds in the arena roared their excitement and their enthusiasm for handball.

One evening, the weather cleared, the full moon shone. Just before midnight, people were starting to leave. The cheering continued from the velodrome and the hockey venue; the stadium glowed purple, the Mittal tower red. The wind turbines span. Beyond the crowds a new London vista, a sightline opened up, towards the lights of Canary Wharf, and Greenwich beyond. And the volunteers sang their guests home.

Then...

Alec Kellaway (1971)
The Olympic Stadium and many of the new buildings are located in Newham, east London. Yet with copyright issues, the description has been the “London 2012 games”. Newham is one of the most multi-racial, economically deprived Boroughs in the UK, yet with major regeneration projects underway which formed a major showcase for the Games. Most local residents were unable to obtain tickets so Newham Council supported a huge range of Community events. We hoped that via wide community engagement we would be able to create a legacy. Some 800 plus parties ranged from a single street, to major events featuring music, dancing and sports. The major aim has been to encourage people to meet neighbours, become fit and active, or take up sport, volunteer, and so forth.

For myself, I did receive a complimentary ticket for the Paralympics, on the last Friday evening. The atmosphere was electrifying. Some 13,000 “Games Graduates” gained experience through Volunteering or short-term Contracts. Job Centre Plus has held Recruitment Fairs, invitation only, for those with games experience. These are likely to result in thousands of unemployed people gaining work; and even more people making changes in their lives.

Canning Town Station was central to Games transport, and is now a major interchange between the Jubilee Line and two branches of the Docklands Light Railway. The area is named after the former Glassworks, owned by the Canning family (including George Canning, former Prime Minister and a member of Christ Church).
Joanne Welch (1982)

Back in February 2011 I had an interview to work as a Gamesmaker – a volunteer at the 2012 Olympics. Telling my interviewer that I was happy to pick up litter worked like a dream as they subsequently offered me a role as a National Olympic Committee assistant – based in the Athletes' Village and supporting Team USA as the athletes, coaches and other staff settled in, took part in their events and moved out again. The role was varied – driving the Head of Sports’ Performance to Eton Dorney and sneaking into the rowing enclosure brought back happy memories of my time on the river at Christ Church. Spending a day making up beds with extensions to accommodate the extra tall water polo players was less exciting but still an essential duty.

I spent five weeks there and amongst the highlights were accompanying the US team to the Stadium for the opening and closing ceremonies and watching teams being welcomed into the Village by performers from the National Youth Theatre. Low points were carrying an endless supply of boxes around and getting lost in East London. Still, I did get to drive in the dedicated Games Lanes........

Working with a group of 12 Gamesmakers, I learned a lot about teamwork on a very practical level and was constantly amazed by the diversity of the people milling around – athletes from all over the world, volunteers, VIPs, military and contractors, all in uniform and all working together. I got a real kick out of seeing people in the street that I’d seen competing on TV, bumping into Michael Phelps on the staircase and chivvying along the US basketball players who got left behind on the walk to the opening ceremony and were in danger of entering the Stadium behind the Uzbekistan flag!

Some months on, it feels like a real privilege to have been at the heart of all the action, to follow the ups and downs of the athletes and to have supported them in a very practical way. Roll on Río!

Ed Thorpe (1995)

During my time at Christ Church I was lucky enough to get tickets to the Olympics in Atlanta (1996) and the football World Cup in France (1998) thanks to a prize-winning grandmother. So I was well aware how exciting the atmosphere of such international sporting events could be.

When London was awarded the 2012 Olympics I knew I wanted to experience it firsthand. I obviously wanted tickets to some of the events, but I also knew that volunteering would offer me a unique perspective on what I was sure would be a fantastic occasion.

I applied to be a Games Maker – as we volunteers were famously called – for both the Olympics and Paralympics. Working as a freelance writer and consultant, I was hopeful I could fit my work around the opportunity to be at the heart of the Games. In the end, I accepted a role in Event Services in the Olympic Park at the Paralympics.

I could try to make Event Services sound highly skilled. The reality was that I was mainly telling people where the nearest toilets and water fountains were, taking people’s photographs or high-fiving kids! I won’t comment on any apparent links with studying PPE.

I loved being part of the atmosphere in the Park. The best job was working on the mobility buggy stops around the Park where it was possible to have a proper conversation with people and be part of a genuinely valued service. The most awkward moments were being stumped by the amazing variety of random questions posed by the glorious public!

The Paralympics totally exceeded everybody’s expectations. I have worked on disability issues both in service delivery and policy-making in Brussels. However, I have to confess that I do not really remember any Paralympics before London 2012. It felt very much that this was a ground-breaking moment for disability sport and that atmosphere came through every day in the Park.

I think people imagine that Games Makers could get into different events quite easily. The reality was that we were not allowed into venues we were not working in. I did have tickets to some athletics, however. Apart from seeing new heroes such as Hannah Cockcroft, the thing that will always stick in my mind was watching the blind triple-jump. It was maybe an overused term this summer, but it really was inspiring.
Victoria Dare (2000)
Friday 3rd August had an inauspicious start. Four years previously, I’d been shouting at the television when my Christ Church contemporary Robin Bourne-Taylor had been rowing in Beijing. Four days previously, I’d been sat in the stands with my flatmate (Jon Green, 1999) cheering GB crews across the finish line. Now, as New Zealand Foreign Minister Murray McCully’s Dignitary Assistant, I was stood in a field in Buckinghamshire on the phone, trying to understand why his electronic accreditation wasn’t working.

You can’t get anywhere backstage without accreditation at the Olympics, and I certainly wasn’t about to take on the army who were politely but firmly saying we weren’t allowed in. I was all too aware that there were 90 minutes until NZ’s two biggest gold medal hopes raced in their finals, and reasonably convinced that Mr McCully would rather not watch them on the tiny screen on my phone. The 40 minutes it took to fix the ‘technical problem’ were amongst the longest of my life (although, as I am writing this, I reflect probably not quite as long as the grilling I got from WES Thomas and Katya Andreyev one rainy December morning). Thankfully the rest of the day went rather more as planned, and two NZ and one GB gold medals later we were zipping along the M4 Olympic Lane back to London.

A week as a volunteer DA (Dignitary Assistant) at the Olympics was an enormous privilege, and I was fortunate that my government relations experience meant I was selected for that role, rather than shepherding the hordes pouring through Westfield shopping centre. 250,000 people had applied to volunteer at the Olympics, 70,000 had been selected after submitting an application form and attending an interview, and just over 200 had been chosen to look after visiting overseas dignitaries. There were perks of the role, including a tour of the Olympic Village thanks to the generosity of Team NZ. There were less glamorous moments too: I heard the Olympic Stadium crowd roaring Usain Bolt on from an underground car park, whilst hunting for ‘our’ designated driver amongst the hundreds of identical cars. Then there were the circumstances that nobody could foresee. 24 hours after the accreditation hiccup, driving back from Dorney, the Minister learned that two NZ soldiers had been killed that morning in Bamiyan Province.

Das had apparently been selected for being people who could talk to anyone but who would also know when it is best to say nothing at all. On that day you could see why. Eight years working in Whitehall certainly helped with that but for me, once painfully shy, I can trace the roots back to tutorials. Nothing makes you quite as fearless, or quite as aware of body language, as sitting with a world expert for an hour each week as they interrogate what you think and why you think it. That evening, as I sat planning the itinerary for the next day, so we could squeeze in a trip to the Village, Velodrome and Stadium, the words my politics tutor Jonathan Wright uttered many years previously echoed in my ears. “Vicky, you are a born administrator.” It was a compliment. I think.
Sophie Troiano (2005)

There are special years in everyone’s life where momentous things happen – 2005 was that year for me, but not necessarily in the way that I thought at the time. It was the year I left school, matriculated at Christ Church and met some of my closest friends. It was also the year that London was given the 2012 Olympic Games – for which I felt national pride but no particular personal significance. Little did I know that in 7 years’ time I would be representing Great Britain at what became known as ‘the greatest show on earth’.

When I started my degree at Christ Church I had been competing internationally at fencing for a number of years at junior (U20) level. Whilst moving to Oxford meant leaving my London-based coach, the university fencing club offered a good standard of coaching and sparing partners and I maintained a training regime of 5 fencing sessions and 2 gym sessions a week. I continued doing the international circuit for the next 2 years, however after a disappointing season in my last year as a junior I decided to take a break and focus my last 2 years at Oxford on getting my degree, making the most of university life and fencing more recreationally at a university level.

After graduating in 2009 I moved back home to London and started working at GlaxoSmithKline. I began fencing more seriously again and entered some international competitions at senior level. With more training and competition my performance continued to improve and following a restructure at British Fencing I was selected on to the elite national programme funded by UK Sport in summer 2011. This was the start of a much more professional operation; where, as athletes every element of our training and recovery was planned and measured, our performances filmed and statistically analysed and our physical fitness tested to the limits. We travelled the world as a team, competing across various continents, away from home sometimes weeks at a time.

The fencing team selected for London 2012 was announced on the 12th June which marked the beginning of an incredible Olympic experience. From our final preparations at the TeamGB holding camp, to ‘kitting out’ and moving into the village, the following month was just a whirlwind of activity and excitement. People always ask what you will remember the most, and I would have to say stepping out onto the field of play in front of the home crowd and being hit by the rapturous cheering and support.

After finishing competing the next week and a half flew by, supporting other TeamGB athletes, partying and marching in the closing ceremony. Returning to work was a bump back to reality, although keeping busy with new and different challenges proved a good way to avoid the post-Olympic blues.

After a few months off and having recovered from a stress fracture, I am now back to pre-season training to be ready for the start of competitions in February. And whilst I am now gearing up for the next set of targets in 2013, I can’t help but look back on this year and think 2012, like 2005, has been something quite special.
Book Reviews

**Nancy: The Story of Lady Astor**

This is the story of the controversial American dynamo who in 1919 became Britain’s first woman MP. A leading social and political hostess during some of the most exciting decades in our national life, her life stretched through times of phenomenal change: from the lingering ruins of the American Civil War, to the days of ‘Swinging London’, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.

Between those two poles she made her mark - through the grace and opulence of the Edwardian Age, the carnage of WWI, the great depression, the years of appeasement, The Cliveden Set, and the final eclipse of the old world in the ashes of WW2.

With immense wealth at her disposal, full of zest and wit, determined to be centre-stage, she was the prime attraction at countless luxurious parties at Cliveden, the Astors’ magnificent mansion above the Thames. She entertained the gilded youth of the city: “My vigour, vitality and cheek repel me”, she herself said, “I am the kind of woman I would run from.” But she certainly drew the crowds.

*Adrian Fort (1966)*

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**‘Gentlemen and Players’**

This entertaining and informative book recounts the often comical efforts of the English cricketing establishment, led by that overweening private members club, the MCC, to preserve the distinction between the game’s amateurs and professionals – ‘Gentlemen’ and ‘Players’ in the mid 20th century. ‘Those of us who were aware of such things’ writes Williams, ‘could see that by the middle of the [1950’s] the social and political climate had started to change.’ Indeed it had: to the horror of the bacon-and-egg tie-wearers, the ‘Swinging Sixties’ dawned and the myth of the flannelled fool was finally laid to rest.

Charles Williams (1953) captained both House and OU XIs, 1953’s Annual Report noting admiringly ‘In University events our leading star was C.C.P Williams, with a cricket Blue. He went on to play for Essex, Combined Services and as one of last generation of ‘Gentlemen,’ and writes with authority, clarity and good humour about the technicalities of the game and the behind-the-scenes life of the warbaby cricketer – professional or ‘amateur’.

*Chris Sladen (1959)*

Charles Williams, ‘Gentlemen and Players, the death of amateurism in cricket’ 2012 Weidenfeld & Nicolson, xiii + 202 pp, £25

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**Merde Factor**

There are many gratifying things about being a writer – book festivals in exotic places, for example, or drinks with Jilly Cooper – but the best of all must be receiving emails from readers asking when the next novel is coming out.

It was in answer to a steady stream of these that I wrote *The Merde Factor*. It’s the fifth volume of the adventures of an Englishman in France called Paul West, who first appeared in *A Year in the Merde*.

After, amongst many other things, opening an English tearoom and doing the catering for a très bourgeois wedding in Provence, Paul has now returned to Paris – jobless and euro-less – and is subletting a garret so small that he has to get his baguettes cut in half so they’ll fit in his kitchen. France has been hit by *la crise économique*, so Paul tries to become a civil servant, one of the chosen few of French society who, ever since they were created by Napoleon, have been ruling the country like so many mini-emperors. He also judges a poetry competition, helps a Parisienne to rebel against her Dominique Strauss-Kahn-like boss, and discovers a disturbing new trend in French food tastes.

And the best thing of all – apart from a review in the Financial Times of all places, which called the novel “lighter than a good mille-feuille, and just as moreish” – was the first email from someone who’d just finished *The Merde Factor*, and who wanted to know when the next volume would be coming out.

*Stephen Clarke (1978)*
Pranks’ Corner

Charles Wickham-Jones (1945). When I came up to Christ Church I qualified for a one-off banana ration before my 18th birthday during my first term (only for children after the absence of this staple diet during WWII). I duly collected mine from the Buttery. Most of the intake that term were ex-service men.

The standard prank especially for those living in Peck was to remove the weighing machine from the Men’s toilets in Blue Boar street, and stand it in the middle of the quad. On the third time this was done it was carefully dug in to delay (sadly unsuccessfully) its speedy removal as on previous occasions.

The Battels of all of us were charged a very excessive amount when some loo seats got burnt. Two guineas (£2.05) if I remember correctly, but then remember that full board for a week was only four guineas (£4.10). When we complained, we were told: “The House only sits on mahogany”.

When we went to breakfast one day, a swan, wearing a white bow tie was swimming in Mercury. I gathered that a handkerchief steeped in port (15/- (£0.75) a bottle for 1927 vintage) was used to anaesthetise the unfortunate bird.

Reminiscences

Guy Neely (1950). Around 1952 I was in my room in Peck immediately above the Senior Censor. There was knock on the door and a man entered who was then not as well known as he subsequently became. “Do you mind if I sit down?” he asked, “I had these rooms before the war and the nostalgia is strong”. We talked and I came to realise he had been an Olympic long jumper. “I used to practice in this room” he claimed. Given its size I did not see how but said nothing. “One day the Senior Censor invited me to lunch. We ate amicably but at the coffee he pointed to the ceiling and declaimed “Quiet up there now is it not?”

Years later I came to realise I had entertained the man who had been Headmaster to Prince Philip and subsequently to Prince Charles.

Ted Cooke-Yarborough

Ted Cooke-Yarborough (1937) was one of two of the original designers of the world’s oldest digital computer who watched on proudly when the Harwell Dekatron was rebooted having been carefully reconstructed at The National Museum of Computing at Bletchley Park. Ted was part of a small team at Harwell Atomic Energy Research Establishment who created the 2.5 tonne machine in 1951.

Ted said, “Our job was to use electronics to help our research programme. Most of the calculations up to that point had been done by people using mechanical calculators which was terribly tedious work.” The Harwell uses Dekatron tubes for volatile memory, storing the numbers for one decimal digit. Though slow it could keep going unattended for days.

© From left to right: Delwyn Holroyd, who led the restoration team, Ted Cooke-Yarborough and Kevin Murrell, trustee of the National Museum of Computing.

Inter Collegiate Golf Cup

Robert Seward (1965) holds the Inter Collegiate Golf Cup which Christ Church won again in 2012.
In the Ashmolean Museum

Love-shorn, these beached and homeless rarities
Are suffering from a slow delirium:
A swollen shoe that used to pinch or please,
A hazy altar-stone of Jupiter’s,
A wilted glove, a wizened soundless drum,
Unwhetted swords and dullened Barbary spurs.

Only this sixteenth-century porcelain,
A wedding ginger jar with shining glaze,
Has something of the watery brightness in
The eyes that danced beside it in Shanghai,
And loved the blooms and dragon it portrays,
And found it clean, or brimming, or awry.

The Ashmolean poem is unpublished.

The Silver Birch

The silver birch against heraldic sky
Is all-consuming: what I am walking through
Is both my garden on a crisp March morning
Under this bounding, binding, human blue,

And a mind cleared of its old reports and annuals.
All that I see is live. I gaze and gaze.
This is full screen in brilliant definition.
I could be rapt at winter’s greyest greys.

‘The Silver Birch’ was first published in
The Interpreter’s House

Dr Kieran Winn (1987)
This is the kind of book that academics should write, not just for each other, but also for the generally educated reader; it is the product of very wide scholarship, in a number of languages; and it has a very good story to tell, with plenty of interesting personalities to meet along a very extended historical route from Ancient Egypt to the present.

The book is generously and interestingly illustrated throughout, and packs in much interesting incidental information (on the history of reading glasses, for example). It has valuable things to say about the nature of reading, and in particular reminds us that reading always takes place in an historical context. This is by now a hoary old cliché of academic theory; but it is a far from merely theoretical matter, when we consider the history so succinctly specified in this book, which is that of the still changing position of women. (Women didn’t start reading in Christ Church library, as entitled undergraduate members of Christ Church, until 1980, and it is precisely such changes in access to the resources that males had taken for granted for themselves, that is a theme of this book.)

As readers, women had to emancipate themselves, over a very long period, from male, and particularly male religious, control over simple matters of information. As Belinda Jack tells us on her first page, “Women’s access to the written word has been a particular source of anxiety for men… almost from the very beginning.” Juvenal loathed the ‘female scholar’ who ‘quoted lines I’ve never heard’, the Virgin Mary can be found reading as well as praying by the annunciatory angel, but she is nevertheless usually represented as reading the Biblical prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. She is there to promote ‘pious reading and submission to scripture’, to obey the book rather than to learn from it. As Ann Finch complained in 1685, women were
Fallen by mistaken rules,
And Education’s more than nature’s fools;
Debarred from all improvements
of the mind,
And to dull, expected and designed …
So strong the opposition faction
still appears
The hopes of thrive can ne’er outweigh
the fears.

An equally important motive for reading lies in
its opportunities for self-discovery, and the
acquisition of a ‘knowledge of the world and
experience of a wide kind. It is a moral
illumination’, as Elizabeth Hardwick puts it. But
for far too long the book was seen as
conveying quite the wrong kind of knowledge
for women, indeed of continuing the dire
function of the apple in the Fall. For Thomas
Aquinas, female intellectual curiosity was
evidently a sin. Particularly important for the
historical development of women’s reading, as
Belinda Jack shows, was the post mediaeval
shift away from reading as public
performance, to the general spread of literacy
and of reading in private, and of course to the
cognate development of the many European
novels addressed to women, of which this
book gives an excellent selective account.
Progress is made here because the reader can
read alone, interpret the text for herself, and so
acquire a new sense of her identity as a
woman, of her individuality, and of her
difference from others. To the extent that this
is the case, Belinda Jack has a hearteningly
progressive story to tell.

As we are often humorously shown here,
women also had to combat their
caracterisation by men as peculiarly likely to
have unruly emotional responses to literature,
including those which led to ‘sexual illicity
and moral degeneration’. Sheridan’s Lydia
Languish, for example, is addicted to romantic
fiction, and even Jane Austen was willing to
see women as being misled by such
sensational matters, but to a satirical purpose
(for example in Northanger Abbey, which
nevertheless leaves her own satirical
intelligence firmly in charge). And this kind of
fear of women’s involvement in over-exciting
narrative continues, till the mid nineteenth
century, when reading for pleasure was
thought to be a dangerously self-indulgent
matter, as one or two of the pictures
reproduced here show, notably the supposedly
satirical pornography of Anton Wiertz’s The
Reader of Novels (1853), who is interestingly
naked, with a mirror placed beside her, in order
to reveal to the spectator those parts of her
body which might otherwise have been
invisible. She is being offered copies of Dumas
by the devil.

Other snares for women readers of the
nineteenth were the many ‘Silly Novels by Lady
Novelists’ which were attacked by George Eliot
in 1856, just before she published her profound
dramatization of the enlightening effects of
intelligent reading on a young girl, of the
effects of being deprived of education, and of
having a uselessly favoured male chauvinist
elder brother to put up with, in The Mill on the
Floss (1860). From here on, as Belinda Jack
makes clear, there is a stream of novels, from
Hardy’s Tess on, which treat the reading and
education of young women in a very different
way. Her account of the twentieth century
centres on the range of reading now open to
women, and the ways in which it was
disseminated and discussed. Particularly
interesting here is her account of reading
groups. She ends by looking with tantalising
brevity at cultures in which reading for women
is still far too much under male control; as we
can see, if we read her remarks on Azar Nafisi’s
Solutions to Europe’s crisis
“more Europe” or “more politics”?

Dr David Hine  Peter Pulzer Student and Tutor in Politics, 1985

It wasn’t supposed to be like this, and we have no idea where it will end. The Great Moderation of the 1990’s seemed to Europe’s politicians to herald an era of stable inflation and steady growth. It justified their precocious dash for monetary unification. But it turned out to be hubris. Low inflation differentials across Europe were no guarantee against adverse changes in competitiveness. Locking the exchange-rate door and throwing away the key left internal devaluation as the only remedy. Few governments had the strength to use it.

The financial imbalances that built up through globalized trade and financial-market liberalization will take a very long time to unwind. The financial imbalances that built up through globalized trade and financial-market liberalization will take a very long time to unwind: far longer than the business cycles to which we have become accustomed. This time it’s different, and far worse. We may still be unwinding European debt a decade or more from now. So can Europe’s democracies and the EU’s institutions cope?

Predicting Europe’s political future is no easier than predicting the economic solutions it will use against the crisis. For the moment, the solution is austerity, austerity, austerity. Rapid fiscal adjustment seems the only way to get German voters to help bridge the gap. They need persuading not only that responsibility and prudence have at last set in across the Mediterranean, but that they will see their money back in full. It is unlikely they will. We can only hope that time will bring the realization that demanding a guarantee of austerity and full repayment is worse than the debt write-downs that will get growth going again.

But that is only the beginning. Parallel universes open out even after unrelenting austerity has been abandoned. We can divide them into three: break it all up; carry on much as we are (probably with further painful bail-outs and write-downs); and federalism. Any of the three is possible, though the first and the last have spectacular implications.

If we could model the social and economic consequences of break-up, we would know better how to judge it. They range from catastrophic humanitarian crisis and a retreat into protectionism, to a rapid escape to the sunny growth-refreshed uplands of exchange-rate flexibility. Federalism is no easier to call. The first step on the current agenda is banking union, but even there the uncertainties are huge. The French (and Italians and Spaniards) fear the loss of sovereignty a fiscal and banking-union would impose. The Germans – while demanding it as the price of their solidarity – fear they would end up being out-voted, and may yet back away if it looks possible. For the British, the federal solution might lead to self-exclusion. Not a pleasant prospect: it is one thing to huff and puff to see off the UKIP threat, quite another to part company with a regional bloc accounting for half the UK’s trade.

If, by default, the EU sticks to the middle path, can its democracies cope? In a way, they have to. Just as there is no single Euro-area country where the population wants to quit the Euro (and no single government wanting to either), there is no country (the UK apart) that seems to contemplate being outside the EU. But to be in is to stay on the democratic path. The Greek, Dutch, Belgian,
Austrian, Italian and French voters who have recently put their crosses against populist candidates of the far-right, and a few exit-oriented parties of the far left, have to reckon with this simple reality: This because Europe, for all its faults, is also an extraordinary political achievement. It is extraordinary not for the clunky institutions in Brussels, but for its fundamental commitment to freedom, the rule of law, human and civil rights, and negotiated and largely consensual political solutions. That commitment, the product of nearly seven decades of democratic development, is far more deep-rooted than the last time Europe was under severe strain. Any member-state that gave up on it would immediately be given up on by all the others. It would pay an extraordinarily high price.

That is a huge base of political capital, even if it does not guarantee democratic survival. Certainly the countries in most economic trouble – Greece, Spain and Portugal - have moved from stable and frequently single-party governments, to messy multi-party systems, with much more coalition instability Italy – never a by-word for party-system stability – has had to give up on party government altogether for now and trusts in Professor Monti and his technocrats.

But no-one ever pretended democracy was easy in hard times. National politics will be a long messy grind. What does not seem a good idea is to compound the troubles by making a dramatic dash for EU political centralization in the mistaken belief that the poorer parts of Europe will reap a fiscal bonanza from a suddenly-generous Germany. They won’t. Despite the need for debt write-downs, no feasible amount of fiscal federalism will do much to alleviate southern Europe’s immediate economic troubles. And as the class and sectoral and inter-generational tensions in these countries are painfully worked out, there is surely a better chance of success if each country’s voters see the process mainly as the evolution of an internal national bargain, rather than a national battle against Germany or Brussels.

In some countries it will be tough. The smallest of all (Ireland, and, though not a Euro- or EU-state, Iceland) have the resource of cohesion that comes from being tiny but strong and determined in their identity. The bigger ones, Greece, Portugal and Spain especially, have a tougher task. There is no guarantee domestic politics can deliver what is needed everywhere and there are still many possible outcomes - politics can destroy a country’s prospects when badly managed - but it can also deliver lasting solution...
Apportioning Blame for the Euro

Why the single currency is a bridge too far for European enterprise

Peter Oppenheimer, Emeritus Student, 1967

The economies of the North Atlantic area, and by extension the rest of the world, have not recovered from the banking crisis which broke in 2007-08. That crisis was generated by private market activity (sub-prime lending, derivatives and all that), though obviously monetary authorities share the blame because of their failure to regulate. But a key factor in the slowness of recovery, the biggest single drag on the world economy at the present time, and the principal generator of unsound debts, is entirely government-made. Step forward the euro.

The creature is paralysing economic policy across the globe. One would like to be able to say that its demise is inevitable. Alas, that is not the case. If the member states of the euro-zone are allowed by their electorates to maintain it, they can go along for decades engaging in recurrent bouts of deflation and default, destroying Europe’s credit standing and undermining much of the genuine unity-in-diversity that has been Europe’s heritage over the past half-century. By the same token, if the euro did break up, that would not signal a new crisis. Rather, it would be the greatest relief since Mafeking, and damage limitation could bet underway with due assurance of closure.

Ironically, at the time of the real Mafeking there was monetary union in Europe, in the shape of the gold standard. And it notably failed to prevent the military build-up that culminated in World War I – which of course brought the monetary union itself to an end. So much for any peacekeeping pretensions of the euro. But what had actually made monetary union possible in the 19th century? Assuredly it was not fiscal union, nor banking union, two of the quack remedies for today’s dilemma put forward by the European Commission and by assorted commentators and politicians. The crucial mechanism was flexibility of the labour market, particularly as regards pricing. In other words, money wages adjusted – relative to each other and to international prices – so as to keep countries’ competitiveness in line.

Of course there were also international movements of factors of production (capital and labour). But they were not governed by the needs of the balance-of-payments adjustment process, nor could they have guaranteed its proper functioning if they had been. As it happens, such needs were at that time moderated by the fact that a large slice of the international economy was basically an appendage of the British economy.
Capital outflows from Britain, mostly through bond issues in London, funded the development of food and raw-material output overseas, much of it serving Britain’s own growing import requirement. By 1913 Britain was still responsible for about 40 percent of global goods imports. At the same time, scope for the capital flows was partly assured by migration of labour from western and eastern Europe to the new lands of the Americas, Australasia and parts of Africa.

Even in these exceptionally favourable circumstances bond investments were not riskless and payments equilibrium not always smoothly maintained. Defaults occurred in countries on the periphery of the system, typically combined with derogations from the gold-standard regime of rigid exchange-rates. Argentina was a prominent case, and not for the last time. Reverting to our own day, there is no contemporary equivalent of nineteenth-century Britain to shape the structure of international payments. And money wages everywhere are far less flexible than they were before 1914, thanks to the shift from laissez faire to the mixed economy and the concomitant fivefold rise in the ratio of government spending and taxation to national income. All the greater is the need for some form of exchange-rate flexibility to facilitate the adjustment process. In the meantime, the likes of Greece and Spain languish with unemployment rates of 25%.

Euro-fanatics may dream of internal European labour movements as an alternative, and look enviously at the continental United States – as if its cultural and linguistic uniformity were merely an incidental characteristic, and as if partial depopulation of Greece or Spain may be contemplated with the same equanimity as relative depopulation of the central United States. On top of that they ignore the global impact of Europe’s self-imposed monetary sclerosis. Germany’s example of maintaining an undervalued currency is followed by China and Japan, with the dollar and also sterling correspondingly overvalued. Correction of these misalignments is strongly desirable in order to promote restructuring, diminish trade imbalances and curb precarious accumulation of sovereign debt.

I began by dividing blame for current economic misfortunes between markets and governments. That is not quite the same as the share-out between economics and politics. To be sure, the banking crisis was rooted in bad economics. Misplaced ingenuity from Chicago (the theory of efficient financial markets) and a disregard of financial history joined forces to corrupt the thinking of central bankers (most crucially, Alan Greenspan at the Fed) and other monetary authorities. By comparison, politics loomed large in the establishment of the Euro, especially Gallic chauvinism and anti-American sentiment (again, nothing to do with peace and harmony in Europe). But it was aided and abetted by wishful economic thinking, to the effect that elimination of the transaction costs associated with short-term exchange-rate risk in international trade constituted a sufficient argument for getting rid of separate currencies.

It is an object lesson in the difference between technical accomplishment in economic theory and a sound grasp of the subject in its application to practical affairs. Nor is it a matter of hindsight. There were warnings a-plenty along the way that a single currency would be several bridges too far for the European enterprise. ■

© The Council of Europe
A tale of two cities

Marx would have been laughing all the way from the bank

Karl Sternberg (1988)

If Karl Marx had been alive in 2007, he would have been working for an investment bank. Banks had reached a state of communist perfection. The workers took home everything; the capital holders were left with nothing. Shareholders of banks were raped by the staff, who paid themselves extravagant sums out of illusory profits. Labour had found a far more effective device than trades union for destroying capitalists, by duping the shareholders that higher pay was essential to retain Talent. In this they were aided and abetted by the accountants, who allowed them to declare profits before they received any cash. Marx would have been laughing all the way from the bank.

There are multiple Cities. The insurance market and fund management have continued to function. In fact, everything outside banking emerged from the crisis without shareholders losing everything and having to beg from the taxpayer. There is this City-overpaid, but at least paid out of real profits, where insolvency does not lead to systemic instability. Then there is the City of the banks. Hence the focus of the authorities has been on reforming the latter, from the Vickers Commission proposals to the Financial Stability Committee of the Bank of England.

We should hardly be surprised that the beneficiaries of the communist banking system are squealing. There are many siren warnings about the terrible consequences of more regulation. Many in banking seem not to have noticed that they recently brought the world economy to its knees. To be fair, the banks were not alone in their mistakes. Central banks set interest rates too low for too long; politicians believed they had abolished the business cycle and that a permanently higher level of public expenditure could be justified; too many citizens borrowed money they could never afford to repay. This type of mass self-delusion has characterised most booms in history. But of these multiple protagonists, the bankers seem most reluctant to accept that change is necessary. They need rescuing from themselves. It seems counterintuitive, yet regulation is the mechanism by which we can re-impose a capitalist system on the banks and expunge this communist failure.

For starters, the banks need to be humble about how much value they really add to the economy. To the extent that we export banking services, banks can make a positive contribution to the economy: fleecing foreigners is fine. Even that only works if the banks get their loans repaid or don’t lose money with foreigners’ capital and end up getting the (domestic) taxpayer to repay them. Bail-outs negate many years of (apparent) contribution to the economy via exports.
The most important domestic function of banks is to channel savers' money to businesses that need funds for investment. It is only investment in productive capacity that generates sustainable economic expansion. This is a vital job, but we must remember that the banks themselves are not the ones with the investment ideas. Businessmen have those. Nor are banks the only mechanism for introducing capital to businesses: the stock market, the bond market and internal generation of capital are also sources of capital. UK businesses have never been so profitable. They have plenty of spare cash to invest. Not for a long time have the banks been so unwanted. What businessmen lack is confidence, not bank loans. (I accept that this is often not the case for small companies; they still need the banks to work properly).

How much reward should banks receive for acting as the middlemen between savers and borrowers? Of course they should receive something, but not enough to justify super-normal returns. A utility-type return would be a far superior return to recent history, and would be more valued by shareholders if it were more reliable. This must involve splitting the banks into their trading functions and their agency roles and deposit-taking and lending functions. But Northern Rock wasn't trading, say the Marxists. True, but it was the culture of wholesale market-based finance, and bundling loans to sell to other banks, and a determination to reach the same (illusory) returns on capital from trading, that led Northern Rock towards its rocks. And the trading at other banks only appeared to be profitable because of the implicit (later explicit) guarantee from taxpayers for solvency. Let those who wish to trade raise capital and pay the undistorted market rate for their activities. Vickers did not go far enough.

Pay remains an essential failing. Far too much of a bank’s revenue is paid to the employees. Shareholders seem to have forgotten that their role is to pay the minimum sum necessary to keep staff: they have ceased to act as capitalists ought. The idea that bankers (or CEOs more generally) would rush off to do something quite different if they were paid a bit less is intuitively ridiculous. Shareholders have foolishly tolerated pay schemes of insufficient duration (paying people over one year’s ‘results’) and complete asymmetry (never punishing failure). They fell for the line that each bank had to deliver top quartile remuneration, as if all bankers were above average (like the children in Lake Wobegon).

Like most communist parties, the members are very good at protecting themselves from external criticism. There have only been a couple of show trials and expulsion to the gulag: Fred Goodwin and Peter Cummings. What about the rest of them? There are many more managers and non-executive directors who should never work in financial services again. It takes a capitalist country like the US to pursue the miscreants more successfully. Britain is hopeless at disgracing its failures.

A healthy, prosperous, contributing City needs more capitalism and less communism. Ignore the conflicted calls that we are committing national suicide from regulatory interventions. Split the banks up, pay the staff less, and allow them to deliver a lower but sustainable return. That’s what will deliver competitive advantage in future - a solid, sober banking system. Marx will have to go elsewhere.
Many of my favourite novels are meditations on history, as in Marguerite Yourcenar’s *Memoirs of Hadrian*, Hermann Broch’s *The Death of Virgil*, and the nostalgia for a tolerant polytheism achingly evident in the Portuguese novelist Mario de Carvalho’s *A God Strolling in the Cool of the Evening*. But religion can be heroic, especially when its consolations turn to doubt and unlooked-for martyrdom, and I am thinking here of two great novels set in seventeenth-century Japan, *Silence* and *The Samurai*, by Shusako Endo. Thomas Mann’s *Lotte in Weimar* distils an elegantly decaying culture through a poet’s eye. As is often the case with people of a profoundly conservative disposition, I gain great literary consolation from High Modernism, and have long admired the work of Ford Madox Ford. *The Good Soldier* is both exquisite and deeply melancholic, *The Fifth Queen* shows how a modern series of historical novels ought to be written (it knocks Hilary Mantel’s clichés into a Henrician codpiece), and *Parade’s End* is devastatingly good. I find myself regularly re-reading individual novels from Anthony Powell’s incomparable sequence, *A Dance to the Music of Time*. Joseph Roth’s *The Radetzky March* is utterly magnificent, as is everything that he wrote.

William Faulkner, from that other Oxford (in Mississippi), is a writer whose work I find endlessly rewarding. *Absalom, Absalom!* is a magnificent achievement. The Master remains, for me, the incomparable Henry James: *The Wings of the Dove* is a perfect novel, and it is such an ugly story morally. The greatest post-war novelist, Saul Bellow, was also American; I could not be without *Humboldt’s Gift* or *Mr Sammler’s Planet*. I do have my literary vices, chief of which are classic English ghost stories, especially the work of M.R. James; and, for sheer naughtiness, nothing can beat the scabrous pleasures of Simon Raven’s Alms for Oblivion sequence; he had it in for the real villains of modern life, puritans and prigs, of whom there are far too many.

As with novels, so with poetry, I greatly admire the work of Anthony Hecht, and it is my good fortune to have enjoyed conversation in college with Geoffrey Hill, the greatest English-language poet since T.S. Eliot; his poetry is worth any amount of modern theology, and is profoundly more literate theologically than any of it. *The Last Leader*, a collection by the late Mick Imlah, who died wickedly young, is a volume to which I find myself returning again and again; Oxford, music, cricket, rugby, literary history: what more could one ask of a modern poetic sensibility? Something of this is discernible in the poetry of my colleague and friend Peter McDonald, whose poem ‘Sunday in Great Tew’ is fraught with the collisions of history and modern politics: it is a moving and masterly lyric. I read it alongside the late and very great Hugh Trevor-Roper’s essay ‘The Great Tew Circle’, in *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans*. And this brings me full circle, as Trevor-Roper, in his inaugural lecture as Regius Professor of Modern History, long ago reminded us of the need for the constant union between ‘History and Imagination’.
FORTHCOMING EVENTS

For news and more information about events, please visit our website www.chch.ox.ac.uk

February 2013

20 February
4TH C.H. STUART DINNER
Christ Church

The fourth annual dinner of the C.H. Stuart Society.

March 2013

9 March
FAMILY PROGRAMME LUNCHEON
Christ Church

Members of the Family Programme are invited to the House for lunch.

15-24 March
OXFORD LITERARY FESTIVAL
Christ Church

We welcome world-class authors and speakers at The Sunday Times Literary Festival. The programme has become a centre of advance publicity in the Sunday Times and is also to be found online at www.oxfordliteraryfestival.com.

16 March
ASSOCIATION EVENT: TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

The Christ Church Association invites Members to a behind-the-scenes tour and lunch at Trinity College, Cambridge.

April 2013

20 April
CHEMISTRY LUNCH IN HONOUR OF DR PAUL KENT
Christ Church

Members who read Chemistry are invited to lunch for the House, in celebration of Paul Kent’s 90th birthday.

26-28 April
UNIVERSITY EUROPEAN REUNION: IN MADRID

This year’s European Reunion brings you a spectacular weekend of talks, tours and dinners in Madrid. Christ Church will be holding a dinner for Members of the House and their guests on the Friday night.

Contact: Oxford University Society alumnireunion@alumni.ox.ac.uk +44 (0)1865 611610 or sign up for email updates at www.alumniweekend.ox.ac.uk

21 May

1966-1971 GAUDY – 50TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

A reunion dinner for Members who will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of their matriculation.

June 2013

20 June
GAUDY 1972 – 1976
Christ Church

Contact: Helen Camunas-Lopez, Stuward's Assistant +44 (0)1865 286580
helen.camunas-lopez@chch.ox.ac.uk

Event booking forms are available to download at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/development/events/future

The Mad Hatter’s Tea Party

The mad hatter’s tea party on 1 November was such a resounding success that we are offering a further three dates for Afternoon Teas in 2013. The next M H A tea’s Tea Party will be on Thursday 30th May. We are also offering a special St Valentine’s Tea and Tour (Saturday 17th February) and an Alice-themed M afternoon Sunday Tea and Tour (Sunday 10th March). All three teas will be served on high Table with up to 30 guests and there is an optional pre-tea Behind-the-Scenes Tour of Christ Church.

We also have a few places left for our Special Interest Weekend on The English Country House: a Journey through Time, taking place from 11th – 14th April 2013. The weekend will include expert lectures, visits to historic houses and Tudor- and Victorian-themed dinners.

For more information and on-line booking for all of our events, please visit: www.chch.ox.ac.uk/conferences/conferences-own

The 2013 Andrew Chamblin Memorial Concert

Nicolas Kynaston, HonFRCO, HonRAM
7.30 pm, Tuesday 11th June 2013.

Mr Kynaston will play an hour-long programme of Baroque organ works. Admission free with everyone welcome.

The annual Andrew Chamblin Memorial Concert was set up in memory of Old Member, Dr Andrew Chamblin, (1991) a postgraduate in mathematical physics under Professor Sir Roger Penrose. Andrew then moved to Cambridge to study theoretical physics for his doctorate under Professor Stephen Hawking. A native of the city of Amarillo in Texas, Andrew had studied both the organ and the harpsichord.

The annual Concerts have attracted numerous distinguished organists including Simon Preston, Dame Gillian Weir and David Briggs. The series is under the auspices of Music at Christ Church, directed by Stephen Darlington and Clive Driskill-Smith. They are held in term-time so that current students as well as Members and the general public can enjoy performances from world-renowned organists each year.

There are significant costs associated with the concerts, including the recitalist’s fee, thus to maintain the programme established in Andrew’s memory in perpetuity, and to help maintain the tradition of organ music at Christ Church, donations to the Concert Fund are urgently needed.

More details about the Memorial Concert series can be found at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/development/old-member-charities/andrew-chamblin-fund

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On the University Alumni weekend in 2013 the Association will be holding a dinner with a performance of William Gager’s Dido (1583), staged by Early Drama at Oxford (EDOX).

A pupil of Westminster School, Gager won a Queen’s Scholarship to Christ Church in 1574, and by the 1580s had made his mark at Oxford as a dramatist at the centre of a prominent circle of literati. After his undergraduate degree (Jurisprudence), he proceeded to MA and BCL, becoming a Doctor of Civil Law in 1589. Gager was hugely influential in Christ Church’s elevation to the forefront of University drama: thus when Queen Elizabeth came to visit Oxford in 1592, it was to William Gager that the University turned to provide official entertainment for the monarch, and to showcase Oxford’s academic prowess. Gager’s adaptation of the story, from Virgil’s Aeneid, of Dido, was commissioned to celebrate the visit of the Polish Ambassador to Oxford in 1583. It was performed, with great ceremony, in Christ Church Hall.

In 2013, the College’s heritage as an important centre of Elizabethan drama will be marked with a special evening of entertainment: Gager’s play will once again be staged, with a splendid Elizabethan style dinner in Hall, by a cast including Christ Church students. There will be a drinks reception beforehand and the Buttery will be open afterwards.

There will also be a one-day conference, entitled Performing Dido, at Christ Church, on Sunday 22nd September, at which international scholars and Oxford English Faculty’s Laurie Maguire and Emma Smith will discuss Gager’s play and Dido, Queen of Carthage by Gager’s contemporary, Christopher Marlowe.

More information will be available on the website in the New Year and in the Trinity issue of Christ Church Matters.