Now, not everyone knows what a purlin is. These are the support struts that connect the main roof beams, and therefore hold up the ceiling. They are heavy – made of oak – and exceptionally strong. But when they fall, immediate investigative and interventionist work is needed.

For several months we have been carrying checks on the ceiling, repairing where necessary, and cleaning the Tudor décor that we might otherwise never get to see in detail, let alone touch. Indeed, the upside of this – and most apparent difficulties often carry benefits – has been that we have been able to see, close up, the genius of our Tudor builders. The ceiling is an exquisite piece of craftsmanship, and whilst we have had to spend an unexpected
and unwelcome sum on repair and restoration, we have been able to admire the work of our forebears at a distance seldom granted to other generations.

All this has come at a time when the House coat of arms has been seen almost everywhere. I refer, of course, to Hilary Mantel’s *Wolf Hall*, and the highly engaging adaption done for primetime television. If you have not read Mantel’s book, or had a chance to see the TV episodes, I recommend her work highly. This is Wolsey’s world brought to life, and the perspective gained by looking down from the ceiling in our Great Hall to the floor below, coupled to Mantel’s imaginative rendition of the Tudor era, remind us of the scale of ambition and achievement undertaken by our Tudor forebears. *Aedes Christi* was a vast project for its time; it remains a vast enterprise for us now, and for future generations. As a famous old prayer has it – ‘for all that has been “thanks”; for all that shall be, “yes”’.

The ceiling of the Dining Hall notwithstanding, the House is in fine shape. I am writing this on a Saturday afternoon as our rowing crews are bumping their way up the river. There have been some very fine achievements in sport for the House.

Academically, we are in a steady and strong position in all subjects, and we continue to build patiently on the invaluable work of our Tutors. It has also been particularly pleasing to see our students move into so many different spheres of work after their graduation, such as teaching, law, consultancy, banking, charity, civil service, computing, and journalism. All are well represented. Our graduate students continue to push the frontiers of knowledge and research.

Our future, then, is directed to both preserving and improving – towards increasing student access across the country – and from all over the world. Our work remains: towards enhancing and improving the House in the present, so that future generations will be enabled through the generosity of the legacies we leave. ‘For all that has been, “thanks”; for all that shall be, “yes”’.

The Very Revd Prof. Martyn Percy, Dean
On the morning of Saturday 19 July 2014, the Hall staff discovered debris on the floor when they came in for work. The end of one of the purlins (a longitudinal beam) on the west side of the east bay had sheared off and caught itself on the principle tie of the adjoining truss. The Clerk of Works was called, the Hall was closed and an emergency scaffold erected to hold the purlin in place. Although deep in section, the purlins are not trenched into the side of the truss ties but rely for support on a shallow tenon some of which have been weakened by death watch beetle, probably as a result of historic water ingress. There was little evidence to suggest ongoing or active infestation. A repair was fashioned using a flitch plate, steel tenon and a steel shoe at each end. This repair was effected over a series of nights to keep the Hall in use as far as practicable.

A trawl of the archives by the Archivist revealed photographs of the Hall when last redecorated in 1979/80 and which included a photograph of a similar purlin failure. A sample of purlins were inspected by a structural engineer and timber specialist from a tower scaffold from which it was concluded the all of the purlins ends needed additional support and that whilst scaffold was erected for that purpose the opportunity could be taken to inspect the roof structure more thoroughly and to clean and record.

A specialist conservation contractor, Cliveden Conservation, who had previously carried out the successful project to conserve the masonry bosses in the Cathedral were engaged to carry out remedial work.

The Hall portraits were protected and an elaborate scaffolding structure designed and erected to provide the working platform but transferring load on to cross walls to avoid overloading the stone vaulted ceilings to the Hall floor. Cleaning of the roof structure and decoration was undertaken, all the joinery and structural timber was inspected and the anticipated steel shoes inserted. Closer inspection found that the hammer beam roof trusses have rotated inwards and there were significant fractures and stress cracks to the curved braces. Furthermore mortice and tenon joints had opened up, and previous repairs were failing (bolted connections, plated and strap repairs), even causing some slight outward movement of some perimeter walls at eaves level.

There were minor roof leaks, further evidence of death watch beetle infestation, and there was evidence of charred timbers in the middle bays from the fire in the 1720s, all requiring attention.

The level of intervention in the fabric required to attend to the defects meant consultation with the Local Authority Conservation officer and Historic England. Remedial solutions were devised by the Structural Engineer in close consultation with and implemented by Cliveden Conservation. All solutions were approved by an Engineer from Historic England. The repairs to the hammer beams involved inserting steel channels into the side faces of many of the beams and bolting through the new corner plates to re-establish continuity. Where the ends/sides of the hammer beams were badly decayed timber was cut out and steel...
This has been a complex and logistically difficult project however the House will be left with a splendid looking early C16th roof… well mostly!

The total cost of the works is estimated to be in the region of £650k and the House has foregone around £400k in lost conference and tourism revenue. None of these costs were budgeted and, as a result, Christ Church has had to find an additional £1m by a combination of economies and delaying certain expenditure on other building works.

Many people deserve our thanks for their professionalism in repairing the roof and dealing with the consequential issues of maintaining a service throughout the disruption, and many, especially the current students, suffered from the restrictions placed on using the Hall as a result of the works. Thank you all for your forbearance.
The imposing portrait of Henry VIII, hanging behind the dean’s chair in Hall, is that of a confident benefactor. After the fall of Thomas Wolsey in 1529, Henry made a new start, stripping the infant Cardinal College of its assets, emptying it of its academics, and leaving it abandoned and with little hope of survival. It is easy to believe that the king was the major influence on the foundation of Christ Church in 1546. It was not until Henry came up with his great scheme of the combined college and cathedral, that the ruins were once again inhabited and began to flourish.

But, on deeper investigation, another picture appears. The college founded by Thomas Wolsey – made a cardinal 500 years ago this year, on 10 September 1515 – was to influence the management of Christ Church into the nineteenth century and beyond.

Wolsey’s plan was for an Oxford college to surpass his alma mater, Magdalen College. The king approved his cardinal’s plans for the ‘bringing upp of youthe in virtue’.

Cardinal College was given statutes, in an impressive volume which survives in the archive, which laid down every detail for its successful administration, drawing heavily on those of Corpus Christi College, founded only eight years previously. But the scale of Wolsey’s new foundation was vastly different from anything that had gone before.

At the top was the dean – honest, of integrity and renown, an English clergyman but neither bishop nor monk, learned in theology and at least a BA, and over 30 years old. The dean could remain in office until his death, provided that he did not accept a bishopric or commit usury, simony, perjury, or wilful murder.

Under the leadership of the dean, there were sixty canons of the first order, all ordained graduates and considered qualified to teach.
At least eight of these had to hold doctorates and of these eight, one was to be sub-dean, four were censors, and three were bursars. Forty undergraduate junior members, known as canons of the second order, were to be elected from the Founder’s schools.

The statutes laid down every aspect of the college’s administration including the admission of the priests, clerks, choristers and the master of music, as well as all the staff required to run such a vast establishment. The most senior was the manciple, heading up the team of pantrymen, butlers, and cooks. The porter was responsible for ensuring that all the gates were kept closed and locked at all times; the barber, laundryman and groom ensured that men and horses all looked respectable. The dean was granted seven personal servants who were to be funded and clothed from the college coffers.

Prayers were to be said every day on rising and retiring, and attendance was expected at innumerable chapel services including seven daily masses and three special ones each week for the commemoration of the Founder. At meal-times, conversation was in Latin or Greek, and the Bible was read during dinner with expositions given after the meal. Only if a fire had been lit in Hall could students linger to benefit from unaccustomed warmth and to enjoy ‘temperate recreation’.

Student behaviour was carefully monitored. Good manners were expected, and attire was to be sober. Everyone in college was provided with cloth to make a gown once a year, its quality depending on one’s rank, but all of the same colour.

For the first time all the subjects available at the university, for bachelor and for higher degrees, were taught within a single college. Wolsey took on board the new Erasmian teaching that had been embraced by both Magdalen and Corpus Christi Colleges.

The college needed an immense endowment in order to run. The income from the landed estate was just under £2,500, several times the income of other colleges.

When Wolsey fell, the fate of Cardinal College seemed certain. There were rumours that the residents were to be evicted and the new buildings demolished, to destroy all the symbols of Wolsey’s power that were carved into the stonework. The cardinal’s great plans appeared to be in tatters.

But Cardinal College did survive – not in name, but definitely in form. The statutes of Wolsey’s great institution had a greater impact on Christ Church than has been supposed. Although Henry VIII came up with the idea for the unique foundation he died before he could ratify statutes for Christ Church. The evidence shows that Christ Church adopted Wolsey’s scheme almost as it had been written. Until 1867, when the first written constitution was adopted, Christ Church was administered under the headship of a dean and canons, with 100 Students (101 after 1663), censors, treasurers, public professors, a choir and an organist, and servants managed by the manciple. His coat of arms is still that of Christ Church. The educational system followed Wolsey’s ideas. His statutes formed, and still form, the backbone of Christ Church; and his buildings are at the core of our extraordinary establishment.
Farewell to Revd Ralph Williamson

A special reception and recital was held in the Cathedral on 11 March to say goodbye to Revd Ralph Williamson after eighteen years as College Chaplain. Ralph has moved to take up his new appointment of Vicar of St Peter’s, Eaton Square, in Central London. The Dean of Christ Church, the Very Revd Prof Martyn Percy said: “We congratulate Ralph most warmly on this appointment to a very significant parish at the heart of London. We will miss Ralph, Rachel and the family enormously – they have been a cherished and greatly appreciated part of Christ Church life for the past seventeen years. Ralph will bring the wealth of his experience as Chaplain to his new role as Vicar, and the Diocese of London is fortunate to be gaining such a gifted priest”. He – and his family – will be missed by everyone at Christ Church.

15th Christopher Tower Poetry Competition

This year’s theme of cells for the 15th Christopher Tower Poetry competition attracted entries ranging from biological cells to prison cells; monastery cells to computer cells. The 727 entrants (all born between 1996 and 1999) represented 425 schools, with many schools encouraging entrants for the first time. The judges were the poets, Helen Mort (a Tower Poetry winner herself in 2004), Ian McMillan and Peter McDonald.

At a lunchtime reception in Christ Church on Monday 20 April, sixteen year-old Isla Anderson (left), from Woldingham School, Surrey, was awarded the £3,000 first prize for her poem ‘The Forensics of Salt-Licking’.

The winner of the second (£1,000) prize was Max Thomas (Hampton School, Middlesex) with ‘Fusion’ and the third prizewinner, Lewis Harrington (Wilson’s School, Surrey) – who was also longlisted in 2014 – won £500 with ‘Firewood!’. Their schools receive £150 each.

The Tower Poetry website is www.towerpoetry.org.uk

For further information on the competition and other Tower projects: info@towerpoetry.org.uk

ISLA ANDERSON

The Forensics of Salt-Licking

Poem, this. Laboratory. Strip-lit, search-lit, clean. Fluorescence shuttering the tremor of it all - the blur of all these fingertips, adrenalin as refugee. Circulating, curdling the blood; receptorless, and never

where I needed it to thrash. Him, hook. Him twenty-something, liquor tongued and warm; him hand

past the ladies’ toilets, out beneath the Kapok, silted feet. Baby let me show you something,

yeah? Gospel, this. My stumble-drunk consent, my false sixteen. Body just. Saying so what if it happens here

like this? Brush my teeth. Forget his slow mastectomy smile - years on, try to swab him from the lining of my cheeks, to magnify. On the glass, it seems his cells remain like salt-lick in my mouth; put in focus, all that’s left is gutted lime.

Volunteers Needed

Christ Church Association Committee

This year a number of spaces are due to open up on the Committee of the Christ Church Association. The committee plays an important role in shaping the range and format of Christ Church events and publications, and is a forum for ideas on how best to engage alumni. A minimal time commitment is required, with only two meetings a year: one in Oxford over the alumni weekend in September, and one in London in March. If you would like to find out more about the position please email: development.office@chch.ox.ac.uk

Year Reps

Year Reps act as a valuable conduit between Christ Church, the Association, and members. Their role is to encourage their contemporaries to engage with College and attend events, and to this end they send an annual message to their year with information about events and a request for news for the Annual Report. There is an annual meeting in November (alternating between London and Oxford) which is followed by dinner on the House. We are currently seeking volunteers for the following years which have no reps: 1992, 1967, 1965, 1964, 1959, 1957, 1956, 1955, 1954, and 1953. Please email: development.office@chch.ox.ac.uk if you are interested.

We would also be keen to hear from anyone who matriculated in the following years where we only have one rep, as we normally aim to have a few for each year: 2007, 1994, 1993, 1991, 1983, 1980.

The T ower Poetry website is www.towerpoetry.org.uk

For further information on the competition and other Tower projects:

info@towerpoetry.org.uk
Taruithorn, the Oxford Tolkien Society

Taruithorn, the Oxford Tolkien Society, held their very first AGM 25 years ago, and this May, after more than a year of planning, the current membership welcomed their predecessors and families back to celebrate their quarter-century with a lavish garden party and banquet, the food being guarded by a small red dragon.

I was already a card-carrying Tolkien fan when I came up in 1988, but knew that I would not find a ready-made fan club to join on arrival. I still remember the delight of finding a whole room full of odd, quirky and geeky clubs tucked away in a corner of Freshers’ Fair, covering every imaginable subject from Sherlock Holmes to Poohsticks, but it was not until a year later that I circulated a few posters, booked a room and got a Tolkien Society started.

The name caused lengthy debate. Everyone wanted to include the name Taruithorn, which was Tolkien’s own translation of the name “Oxford” into Elvish; but should it be Taruithorn (The Oxford Tolkien Society) or The Oxford Tolkien Society (Taruithorn)? The former won, though the parentheses were later quietly dropped, and Martin Grossel nobly agreed to be Senior Member.

Taruithorn has met regularly ever since, sometimes drifting to other colleges but always returning to its spiritual home in Christ Church.

Sarah Wells (Christ Church, 1988, née Sturch, 1st President of Taruithorn).

Christ Church Boat Club

Christ Church Boat Club fielded three men’s crews and two women’s crews in Summer Eights. The club was looking to build on a decent Torpids campaign earlier in the year. The men’s third boat and women’s second boat, comprised mostly of novices, rowed well. However, they were unlucky to be being chased by very fast and much more experienced crews, and both crews were bumped each day. The men’s second boat rowed four times in the first two days of the campaign, as they were positioned as the sandwich boat between division two and three. This feat alone was impressive, and to end the week only having been bumped by fast crews from Queen’s and St Hugh’s was a laudable achievement.

The women’s first boat also rowed exceptionally well and, despite being bumped by University on Thursday, recovered to bump St Edmund Hall very speedily on the Saturday. The highlight of the week for most at the boat club was seeing the men’s first boat bump up to second on the river on Wednesday. They bumped Pembroke at the top of Boathouse Island with such force that they broke an oar – a hugely satisfying memory to look back on!

The club would like to thank their coach, Mike Genchi, boatman Rob Taylor, the captains, Mike Boemo and Anna Murgatroyd, and the President, James McCormick. Thank you also to all Old Members who support the club, and especially to Alex Beard and his wife Emma, who are offering match funding for gifts. There has been no better time to help by donating to the Boat Club. Finally we thank the Steward for overseeing the Club’s finances so diligently, Jackie Webber who assists, and the Development Office for their support. We are determined to repay all our supporters with an even better year in 2016, especially with the Bicentenary of the Club coming up in 2017.

Martin Parr, one of Britain’s best-known contemporary photographers, and President of Magnum, the world-famous photographic agency is currently undertaking a photo-documentary book project. With the working title of Oxford it is to be a collection of around 100 photographs documenting an academic year in the life of the university. Whilst it will be centred on a selection of colleges, it will also look at other aspects of university life.

The project will culminate in publication in the autumn of 2017, accompanied by a local exhibition.
Living and working in Christ Church, I am constantly struck by the range of people we meet. Scarcely a week goes by without encountering somebody with an experience of life so different from my own that my perspective is permanently shifted and broadened. In the past six months the Cathedral has hosted the full spectrum of British society from former Archbishop, Lord Carey, to ex-homeless drug user, Jayson Marc-Frater.

For the past five years or so the Cathedral has offered a series of informal services on Sunday evenings. After Eight services provide a mixture of conversation, music and prayer, seeking to open up fresh perspectives on some of the pressing social, cultural and political issues of our time. In Hilary Term we had two fascinating series; the first exploring matters of war and peace; the second looking at the Church’s ministry on the margins of society.

Alex Battye served for several years as Chaplain to the Irish Guards. Along with Stuart Hallam, a Chaplain to the Royal Marines, he opened our eyes to the realities of military chaplaincy: from the dust and searing heat of a Forward Operating Base in Afghanistan to the manicured lawns of Aldershot, where the Chaplain must break news of a soldier’s death to their families.

Later in the term the Revd Mary Gurr, Chaplain to the Homeless, shared a platform with Jayson Marc-Frater. Jayson is now one of the staff at the Gatehouse project in north Oxford, but for many years he was homeless. Another memorable evening featured Errol Robinson, (left) a leading human rights solicitor in Birmingham.

But perhaps the most memorable image was the car that drove into Tom Quad on 21 January. Driven by a nun in full habit, its passengers were a Franciscan friar, a Benedictine novice and another religious sister: Sister Judith SLG, Brother David SSF, Brother Mickael OSBn and Sister Jane ASSP. This colourful car load was arriving to take part in an event at the Cathedral seeking to raise the profile of the Anglican religious orders. For God’s Sake drew students and the public alike, and marked the beginning of a series of University events exploring the variety and depth of religious life in the Church of England.

At Christ Church you just never know who you will meet next!
CATHEDRAL CHOIR

Stephen Darlington outlines the Choir’s plans for this summer, including a return visit to China.

Alumni will already be aware that the Cathedral Choir has acquired a stellar reputation, both for its high standards in the daily Cathedral services and also for its recordings, concerts and tours. This edition’s article focuses on two special examples which serve to reinforce this reputation. In each case they involve collaborations with other groups, something I believe to be a very important aspect of the Choir’s activities, and, moreover, they are both repeat invitations.

First, in July, the choir makes a second visit to the St Alban’s International Organ Festival, this time in collaboration with the choirs of Westminster Cathedral and St Alban’s Abbey. This exciting festival revolves around the world’s most prestigious organ competition, of which Clive Driskill-Smith, our Sub-Organist, is a former prize-winner, and I am its former Artistic Director. The annual Three Choirs Concert has become a highlight of the festival. The concert programme includes cori spezzati pieces by Gabrieli and Guerrero, involving brass consort, as well as James MacMillan’s stunning Tu es Petrus and Arvo Pärt’s De profundis. This celebration of choral music will present a rare opportunity to hear three great choirs on their own and in ensemble: a real treat. For tickets, please see: www.organfestival.com.

Secondly, in August, the choir is on its way to China for a repeat visit to the prestigious National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing as part of the annual choral festival. There will also be concerts in the Grand Theatre in Shanghai, the Concert Halls in Wuhan and Shenzhen, and the Opera House in Guangzhou, where we will be collaborating in performance with two local choirs. In his book China in Ten Words (2012) the author Yu Hua entitles one of his chapters ‘Reading’. He explains the extraordinary experience of lengthy queues for coupons in 1977, when the demise of the Cultural Revolution resulted in previously banned books being published once again. Discussing the ‘mysterious power’ of literature he writes:

One can read a book by a writer of a different time, a different country, a different race, a different language, and a different culture and there encounter a sensation that is one’s very own.

This is surely a notion which can be applied to music as well, and it is certainly the case that the palpable hunger for our choral music was immensely striking when we visited China in 2012. The concert in Beijing, in front of a packed hall, was streamed live throughout the country and we are expecting this to happen again. Notwithstanding the importance of the daily round of services in Christ Church, this is a vital way in which we can touch the lives of vast numbers of people in another continent and promote the College and the University.

In our publicity material, we draw attention to the choir’s ‘extraordinary versatility’ and this is clearly borne out by such invitations. Do look at the choir’s website www.chchchoir.org for details of the choir’s activities and recordings.

Above: Choirboys on the highly successful 2012 China tour.
In November 2014, the nation remembered the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War One. With only a few veterans now surviving the Great War, one of the most moving sights was the river of red ceramic poppies that carpeted the moat at the Tower of London. The artwork, devised by Paul Cummins, was a poignant reminder of one of the worst conflicts in human history. During the Great War, Christ Church lost almost 250 men, and we are pleased to have secured 250 poppies to memorialise those who fell in this conflict.

In future Novembers, the grass in Tom Quad nearest to the Cathedral will be carpeted with these unique ceramic poppies as a reminder of the cost of conflict, and of the sacrifice made by those from the House who served their country.

If you would like to sponsor a poppy, perhaps in memory of a relation, please contact simon.offen@chch.ox.ac.uk to give the name.

The Very Revd Prof. Martyn Percy, Dean

Alan Mackintosh came up to Christ Church in 1912 and rowed in the 3rd Torpid in 1913. One of his tutors was C.D. Fisher, a young don, who died aboard HMS Invincible at the Battle of Jutland in May 1916.

In spite of poor eyesight, Mackintosh was a member of the OUOTC until his commission was granted on 1 January 1915 and he joined the 51st Highland Division, soon to be bound for the Somme. Always a poet, Mackintosh documented his War in verse. Just before he left Oxford, he wrote the following:

Matri Almæ
City of hopes and golden dreaming
Set with a crown of tall grey towers
City of mist that round you streaming
Screens the vision of vanished hours,
All the wisdom of youth far-seeing,
All the things that we meant to do,
Dreams that will never be clothed in being,
Mother, your sons have left with you.

Clad in beauty of dreams begotten
Strange old city for ever young,
Keep the vision that we’ve forgotten,
Keep the songs we have never sung.
So shall we hear your music calling,
So from a land where songs are few
When the shadows of life are falling,
Mother, your sons come back to you.

So with the bullets above us flying,
So in the midst of horror and pain
We shall come back from the sorrow of dying
To wander your magical ways again.

For that you keep and grow not older
All the beauty we ever knew,
As the fingers of death grow colder,
Mother, your sons come back to you.

From Colin Campbell and Rosalind Green, Can’t shoot a man with a cold (2004)

Mackintosh was not one of the sons who returned. He received an MC in 1916 for gallantry at Vimy Ridge, leading his men across no-man’s land and into the German trenches. Many were killed or wounded and Mackintosh wrote home “I believe I’ve been recommended for the Military Cross, but I’d rather have the boys lives. … I’ve had my taste of the show. It’s not romantic. It’s hell.”

Judith Curthoys, Archivist
At lunch this week one of my pupils asked me: “Sir, when you were young, did you dream of being Headmaster of Christ Church Cathedral School?” I had to be honest and tell him that, at the age of ten, the thought hadn’t crossed my mind. As it happens, though, one of the most memorable days of my childhood was when I came to Oxford for the first time with my Grandfather, an Old Member of the House. I still remember walking under Tom Tower and being struck by the immensity of the place. We went over to the Cathedral, but the door was shut because the present organ was being installed. Had the door been open, I might have become aware of the choir and its school on that day.

A choir school is an extraordinary place and, in so many ways, counter-cultural these days. Choristers require long attention spans; they read music closely for more than two hours every day; they sing lengthy poetry written more than 2,500 years ago in the English of the Sixteenth Century; they sing lengthy poetry written more than 2,500 years ago in the English of the Sixteenth Century; they sing lengthy poetry written more than 2,500 years ago in the English of the Sixteenth Century; they read Latin and listen to music which is both complex and – horror of horrors – live rather than down-loaded. On Sundays, they absorb two sermons from some of the country’s leading theologians.

In the life of a chorister, nothing comes quickly; attention to detail is emphasised, practice is at the heart of what is achieved and they are expected to behave in ways unimaginable to most of their contemporaries. I have overheard two choristers assessing the relative merits of Tallis and Byrd, possibly not the concern of most twelve-year-olds. All our choristers know how to perform and react when under pressure: singing seven services per week teaches them that. And then, when most children have gone home for Christmas and Easter, they stay on in School right up to Christmas Day itself and throughout Holy Week. A rough calculation suggests that an undergraduate is resident in College for around 24 weeks-a-year compared with a chorister’s 37, which makes them a truly central part of the life of the Foundation.

Whilst the choristers’ existence is far from ordinary, the qualities that they acquire make them particularly well-equipped for the modern world. Nearly all of them gain Scholarships or Exhibitions to their senior schools and almost a third go to Oxbridge, but what delights me most is that if you ask them whether they enjoy their lives as choristers, they almost invariably say that they do. This enjoyment is evident when one has the privilege of hearing them sing and I would strongly recommend that any Member returning to the College takes the time to come and hear them.

I am very proud to be the Headmaster of Christ Church Cathedral School. Had I been a wiser child, I might well have had the ambition to be the School’s Headmaster from my very early years, as my pupil so wisely suggested.
COMMENORATING THE 250th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEQUEST OF GENERAL JOHN GUISE

Jacqueline Thalmann (Curator of the Picture Gallery) celebrates perhaps the greatest gift the House has ever received when General John Guise (1682-1765) left his collection of over 200 paintings and almost 2,000 drawings to his former college.

It was a rich and well-known art collection with outstanding drawings by Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael and with celebrated paintings by Annibale and Ludovico Carracci, Tintoretto and Veronese. Bequeathing it to Christ Church was an unprecedented act – no one until then had left an art collection of this calibre, size and importance to a public institution. Britain at that time did not yet have a public art museum: Dulwich Picture Gallery only opened in 1812 and the National Gallery in 1824. Equally bold was Christ Church’s acceptance of this extraordinary bequest and its commitment to Guise’s will of 1760 that stipulates: ‘that the same [the collection] shall be carefully...’
preserved as the collections are very good and that none of them or any part thereof shall be at any time Sold but kept for the use of the said College”.

John Guise took his BA in 1702, while Henry Aldrich was Dean and several indications attest to the influence which this most universal head of house had on him. Aldrich was not only a theologian, a mathematician, a philosopher and an amateur architect who designed Peckwater Quadrangle and conceived the New Library, but also a collector of prints and arguably the first Oxford man who fully understood the power of images. It might have been this environment that stimulated Guise’s interest in art and subsequently the bequest.

The collection, however, was only one part of Guise’s personality and life, the one that is most visible and for which he is remembered today. His military career and his private affairs are more obscure and difficult to reconstruct and have led to some confusion.

What we positively know is that he fought in several major battles; in Oudenarde (1708) and Malplaquet (1709) under the Duke of Marlborough during the War of the Spanish Succession; in 1719 he commanded seven companies of the Grenadiers in the Vigo expedition; he fought in one of the most gruelling military defeats, in the battle of Cartagena in 1741 (today Columbia) during the War of Jenkins’ Ear and he took part in the Scottish Campaign in 1745. In 1753 he was appointed Governor of Berwick and by the time of his death on the 12th June 1765 he had risen to the rank of General.

The private part of someone’s life is even more difficult to retrace, but we know that in 1723 John Guise married Marianne Ursule d’Hervart (1699–1749), from a prominent Huguenot family and she, like their four children, predeceased him. Three of the children died in infancy and the one son who grew into adulthood, William (1728-1751), died fourteen years before his father.

I discovered more documents and details about John Guise’s life in the last year, alas, this is not the place to discuss them and I just refer to Horace Walpole who captures the flair of his contemporary in a letter after Guise’s return from the West Indies in 1742: “Guise is arrived from Carthagena, madder than ever. As he was marching up to one of the forts, all his men deserted him; his lieutenant advised him to retire; he replied ‘He had never turned his back yet, and would not now,’ and stood all the fire” and he added, ‘General John Guise, a very brave officer but apt to romance’.

The aptness for romance certainly also meant his passion for art. He was not only an art collector, but also an art advisor to Frederick Prince of Wales and the 1st Duke of Chandos and he conversed easily in art matters with Queen Caroline. Furthermore, his interest in disseminating art brought him in contact with Jacob Christoph Le Blon’s invention of colour printing; he backed Le Blon’s business, believing this would make it possible to produce full-colour reproductions of paintings - an investment that was less successful than expected.
But his greatest achievement was the accumulation of an exceptional art collection and by leaving it to Christ Church, he had enabled the creation of the first public art gallery in Britain. When the paintings and drawings arrived in Oxford in 1767 they were hung in Christ Church’s new library. The lower part of the library, initially designed as an open loggia, was redesigned as a gallery. The upper part housed the actual working library and the reading room. This part of the library was only accessible to members of the House, but the lower library (the gallery) was open to the public and available to everyone who was interested. In 1776 the first catalogue of the collection was published and thirty years later an image by Rowlandson shows a Mrs Showwell giving a tour of the collection.

The Picture Gallery will commemorate General John Guise’s bequest with a number of events, most notably with an exhibition of masterpieces from his drawings collection: Undisputed Masterpieces – General John Guise’s Swans – Leonardo, Michelangelo, Titian (until 5th October 2015). We had to restrict the artists mentioned in the title to the most recognisable names, but other drawings which can take one’s breath away are for example: Bellini’s Portrait of a Man, one of the most striking Venetian drawings in Britain, Verrocchio’s Head of a Woman (according to Prof Christopher Butler, ‘by far Christ Church’s most beautiful possession’) and the striking and rare drawing of Rachel and Jacob by Hugo van der Goes. These works on paper are the pinnacle of Renaissance draughtsmanship. Guise knew it and wanted to share them. We should, therefore, remember and celebrate this exceptional 18th century man, by endorsing his belief that art plays an important part in the overall education of the individual and that it encourages empathy, creativity and genius. Guise’s vision of equality, interdisciplinarity and accessibility achieved then what we are looking for today. He also believed in what the artist and art theorist Jonathan Richardson wrote in 1715: “supposing two Men perfectly equal in all other respects, only one is conversant with the works of the best Masters [...] and the other not; the former shall necessarily gain the Ascendant, and have nobler Ideas, more Love for his Country, more Piety and Devotion than the other; he shall be a more Ingenious, and a Better Man.”

Far left: Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) Grotesque head of a man in profile to R.
Left: Giovanni Bellini (1430–1516) Portrait of a Man
Below left: Hugo van der Goes (c.1437–1482) Jacob and Rachel
Christ Church is about to commence an ambitious conservation plan of many of its paintings, drawings, prints and other items. The next edition of *Christ Church Matters* will explain in detail, but to mark the 250th anniversary of the Guise bequest it was thought fitting to start by cleaning and restoring the bust of General John Guise, which was badly damaged in the Loder’s Club Peckwater bonfire of 1870. The cost of this might be as much as £10k.

Should any member or friend of the House wish to contribute to this cause donations would be most welcome, especially any Loder with a pang of conscience about that fateful night, 10th May 1870, when: ‘With the fire glow on their faces, they were left: Roubiliac’s Frewen, John Bacon’s Guise, an anonymous Gaisford, a bronze Marcus Modius, and the unique small statue of Aphrodite and Eros. The Loders went to bed. In the morning the statuary appeared to be irreparably damaged’ (Quoted from Adrian Fort’s pamphlet on the Loder’s Club).

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**THE BUST OF JOHN GUISE**

**THE CHRIST CHURCH PICTURE GALLERY CONSERVATION PLAN**

Dr Cristina Neagu (Special Collections, Christ Church Library) gives an update on the Hebrew Cataloguing Project.

**Used in cartography** for regions that have not been mapped or documented, *terra incognita* perfectly describes one of the Library’s most exciting collections: that of Hebrew early printed books and manuscripts. At the moment the collection is indeed still little explored. However, this will soon change dramatically, for, as a result of a recent successful application to Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe, the Library has received a significant grant to catalogue the collection, and we are pleased to report that work on its priceless holdings has started on 1 April 2015.

The plan is that the collection will be searchable via unified online catalogues (SOLO, in the case of the printed books, and the Bodleian Hebrew MSS catalogue, for the codices). Rahel Fronda, Deputy Curator of Hebraica and Judaica at the Bodleian Library, is now in charge of the study and cataloguing of the Hebrew early printed books collection. The Hebrew manuscripts will be catalogued and added to the online platform currently being developed by the Bodleian Library. In charge of this is Sabine Arndt. She was Project Manager of the Genizah Digitisation Project. The Library came well prepared, as ahead of the cataloguing projects, we have initiated studies on aspects of the Hebrew collections. Among those involved were Dr César Merchán-Hamann (Hebrew and Judaica Curator at the Bodleian Library), Jeremy Pfeffer (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), and Brian Deutsch.

Although we are now only at the beginning of the process of in-depth scrutiny, both the manuscripts and the early printed books have started to reveal unique and exciting treasures. Before the project started, the number of printed volumes in the Hebrew collection was estimated at c. 2,000. It is however likely that there are well over 3,000 individual items, as several works have often been bound together in one single volume. By slowly piecing together clues and bits of information scattered throughout their pages, we have started discovering some of their former owners. Among these are John Morris (Regius Professor of Hebrew at Christ Church between 1626 and 1648), Edward Meekerke (1590-1657; Regius Professor of Hebrew between 1620-1626) and Thomas Marshall (1621-1685, Rector of Lincoln College in Oxford). The variety of subjects that the collection covers is remarkable. There are dictionaries, grammars, Biblical and rabbinic literature, polemical writings, theological works, as well as kabbalistic literature. Without doubt, this is the result of systematic collection of seminal works in the field of Jewish and Oriental studies over nearly 400 years.

It is likely that many books are the only copies in Oxford. We have already discovered some rare first editions and Hebrew incunables. The *Zohar*, printed in Mantua-Cremona 1558-1560, and
Prophetae priores hebraice published in Soncino, 1486, are just a couple of such noteworthy examples. Other details about the making of these books and their individual histories include censorship deletions and signatures by well-known censors (Renato da Modena, Camillo Jaghel and Luigi da Bologna), manuscript and early print waste that has been used in their wide variety of bindings (e.g. Oxford 16th century bindings, calf, vellum, marbled paper, paper boards, pigskin, cloth, half calf, reversed leather). The printed collection is additionally valuable for its unique annotated copies. Several volumes have extensive notes by John Morris, as well as Latin and Hebrew marginalia in Thomas Marshall’s hand. Some works have been donated to the College by their authors with a dedication. A very special case is that of the Sefer Mikhlo ("Book of Completeness") by David Kimhi (ca. 1160-ca. 1235), printed in Venice in 1545 at the workshop of Daniel Bomberg. The copy at Christ Church is unique (and a perfect candidate for digitization), as it is interleaved with copious 16th or 17th century handwritten notes in Latin. It might have been intended as a working copy for students of Hebrew in Oxford. Previous owners of the book include William Eyre and Mr. Nettles.

The manuscript collection is smaller in size. However, in terms of content, it is refreshingly wide-ranging and challenging. Codices contain medical, philosophical, mathematical treatises, as well as rabbincs, homiletics, apologetics and kabbalistic texts. Some are original works by Jewish scholars, others are Hebrew translations of Arabic texts, many of which were themselves commentaries of classical Greek works. The majority of manuscripts date from the 15th to the early 17th century. Several codices include unrelated manuscripts from different sources. Some of these were repaired in the past (we could identify traces of 18th and 19th century conservation work) and, when they were rebound by craftsmen not familiar with Hebrew, pages were moved out of sequence.

The careful examination of the collection by Hebrew specialists is expected to produce significant revelations. Aspects of work conducted so far is available online, with two important manuscripts fully digitized (www.chch.ox.ac.uk/library/digitization/hebrew-mss-digitized). We are deeply grateful to both Christ Church alumni and the Governing Body for their generous support, and we hope that soon we will be able to secure all the funding we need to complete the project. Please contact simon.offen@chch.ox.ac.uk if you wish to help.
Left: Professor Sarah Mortimer at the launch.

On the 3rd February we celebrated the official launch of IntoUniversity Oxford South East, a local learning centre created from a partnership between Christ Church, the University of Oxford and the children’s educational charity IntoUniversity. This project has been made possible by the generous gift of £250,000 by Anthony Ling (1984), which has enabled us to fund the centre for 5 years.

The centre is based in Blackbird Leys, one of the most教育ally and economically deprived areas in the UK. They are working with local schools and teachers to offer educational support to 900 young people each year, tackling educational disadvantage, and inspiring them to achieve. The centre provides after school academic support and mentoring, alongside programmes for primary and secondary school groups.

IntoUniversity’s work has an undeniable impact on children’s futures, with 77.1% of their students progressing to university in 2012, compared to a national average of 34% for state schools, and 18% for students on Free School Meals. The effect of their work on local children’s aspirations and attitude to learning shines through when classes come to visit Christ Church: in their confidence in talking to our students and tutors, their enthusiasm, and their excitement about the future.

The centre has been up and running since October, and the students, senior members and staff of Christ Church have been a vital part of its success, by volunteering as mentors and tutors, and supporting their visits here. It’s been a pleasure to host a wonderful range of events, including a week inspiring future medics, and most recently a revision day for GCSE and A-level students. The ‘graduation’ days are a particular highlight: after spending a week with the team at the centre, each class comes to spend a day with us, culminating in a graduation in the Upper Library, proud parents in tow.

IntoUniversity Oxford South East has already done fantastic work in our local community, and we look forward to helping the centre flourish in the years to come.

Below: Graduation in the Upper Library.
Editorial

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

There’ll be trouble...

John Bickersteth (1946)

I was elected to the XX Club fairly early on in the two years I was up (1946-8). It’s not active now but it was lively then as a debating and dining society – although maybe that is the wrong order! We debated such vital matters as Henry Ford’s dictum that ‘history is bunk’, and we dined rather well. After one merry May evening four or five of us made for Mercury for a late dip, whereupon inevitably the burly and authoritative figure of the Head Porter came striding across Tom Quad as we were undressing. ‘There’ll be trouble’ someone said. The porter made straight for little me. ‘You’ll be wanting me to take your watch, sir,’ he murmured kindly. The war was over, and these marvellous Christ Church servants enjoyed seeing harmless traditions surface again.

CCAN at a glance:

Christ Church events (p. 20)

Old members involved in the Leisure Industry (p. 22)

Book reviews (p. 24)

Christ Church Cathedral Choir (p. 25)
Events
March and April were busy months for events – at the House, on the river and overseas.

Boat Club
Torpids W1 and Summer Eights M1

Boat Club Society dinner
LEFT TO RIGHT: Coach Mike Genchi and his wife Jean; the drinks reception in the Master’s Garden; the Dean was guest of honour.

Farewell to Ralph A farewell recital and reception was held for Revd Ralph Williamson on 11 March in the Cathedral.
Overseas events  The Development & Alumni Office arranged events for the Dean to meet Old Members in Hong Kong and Singapore in March, and in New York, Washington and Vienna in April.

1965 Gaudy  On 20 March we welcomed Matriculands from 1965 for their Fiftieth Reunion dinner.

“P” Club dinner  The “P” Club held their first London dinner for 30 years at the Savile Club.

Family Programme reception  The Dean and Emma Percy kindly hosted a summer reception in the Deanery Garden.
I am hesitant to say that working in the leisure industry as I have done, was a direct consequence of being in the House. Although there was plenty of leisure time during my three years studying law, all it really did was put more pressure on the time immediately prior to Finals. Whilst I had a background with horses and ponies, it was only when I came to Oxford that I had the opportunity to participate in some further equestrian sports and was a Polo Half Blue. I also rode in one of the last Oxford vs Cambridge point-to-point races, although with no distinction, being third of three finishes. I ceased playing polo when I left university but did continue riding at point-to-points.

Having qualified as a Solicitor and worked for some time in the marine industry, I found myself by chance running Haydock Park Racecourse and therefore had an immediate direct connection with the horseracing industry. I had more connection with jumps racing than flat racing but clearly got to know those in the flat racing industry very quickly. The opportunity arose to move to Aintree, home of the Grand National, in 1993 and I was there for 15 happy years going through the considerable traumas of a false start, a crowd evacuation following an IRA bomb threat, Foot & Mouth Disease and of a false start, a crowd evacuation following an IRA bomb threat, Foot & Mouth Disease and many other vicissitudes. From Aintree I went to be Chief Executive at Ascot and have had 8 wonderful years being responsible what is the world’s greatest racecourse.

It is difficult to draw any direct connections between life in the House and my career in the leisure industry except that I did have the opportunity at the House to engage in some activities which gave me an insight into the issues which many of those in the horseracing industry have to deal with on a daily basis. Horses are very fragile creatures and have been bred for 300 years to run faster and faster and there are many disappointments along the way to the rare successes that arise. Consequently, as an owner or a trainer, you need to be ready for much disappointment and very little euphoria. I suppose the euphoria was finishing Finals after a considerable amount of pressure and there were many disappointments along the way with poor Collections or weekly essays presented to my tutor.

Working in the leisure industry means that it is very important to ensure you have an engagement with all categories of customer and understand what those customers want when they attend a major event such as the Grand National or Royal Ascot. The range of customers is very wide and one of the charms of the House was its complete cross section of fellow students, all of whom one was able to engage with.

I certainly look back on my time at the House with affection and as a very formative part of my career.

A large part of the middle four terms was spent simply avoiding lectures (at that time prelims were sat at the end of the second term, then there was a glorious exam void until finals) and spending most of the day lounging in Wildean sloth. There was (sadly gone) an excellent tobacconist in The High who would feed my need for exotic tobacco, often enjoyed in the comfort of the Law Library during occasional attempts at ingesting learning.

Christ Church therefore, for one who had known it since eight years old as a cathedral chorister, was a congenial place to waste three years in doing very little, getting an astonishing second (in Geography) – and two incalculable events: meeting Heather, my wife to be – and five people with whom I shared an elegant mansion on Boars Hill in our third year, and who would remain firm friends - Nick (now Professor) Polunin, my room-mate, William Chatterton (the Rev), his Italophile operasinging room-mate Stephen Mesquita (until recently a publisher of travel books), rowing blue Mark Eastman (now pub owner), and Charles Earle, who has just finished yet another successful career in insurance. For many years we met tangentially, attended each others’ weddings, family funerals and bar mitzvahs. Then around 1995 we started walking together. Once a year, for weekends, we would do a stretch of major walking – and when the opportunity came to...
start my own walking company it was a natural
extension of these comradely trips. Now, of
course, every year we do On Foot’s routes in
Europe – all rather naturally focussed on good
food and wine as well as exercise, and the length
of trip has extended from a weekend to a week
as our time becomes more our own in our late
middle age. See the photo to find out what
happens to House men.

So Christ Church – as a seat of learning I
failed you, but friendships made then were the
foundation of a second, supremely satisfying,
career.

Simon Scutt is founder and Director of On Foot
Holidays, www.onfotholidays.co.uk.

Richard Slocock
(1970) Biology

Autumn 1973, the golden Oxford years swapped
for life as a farm hand on a small stock farm
high on Dartmoor. It was tough but Sally and
I had just married and we faced the adventure
together. Oxford had given me the peerless
surroundings of Christ Church, wonderful
friends and importantly a successful change
of course to ‘Agriculture and Forest Sciences’.
In this Christ Church and the tutors involved
were highly supportive thus encouraging my
buoying interest in rural life. I remain grateful
for this accommodating response, in particular
Mike Soper, the House’s eminent agriculturalist
at the time, was hugely helpful.

The Agricultural Department in Parks Road
(what a delight to sneak across the road and
watch the cricket!) became my second home
in Oxford; would the scientific, decidedly
non practical, course lead to a sound career
in agriculture? Life in tied farm cottages on
Dartmoor and Exmoor came to an end with
the purchase of part of a small estate in Dorset’s
delightful Piddle valley. This seemed the chance
to establish the idyll of a modest but sustainable
family farm, however the erratic economics
of a small farm (and interest rates at 15%)
took its toll and our farming venture was not
to last. Happily, however, ‘something turned
up’. Our slice of Dorset has a little ribbon of
magic flowing through it – namely the river
Piddle, a pellicid chalk stream of the kind so
revered by trout fishermen. The Piddle and its
big sister the Frome are brimming with plump
brown trout. Here, perhaps, was the foundation
of a leisure enterprise. Much work and more
financial risks followed, but by Spring 1981
we were open for business. We had built a new
house, dug a small trout lake and I had become
a qualified fly fishing instructor. Not perhaps
what the Agricultural Department had in mind
for me, but in truth adaptability is the reality of
rural life.

The leisure industry has proved a kind mistress,
the market is huge and far more reliable than
the seemingly inevitable volatility of a small
farm. Some 34 years on Wessex Chalk Streams
Ltd offers c.12 miles of river to our loyal
customers, plus a string of small lakes on our
own land and B&B accommodation. I have
campaigned endlessly to maintain and improve
the fragile environment of the chalk-steam,
globally a rare phenomenon, and along the way
co-founded a successful charity, the Wild Trout
Trust, with Charles Rangely-Wilson (1984)
a fellow Member of the House. A property
business on the side has helped but essentially
the insatiable demand for rural leisure, the
ultimate de-stressing tonic, has taken Sally and
me from Oxford days to salad days.

www.goflyfishing.co.uk

James McKay
(1991) Classics

“The great misfortune of my life,” wrote Robert
Burns, “was the want of an aim.” It is a sentence
that resonates much with me, except that it hardly
feels like a misfortune.

I had a scattershot time at the House, reading
voraciously (sometimes even the books I was
supposed to be studying), acting in plays,
politic in the JCR and in OUSU, running
shows in the Undercroft, sleeping hardly at all. 20
years on, little seems to have changed.

In millennium year, at the age of 27, I stood up
for the first time in a room full of people and
performed ten minutes of poetry I had written.
Since then, what is now called “spoken word”
grows from a niche enthusiasm to clubs,
newspaper features and festival stages; I’ve been
watching it, astonished, at close quarters, and
even helping it along.

Quick plug: come and see my poetry show, The
Boy With The Moomin Tattoo, at the Edinburgh
Fringe this August. Details at

It’s still not a living, though. For that I had the
great good luck to stumble into the world of tour
management, a precarious kind of work but one
that has kept a roof over my head for a decade
(my partner Tim and I recently moved out of
London to Gravesend in Kent), and only takes up
half my year.

The bulk of my work is with coach groups of up
to 50 people, for whom I am a combination of
entertainer and educator, salesman and shepherd,
and who are my responsibility from the moment
I meet them to the end of the tour, days or weeks,
and sometimes thousands of miles, later.

The ability to deliver accessible, entertaining
commentaries on the microphone while
remembering how many of the group are
vegetarian and calculating the profit on an
excursion to the Moulin Rouge, not having slept
properly in a week, feels like nothing but an
extension of my Christ Church days. My classical
background, meanwhile, has enabled me to find
work in Italy, Greece, and Turkey: I have recently
joined the board of a small tour operator called
Westminster Classic Tours, for whom I am
developing a new route for 2016, across northern
Greece in the footsteps of Byron.

With poetry tours like this one, some at least of
the streams of my career (and this has been the
short version) seem about to converge. Maybe
not having an aim is the way to find out what
one’s aim really is. Much to look forward to, and
more by the day.
The Ultimate Three Minutes

William Cummings

During a period of only twenty-four hours near the very tail end of the second decade of the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14-37), in the intimacy of a private supper, and in the glare of public execution, Prophecy became Sacrament; Passover became Eucharist: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” became “It is accomplished”; and in Jerusalem the curtain of the Jewish Temple was ‘rent in twain from the top to the bottom’.

William Cummings (1957), formerly Dean of Battle, in his book The Ultimate Three Minutes, has tried to explore the way in which the first generation of observers and believers interpreted these occurrences: the winding sequence of previous events, the far-sighted patience which assembled all these ducks into their cosmic row, and their inner significance for the rest of human history.

William Cummings (1957)

One Man Cooking

Shaun Dowling

One Man Cooking is an easy-to-use guide for the cooking novice. With over one hundred recipes ranging from starters and soups, through to meat and fish dishes, salads and sauces, Dowling encourages readers to broaden their repertoire in the kitchen and undertake new culinary explorations beyond ‘a can opener, a toaster and a tin of beans’. Alongside the recipes, One Man Cooking includes handy hints and tips based on Dowling’s own experience – as well as lists of essential kitchen equipment and store cupboard ingredients.

Shaun Dowling (1953)

How the French Won Waterloo (or think they did)

Stephen Clarke

There have apparently been some 80,000 books written about Napoleon and Waterloo. Well, make that 80,001. But I hope this one is slightly different.

It’s about the inability of some French historians to admit that their hero might actually have lost on 18 June 1815.

These perfectly serious, highly respected, historians go far beyond the old excuses (Napoleon was incapacitated by piles; it rained so that he couldn’t manoeuvre his artillery; his generals disobeyed his orders; it was Wellington who chose the battlefield, etc, etc.).

Former Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, for example, a keen Bonapartist historian, wrote a book recently alleging that that Waterloo was “a defeat that shines with the aura of victory”. As tragic heroes, standing alone against the world, the French won the moral battle and formed their defiant national character.

Shaun Dowling, One Man Cooking, is published by CreateSpace at £9.99 in paperback.
Napoleon himself claimed that he beat Wellington and only lost to Blücher, and many French historians since have expanded on his argument, portraying Blücher as the third boxer jumping into the ring to save his incompetent English friend.

Victor Hugo, whose chapter about Waterloo in Les Misérables is one of the finest pieces of writing about battle by anyone who has never fought one, even went so far as to claim that God decided the outcome of Waterloo – Napoleon was too much of a giant, and the 19th century could only get under way once he was side-lined.

The problem for the French – even those who criticize Napoleon for his dictatorial tendencies – is that the Empereur was their greatest-ever champion.

His empire represented the pinnacle of France’s status in the world. It’s impossible to accept that he might have been in any way a loser.

And in many ways, of course, he was a winner – his laws are still in use today in several European and African countries (minus the more sexist clauses); the French education system is still basically Napoleonic, a matter of standing learners in rows and firing information at them to see who survives; and Bonaparte is undoubtedly the most famous veteran of Waterloo, with fans all over the world.

One of his black bicorn hats recently sold for 1.8 million euros to a Korean businessman who wanted it as an inspirational exhibit in the foyer of his head office.

My book explores all these ambiguities about history’s greatest Frenchman, and flatteringly, has also been published in French. It’s been very faithfully translated, too, except that the French have shortened the title – it’s just: Comment les Français Ont Gagné Waterloo. Bien sûr.

Stephen Clarke (1978)

Stephen Clarke, How the French Won Waterloo (or Think They Did), is published by Century at £14.99 in hardback.

Binsey

Lydia Carr and Russell Dewhurst

In his foreword to this large-size paperback the former Dean, Christopher Lewis, underlines the centuries old tie between Christ Church and Binsey which, since Saxon times has remained agricultural and recreational open space within walking distance of the centre of Oxford.

From at least the 12th century, Binsey was owned by St. Frideswide’s monastery, whose successors are today’s cathedral and college. Then there was that 19th century maths don from the House, sculling up-stream with his young passengers, picnicking and concocting tales of white rabbits and treacle wells.

The well, at least, is extant and fully documented in this informative book. Some of its content is not new, notably John Blair’s formidable (lots of Latin) essay on ‘The Legends of St. Frideswide’, first published in 1987, now being made available to a wider readership.

Later, perhaps less taxing, chapters cover every aspect of Binsey life, its sacred character, its pilgrimages, landscape, agricultural economy and its appeal to Oxford’s literati, among them Lewis Carroll and Gerald Manley Hopkins; all benefit from cartographic and photographic illustration.

The two final chapters expand on what the book alleges to be ‘an old Binsey saying’ – First the church, then the Perch; Mark Davies, author of the chapter on ‘The Perch and its Predecessors’, construes this as ‘first pay your respects to the Lord, then… your pennies to the pub landlord’. The ‘Perch’ may well be the single feature of Binsey likely to be recalled by generations of House undergraduates; even for the most ancient of us, however, this book has considerably more to offer.

Chris Sladen (1973)

Lydia Carr and others ed., Binsey: Oxford’s Holy Place, is published by Archaeopress at £20 in paperback.

The Secret War

Hugh Trevor-Roper

More than ten years after his death, the work of Hugh Trevor-Roper, tutor and Censor at the House in the 1950s, continues to appear freshly in print.

Two years ago I.B. Tauris published his Second World War journals, an eye-opening account of life in the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS); now the historian Edward Harrison has collated and edited Trevor-Roper’s considerable body of published work on the same subject – British intelligence during the war against the Axis and the subsequent ‘Cold War’ period.

Much of the material now reproduced may be familiar to students of the period, available either in book form (including Trevor-Roper’s account of the ‘Philby Affair’) or as archived press
articles from his astoundingly fertile and often acidic pen. The book does, however, offer added value in the form of voluminous notes, both those of Trevor-Roper himself and the additional explanatory gloss provided by the editor.

It’s particularly good to see a couple of contributions, here published as an Appendix, from Trevor-Roper’s tutorial colleague Charles Stuart.

Both had served in the same Section of the intelligence service in wartime and it appears that Trevor-Roper would commonly defer to Stuart’s allegedly clearer memory of events from that time.

Stuart’s essays originally appeared in *The Spectator* (then edited by Nigel Lawson) and dealt with the traitor Philby in rather less colourful style than that employed by Trevor-Roper.

The two historians also seem to have agreed to differ on the exact socio-political background to the wartime top brass of MI5 and MI6, a topic which plainly interested Trevor-Roper rather more than it did Stuart.

**Chris Sladen (1973)**

Edward Harrison ed; Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Secret World: behind the curtain of British intelligence in World War II and the Cold War*, is published by I.B. Tauris at £25 in hardback

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**The Matter Factory**

**A History of the Chemical Laboratory**

*Peter J T Morris*

Peter Morris (1974) has written a fascinating and beautifully illustrated book that every chemist or science historian should read. Indeed, it should be a recommended text for those studying Chemistry and the History of Science.

It provides more than just a history of the laboratory and the laboratory building, the main milestones are highlighted: the central role of the furnace in the 1700s and 1800s; the chemistry bench with its bottle racks and reagents arranged around it; the supply of water and gas to the bench and later, as health and safety requirements necessitated change, the need for laboratory coats and the importance of the fume cupboard to synthetic chemistry.

Each of these aspects is rigorously and colourfully linked to the prominent laboratories of the period, and to some of the prominent characters - Lavoisier in Paris, Faraday in London, Bunsen in Heidelberg, Perkin in the Dyson Perrins at Oxford, Djerassi at Stanford.

There is even a mention of Dr Lee’s building in Christ Church, (now an extension to the SCR) where Soddy carried out pioneering radiochemistry experiments, nearly a hundred years ago.

The development of the modern laboratory building is carefully defined. These operate on a much grander scale, such as the GSK research laboratories at Stevenage, providing an exemplar for the new University Chemistry buildings in Bristol and Oxford.

Finally, the future impact on the 21st century laboratory of the advent of robotics, automated flow methods and minimization of waste and solvent use is considered.

Visionary and compelling, this is an authoritative and fascinating book that I strongly encourage you to read.

**David Parker (1974)**

Peter J T Morris; *The Matter Factory: A History of the Chemical Laboratory*, is published by Reaktion Books at £30 in hardback

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**Before Action**

*William Noel Hodgson and the 9th Devons*  
*Charlotte Zeepvat*

William Noel Hodgson (1911, Greats) never intended to be a soldier; he wanted to write. The Great War made his reputation as a poet but it also killed him. This groundbreaking biography traces his path through the pre-war world and explores why he set his own hopes and plans aside to join the army. His story is personal but it evokes the experience of a generation.

A hundred years on, Hodgson is not only remembered for his poetry but has become one of the best-known casualties of the first day of the Battle of the Somme. His own unit, the 9th Battalion, The Devonshire Regiment, lost every officer but one and well over half the men who went over the top that morning - most in the first half-hour.

*Before Action* draws on Hodgson’s own writing and the unpublished letters and diaries of his fellow officers, to recreate the experiences of a 1914 volunteer battalion. Through their eyes we see everything from the lighter moments of soldiering to battle at its most violent: at Loos, where Hodgson won the Military Cross, and the opening day of the Somme offensive, offering an important new explanation of what happened to the 9th Devons that fateful morning. It uncovers the hidden meanings behind some of Hodgson’s most familiar poems, and its wider themes of family and friendship, war, grief and remembrance, are universal.
The manor of Binsey was a possession of St Frideswide’s priory, then Cardinal College, and then Christ Church. As such, it is one of Christ Church’s longest-held estates. The land was difficult to manage, being prone to terrible flooding but the waters of the Thames created wonderful meadows which were divided between the college’s tenants in strips, so that everyone received a fair portion.

The inn appears on one of the prettiest maps in the Christ Church archive, by the King’s Surveyor, Richard Davis of Lewknor, dated 1792, but it is first mentioned in the archive in 1831 when Richard Gee leased The Fish with 7 acres of land. No doubt this is the Perch, which was first leased as a separate property in 1843. In 1871, the lease was, unusually, granted “for the life of the Prince of Wales”. It was described as a “public house, with a large club or dinner room, tea garden, [and] skittle grounds.”

The refurbished pub is warm and welcoming. The main building dates from the C17th with a thatched-roof, a traditional interior (including open fireplaces) and a 21st-century bar and kitchen setup.

The beautiful garden (complete with a shed bar open at the weekends) is the perfect place to catch the sun in the summer. And when it gets colder and wetter, there is a full-sized, custom built marquee, which is also available for private events.

The food is English farmhouse style with a regularly updated seasonal edge. Recipes are a mix of old classics and new inventions. Drinks include British real ale, craft beers and ciders, and a strong list of the best English wines, in addition to a well-balanced list from around the World.

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THE PERCH REOPENS

The Perch at Binsey is one of Oxford’s oldest and most charming pubs, Christ Church owned, it has recently reopened after substantial refurbishment. Right by the river on Port Meadow, in a location that all other pubs in the city envy, it is close enough to central Oxford to be walkable, and just far enough away to be a refuge from the hubbub.

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The refurbishment of the Perch includes a new and improved interior design with traditional features and modern amenities. The pub offers a warm and welcoming atmosphere, with a traditional bar and a comfortably furnished seating area.

The Perch is located on Port Meadow, right by the river. This makes it the perfect place to enjoy a drink and watch the boats go by. The pub is also close enough to central Oxford to be walkable, but far enough away from the hubbub to feel like a peaceful oasis.

The refurbished Perch is the perfect place for a quiet drink or a lively party. The pub offers a range of drinks, including real ales, craft beers, and a well-stocked bar.

The Perch is owned by Christ Church, and it has been a long-time fixture on the Oxford pub scene. The pub has a rich history and has been a popular spot for locals and visitors alike for many years.

The refurbishment of the Perch has added new features and modern amenities, while still maintaining the traditional charm that has made it such a popular spot. The pub now offers a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere, with a new and improved interior design.

The Perch is the perfect place to enjoy a drink, relax, and soak up the atmosphere of Oxford. Whether you’re stopping by for a quick pint or staying for a meal, the Perch is sure to make your visit to Oxford a memorable one.
Ovalhouse had quite a start to the year when a fire broke out in the Box Office in January, causing significant damage at source and smoke damage throughout the building. The cleaners raised the alarm and the fire was controlled quickly but the damage was extensive throughout the building: all floors, walls, cabling, electrics and some plumbing had to be replaced. The insurance company covered the majority of the £200k –worth of damage but the staff are reeling from the extra work, and there were unforeseen associated costs denting the annual budget by almost £15k. Ovalhouse was out of action for for 2 months. This didn’t stop them continuing to develop a wonderful piece of devised theatre, which eventually played to packed houses in April.

In “After All This”, Ovalhouse Drama Company explored the role of young adults trying to figure out their place in society: what perceptions there are to be changed, rules to be broken and voices to be heard. I took a friend to see this show who had never visited Ovalhouse before. Even before the show started I could tell she was impressed. The atmosphere in the busy café was infectiously energizing.

I explained that I only found out about Ovalhouse myself when I rather randomly turned up here once for a rehearsal for a play competition. For some strange reason, I felt compelled to ask at the Box Office who owned the building. Perhaps even more unusually, the answer came straight back that it was originally set up by “Christ Church in Oxford”.

Jane Dodd (1987) writes of ‘the sort of drama at which Ovalhouse excels. Taking previously unheard voices and extracting the wonder of their lives...’
The auditorium was so packed we could barely find two seats together. The set looked simple and elegant. Always a good sign. Multimedia and clever use of projection and lighting supported the performances beautifully. Fragments of lives intertwined before us: from a wry look at a boy band type obsession with politics to an effortlessly naturalistic performance considering supermarket savvy choices. Just how do you decide what to value and what to discard? The range of choice is baffling.

The juxtaposition of those who have plenty in comparison to two cousins sitting in bed on Christmas Day with their biscuit Christmas dinner, but still counting their blessings. Later the night club powder room is awash with sexual confusion as young girls apply a bit of lipstick and begin to comprehend the power they have and how easy it is to give away. A young man finds solace and salvation through drama after suffering post 9/11 racial abuse. Even the beginning of the universe is pondered in this far-reaching piece of theatrical joy.

This is the sort of drama at which Ovalhouse excels. Taking previously unheard voices and extracting the wonder of their lives and somehow bringing it all together in a piece of compelling theatre. The show rightly received an extraordinarily enthusiastic response from its audience, and from my friend in particular, who is Ovalhouse’s latest fan!

OVALHOUSE are currently fund raising to cover fire damage and for their annual Youth Leadership Programme. For more information or to contribute please contact Deborah Bestwick at Ovalhouse: Deborah.Bestwick@ovalhouse.com, 020 7820 7266

‘Just how do you decide what to value and what to discard? The range of choice is baffling.’

Left: Fire damage to the box office.
Fra’ Julian Chadwick (1975) Knight of Justice in perpetual Vows, traces the origins of the Order, its humanitarian work and the proposed beatification and canonisation of its former Grand Master, Andrew Bertie (1951).

Some members of the House may have seen a story in the media earlier this year about Andrew Bertie who read Modern History at Christ Church between 1951 and 1954.

The House has produced men and women of great distinction since its foundation: Fra’ Andrew Bertie is unusual if not unique among them in having been declared a ‘Servant of God’ by the Roman Catholic Church. Put simply, this is the first of four stages towards possible canonisation-official recognition by the Vatican that someone is a Saint.

Fra’ Andrew was born on 15th May 1929, a grandson of the Earl of Abingdon: his mother was the daughter of the 4th Marquess of Bute. After Ampleforth and the House he also studied at The School of Oriental and African Studies. He was commissioned into the Scots Guards.

For over 20 years Fra’ Andrew taught at Worth-the Benedictine Public School in Sussex. He was fluent in many languages (including Tibetan) apart from the more usual diet of European tongues. Those taught by him have fond memories and deep regard for his abilities.

In 1956 he joined the Order of Malta and in 1981 made his perpetual vows as a Knight of Justice. (Knights of Justice are those members of the Order who make perpetual religious vows and become known as ‘Fra’. He became Grand Master of the Order in 1988, holding that office until he died in 2008.

The Order of Malta is little-known in England unlike its Anglican sister organisation, the Venerable Order of St John. The official name of the Order is ‘The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta’: unsurprisingly it is usually referred to as ‘The Order of Malta’ or ‘The Order’!

The Order began in Jerusalem in 1048 when certain merchants from Amalfi were permitted by the Muslim authorities to found a church and hospital for Christian pilgrims: the leader of these is known to the Order as Blessed Gerard and regarded as its founder. The Order was from the beginning placed under the patronage of St John the Baptist. In 1113 the Papal Bull Pie Postulatio Voluntatis conferred upon the Order certain ecclesiastical privileges essentially making it answerable only to the Pope.
The Order flourished both in the Holy Land and in Europe but was in due course forced to move its headquarters first to Cyprus and in 1310 to Rhodes. The Order’s very impressive buildings can be seen there – albeit somewhat over-restored by Mussolini in the 1930s!

Suleiman the Magnificent forced the Order to leave Rhodes in 1523 and after a period of homelessness it was given the Island of Malta. The Order remained there until unceremoniously evicted by Napoleon in 1798. The Ottoman siege of Malta was repulsed by Grand Master de la Vallette-after whom the Island’s capital is named. The Order’s fleet played a significant part in the battle of Lepanto.

Throughout its history the Order’s principal works have been tuitio fidei and obsequium pauperum – protection of the faith and service to the poor. Today the Order is active in 120 countries. It has 13,500 members, 25,000 employees, and 80,000 volunteers. In the UK the Order runs numerous care homes jointly with the Venerable Order. A major international project is the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, providing maternity facilities for the West Bank.

As this is written, Order of Malta teams are in Nepal. Teams have been active in Lampedusa for many months. A brief look at the Order’s websites gives a much fuller description of what is undertaken internationally.

Because of its status and history, the Order’s chief is known as the Prince and Grand Master. Although the Order as such has no territory, it maintains diplomatic status with numerous countries and has presence at international bodies such as the UN. This helps the Order to carry out its humanitarian work internationally and also helps it be heard.

Grand Master Andrew Bertie was treated with honours and precedence; many decorations and awards were conferred upon him. It is clear that these were to him as nothing compared with the humanitarian works of the Order. He said ‘Our aims today are exactly as they were at our foundation, the sanctification of our members through service to the sick’

On 20th February 2015 a remarkable ceremony took place at the Lateran basilica in Rome: the opening of the formal enquiry into the Cause for the Beatification and Canonisation of Servant of God Fra’ Andrew Bertie. It is remarkable that this cause has been opened so quickly after his death, and it is a testimony to the holiness and devotion of Fra’ Andrew.

The workings of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints are slow and mysterious: I know that discussion of such subjects as miracles and relics excite many in this country. So I will simply say that Fra’ Andrew presided over the expansion of the Order both here and internationally to become one of the largest humanitarian NGOs in the world.}

‘Today the Order is active in 120 countries. It has 13,500 members, 25,000 employees, and 80,000 volunteers.’
In this 800th anniversary year of Magna Carta, Christ Church alumnus Derek Taylor (1965) examines the Great Charter’s long life and finds it’s not always been a beacon of freedom and justice.

Back in 1215, Magna Carta was like many a new-born in the Middle Ages: the odds were stacked against its survival. It was a sickly baby with abusive parents. Those who’d conceived it - King John and the barons – abandoned it within three months, and turned to attack each other. The Pope even declared it dead, and excommunicated anyone who tried to revive it.

Magna Carta itself looked ill-equipped for a long and healthy life. Most of its 63 clauses were peppered with feudal jargon - ‘amercement’, ‘trithings’, ‘halberget’, hardly words to echo down the ages. And even when we do stumble on a few lines to make
our hearts leap, historians step in and pour cold water on our enthusiasm. Take the most famous of its clauses, no. 39: ‘No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled…… except by the lawful judgement of his equals or by the law of the land.’

Stirring stuff. But note, these wonderful privileges applied only to ‘free men.’ In 1215, this was a small, specific group of around 1 in 4 of the male population. Women were entirely excluded. It’s upper class men looking after themselves.

But what about ‘except by the lawful judgement of his equals’? Trial by jury, surely? Actually, no. It just refers to a way of settling legal cases in the thirteenth century when it wasn’t clear which court had jurisdiction.

So where does the true importance of the 1215 Magna Carta lie? Well, it wasn’t an entirely sickly child. It had a sturdy heart that would help it live on. The Great Charter had shown that even a king must obey the law. It’s not spelled out. But many of the clauses are examples of this hallowed principle at work.

Magna Carta however wasn’t finished there. It was – and still is – a living thing.

King John’s premature death in 1216 gave Magna Carta new life. It was a dangerous moment. His heir, Henry III was only nine, and civil war was raging while a French prince claimed the throne. To appease the opposition, the young king’s regent hastily reissued Magna Carta. It did the trick, and a pattern was set.

Over the following centuries, whenever a king faced revolt, or needed to raise cash, he’d be forced to make concessions. And these were often incorporated into a rewritten Magna Carta.

Some of the changes were far-reaching. In 1354, clause 39 – which had been limited to a few freemen – was expanded to read: ‘no man, of whatever estate or condition he may be’ shall be punished ‘except by due process of law’. A wonderful right was established.

Then, during the mighty clash between crown and parliament in the seventeenth century, the opposition needed evidence of biblical proportions to combat the king’s claim that he had absolute power given him by God. The great jurist, Sir Edward Coke thought he’d found it in Magna Carta. He believed that trial by jury and habeas corpus had been granted in the original document. We now know he was mistaken. But it didn’t matter.

It was Coke’s commentaries on the Great Charter that became the inspiration for those fighting for freedom and justice, not only in England but in the new colonies which were to become the United States of America.

And again it was clause 39 – protecting individuals from all forms of arbitrary punishment – that led the way. The clause was incorporated into the constitutions of all 13 of the original American colonies. And then in the late eighteenth century when the new Americans won their independence and needed to define the rights of their nation’s citizens, they turned to Magna Carta. Its influence is clear in the final words of the Fifth Amendment of the Bill of Rights: ...no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.

Then because Magna Carta was predominant in the minds of the founding fathers, it has been cited no fewer than 900 times in America’s courts, over 400 of them in the Supreme Court itself.

And if we count the phrase ‘due process’ – a direct quote by the Fifth Amendment from the 1354 re-issued Magna Carta – then barely a second goes by but that someone isn’t using the Great Charter to challenge their boss when he threatens to fire them, to complain about an over-officious bureaucrat, or to object to a parking fine.

From defender of the privileges of feudal aristocrats in 1215, to watchword of Middle America today: two medieval Latin words that will forever be England’s glory: Magna Carta! 

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Derek Taylor’s book Magna Carta in 20 Places is available to readers of Christ Church Matters at a special discounted price of £14.99 (free p&p UK only).

Offer ends: 31st August and is subject to availability.

Order from: www.thehistorypress.co.uk or tel: 01235 465500

Offer code: HPMagna20 (for discount)
The vivid portrait of Sir John (‘JC’) Masterman in Christ Church Hall shows a diffident, kindly and distinguished don. Masterman taught History at Christ Church between the two world wars and later served for fifteen years as Provost of Worcester College Oxford. In 1957 he became Vice-Chancellor of the University. But his path was not as easy as this upward progression suggests. Masterman had to defy his parents to become an academic, as they had intended him for the Royal Navy. After years of naval training he rebelled and insisted on applying to Oxford. As a rule Masterman was exceptionally determined to get his own way, which made him a great competitor at an astonishing range of sports. During his time as a Christ Church tutor he competed at Wimbledon and toured with the MCC. In the week of his 45th birthday he took part in a golf competition, played in the South of England squash championship, and scored two goals against the Cambridge hockey team. Masterman had such energy that he was able to combine playing so many sports with his work as a highly respected History tutor and Christ Church Censor.

Masterman felt that he had much to prove, not least because he had missed the formative experience of his generation. On the outbreak of the First World War he was studying at Freiburg University in Germany, and was interned as an enemy alien.

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CHRIST CHURCH AND THE SECRET SERVICE

SIR JOHN MASTERMAN AND MI5

Edward Harrison (1972) tells the story of the Oxford don who became the master of the ‘double-cross system’ during World War II.

The vivid portrait of Sir John (‘JC’) Masterman in Christ Church Hall shows a diffident, kindly and distinguished don. Masterman taught History at Christ Church between the two world wars and later served for fifteen years as Provost of Worcester College Oxford. In 1957 he became Vice-Chancellor of the University. But his path was not as easy as this upward progression suggests. Masterman had to defy his parents to become an academic, as they had intended him for the Royal Navy. After years of naval training he rebelled and insisted on applying to Oxford. As a rule Masterman was exceptionally determined to get his own way, which made him a great competitor at an astonishing range of sports. During his time as a Christ Church tutor he competed at Wimbledon and toured with the MCC. In the week of his 45th birthday he took part in a golf competition, played in the South of England squash championship, and scored two goals against the Cambridge hockey team. Masterman had such energy that he was able to combine playing so many sports with his work as a highly respected History tutor and Christ Church Censor.

Masterman felt that he had much to prove, not least because he had missed the formative experience of his generation. On the outbreak of the First World War he was studying at Freiburg University in Germany, and was interned as an enemy alien. While his contemporaries were marching into battle on the Western Front, he sat out the war in captivity. Even worse, after an unsuccessful attempt at escape he gave his word not to try again. It was a disappointing war record for someone with great drive and a keen sense of personal honour. After the outbreak of the Second World War, Masterman grasped at the opportunity to make amends.

His chance to do so came from a former Christ Church pupil, Dick White, by 1940 one of the rising stars of the Security Service, or MI5. It seems Masterman’s entry into MI5 was also sponsored by Lord Swinton, Head of the Security Executive which supervised MI5. Masterman was recruited into the section handling ‘special agents’, captured German spies who had been persuaded to change sides and work for Britain. The section was led by ‘Tar’ Robertson, and formed part of Guy Liddell’s B Division combating hostile espionage. The special or double agents were co-ordinated by the inter-service Twenty Committee, so called as the Roman numerals for 20 were a double cross. Masterman was appointed chairman of the Twenty Committee, a surprisingly significant role for such a recent recruit.
The Twenty Committee met weekly to discuss what information might be passed safely to the Germans and to ensure that the double agents were not contradicting one another in their reports. The turned German spies were fed information to build up their credibility in preparation for a devastating final deception which would repay many times over for the material already given out. But there was a real danger that the agents would be exposed by some mischance leaving the whole operation in debit. Masterman showed considerable moral courage in his wartime work. If the system of double agents had crashed prematurely, his role would have been open to easy misinterpretation, particularly as he had spent the Great War so ingloriously in Germany. With good fortune the bluff was maintained and the double agents were partly responsible for encouraging the German delusion that the principal Allied attack in 1944 would fall on the Pas de Calais rather than Normandy. Guided by his chief ‘Tar’ Robertson, Masterman had played a part in perhaps the most important deception of the Second World War.

Before the war Masterman had never written academic history, but he had published two novels and a play. So in 1945 Sir David Petrie, the Director General of MI5, invited Masterman to write the story of the double-cross system. He did so very quickly, providing a concise and clear account of how the double agents were managed in individual cases and the general principles which could be drawn up for running such agents. Although most copies of the book were soon destroyed on Petrie’s orders, Masterman was allowed to take one back to Oxford.

After his return Masterman maintained contact with MI5 by acting as a talent spotter. In December 1945 the Deputy Director-General wrote that ‘If you can suggest anyone for our consideration, I shall be more than grateful.’ Masterman also kept in touch with David Petrie, who retired in 1946 and was succeed as Director General of MI5 by Sir Percy Sillitoe, an experienced Chief Constable. Guy Liddell, the preferred internal candidate, was passed over. As head of MI5 Sillitoe saw no need to stay in the shadows, as he much preferred the limelight. He exploited this hitherto secret role to seek publicity and relished pretending to shy away from photographers to draw their attention all the more. His behaviour within MI5 was equally bizarre and reduced the office to demoralization.

Masterman and Petrie were horrified by Sillitoe. They decided to use their influence to ensure that his successor as head of MI5 would come from within the Security Service, namely either Liddell or Dick White. In April 1952 Masterman saw Lord Swinton, now an influential minister in the Conservative government. Prompted by Masterman, Swinton influenced the Home Secretary into making an internal appointment. The choice fell on White. With his old pupil installed as head of MI5, not least because of his own intervention, Masterman judged it opportune to raise the question of publishing his book on the double-cross system. In December 1954 he suggested that he could adapt his book for publication by MI5. White replied that his legal adviser was dead against sponsoring such a project. Denied by his former student,
Masterman only revived his plan to publish his book as a piece of unfinished business when his term as Provost of Worcester was coming to an end in 1961. But his timing was unlucky. The Security Service was soon preoccupied by the dangerous contacts of the Minister of War, John Profumo. Besieged by the media over Profumo, a book drawing further attention of any kind to MI5 was the last thing the Conservative Government wanted. Masterman had to shelve his project again.

In the long run the image of the British Intelligence was tarnished not so much by the Profumo Affair as by the defection in 1963 of the Soviet spy Kim Philby. The revelations about Philby’s betrayal made Masterman all the more convinced of the need to publish his own book. In May 1968 he wrote to Dick White that ‘To control the whole German espionage system throughout the war, as we did, is surely a much greater contribution to the credit side than Philby’s treachery is to the debit.’ But White was still not wholly convinced. Masterman continued to press his old pupil, who by 1969 held the influential post of Cabinet Office Coordinator on Intelligence and Security. Eager to please his old tutor, White conceded that ‘we do not raise security objections to the publication of your book.’ But its actual publication proved as elusive as ever.

Masterman was running out of patience. He decided to cut the red tape once and for all by publishing his book in America. White was dismayed by this drastic action. He could not understand Masterman’s motives in wanting to publish and stir up a whole lot of trouble which he felt could only rebound on a distinguished career. Nevertheless, Masterman signed a contract with Yale University Press, which contacted the Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling, to seek publication in England as well as in America. The Home Office told the Attorney General, who considered that if Masterman had already sent the book to Yale, ‘this amounts to an offence under Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act.’ However the Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas-Home and the Home Secretary decided to see Masterman in an attempt to persuade him to withdraw publication.

Douglas-Home, another former pupil, was already wavering. He told his officials that ‘If I can’t trust my old tutor, who can I trust?’ Douglas-Home took Masterman to see Maudling, who had taken the trouble to read the book. Masterman won over the Home Secretary with White’s comment that there were no security objections to publication. With Maudling willing to countenance publication provided some changes were made, Yale University Press could go ahead. Yet the Director General of MI5, Martin Furnival Jones, wrote in fury to Masterman that ‘your action is disgraceful...When you left the Service after the war you signed an undertaking not to do precisely what you are now proposing to do.’ The book was published simultaneously in Britain and America. Masterman was certain that he had done the right thing in forcing through the publication of his book to offset the damage done by Philby: ‘sometimes in life you feel that there is something which you must do and in which you must trust your own judgement and not that of any other person.’ In addition to his many other achievements, Masterman made a significant contribution to MI5 not only during the war but also later by influencing the appointment of an internal candidate to succeed Sillitoe as Director General and finally by publishing a remarkable book about the wartime success of British Intelligence.

In order to improve the Garden Department’s ability to propagate and grow the plants needed to restock all the various garden areas, we have proposed to build a new purpose designed glasshouse to replace the current ad hoc collection of small, inefficient domestic style glasshouses in our nursery. Planning permission was granted last year, but having gone out to tender the cost proved to be prohibitive, so we had to rethink the whole project.

One of the main cost issues was the supply of gas to the building for heating. On looking for alternatives the Head Gardener found a contractor who has specialised in building glasshouses with green credentials. The Glasshouse design has thus been re-planned, making the whole design more efficient and sustainable with an air source heat pump for the heating, thermal screens to reduce the heating input required and rain water harvesting to reduce demand for mains water.

This, together with a reordering of the retained facilities and incorporation of a large neighbouring workshop, although it comes at a similar cost to that already proposed, partly due to the confined nature of the site and the lack of solid ground to build on requiring an expensive piled foundation solution, would give us a much more user friendly and efficient plant growing area with a greater degree of sustainability. If we are successful in funding and completing this project we will have a modern, efficient, environmentally responsible nursery built in line with our Conservation Management Plan’s policy on sustainable management and which would be the first such facility built in the Oxford area. Any support from old members and friends would be much appreciated. Please contact simon.affen@chch.ox.ac.uk.
New Walk has been transformed with the felling of nine old hybrid Black Poplars and the planting of 19 new Common Lime (See CCM 34). The House is extremely grateful to Old Member Dr. Javed Siddiqi (1984, Social Sciences) who donated the trees to mark Christopher and Rhona Lewis’ time at Christ Church.
When choosing my bedtime reading
I usually select novels with a significant component of escapism to whisk me away from the world of astrophysics and equations. I’m particularly fond of crime novels, my favourites are the Adam Dalgleish detective stories by P. D. James – there is something eerily compulsive about tales of murder in isolated communities. Her death last year leaves me and millions of others without something we’ve had for decades - the latent expectation of the next book.

Occasionally I break this habit. I am one of the last of the generation of physicists who were trained by some of those who worked on the Manhattan Project and I have long been fascinated by the clash of physics, morality and power that it embodies. Ray Monk’s biography of J. Robert Oppenheimer, A Life Inside the Centre, was thus irresistible.

Oppenheimer was one of the most enigmatic, brilliant, controversial and complex characters of the twentieth century. Very few scientists can combine his scientific contributions and his influence and impact on the course of history.

As a youngster Oppenheimer was astonishingly talented, exhibiting a prolific appetite for languages (he later became an accomplished Sanskrit scholar). In the 1920s he went to Harvard, caught the Physics bug, and spent time in the thick of the development of quantum mechanics, working in Gottingen (with Max Born) and Cambridge (with Ernest Rutherford – who was not impressed – he was looking for an experimentalist). He returned to the United States to establish leading schools of theoretical physics in Berkeley and Caltech.

The devastating consequences of the first uses of the atomic bomb in Japan, together with the realisation that a hydrogen bomb would be hundreds to thousands of times more powerful, led Oppenheimer to re-consider the wisdom of building such weapons, in particular the H-bomb. From his post war position in Princeton, as Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies (incidentally making him Einstein’s boss) he began promoting more openness and international co-operation on nuclear issues in Washington. Once the Soviets had exploded their first H-bomb this cause was lost and the arms race inevitable. Oppenheimer’s opponents seized on this new stance, combined with his earlier communist associations, to suggest that he was a Soviet agent. After a lengthy grilling by a Security Board his loyalty to the USA was confirmed but his security clearance was withdrawn. Oppenheimer was devastated by the tenor of the questioning and for most of the next decade withdrew from public life, focusing on physics, mostly through public lecturing. His rehabilitation by the American establishment came in 1963 through the Enrico Fermi Award which honours scientists for their lifetime achievement in the development, use, or production of energy.

Oppenheimer’s story is compelling for its juxtaposition of a great scientist and director, with the social and political climate of the times. Francis Bacon famously wrote about the pursuit of science that it should be motivated not just for intellectual enlightenment but also for “the relief of man’s estate”. Whether Oppenheimer’s oeuvre fits Bacon’s requirement will always be controversial, however it is a lesson to all scientists that his interactions with his political and military masters almost destroyed him. Time for the next murder mystery! 😁

Roger Davies is the Philip Wetton Professor of Astrophysics at Oxford University and a Student of Christ Church.
Gerald Parkhouse (1950) recounts the participation of Christ Church crews and oarsmen in the Henley Royal Regatta during the first 150 years of its existence. Taking official records together with newspaper accounts, archival material from the Christ Church Boat Club, and reflections from several former Boat Club Presidents, it charts the impressive contribution of Christ Church rowers at Henley.

Available now at £10.00 plus p+p.

from simon.offen@chch.ox.ac.uk
A half-day symposium to mark the 350th anniversary of the publication of Robert Hooke’s Micrographia, thought to be the first handbook of microscopy, and to applaud recent new developments in molecular-scale microscopy as recognised by the 2014 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, and the 2014 Centenary Prize of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

The event will be held at Christ Church, where Robert Hooke was an undergraduate from 1653 to 1658. The afternoon will include lectures on both the history and science of microscopy given by distinguished speakers, including TV science historian and expert on Robert Hooke Professor Allan Chapman, and Professor Eiichi Nakamura, 2014 RSC Centenary Prize winner, who is a pioneer of single molecule dynamic microscopy. The historical context of Micrographia will be described by resident academics of Christ Church, while other invited scientists will give perspectives on modern microscopy, including super-resolution microscopy (nanoscopy), of which Hooke could have had no conception. Following the lectures there will be a wine reception in the Picture Gallery. A selection of Hooke memorabilia will be available to view, including copies of the first edition of Micrographia held by the College Library.

This event is organised by the Christ Church Chemists’ Affinity Group and is supported by the Faraday Division of the Royal Society of Chemistry.