‘Maybe what they say is true...’

Appropriately with a new reforming Coalition Government standing before us our attention is fixed, in this Michaelmas edition of Christ Church Matters, on politics. Not only are the Old Members who have contributed most definitely ‘politicians who have read and thought’ but in other articles we also examine aspects of what the Dean refers to as the Christ Church ‘Community which works’.

The charitable objectives of Christ Church have been officially agreed for the first time and are described in Edwin Simpson’s piece on bringing the Foundation Charter up to date. There is a conference to mark the 300th anniversary of the death of Dean Aldrich, to which you are invited. It was he who oversaw an era when the House was ‘the supremely elegant finishing school for the nobility’, and Old Member Marcus Scriven contributes a lively article on the Lords today. And what more fascinating and political a subject could there be than Hugh Trevor-Roper, whose biography by Adam Sisman is reviewed by Sir Michael Howard.

Christ Church Matters exists to give the reader news of the House, but also views. Nigel Lawson’s article in the last edition elicited a number of outraged responses. We are pleased to include Dr Mark New’s reply in this edition. Whether or not you believe Lord Lawson to be ‘a travelled man that knows what he talks about’ this magazine is a place where Housemen and women should be able to air views with which their peers disagree. The views expressed are not official views of the college, and surely a Christ Church education gives its members the ability to evaluate evidence and form their own opinions? We welcome your contributions and comments, to which we will always respond, and whilst there is not room to publish letters you can post remarks online on HouseProud.

Importantly you will find as an insert in this issue a letter from the Dean. The future of Higher Education is uncertain at present but his letter will bring you up to date with what we do know. Admissions interviews are happening amidst the frost and snow this week and one can not fail but to wonder at the idealism of the young, both present and past, such as Arthur Abrahams (P.7). The fundamental question we have to answer is how are we going to preserve all that is special about Christ Church in the future? What courses will be available and how will they be taught? Who will be able to afford to study here? Will independence of thought depend upon financial independence?

Some already say there is too much politics and not enough philosophy in the world. The public seems to believe we need more law in the form of judges to oversee the politicians. Can we balance the realities of ‘war and war’s alarms’ with dreams of being ‘young again’? Who or what will we be holding in our arms in the future?

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Dean’s diary

You will be surprised to learn that when the Censors and I get together for our regular sessions, we do not talk solely about matters of educational strategy or high finance. As is the case in every Oxford College, ‘bike sheds’ drop in on the agenda. You might think that the subject lacks pizzazz, but that is not wholly the case, for other than feet, there is no other way to get around in Oxford and the two sheds are part of life lived here. Members of the House need to get through the door (a challenge with a bike), find a space for their steeds and have reasonable confidence that they will be waiting for them, champing at the bit, on return. If bike sheds had been part of my job description in 2003, that should have been no cause for alarm.

It is tempting (and, sadly, sometimes done) to rate what goes on here in order of priority. True, our statutes give us a religious and academic purpose; that is what we have been here for from the start. Yet those purposes cannot be pursued in isolation. Those who learn and those who teach need to be housed and fed, given libraries and IT facilities, enjoy that degree of the peace necessary for stretching study, and be surrounded by a community which works. It follows that the quadman and the person who serves in Hall is crucial to the House. What is more, good cooks and quadmen are hard to come by and need to be especially treasured once here.

Which brings me, by seamless logic, to scaffolding. Since I came there have been numerous opportunities for climbing and it is important to take them all, for the buildings are definitely a glorious part of the whole mosaic which is this place. We have been doing the workaday matters of maintenance and ensuiting (I claim to have discovered the first use of this despicable verb in the whole history of humankind: 2001) but we have also branched out and caught up on some massive projects.

Blue Boar was much the hardest and the most expensive, but the result is wonderful and the occupants enjoy it. In spite of (no, because of) its openwork 1960’s character, it now has a fine lecture hall, an exhibition space and 79 rooms, all with showers! Other original features have been added, like heating which works and roofs that slope.

Then there is the Library which was magnificent before and is now more so, decked out in its original colours, free of hessian, protected from fire, leak-proof and secure.

Last and least glamorous, although with the most exciting scaffolding, is Meadow Tower (Meadow 3) which has been renovated inside and out. Some of the rooms at the top were dangerous, so there are now two superb ‘vertical sets’ at the top. What is more, the tower stonework, under which numerous members and visitors pass, is now beautiful and safe.

To those who have helped, we are most grateful. I liked the scaffolding, but that would not have been much good without fine jobs done.
In 1669, Dr Richard Gardiner’s house burnt down. He had been a Student since 1607, and a canon from 1629. Having settled back into his accommodation after the upheavals of the Commonwealth, the loss must have been a shock for the seventy-eight year old. The lodging was in the south-east corner of Chaplain’s Quad, an old and dilapidated corner. The canons looked on anxiously as the fire crept dangerously close to the library – still then just off the cloister – and took a drastic decision to protect the ancient core of the college. The Meadow men were given orders to create a fire-break. Responding quickly, £5-worth of dynamite was brought in, and Dr Smith’s residence was blown up. Once the fire had been extinguished and the rubble cleared away, three new construction projects were begun in direct consequence. Firstly Fell’s Building was constructed on the site of the destroyed houses, to stand until Meadows went up in the 1860s, and then the Kilicanon lodgings were built for Gardiner. The third project was paid for by Gardiner. Determined that Christ Church would never suffer such a disaster again, a reservoir was to be dug so that there would always be a ready water supply. Very early in Christ Church’s history, the quad had been excavated to such that the walkways were higher than the centre; the disbursement book for 1599 shows John Taylor working “at the steepes in the great quadrant next to Mr Deane’s lodging.” Fell, or rather John Browne the labourer, dug it deeper still in 1668, and the spoil was used to raise and improve the Broad Walk. Gardiner died at the end of 1670, but not before he had seen the very centre of the quad excavated, and the new 40-foot pond connected up to the water supply from Carfax. Master carpenter, Richard Frogley (who was later to select all the timber for Tom Tower, including the bell-frame), created a fountain which was surmounted by a globe “beautified with the celestial planets” carved by William Bird. Bird was no mean sculptor; he had worked on the Sheldonian Theatre and had carved the elaborate memorials to the Fettiplaces in Swinbrook church, but his globe did not last long, in spite of the Chapter’s promise to keep Gardiner’s bequest in good repair in perpetuity. In 1695, Anthony Radcliffe gave the first Mercury to replace the neglected globe. But he was to meet a sorry fate, too, falling victim to an undergraduate prank when Edward Stanley, soon to be Prime Minister, tore the statue from its plinth in 1817, and it was not until 1928 that a new lead Mercury, given by Herbert Bompas, was erected in the centre of the pond. For six years, he stood on a rather unbecoming plinth that had been found in the corner of a local builder’s yard until, in 1934, he was remounted on one designed by Edwin Lutyens.
Now an icon of Christ Church, Mercury has seen mishaps and adventures, many of which are not mentioned in the archive, and about which the archivist would be delighted to hear! Legend has it that the canons’ children were given rides on the backs of turtles purchased for banquets and turned loose in the pond to keep them fresh. In 1809, the reservoir proved its worth when the south-west corner of Tom Quad caught fire but other stories abound. A painter, walking backwards to admire his handiwork on the face of Tom’s clock, tripped over the curb and fell in. And there was the swan which, bedecked with bow tie after a gaudy was found seemingly enjoying the water one morning in 1949, something that the Thames Conservancy people found less than amusing. And in the bitter winter of 1962/3 all but four of the fish perished, which prompted a thorough clean-out. The key to Tom Gate, apparently thrown into the pond in 1947, was retrieved along with £5 10s in cash. Perhaps it’s time for another hunt; who knows what riches may be laying at the bottom?

Loggan’s print of 1673 showing Bird’s globe.

Swan’s formal dress

The staff at Christ Church, Oxford, yesterday found a swan wearing a dress tie swimming in the pond in the quadrangle. Representatives of the Thames Conservancy captured the swan and restored it to its proper home, the Isis, after removing the tie.

— The Times, Thursday 16 June, 1949


Three undergraduates, being a bit the worse one Saturday night had thrown one of their party into Mercury finding a shoe at the bottom he tried to hang it on Mercury’s outstretched hand bringing the statue collapsing down on him and pinning him underwater (the statue is lead). The other two fortunately realised he wasn’t coming up and dived in, rescuing him before he drowned.

By pure coincidence Ron happened to come along just as this happened, about one o’clock in the morning, to witness the end of the incident. The pond had to be drained to remove and reinstate Mercury.

SWM’s formal dress

The staff at Christ Church, Oxford, yesterday found a swan wearing a dress tie swimming in the pond in the quadrangle. Representatives of the Thames Conservancy captured the swan and restored it to its proper home, the Isis, after removing the tie.

— The Times, Thursday 16 June, 1949
More Divine than Human

The Cathedral Choir continues to hit the headlines with its recordings and concerts. The recent recording of music from the Eton Choirbook, *More Divine Than Human* (Avie AV2167) caught the eye of voters for the prestigious annual Gramophone Awards. It was on the shortlist of three recordings in the Early Music category and continues to attract the attention of choral enthusiasts throughout the world.

Choral Music by Egon Wellesz

The other major recording which has appeared this year is of choral music by Egon Wellesz (Nimbus NI 5852). Wellesz was a Catholic convert from Judaism who emigrated from Austria to England in 1939 and spent the rest of his career in Oxford. He exercised an enormous influence on many composers and musicologists during the post-war period in Britain. A special post of Reader in Byzantine Music was created for him at Oxford, a title he held until he retired in 1956. He composed a significant amount of sacred music, including five Masses; two of which – the first and the last – feature on this disc. Wellesz's operas of the 1920s contain a significant amount of virtuoso choral writing, and this quality carries over into his church music, although on the whole they are written in a simpler, more traditionally tonal idiom. 2010 marks the 125th anniversary of Wellsz's birth.

Mozart's Requiem

A performance of Mozart's Requiem is always a special event, but it was particularly so on 11 November in the Cathedral when the work was presented by the Cathedral Choir with the University's Orchestra in Residence, the Oxford Philomusica and a star line-up of soloists conducted by Stephen Darlington. Amongst the soloists, the baritone Timothy Murfin was a boy chorister in the Choir in the 1980s and is now developing a stellar career as an opera singer, in demand throughout the world. Mozart's work is best known in the version by his contemporary Franz Süssmayr but on this occasion the performers used a completed edition by Dr Timothy Jones, formerly a Junior Research Fellow at Christ Church who is now Deputy Principal at the Royal Academy of Music. His version applies the latest in Mozart’s scholarship to the reconstruction of the material left behind by the composer to extraordinarily powerful effect.

BBC Choral Evensong

The Cathedral Choir’s live broadcast of Choral Evensong on BBC Radio 3 on 24 November was devoted to the celebration of the Feast of St Cecilia and had a very strong Christ Church flavour! The musical setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis canticles was composed by Howard Goodall, his Marlborough Service and the anthem, a setting of John Masefield's wonderful poem *Where does the uttered music go* was composed by the most famous of our musical alumni, William Walton.

"This is a stellar recording."  
BBC Music Magazine

"...spacious, rich, expressive performances."  
– Sunday Times

"...a disc to send the spirits soaring. Glorious beyond words."  
– Gramophone

To order your copy for just £12 (plus p&p), email carolyn.bull@chch.ox.ac.uk or call +44 (0)1865 286598
Future Concerts

Once again the Cathedral Choir is giving a concert in St John’s Smith Square as part of the prestigious annual Christmas Music Festival there. This is on Monday 13 December at 7.30 p.m. If Christ Church Matters has landed on your doorstep in time, you may still be able to get tickets from the Box Office at www.sjss.org.uk or by calling 44 (0)20 7222 1061. If you are unable to make it to the London concert, then there are two Christmas concert performances in the Cathedral as part of Music at Oxford’s International Concert series. Tickets can be obtained from www.musicatoxford.com.

USA East Coast Choir Tour 2011

This coming Spring, between March 7th and April 9th Stephen Darlington and the choir, wearing their woolly winter best, will be off to Charlotte, Washington DC, New York, Boston and Toronto. We have wonderful venues in which to perform, Covenant Presbyterian Church in Meyers Park, Charlotte on 29/3, St Albans Episcopal Church in Davidson on 30/3, Washington National Cathedral on 1/4, The British Embassy on 2/4, Saint Bartholomew’s on Park Avenue in New York on 4/4, Trinity Church, Copley Square, Boston on 6/4 and Grace Church on the Hill in Toronto on 8/4. There will be a reception after each concert to which all attendees will be invited.

We have generated considerable interest from the Public Radio network on the East Coast and hope to arrange both a nationwide broadcast in the US and through support from local radio stations a local broadcast of our concerts. We are also actively seeking a corporate sponsor for the trip and/or the receptions.

Inevitably there are costs associated with these events and we estimate that the total cost will be in the region of $100,000. We have already raised $55,000 but would welcome further donations from any Old Members, who, like me, feel that this is an important part of the choir’s work and that the choir is a vitally important part of Christ Church’s heritage.

We hope that the trip, principally through the post concert receptions, will generate a much broader level of interest in the choir and its work than has been possible historically. We also aim to begin to put together an endowment that will allow the choir to make at least one trip and one recording every alternate year. In the interim any financial support that Old Members may be inclined to give to this tour would be extremely welcome.

Please contact Chris Rocker: chris.rocker@chch.ox.ac.uk

© Top from left: St John’s Smith Square; St Louis Cathedral Basilica, taken during the 2005 choir tour; Grace Church on the Hill.

© The National Cathedral, Washington DC at night.
Shocked visitors to the Cathedral were greeted by screams, flailing swords, and a general scene of panic and commotion. Fortunately stewards were at hand to explain that they hadn’t walked onto a crime scene, but to a rehearsal of T.S. Eliot’s play *Murder in the Cathedral*, which had a highly successful four night run at the start of Michaelmas term.

The production was the result of an interesting partnership between Christ Church and the Oxford Playhouse, as part of their Oxford Playhouse Plays Out series. Following the success of productions at the Bodleian Library, this series aims to take theatre into other significant venues in Oxford. What made this particularly appropriate to Christ Church was not only the ecclesiastical theme, but that it brought together professional actors and Playhouse staff with some of the most talented members of the Oxford University Dramatic Society. The result was a youthful, energetic and gripping production that left audiences startled and spell bound. The producer used the venue to full effect, with the audience seated like a congregation in the midst of processions through the chancel and nave, actors and singers performing from the galleries, assassins hammering on the west door, and Becket murdered at the high altar. As the *Oxford Times* review put it, ‘Those privileged to have seen it (the performances had sold out within hours) will surely look back on an evening of theatre at once thrilling, thought-provoking and profoundly moving.’

Cathedrals have traditionally provided atmospheric venues for the performing arts. It is good therefore to have forged a link with the Oxford Playhouse, and hopefully the success of *Murder in the Cathedral* will lead to further collaborations. The Cathedral has also struck up a partnership with the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance. This prestigious dance school, which has given three performances in the Cathedral over the past year, has recently introduced an MA in Performance Dance. The MA includes a research project focused on dance and ritual in a religious context, using cathedrals and other religious buildings. Intriguingly, the Director of the Rambert School, Ross McKim, as well as being a leading international figure in the world of dance, also has a doctorate in theology.

As well as developing its work with the arts, the Cathedral is also expanding its educational activities. Thanks to the support of the Friends of Christ Church Cathedral, a part-time Education Assistant, Hannah Clegg, has been appointed to work alongside Jim Godfrey to strengthen links with local schools and to devise curriculum-focused resources for school visits, including seminars for sixth form students.

If you would like to find out more about services and events, we have introduced a regular e-newsletter which is available from cathedral@chch.ox.ac.uk. We also hope to begin web-casting services and events in the near future, as state-of-the-art audio web-casting equipment is currently being installed. Both will ensure that all associated with Christ Church – wherever they may be – can keep in touch with the Cathedral.
The Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance

War Memorial Notes

Christ Church Roll of Honour 1914–1918

The first man on the list is Arthur Abrahams and it may be of interest to see what we now know about him.

Abrahams, Arthur Charles Lionel (above inset), born 1898 in Kensington, only child of Sir Lionel Abrahams KCB and Lucy (née Joseph) Lady Abrahams (later Dame) of 18 Porchester Terrace, London W.

He had been an attractive child and had grown into a most lovable man, robust in intellect, affectionate in disposition, modest in his successes, imbued with a deep Jewish feeling and looking forward to being of use to his people. He gave early evidence of inheritance of intellect above the average from his gifted parents. In 1911 he was elected to a King’s Scholarship at Westminster School where he instantly became, and always maintained, immense popularity with his master and his fellow pupils.

In 1915 he obtained a Scholarship at Christ Church, Oxford but immediately joined the Army in accordance with his ardent longing to be of service to his country. He had already reached the rank of sergeant in the school O.T.C. and was gazetted to the Coldstream Guards. In the Army, as in school, his unassuming ability won him the confidence of his superiors, and the affection of his comrades. The commanding Officer with whom he served during the greater part of his service abroad has written to Sir Lionel Abrahams, ‘I knew your boy well and was commanding the battalion when he joined. He was most popular with all ranks, and he was particularly fearless. Arthur was a Coldstream Guarder through and through. He fought like one and he died like one.’ The colonel commanding the Guards wrote: ‘The regiment can ill afford to lose men like him’, and from the ranks there has reached his family the equally prized message: ‘The boys would follow him wherever he wanted them to.’

After he had been reported missing his parents learned that he fell on April 13th, when England lost a gallant son, Anglo-Jewry one of the most promising of its youngest generation, and his immediate family the joy of their hearts.’

Jewish Chronicle, June 1915

Lt Abrahams’ name is listed on panel 1 of the Ploegsteert Memorial in Belgium, commemorating more than 11,000 servicemen of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in this sector during the First World War and have no known grave.

His father, Sir Lionel, Financial Secretary to the Council of India, died the following year. One of Sir Lionel’s colleagues at The India Office, CMK, wrote in an obituary in the Jewish Chronicle 1919, ‘The loss of his only son in action was a blow from which he never recovered and cast an ever present shadow over his last months in which he struggled manfully against failing health.’

Please get in touch if you would be interested to join the researchers, have information about any of the fallen, have website building expertise or would like to talk to us.

Penny Keens – pkfirstworldwar@gmail.com
Readers of Christ Church Matters may be interested to hear something of Christ Church’s experiences of registration with the Charity Commission. Although the House’s activities are undoubtedly charitable, Oxford colleges have been exempt from registration until certain provisions of the Charities Act 2006 were recently brought into force. The process has not been without interest, however, and has involved a fairly detailed analysis of the origins of the present Foundation in 1546 and of its gradual reform since then.

The Foundation we know today was brought into being by Henry VIII by a Royal Charter enrolled on 4 November 1546. A few weeks later, on 11 December 1546, letters patent of dotation granted the Foundation its property. The existence of two documents led the Commission at first to suggest that there might be two foundations: the first, a Cathedral, founded on 4 November; and the second, a College, added on 11 December. Fortunately – at any rate for those brought up to believe in a unique joint Foundation – it proved possible to persuade the Commission that this analysis was incorrect. There is only one Foundation, and its single founding Charter (i.e. that of 4 November) in fact refers not only to a Cathedral Church and to a Dean and Chapter but also to ‘Students within the same Church’. Given the size and scale of the intended buildings it seems pretty clear that Henry’s designs were educational as well as religious. He wished to establish Christ Church to replace, in part, the existing Cathedral founded in 1542 at Osney, and in part Cardinal College, originally founded by Cardinal Wolsey in 1525 and later re-founded by Henry in 1532.1 Certainly, from a legal point of view, it is clear that only one Corporation was created in 1546 – Ecclesia Christi Cathedralis Oxon. ex. Fundatione Regis Henrici Octavi.

Although Henry drew up governing Statutes for the House, they were never actually brought into effect.
Remarking, it proved possible to govern the Foundation on the basis of mere drafts for more than 500 years, until the Christ Church Oxford Act, 1867. The disputes between the Canons and the Students leading to that Act are well known. Although Henry had provided for Students within the Foundation, later seemed a sorry one by the middle of the nineteenth century. Unlike the Fellows of other colleges they were excluded from the Governing Body, which in Christ Church consisted of the Dean and Canons alone, and were not even allowed to dine at High Table, which in Christ Church was reserved for noblemen. Meanwhile, the Canons received a stipend of, on average, £1,500 per year, while the Regius Professor of Greek still received only the £40 provided by its original endowment. It took time to be achieved, but the 1867 Act established the collaborative foundation we now know, where Dean, Canons and Students unite in a Governing Body on all matters save those exclusively diocesan in character.

It seems that at or about this time a second seal for use by the Foundation was made, the one to be used on behalf of the Governing Body as a whole, the other by the Dean and Canons in connection with Chapter business. The existence of two seals was also advanced by the Commission as a possible indication that two corporate entities exist; but again it proved possible to convince them otherwise. The 1867 Act cannot be construed as indicating that two corporate entities exist; but again it proved possible to convince them otherwise. The 1867 Act cannot be construed as indicating that two corporate entities exist; but again it proved possible to convince them otherwise. The 1867 Act cannot be construed as indicating that two corporate entities exist; but again it proved possible to convince them otherwise. The 1867 Act cannot be construed as indicating that two corporate entities exist; but again it proved possible to convince them otherwise.

The existing Statutes, which were last comprehensively revised in the 1960s, are very clear about these mechanisms — but rather less clear about what it is that the Foundation is actually to do! They contain no clear description of the objects (or purposes) of the Foundation at all — a remarkable omission to the modern mind, although apparently not to one of the middle of the 16th (or even the 20th) centuries. An appropriate formulation has, however, now been agreed with the Charity Commission, made by the Governing Body, approved by the relevant University Committee, and will soon be laid before Parliament before being brought into effect (mechanism remains all). The charitable objects of the House will be described as follows, reflecting — it is hoped — both the practical requirements of modern charities legislation and the discernible intentions of Henry in 1546:

(a) the advancement of religion, education and learning, in particular but not exclusively by:

(i) the provision, support, conduct and maintenance of Christ Church Cathedral as the Cathedral of the Diocese of Oxford, together with its Choir,

(ii) the provision, support, conduct and maintenance of Christ Church as a college within the University of Oxford, and

(iii) the promotion of research in any branch of learning;

(b) the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage and science, in particular but not exclusively by:

(i) the preservation and conservation of collections of articles of historical, aesthetic or scientific interest,

(ii) the preservation and conservation of the Cathedral and its appurtenances including the Chapter House, and

(iii) the preservation and conservation of the other buildings of the House and its curtilage including the Meadow.
Climate change

Some hard facts...

In the Trinity Term 2010 issue of Christ Church Matters, Nigel Lawson suggested that the rational course of action on climate change was to abandon the UK government’s aggressive legislative approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and to adapt to whatever impacts ensue from a continuation of our fossil fuel based world energy system. Some of his arguments are reasonable, if viewed from a particular moral or political-economic stance, and some are just plain wrong.

It is true that UK emissions-reduction targets are far more ambitious than most other countries, and that emissions from large emerging economies will continue to grow, probably until the late 2020s or 2030s. There are at least two reasons why the UK’s emissions targets should not be abandoned. First, developed countries have a moral obligation to reduce emissions sooner and faster than developing countries. If we accept that climate change is something to be avoided, we also have to accept that we have pretty much used up our share of the total emissions that will enable the world, with reasonable probability, to avoid dangerous levels of climate change. We cannot expect developing countries to shift out of cheaper fossil fuel energy sources if we do not lead the way. The UK emissions-reduction targets are based on this premise, and on an equitable apportionment of future emissions between developed and developing countries.

Second, it makes sound economic sense to lead the way in developing low-carbon energy systems. The UK’s economic future lies in designing technologies that the rest of world wants, rather than trying to compete in manufacturing that can...
be achieved at a fraction of the cost in developing
countries. It is true that China continues to build
coal-fired power stations, but it is also true that
China has installed more wind turbines in the last
couple of years than any other nation, and that China’s
research and development budget for alternative
energy technologies dwarfs that of the UK and EU.
China clearly expects to be transitioning to a
low-carbon energy system, and aims to provide
low-carbon technology to the rest of the world.
The UK needs to be ahead of the game, or risk
losing out in the green technology race.

Lawson makes much of the uncertainty in
projecting future climate change, yet there is a lot
that climate scientists are pretty certain about. At
least half the uncertainty in future climate
changes is not due to poor understanding of the
climate system, but because we simply do not
know what society will do to reduce emissions.
An aggressive emissions reduction policy would
limit global temperature changes to somewhere
between 1 and 3 degrees over preindustrial levels.
Lawson’s fossil-fuelled world would lead to a
warming of between 2 and 6 degrees, perhaps
even more.

The uncertainty about how the climate responds
to any give amount of greenhouse gas emissions
is still large. But it also has a skewed distribution:
the lower bounds of possible warming are well
constrained, while the upper bounds are poorly
constrained. This has important implications for
how we think about the risk of serious climate
change impacts. The chances of climate change
much larger than expected are significantly
greater than the chance of much lower than
expected changes, suggesting a precautionary
approach is appropriate. Also, higher levels of
global warming raise the likelihood of major
‘tipping points’ being crossed, such as the
irreversible melting of the Greenland Ice Sheet,
which would commit the world to six meters of
sea level rise. While this rise would occur over
several hundreds of years, the adaptation costs for
cities like London would be enormous; for low
lying areas in the developing world such as in
Bangladesh, the adaptation that Lawson suggests
we opt for would be nearly impossible, from both
a technical and financial point of view.

Finally, Lawson argues that climate impacts will
affect wellbeing in the developed world only
marginally, with living standards reduced by 10%,
from an overall increase of nine times those of
today. Yet he suggests that countries like the UK
should avoid any risk of reduced economic growth
due to the costs of moving away from carbon
energy. In effect, he is offering a ‘buy now, pay
later’ deal, where the UK buys and the developing
world pays, and we do not know for sure how big
the payments will be.

An alternative, precautionary view, would suggest
that it is worth investing now in a low-carbon
economy. The UK would lead the way morally,
politically and economically, and by showing what
is possible, could ensure that the rest of the world
follows suit and we avoid some of the worst and
most uncertain impacts of climate change.
After a triumphant Torpids campaign with many good performances at all levels it came as no real surprise that the ChChBC was in good form entering Summer Eights. With six men returning from OUBC (three Blues – including twin Olympians – and three from Isis) the House 1st VIII was always going to be swift – especially as the remaining two seats were taken by strong contenders from the 1st Torpid. It soon became clear that no-one in Oxford could match the power and skill of this crew – among the fastest ever seen on the Isis. Racing serenely well ahead of first Pembroke and then Oriel, they made the retention of the 2009 Headship look very easy.

The men’s 2nd VIII, made up largely of the 1st Torpid, were baulked of a blade only by the incompetence of BNC’s supposed 1st VIII who went down many places and allowed the House’s first night prey to escape – temporarily. All the same, the znds added further to their lead as highest 2nd VIII, bumped three 1st Eights and embedded themselves firmly in Division Two. After an absence of over thirty years from such a level, this was a remarkable achievement – even without the blade.

No such worries met the all-conquering 3rd VIII; they gained blades over four days in some eighty strokes total, bumping two first and two second boats and extending the gap between themselves and the next highest 3rd VIII. Thus House crews hold the Headships of the men’s 1st, 2nd and 3rd Eights – as last year – but by even greater margins.

On the ladies’ side, the 1st VIII was always likely to struggle rowing off fourth place with a courageous – but underpowered and under-experienced – crew.

There holding off of a much larger Wadham boat on the first day was a triumph in itself and, while they lost two places overall, they performed with real spirit to emerge with much credit. There is much potential within the ladies’ crews and it is likely that this is a temporary dip soon to be reversed.

The ladies’ 2nd VIII retained their Headship of the second boats, matching the position attained by any 2nd VIII in the days before universal co-education – in itself no mean feat given the changes in the structure of the Oxford collegiate rowing world over the last several decades. The 3rd VIII had the misfortune to be pitted against an experienced crew of graduates from Osler House and were bumped from the top-slot won last year.

With much to celebrate the Hall was again vibrant that evening with the vast Eights Trophy on display and the Dean giving his speech – as is now traditional – standing atop High Table. After champagne drunk from the trophy the crews and hundreds of supporters gathered in Meadows for the burning of the boat – the House’s fourth in succession. The evening was a suitable climax to a great Eights Week that not even a damp day could repress.

Overall then another glorious year in the annals of House rowing – with many accomplished performances and a strengthening of the Boat Club’s position – especially on the men’s side – as the leading Oxford college. One would have to go back over three decades to find a time of comparative dominance. Many thanks to the large cast of characters that rowed, coxed, coached, umpired – and supported these endeavours, especially our sponsor, Oliver Wyman; all of your efforts are much appreciated; they keep the House in the place where it wishes to be – on top.
Editorial

Since our last edition of Christ Church Matters the political landscape in the UK has changed somewhat. The May election resulted in 117 MPs from Oxford University, of which seven were from Christ Church, including our first ever female MP, Louise Bagshawe (1989).

Since politics has been uppermost in mind for the last few months, I am delighted that for this edition we have managed to persuade four distinguished Old Members to write about their experience of Westminster and Whitehall. They are two MPs – new boy Chris Skidmore (1999) and the old hand Sir George Young (1960), who is now leader of the House – a Government minister; Earl Howe (1969) and the distinguished former Cabinet Secretary Lord Armstrong of Ilminster (1964). Marcus Cranen (1988) meanwhile has contributed a witty review of progress in the House of Lords over the past 50 years. David Neuberger (1966), a former Law Lord who undertook what he says a colleague called ‘elective demotion’ to become Master of the Rolls, explains how a Christ Church chemist ended up as the second most senior judge in England and Wales. In a more unusual review, Tony Schur (1958) describes ideas for a fairer system of government put forward by a family of mice living underneath the corridors of power.

We have tried to capture the flavour of the events organised for us all by the college and members of the Association. You may have enjoyed the GCR 50th anniversary weekend. The Association’s AGM was held on the boat as the college and members of the board of benefactors’ dinner was. The thinking behind this break with tradition was to boost the numbers, but since we held the meeting in an icy sun-starved room below stairs, away from the refreshments and entertainment, this became more of a matter of principle than practice. We did manage to keep the AGM relatively short, however, helped by the knowledge that otherwise the boat would leave before we had a chance to take shore-leave and beetle into the pub.

“You may have been to the Board of Benefactors’ dinner and been part of the 1958 Rugger Eight Dinner or present to bid farewell to Professor Michael Vaughan-Lee at his retirement dinner. You may have been part of the drinks for media, tech and start-ups group. Whatever event you attended, I hope it led to a rekindling of old friendships or the creation of new ones.

As with the last edition, I am grateful to Freya Howard (1999) who has helped pull together the material for the events pages. If you are planning to go to any of our many events next year and would like to do a short write up for Association News, Freya or I would be thrilled to hear from you. I am not sure if writing up the event makes people shun you or seek your company, but I will tell you after the 1997-1999 Gaudy next year in the meantime may take this opportunity to wish you a merry Christmas and a happy 2011.

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

Old Members in government and politics

Christ Church after the war

I came up to Christ Church in October 1945 straight from school, to read Classical Mods and Greats. It was an interesting time to be up. We eighteen-year-olds were very much in a minority. Most of those who came up at the same time were war veterans, some already in their thirties, already mature, often with extraordinary experiences behind them, and keen to complete their education and get on with their lives. None of the less they were extraordinarily tolerant of and kind to us callow youths.

I had a set of rooms – sitting room and bedroom – in Meadow Buildings. There was a washtub and basin in the bedroom, but no running water; the scout brought hot water in a can in the morning. There were two lavatories on the staircase, but the nearest bathroom was three staircases away. There was no central heating. We had open fires in the sitting rooms in winter, for which we were allowed one hundredweight of coal a week. In the long and bitter winter of early 1947 that allowance seemed inadequate.

I rowed in the Christ Church First Eight in the Torpids in January 1945, coached by Gilbert Kline, who told us that, if we were to make a bump, we should have to ‘row like hell’ for the first minute: if we did not make a bump in that time, we should fall apart and be bumped. We did as we were told, and were lucky enough to bump the boat in front of us in the first minute of every one of the six races. I still have my oar to prove it.

...it was unforgettable to see the figure of Wolsey striding round Tom Quad in the gloaming.

One of the high spots of my four years was the celebration of the quatercentenary of the refoundation of The House by King Henry VIII in 1946. There were four performances of Henry VIII in Hall, Cardinal Wolsey was played by Michael Howard, and it was unforgettable to see the figure of Wolsey striding round Tom Quad in the gloaming. I played the Second Gentleman, and spoke the prologue.

There was also a great dinner in Hall, attended by The King and Queen. When the Dean proposed the Loyal Toast, ‘The King, the Visitor of Christ Church’, we all drank it, and cheered His Majesty, and then the...
whole company with one accord dashed their glasses to the floor, in accordance with the tradition that glasses from which The King’s health has been drunk in His presence should be destroyed so that they can never be used to drink any other toast thereafter. It was a very splendid moment; and the Steward was horrified.

The combination of ClassicalMods and Greats provided a rich intellectual and cultural discipline.

I read PPE from 1960 to 1963: the Politics came from Robert Blake, the Philosophy from Oscar Wood and the Economics from Roy Harrod. Three great tutors, complemented by Peter Pulzer who continues to impart wisdom. I only wish I had paid more attention to what they had to say during the tutorials. At that time, I thought I would follow a lucrative career in the City and so did not focus on macro-economic theory, the case for an elected second chamber or the importance of logic in political discourse.

When I arrived in the Commons and served in the first Thatcher administration, Roy Harrod’s Keynesianism was falling out of fashion. We Keynesians were routed to make way for the Friedmannites, before regaining lost ground in the wake of the recent banking collapse and the world recession. When I got to the Treasury under John Major in 1995, my knowledge of demand curves came in handy, but I was baffled to be told by one official that a policy I advocated might work in practice, but it didn’t work in theory. I learned much about Disraeli from Robert Blake, but that great Prime Minister’s tactics of dishing the Liberals have proved redundant, now I find myself locked in coalition with them. Oscar Wood’s tutorials took place on a different sphere, which many of us required an oxygen mask to inhabit. But his ability to spot a loophole in an argument has proved invaluable in the rough and tumble of debate in the House.

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While I was at the House, I met a number of fellow undergraduates who would be with me later in the House of Commons – Winston Churchill, Mark Lennox-Boyd, Douglas Hogg and Jonathan Aitken – and a far larger number who ended up in the hereditary House of Lords without the inconvenience of an encounter with the electorate. PPE gave me the big picture, but it didn’t prepare me for all the skulduggery and intrigue of politics – I got that from the Oxford Union and the Oxford University Conservative Association.

George Young (1960)

CHRIST CHURCH ASSOCIATION NEWS

On one occasion I was summoned by the Senior Censor, Hugh Trevor-Roper, to be censured for the minor disciplinary offence of having girls in my room five minutes beyond 10.30 p.m., the time when they were required to be out of the college. Waiting outside his room I noticed a bookcase with three shelves, each holding about twenty books. Looking more closely, I discovered that every single book was The Last Days of Hitler and that no one book was like any other: a great variety of editions, many in English and some in foreign languages. No wonder Hugh was able to drive a great grey Bentley, which he parked in Tom Quad.

My first tutor for classical languages was J. G. Barrington-Ward. Unfortunately he was taken ill and died in my first vacation. So I was sent to J. D. Denniston of Hertford College for my second term, but he too was obliged to retire sick. Then in my third term Denys Page returned from Bletchley Park, and he was young and strong enough to survive for the rest of my career in Classical Mods. For my special subject – Greek vases and sculpture – I was fortunate to be taught by Paul Jacobstahl, a world authority on that subject and a lovely man, whom Christ Church had welcomed as a refugee from Nazi Germany.

For Greats, I went to Michael Foster and then to Jim Urmson for philosophy, to Eric Gray for Roman History and to Robin Dundas for Greek History. Classical Mods and Litt. Hum could hardly be said to be vocational training if I was not going to be an academic. As Robin Dundas said when I was accepted for the University Conservative Association.

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Earl Howe

(1969)

I attribute the most fulfilling period of my working life.

It is to their influence, as well as to an accident of birth, that career, of the debt that I owe to my tutors at Christ Church.

work there I am aware, as I have been throughout my career, was both stimulated and outclassed in equal measure.

the ethical underpinning of the Mental Health Act felt like them in a debate on stem-cell research, human cloning or Oxford; Mary Warnock and Anthony Quinton. Listening to were two of the people whom I held in awe when up at there was another rather daunting factor. Sitting near me Bench you cannot afford to make a serious slip, but for me House requires very careful preparation. From the Front

I shall remain forever grateful that he did so. Between 1991 and 1997 I served successively as a Government Whip and as a junior minister in the Ministries of Agriculture and Defence. These latter two posts put me at the heart of Government and, in the House of Lords, on the line as the person responsible for steering each department’s programme through the chamber. Then, when the Conservatives entered Opposition in 1997 I was asked to take on the health portfolio. This I soon found to be easily the most absorbing of all the subject-areas I had covered. Handling the minutiae of legislation in the Upper House requires very careful preparation. From the Front Bench you cannot afford to make a serious slip, but for me there was another rather daunting factor. Sitting near me there were two of the people whom I held in awe when up at Oxford; Mary Warnock and Anthony Quinton. Listening to them in a debate on stem-cell research, human cloning or the ethical underpinning of the Mental Health Act felt like a regression to a long-remembered tutorial in which one was both stimulated and outclassed in equal measure. The one thing I learnt at Christ Church was that dedication is what matters.

The Right Hon. The Earl Howe (1969)

I always had a strong interest in politics – I joined the Conservative Party at 16 and cut my teeth campaigning in the 1997 General Election in my home area of Kingswood. However, when it came to choosing a degree, my teachers convinced me that I’d learn more about politics studying the Tudor Court than PPE. When I arrived at Christ Church, thrown into tutorials with WES Thomas discussing Macaulay, I soon became engrossed in the subject. I preferred to get elected as President of the University Historical Society than get involved in Oxford Union hackery. Nearly twenty years on from John Major’s decision, I was surprised when the results came in – I was the first Conservative gain of the night with a 9.5% swing. The hard work, hours on the streets knocking on doors had paid off. The one thing I learnt at Christ Church was that dedication is what matters. Apply yourself, I remember Patrick Wormald telling me, and you can achieve anything.

The Earl Howe (1969)

I was fortunate enough to be taught by the inspirational late Patrick Wormald, one of the most brilliant minds I’ve met, who convinced me that I wanted to follow an academic career. After graduating, I stayed on at Christ Church to do a Masters and a Doctorate, though I began to realise that I wanted to do more than just sit in silence in a library all day. By that time I’d been asked to write a biography of the Tudor King Edward VI, and decided to postpone my studies half-way through the DPhil. I never went back. By then, my interest in getting back into politics had begun to pick up, and I ended up as David Willetts’ special adviser on education. I went on to become the Director of the Conservative Party’s Public Services Policy Group, before going on to work as Michael Gove’s Adviser. At the same time, I kept up my history interests, writing a book on Elizabeth I, Death and the Virgin, which was published earlier this year.

When I was selected for Kingswood in early 2008, few people expected that I would be able to win the seat; Labour since 1992, they held it by over 7,800 votes. But it was my home seat and I was determined to fight it as the local candidate, though also found work as a part-time history lecturer at Bristol University. I was surprised when the results came in – I was the first Conservative gain of the night with a 9.5% swing. The hard work, hours on the streets knocking on doors had paid off. The one thing I learnt at Christ Church was that dedication is what matters. Apply yourself, I remember Patrick Wormald telling me, and you can achieve anything.

Chris Skidmore (1999)

I am aware, as I have been throughout my career, of the debt that I owe to my tutors at Christ Church.

Nearly twenty years on from John Major’s decision, I am a Government minister again – this time in the Department of Health. In approaching the intricacies of my work there I am aware, as I have been throughout my career, of the debt that I owe to my tutors at Christ Church. It is to their influence, as well as to an accident of birth, that I attribute the most fulfilling period of my working life.

Earl Howe (1969)

Chris Skidmore (1999)
In celebration of the GCR 50th Anniversary the programme of events for the Association weekend was extended this year and tied in with the University’s Alumni weekend.

Old Members, spouses and guests gathered in the new Exhibition space in Blue Boar for registration, a Champagne Tea Reception and welcome by the Dean who seemed somewhat taken aback on realising that House men and women normally take a glass of bubbly about then. The room also boasted a splendid GCR Art Exhibition by Sarah Simblet (1991) and Anthony Slessor (1996).

A rousing Celebratory Evensong followed with Prof. Jonathan Freeman-Attwood (1985) (Principal of the Royal Academy of Music), Stephen Darlington (Cathedral Organist and Tutor in Music), and Simon Desbruslais (PhD student) (2007) performing virtuoso 17th and 18th century sonatas for two trumpets and the organ by Franceschini, Vejvanovsky and Handel. The two trumpets filled the cathedral magnificently.

A group photograph was taken on the Hall stairs of all those attending the GCR dinner and along with many other photos of the weekend is available at: www.photoboxgallery.com/GCR50thanniversaryChristChurch

Speeches by Dr Katya Andreyev (1987) Tutor for Graduates, Sir Nicholas Bayne (1955) the first GCR Secretary, and Ollie Murphy (2008) the present GCR President, amused and informed in equal measure. An appeal was made to those in a position to help support Graduate scholarships and the importance of the GCR to its members, to the House, to Oxford and to the world outside was stressed. Everyone agreed on the debt owed to Dr Paul Kent in setting up the GCR and guiding it through its early days. The Lay Clerks sang on the Hall stairs after dinner to round off a most enjoyable evening.

Saturday morning offered a series of talks and lectures to remind Old Members of the House’s history and to provoke some thought and debate about the future. Prof. Sir Richard Gardner FRS (1974) gave a brilliantly clear and concise presentation on ‘Regenerative medicine: scientific prospects and ethical concerns’ in the magnificent new Blue Boar Lecture Theatre. He was followed by Gary O’Donoghue (1987), BBC Political Correspondent, who introduced an ‘Any Questions?’ style forum with MP’s David Willetts (1975), James Gray (1975), Richard Graham (1977) and Mark Reckless (1990). An apology by the
organiser about the lack of diversity amongst the panellists proved not to be needed as the politicians found much to disagree on whilst debating such subjects as higher education, the economy, Europe, and the Labour leadership election, all expertly managed by Gary.

On the historical side the Archivist, Judith Curthoys, gave an excellent introduction on the History of the House, with a number of fascinating artefacts on display. Antony Farnath (Knight’s of the Garter Descendant’s Representative) presented his research into the 71 Garter Knights of Christ Church, and Dr. Brian Young, Student and Tutor in Modern History spoke on Dean Aldrich and Christ Church to mark the 300th anniversary of that great man’s death.

Drinks in the Buttery and Saturday lunch in Hall were accompanied by a local jazz band, and the same musicians then reappeared on the Boat for the afternoon’s river trip on the Isis. The passengers were also treated to a performance by youngsters from Oval House and a cream tea at Sandford lock.

There was time for a quick change on returning before the Association Lecture by Adam Sisman who has just published the authorised biography of Hugh Trevor-Roper. He spoke on ‘A Formidable Feud: Trevor-Roper v’s Waugh’. A pleasing number of older Members were able to return for the talk and then attend the Association drinks reception and dinner afterwards. Professor Michael Dobson (1979), Professor of Shakespeare Studies, Birkbeck University of London, gave a fascinating after dinner talk on ‘Elizabeth I, Shakespeare and others. Christ Church and the English Stage from the Renaissance to the present. Few could have guessed quite what had gone on in Wolsey’s Great Hall in previous centuries.

The final talk of the weekend, on the Hall Portraits, was on Sunday morning. Christopher Lloyd (1964), previously Surveyor of the Queen’s Pictures, gave an engrossing critique of a number of the paintings and frames in Hall. It was all suddenly so apparent once it had been pointed out!

So many thank yous are needed following the weekend. To those who spoke and performed, to all the staff at the House (the standard of food and service across the weekend was exceptional), to the Steward’s office for the organisation, and finally to those who attended and supported the event. We trust that you enjoyed it and will continue to return for such occasions in the future.

Simon Offen (1986)

1546 reception
Sunday 26th September 2010

In November 2009, as part of a renewed initiative to encourage bequests to the House, The 1546 Society was created. The first 1546 Society reception was held in the Deanery after the Eucharist Service on the Sunday of Alumni weekend, 26th September.

Members are also invited to attend, free of charge, any of the concerts put on by the Christ Church Music Society.

Please contact the Development Office if you are interested in joining the society or have any questions.

Simon Offen (1986)
The Board of Benefactors’ Gaudy

The Board of Benefactors’ Gaudy is to thank and celebrate Old Members and Friends who, over time, made gifts to the House of £20,000 or more. On Monday September 13th, accompanied by their spouses, partners and guests, nearly 100 Benefactors attended the first such celebration making a grand total of 300 for a very grand event.

In an attempt to feed the mind as well as the body it began with a selection of lectures. Dr David Hine, Official Student in Politics, spoke on ‘The euro crisis and the future of Europe’, Prof Nigel Biggar, Regius Professor of Moral & Pastoral Theology, lectured on ‘Can we forgive political enemies? The case of Northern Ireland’, and Dr Mark New, Official Student & Reader in Climate Science, presented ‘Avoiding dangerous climate change – the hard facts.’ The second session pitted Mr Peter Oppenheimer, Emeritus Student, with his ‘Lessons of the recession’ against Prof. Christopher Butler, Emeritus Student, on ‘The high culture and contemporary events.’ In all cases the Old Members were the winners.

For those wanting to nourish other senses The Picture Gallery opened for a private viewing and a glass of wine. Following a Champagne reception in the Deanery there was a wonderful ten minute recital in Hall by the Cathedral Choir directed by Dr Biggar, Regius Professor of Moral & Pastoral Theology, lectured on ‘The high culture and contemporary events.’ In all cases the Old Members were the winners.

The feast began with Goats’ Curd Beignets, Gingered Pear, White Truffle Honey and Port Syrup, with a main course of Braised Haunch and Roast Best End of Wild Boar with Ceps. As one would expect the Steward produced some fine wines for the occasion, including a 1995 Château Langoa-Barton and a lovely Château Doyfus-Midrines 2000 to accompany the Lemon Meringue Tart with Blackcurrant Jelly, Blackberry Sorbet and Cardamom Yoghurt.

Sir David Scholey CBE (1955), Chairman of the Development Board, welcomed everyone and offered special congratulations to all the Benefactors. He mentioned that Old Members have contributed £50 million towards the on-going challenge to continue in perpetuity what it means to be a member of the House. In particular he thanked Michael Moritz (1973, right) and Harriet Heyman for their enormous generosity and welcomed them to the Board of Benefactors. He mentioned that Old Members have contributed £50 million towards the on-going challenge to continue in perpetuity what it means to be a member of the House. In particular he thanked Michael Moritz (1973, right) and Harriet Heyman for their enormous generosity and welcomed them to the Board of Benefactors.

For further information on the Board of Benefactors, please contact the Development Office or look at the website: www.chch.ox.ac.uk/in-perpetuity/board-of-benefactors.

Nick stressed the importance of development and the expert management of resources, in particular the endowment. “If ever there was a time to throw our weight behind our old college it is now I get the sense that the governing body and all those involved with the House have really grasped the nettle of steering the college with the highest level of professional management and achievement and competing successfully on the world stage, which is what it has to do if it is to prosper in the future, whilst at the same time preserving its historic sense of style and quality.”

The Dean reported news from the House and re-iterated the vital role of the Benefactors. “I believe that a splendid feature of the Board of Benefactors is that it is achievable by the whole range of ages which make up our old members and friends, yet to us it is a splendid feature of my role is to have the honour of thanking you.”

Mr Nick Prest CBE (1971) replied for the Benefactors humourously contrasting the splendid food served that evening with, in his day, a particularly toxic attempt at jugged hare. “It produced an astonishing, overpowering and utterly revolting miasma. Strong men choked, weak men cried. Hall was partially evacuated and the stench lingered for days. Waggin House historians compared it to the great stink of 1858 which led to the creation of the London sewage system.”

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Marek Kwiatkowski, Development Director
Professor Michael Vaughan-Lee
Tutor and Professor at Christ Church: 1971-2010
Retirement Dinner

On Saturday 18th September 2010, a large gathering of former Christ Church mathematics students returned to the House to celebrate the lifetime achievements of Michael Vaughan-Lee and to send him off into retirement in appropriate style. Approximately 85 attended, covering matriculants from 1970 through to 2010 graduates. The tables were broadly arranged by age so that the young whizz-kids did not have to endure the nostalgic reminiscences of the ‘old fogy’. Michael’s former pupils in attendance included a number who have achieved much distinction, albeit some in non-related fields, such as Tony Scholl (1973), Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge University, Trevor Llanwarne (1971), The Government Actuary, and Hew Dundas (1971), Past President of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and Chairman of the Advisory Board, Chinese-European Arbitration Centre (Hamburg).

The House Chef was in fine form. We needed an Enigma machine to decode the special diets catered for including V, NSF, NF/NSF, ND, NB, SD2, SD2a, NP, N/PNF. Amusingly, the shot glass containing a smoothie was much smaller than the spoon, thereby imposing an IQ test which most diners failed (the best solution was to pour it out onto the spoon).

Sam Howison (lecturer in Mathematics at the House since 1991) made an excellent (and commendably succinct!) speech outlining the magnitude of (but barely scratching the surface of) Michael’s achievements.

The dinners each brought a bottle of fine wine as a farewell gift to send Michael on his way, including a very rare 1971 Niekerster Kranzberg Riesling Auslese (HF Schmidt) procured from the producer’s private cellars, 1971 being the year Michael arrived at the House as a tutor and also being a very great vintage in Germany.

The programme sheet included four mathematics problems which no-one solved on the night. The sheet also included the first page of Michael’s 1970 Paper ‘Abelian by Nilpotent Varieties’ (Quart. J. Math Oxford (2), 21 (1970) 193-202) in which he proved the theorem ‘The free group of countable rank of the variety of all groups which are both abelian by nilpotent of class c, and nilpotent of class c by abelian, satisfies the maximal condition of characteristic sub-groups’. Your correspondent has no idea what any of this means.

A particular pleasure for all was the attendance of Glenys Davies and Sally Boardman, respectively widow and daughter of the late but very greatly loved Handel Davies. We wish them every best wish as we remember a wonderful Tutor.

Farewell, Michael, with very many thanks from 40 years of grateful students.

Hew Dundas (1971)

Rugger Eight Dinner 1958

Having met up with Jock Craven after many years and enjoyed a good lunch, we resolved to arrange a re-union dinner of our Christ Church Rugger Eight of 1958 which had bumped Corpus IV, New College III and Hertford III. At a glance, you can see that we were not inhabiting the dizzy levels of Ch Ch 1; and, in those days, the gender prefix ‘M’ before the Eight numbers was superfluous.

We discovered that, of our crew, Martin Hall had sadly died in the 1990s; but all the remaining crew and our cox could attend apart from Mike Bower and Christopher Story.

We had our dinner on the 4th June 2010 at the Rifles Officers Club, in Davies Street Mayfair. Attending were Julian Hall (Bow), Peter Ford (2), Floyd MacNeile-Dixon (3), Tony Parker (Substitute 4), Jock Craven (5), David Pitman (Stroke) and Robin Whicker (Cox). We also had Bill Rathbone (coach) and the wives of Messrs Ford, Parker, Craven and Pitman. Many dusters were worn.

We sat down to an excellent dinner, at the end of which Jock Craven proffered some Madeira of astonishing antiquity and some excellent port. Bill Rathbone regaled us with two salacious jokes with which, from the tow-path, he had calmed our nerves in 1958.

Available on a side table were some contemporaneous group photos of our eight, including some taken the morning after our celebration dinner. As a backdrop to our group, we were held two sash window-frames from which, late the previous evening, one of us had systematically smashed out the glazing. This was an embarrassment in the light of the fact that two of us were later to become Circuit Judges.

At the dinner, we drank to the health of the House and of absent friends. At the end of the dinner, we could not be called ‘Nos miseris homines...’

Floyd MacNeile-Dixon is due back in the country in the autumn and we then hope to gather in Mike Bower and Christopher Story for a mini-gathering to complete the project. It has all been well worth organising.

David Pitman (1957)
I wasn’t really sure what to expect from our first Gaudy; perhaps the one thing I didn’t expect was that it would actually feel the same as when I was last up at the House as a member nearly 10 years ago. Those who have engaged recently on the debate between member, old member etc forgive me if I have trespassed the wrong side of the line. The weather was pretty awful and I arrived in Tom Quad so covered by my rain coat that a lady in a burka would have been more recognizable and yet someone I hadn’t seen for a decade managed to pick me out; by the time I was walking through the arch and heading towards Blue Boar I had passed so many familiar faces it felt like any day back as a student, to my delight even the same friendly porters were there. Any mental images I had in my mind from American sitcoms of school reunions where people droned on about their careers were quickly forgotten as I found everyone slipped back into easy banter and in a funny way no one seemed to have really changed.

Before the Dean’s reception it was off to Peck for drinks in somebody’s room and standing there I felt like a student again rather than someone attending a reunion. We were given a lovely welcome at the Deanery and it was wonderful to catch up with so many people.

At dinner the food, wine and staff were all superb. Drinking out of the tankards at high table was a novel experience. Laura Gyte gave an excellent speech that reminded us all of special memories and the contribution our time at the House has made to our lives; friendship, fun and a lot of shared experiences. Then we headed off to the JCR for a bop. No cocktail in London has quite the same vibe as the vodka and orange in a plastic cup served in the JCR and I’ll take cheese over garage any day. As I pushed my way through the crowd someone spilled a drink all over me without even noticing and I was officially back at my first bop in 1998.

1960 Reunion report

Continuing the new tradition instituted last year, September 2010 saw the holding of the second reunion of House men who first came up to Oxford a whole fifty years previously. Thus it was that seventy members of the older generation came back to Christ Church, along with their guests, to take part in the 2010 Reunion of 1960 Matriculands. It was noteworthy how many of those House men now living abroad came back for the event.

Most of the participants arrived during an afternoon of torrenting rain, which relented immediately after Evensong in the Cathedral to reveal the most beautiful and striking sunset behind Tom Tower. This was a fitting prelude to a memorable evening, which began in style with a reception generously hosted by the Dean in the Deanery.

The hubbub of conversation grew as reminiscences were exchanged and old friendships were renewed. The highlight of the evening was the dinner in Hall, where the combination of fine wines and superb food from the Chef complemented the occasion perfectly.

The Dean proposed the loyal toast and the response was given by Sir George Young whose witty and personal recollections were well appreciated by all who were present. The personal warmth engendered by the dinner and by the atmosphere within the Hall meant that everyone departed only reluctantly at the end of the proceedings.

For those who stayed in Oxford overnight, there was the opportunity provided of a behind-the-scenes tour of Christ Church during the following morning. Many of ‘the class of 1960’ joined the tour, and were treated to a seemingly inexhaustible supply of fascinating facts and anecdotes about all aspects of the House. The reunion concluded with a gathering for elevenses in the McKenna Room at which we were delighted to see Dr Paul Kent, tutor for some of us from way back in 1960.

Peter Morley (1960)
Family Programme tea

In 2003 Christ Church launched the Family Programme to welcome families of its junior members to the House and to enable them to feel involved. Members of the programme are invited to a welcome tea when they drop off their children for the Michaelmas term as freshers, and the photograph (above) is of the Dean speaking at this year’s tea.

There is a Family lunch in Hall during the Hilary Term, and members are also invited to Association weekends and other events. They receive the biannual issues of Christ Church Matters and the more regular electronic e-Matters. They are very welcome to continue to receive these communications after their child has gone down.

If you would like to find out more about the programme, or join it, please contact the Development Office:
development.office@chch.ox.ac.uk

Alumni drinks for media, tech & start-ups

 Incoming phone call, 9.15pm, Thursday 21st October: “Kate, it’s Matt, listen I’m with 10 other Christ Church men around the corner from your office in Soho, we’re just wondering where it’s safe to go for a drink?” I recommended a few of the more salubrious local pubs and then set about clearing up the plastic cups and olive packets remaining from a very jovial drinks reception. We had the pleasure of hosting about 20 college alumni now working in the fields of technology, media and entrepreneurship. I was heartened by the turn-out and the good natured spirit of the group. Fellow House members from media giants such as the BBC, ITV, Vodafone and Saatchi, mingled with IP lawyers, market researchers and aspiring IT start-ups. Business cards were flung around and we even had to do a second alcohol run to top up the glasses. — Kate Jillings (1998)

businessbecause.com

Set up by two friends, Maria Ahmed and Kate Jillings, BusinessBecause.com is the first networking + news site for the business school world. We connect business schools, current students, applicants, professors and recruiters internationally, and publish daily news stories from our editorial team and the member community.

Launched as an online magazine in June 2009, we recently upgraded to a network. We’re attracting nearly 3,000 unique visitors a day, and average time on the site is 8+ minutes - phenomenal for a new online media channel.

Kate and Maria both studied PPE, Kate at Christ Church, Maria at St Anne’s. Our initial aim was to provide fresh journalism about life at business school and the global job market for MBAs. We soon evolved into a social media service as we quickly realised that our readers wanted to share their own stories and to talk to each other. Schools are good at communicating with their own alumni and students but it’s tough for students to connect with their counterparts at other schools in the same city let alone on the other side of the world.

Recent graduates might find BusinessBecause.com helpful for networking with other young professionals, or if they’re considering doing an MBA BusinessBecause.com provides lively journalism about what it’s like at top b-schools around the world. More experienced graduates might be interested in the marketing and recruitment potential of BusinessBecause.com. We’re about to sign-up some big corporate clients (e.g. Accenture and GlassOwl (Klein) who are interested in reaching our growing database of business student talent.

Kate Jillings (1998)

Sychelles

John Purvis (Maths 1968) has lived and taught overseas most of his life. He now works part-time for the new University of Seychelles. He also manages a comfortable three-bedroom villa called The House, which offers self-catering accommodation on one of the most beautiful islands, Praslin. He is pleased to offer big discounts to Old Members.

www.thehouse.sc

Rugby Shirts

Christ Church would like to thank the following alumni who have financed a new set of shirts for the college rugby club. They are:

1972: Gwyn Davies, Graeme Rocker, Steve Hnizdov, John Anderson, Tom Dowie, Philip Wright.

Kate Jillings (left) and Sian Fleming-Jones of businessbecause.com

Kate Jillings (left) and Sian Fleming-Jones of businessbecause.com

Sian Fleming-Jones of businessbecause.com

John Anderson presenting a shirt to the rugby club captain, Chris Whitehouse, May 2010
A View from Below: How to improve politics

It may seem strange, perhaps even presumptuous, for someone like me to have written a book with the sub-title 'How to improve politics'. After all I did not read PPE, took no part in university politics and was not even a member of the Union.

But, looking back, it feels as though politics has always been one of my main interests. From time to time this interest has stirred me into action as when, for example, I was an active member of the 1975 campaign to keep Britain in Europe and, later, became a rather tentative parliamentary candidate.

Mostly, however, I have just been an observer of the political process. In the 1960s I was a junior District Officer in Northern Rhodesia, and saw at first hand the speed with which power was transferred to the new government prior to independence. A decade later, my job in Imperial Group enabled me to glimpse something of the relationship between government and big business. And more recently, in my work as a chartered accountant, as a non-executive director in the NHS and as chairman of a national charity, I have been reinforced in my view that the quality of government decision making is not always as good as it should be.

This is why I wanted to highlight some of the more serious weaknesses in our political system, and suggest some ways in which matters could be improved. A View from Below, a slim volume of 96 pages, including illustrations by Sewell, sets out the thoughts of a family of mice, who live in and around the corridors of power in Whitehall. From their detached and independent viewpoint they explain how our political system works and where it has gone wrong. They also put forward their ideas, some of which are radical, for bringing about a fairer and more effective system of government.

A View from Below is published by Blackcap Books with a cover price of £6.99. More information can be found at www.blackcapbooks.co.uk. The book can be obtained through amazon.co.uk, politics.co.uk and other bookshops.

Tony Schur (1958)

The Fortune Hunter

On 8 November 1837 Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau wrote from London to his ex-wife Lucie that he was about to win the hand of the heiress Elizabeth Hamlet: 'My man of business and I have been sweating beads, and God in Heaven give us His blessing! The fortune is immense, and if I obtain it (which is of course not certain) I shall be in clover.' Back in Germany, Lucie followed his progress eagerly, for she wanted him to succeed too, indeed their divorce and his bridal quest had been her idea. Not that she wanted to lose him - they loved each other too much for that. But they had spent their combined fortunes turning his estate into a huge landscaped park and were close to bankruptcy. The only solution was for Puckler to find a rich wife who was also pliable enough to share her home with her predecessor. And the obvious place to look was the destination of fortune hunters from all over Europe: England.

Puckler is remembered today as one of Germany’s finest landscape gardeners and travel writers. But the full story of his stay in England from 1826 to 1828, so formative for both careers, has not previously been told. Drawing on manuscript sources, Bowman gives blow-by-blow accounts of his various courtships, traces his social life among London’s fashionable elite, his love affairs, and his gambling and money troubles, and shows that Puckler was an exceptionally astute observer of Regency England.

James Bowman (1990)

Jewish Refugees from Hitler in Britain

The Jewish refugees who fled to Britain from Germany and Austria between 1933 and the outbreak of war in 1939 are among the most remarkable groups of immigrants to have settled in this country in the mid-twentieth century. They form the largest community of victims of Nazi persecution in this country and the most potent reminder of the Holocaust.

They also brought an exceptional wealth of talent to Britain. From George Weinffenk, Ernst Gombrich, Lucian Freud, Max Penz and the Amadeus Quartet to Judith Kerr, Gerard Hoffnung, Ludwig Koch and Andrew Sachs, the 50,000 who composed Hitler’s gift to Britain contributed enormously to their adopted homeland. Astonishingly, my book, Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-1970: ‘Their Image in Association of Jewish Refugees Information’, is the first ever history of this group. Among those with a connection to the House, I mention Sir Francis Simon (1945), the celebrated physicist, as well as two refugee professors of classics, Paul Jacoby (1938) and Felix Jacoby (1936), who found positions at Christ Church in the 1950s. Peter Pulzer (1937), who left Vienna as a child in 1939, came to Christ Church in 1957 and taught politics to generations of students.

I have made systematic use of the monthly journal of the refugees’ own organisation, the Association of Jewish Refugees (founded in 1948), to write a history that covers their arrival, their experience of the war and their post-war settlement in Britain. The book traces the story of the refugees’ integration into British society, through the austerity of the late 1940s, the consumer-led affluence of the 1950s and the turbulence of the 1960s. It details their interaction with that baffling breed, the British, and the development of their own social culture and communal identity as Continental Britons.

Anthony Grenville (1962)
I was at Christ Church. Absorbed his knowledge by osmosis while been lucky enough to get to know him exchanged a word in four years. I have lawyer of his time, and we never probably the leading academic land senior law student was Teddy Byrne, specialised in the law of land and property.

determined.

to toughen me and make me more that I was neither scientist nor banker, coupled with the previous realisations time, but the difficult eighteen months, difficulty finding chambers who would help me to toughen me and make me more determined.

I ended up in chambers which specialised in the law of land and property. There is an irony there: when I was up, the senior law student was Teddy Byrne, probably the leading academic land lawyer of his time, and we never exchanged a word in four years. I have been lucky enough to get to know him since, and I think that I must have absorbed his knowledge by osmosis while I was at Christ Church.

It was in 1966 that I went up to Christ Church to read chemistry under the tutelage of Paul Kent and Richard Wayne. Chemistry may have been natural science, but it was not my natural home. Nonetheless with encouragement and indulgence from Paul and an alpha-delta mark from Richard for a collections paper I had four enjoyable, if undistinguished, years at the House. Life at Christ Church prepared me well for the uncertainties and challenges of life, chemistry taught me to approach issues in a coherent, logical and dispassionate way, and my contemporaries encouraged me to be articulate and committed, and helped me to maintain and develop my sense of humour.

Having realised that I was no scientist, I had a go at what is now called investment banking. Two years satisfied me that I was even less of a banker than a chemist. So I decided to train as a barrister, and it was a case of third time lucky although not immediately I had real difficulty finding chambers who would take me on, that was discouraging at the time, but the difficult eighteen months, coupled with the previous realisations that I was neither scientist nor banker helped to toughen me and make me more determined.

I ended up in chambers which specialised in the law of land and property. There is an irony there: when I was up, the senior law student was Teddy Byrne, probably the leading academic land lawyer of his time, and we never exchanged a word in four years. I have been lucky enough to get to know him since, and I think that I must have absorbed his knowledge by osmosis while I was at Christ Church.

Life at the Bar worked for me, the combination of court work, paperwork, conferences, academic analysis and factual investigation, appealed to me: for the first time in my life, I really worked. Having become a QC in 1987 I was appointed a High Court Judge in the Chancery Division in 1996. This involved a change of role – decide not advocate – and a more mixed diet – insolvency, company law, commercial law, IP law, as well as property law. Indeed, my Christ Church education came into its own, as there was a need for a Judge who could try patent cases, and I was chosen largely because of my chemistry degree.

This increased my versatility, which I think helped my promotion to the Court of Appeal, as a Lord Justice, in 2004, and then to the House of Lords, as a Law Lord, in 2007.

The Court of Appeal normally involves sitting with two other Judges, and the House of Lords with four other Judges. Judges in the House of Lords were seen by the then-Government as an anachronism, and the Law Lords were moved to become Supreme Court Justices in the new Supreme Court in October 2009. I did not go with them, because I had decided to apply to become Master of the Rolls – the head of the civil division of the Court of Appeal. Whether to become a Supreme Court Justice or the Master of the Rolls was a very difficult choice, and one I was remarkably privileged to have to make. In the end I went for what one of my colleagues called an elective demotion, and, like Lord Denning, I went back to the Court of Appeal. It involves administration, policy-making, and management, as well as judging. So it is hard work, but it is very rewarding.

I had a very good time at Christ Church, and look back on my time there with nostalgic, perhaps slightly rose-tinted, pleasure. Indeed, I encourage my sister-in-law, Fiona Holdsworth (1981), to go there, and, more recently, I encouraged my son, Max (2000), to do so as well.

David Neuberger (1966)

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WANTED!

The Year Representative Scheme was set up by the college and the Association in 2003 to improve the channels of communication between Old Members, the Association and the House. The Year Rep’s role is to nurture links between those groups.

Reps help to keep in touch with their contemporaries. For example a number run a Facebook page for their year, they come up with ideas for events and sometimes help organise them, and often they assist current members, Old Members and the House alike by helping with careers’ advice and business contact networks.

In their Gaudy year, which occurs approximately every seven years, the Reps help to ensure that ‘lost’ members are found, and as many of their contemporaries as possible attend the Gaudy. They often arrange other smaller events, to which spouses and partners can also be invited, and they encourage support for the Annual Fund for student bursaries from their friends.

Being a Year Rep is in no sense an onerous responsibility; it doesn’t take too much time and can be very rewarding! There is an Annual Year Rep meeting in November which alternates between London and Oxford. Ideally, there are about four Reps in any year to allow for such things as postings abroad, busy work periods or family commitments. If a Rep retires they are asked to help find a replacement.

Gradually, we are adding to the number of Reps, both for particular years but also by seeking to appoint Country and Area Reps, and Sports and Society Reps.

If you are interested please contact simon.affern@chch.ox.ac.uk or paul.galbraith@chch.ox.on.org.

Paul Galbraith (1995)
Marcus Scriven (1981, History) was briefly a soldier, then became a journalist, initially for the Sunday Telegraph, subsequently the Evening Standard, before researching and writing his first book, Splendour & Squalor: The Disgrace and Disintegration of Three Aristocratic Dynasties. Splendour & Squalor: The Disgrace and Disintegration of Three Aristocratic Dynasties (Atlantic) is a ‘witty, gossipy and profoundly researched portrait of four particularly dysfunctional 20th century aristocrats.’

Christopher Hart, Sunday Times

Shortlisted for Spear’s Book of The Year Award (Social History), it seeks to answer how far each of the quartet under particular scrutiny could echo the epitaph composed by John Knatchbull, fourth son of a baronet, shortly before his execution in Australia in 1844: ‘For some part I am to be blamed; for the rest I am to be pitied.’

Available to buy at Amazon.co.uk

RATS gnawed through garbage that was heaped, putrefying, on the streets; the dead lay unburied. It was January 1979, the bleakest days of what became known as ‘The Winter of Discontent’.

On Thursday 18th of that month, The House of Lords snapped into action. The debate, The Times later reported, was ‘one of the best attended for some years’. William Francis Brinsley Le Poer Trench, 8th Earl of Clancarty, initiated proceedings. ‘It is with much pleasure,’ he began, ‘that I introduce this debate about unidentified flying objects – known more briefly as flying saucers.’

Perhaps Clancarty (editor of Flying Saucer Review) inadvertently intensified the appetite for Upper House reform. If so, there remained those who were appreciative of the hereditary principle, amongst them the second son of a Luton shopkeeper, Keith Cheeseman. ‘If we’d get short, we’d go, ‘Come on, Angus, let’s pop into the House of Lords’. You’d have subsidised food, subsidised booze, you’d come out with subsidised fags, whisky and chocolates, all with the portcullis thing on.’

His friend, Angus Charles Diogo Montagu, 12th Duke of Manchester, had already been described by a High Court judge as ‘absurdly stupid’; in 1996, he was jailed in the USA for fraud (Cheeseman was by then experiencing his third custodial sentence).

The advent the following year of a new Labour government signalled that the Lords’ days as a gilded day centre were over. The late Earl Russell (historian Conrad Russell), a Liberal Democrat, voiced unease, pointing out that, on issues where Lords and Commons disagreed, public opinion (as recorded by pollsters) more often favoured the line taken by the Lords. Perhaps, suggested Russell, something of the independent spirit of the hereditary peerage could be preserved by selecting 200 peers by lottery – ‘the system for selecting juries’ – who would sit alongside those nominated by the Prime Minister.

Russell’s proposal – described by Baroness Blackstone as ‘grotesque and lunatic’ - was omitted from the House of Lords Act 1999, which finally gave the country an Upper House predominantly comprising resourceful men and women from the professional political class. They included Lord Truscott and Lord Taylor of Blackburn (both suspended from the Lords for offering to amend Government legislation in return for cash), Lord Bhattacharyya and Lord Paul (suspended for difficulties concerning their expenses), Lord Taylor of Warwick and Lord Hanningfield (both facing courtroom charges), and Baroness Uddin (suspended until the end of the 2012 parliamentary session, and directed to repay £125,349).

But it is Lord Watson of Invergowrie who most convincingly suggests that the new elite has developed the self-regard and advanced sense of entitlement of the old aristocracy without the intervening centuries of uneven service and sporadic self-sacrifice. After dining at the Prestonfield House Hotel, Edinburgh, on 11th November 2004, his lordship requested more drink, a request to which hotel staff acceded, although the bar was closed. A little while later, Lord Watson requested further refreshment; this was refused. Shortly afterwards, he set fire to the curtain in the hotel’s reception, earning himself a 16 month jail sentence for wilful fire-raising.

Is it now time to revisit Lord Russell’s ‘grotesque and lunatic’ proposal?
48 years at
Christ Church

My first sight of Christ Church was in December 1961, when I came up for the Scholarship Examination in Mathematics. I was given a room in Peck next door to John Armstrong who was also trying for a Maths Scholarship. I remember asking him about a particular question I had got stuck on, and being immensely impressed when he replied airily “I realized at once that the answer they gave was wrong. I did a quick dimension check, and it had the wrong dimension”. Goodness, I thought, how can I compete against people as clever as that? As it turned out, we were both awarded scholarships to Christ Church and became tutorial partners and friends. We both stayed on at Christ Church to do our doctorates.

I only recall one question in the scholarship interview: “What is the worst Mathematics book you have ever read?” I didn’t want to name a book which one of them had written, but I thought I would be safe answering Friar and Chignell’s Calculus, as Friar was the head of Mathematics at Charterhouse. The follow up question was “Why is it so bad?” My reply, “The answers are all wrong” provoked a big laugh.

I matriculated in 1962 with no less than 8 other Carthusians - those were the days. Rob Walther was one, also reading Mathematics and we too became firm friends, sharing a flat together in our third year in that curious house on Folly Bridge with all the statues. One of my most vivid memories of Rob is sitting in the cinema with him and watching him with awe as he stuck the wrong end of a menthol cigarette in his mouth and lit the menthol end!

Our tutor was Handel Davies (right) who used to puff away at his pipe during tutorials. He had great trouble keeping it alight, and spent more time striking matches than actually smoking it. The pipe, matchbox and tobacco tin were valuable teaching aids as he waved them about to illustrate changes of frames of reference in Mechanics. He was a great tutor, and an immensely kind man.

After 6 six years at Christ Church I received my doctorate and left for America and my first job, at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, (where I became a fan of Country Music) After that I taught at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, before coming back to Christ Church as Tutor in Pure Mathematics in 1971. It was my extraordinary luck that there was a big expansion in British Universities at that time, and Christ Church was moving from one tutor in Mathematics to two.

Apart from the occasional sabbatical, I have been teaching at Christ Church ever since, and what a privilege it has been. Perhaps I should explain? My duties are to teach 12 hours a week, though in my early years that often shaded up to 15 hours, but I never did any preparation for tutorials, and very little marking, so that is hardly a full time job! But of course there is also much research and some administration I did 3 years as Senior Censor and 5 years as Tutor for Admissions and both of those jobs also took up far more time than teaching. Despite that, I still think of my job as ‘teaching’. You can do research and administration at any University anywhere in the world, but it is the teaching that makes Oxford stand out and gives it an enormous edge over other universities. Christ Church tutors really care about their teaching and their students, you only have to listen to the conversation at SCR lunch to realise that.

I am quite often asked “Is it a great thrill when you have a really brilliant student?” Funnily enough the answer for me is “Not really!” Of course I like to have brilliant students around; they are no trouble to teach, and are good for our examination results. But they are going to do well with or without any input from me! For me, the joy of teaching is the 2.1 student who I can encourage and help along to a First, or the 2.2 student who manages to get a 2.1. However I mustn’t be too starry eyed about it. There were plenty of bleary eyed students at tutorials who couldn’t wait to get back to bed!

We have a tremendous teaching team at Christ Church with Sam Howison and Chris Breward, and with help from John Wright, Becky Shipley and Chongrui Zhou. Over the last five years well over half of our undergraduates have been getting Firsts in Finals, and I do believe we can take some of the credit! 

It is the teaching that makes Oxford stand out and gives it an enormous edge over other universities.

Michael Vaughan-Lee
Coming back for a Gaudy or for dinner
One of the most tangible representations of the lifelong link between the House and its members is the tradition of Gaudy hospitality. Many Old Members also enjoy returning to the House from time to time to take dinner at the High Table. It may be helpful to describe the current arrangements.

Gaudies:
A new provisional programme, commencing in 2011, is shown below. Gaudy dates, necessarily linked to the dates of Term, are normally held on a Thursday in late June and late September/early October.

The Governing Body customarily confirms the date about six months in advance of the event. Invitations are posted some three months ahead. It is hoped to adhere to the following seven year schedule, which is based on year of matriculation:

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<tr>
<th>Years</th>
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<tr>
<td>1956-1960</td>
<td>27 September 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961-1965</td>
<td>June 2013</td>
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<td>1966-1968</td>
<td>20 June 2013</td>
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<td>1969-1971</td>
<td>3 October 2013</td>
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<td>1972-1976</td>
<td>26 June 2014</td>
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<td>1977-1981</td>
<td>29 September 2011</td>
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<td>1 October 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000-2002</td>
<td>Autumn 2016*</td>
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<td>2001-2003</td>
<td>Summer 2017*</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>Autumn 2017*</td>
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* date not yet available

The High Table:
The House is also pleased to welcome Old Members wishing to dine from time to time. Dinner is served at the High Table, in Hall, on most nights during each of three 10-week Terms. The High Table, as well as dinner in Hall for current junior members, is a popular and busy service and there are occasional evenings when it is not possible to accommodate Old Members, or when occasionally service is suspended. However, it is available on most evenings in Term and also during vacations when it is served in the Lee Building of the Senior Common Room.

Very often, a member booking dinner will arrange to book with another member of the House, and the arrangements, as established, do not confer any entitlement to bring a guest. But this can often be waived, and a guest welcomed. The House is always glad to hear from Old Members wishing to take dinner, and the arrangements are implemented as flexibly as possible to encourage participation.

All arrangements for Old Member Gaudies and High Table dining are overseen by the Steward. A paper describing the customs and protocols of the High Table is available on request. For all further information and enquiries please contact the Steward’s Secretary, Miss Helen Smith, on 01865 286580 or email helen.smith@chch.ox.ac.uk.

Visiting the House
Old Members may be aware that recently the number of tourist visitors at Christ Church has grown considerably. The spectacular architecture and associations with Alice in Wonderland and Harry Potter have made us an increasingly popular destination with close to 300,000 visitors annually. This has become significant business but our Custodial team has the tricky task of being both welcoming and providing a reasonable element of control.

It also remains important that, amidst these throngs, Old Members continue to be welcomed. If you wish to visit the House please do so at any time during gate opening hours and ideally enter via Tom Gate (which normally closes at 8.30 p.m.) Please feel free to bring one or more immediate companions. If you have a University or Alumni card it would be helpful if you could show this to the Custodian upon arrival, but of course this is not essential.
Christ Church Picture Gallery is commemorating the tercentenary of the death of Henry Aldrich (1648 – 1710) with an exhibition, and an accompanying study day will be held on the 21 January 2011 organised by Dr Brian Young and Jacqueline Thalmann.

Henry Aldrich, Dean of Christ Church from 1689 to his death in 1710, and Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford between 1692 and 1695, was a true polymath: Anglican divine, politician, scholar, collector, musician, architect, to name but a few of his talents and occupations. This concentration of interests and activities combined with a powerful post which enabled Aldrich to promote and utilise them, made him ‘one of the most eminent men in England’ in the late 17th century. But his life and activities are much under-researched and under-studied, a fact that might be explained through the absence of most of his personal papers. In his will he asked for everything to be destroyed except for his collections of music manuscripts (c 8000), books (c 3000) and prints (c 2000 - still in their original albums), which he left to Christ Church. In recent years scholars have started to study these collections in more detail and scholarly cataloguing of them has begun.

With his collections still intact, the exhibition will concentrate on Henry Aldrich as a collector. His fundamental purpose as a collector, especially in his accumulation of prints and music, was a strongly utilitarian one, and this prevailed over pure academic curiosity on his part. He used the prints in his collection to design plates for the Oxford Almanac; some of the drawings by Aldrich which he seems to have made for the newly appointed engraver and printer Michael Burghers, have survived. A glass window in Christ Church cathedral, now lost, was also designed by him after prints in his collection. Furthermore, the design for the window and the prints offer a link to General John Guise (1682 – 1765), who was taught by Aldrich, and who bequeathed his large and important art collection to Christ Church. Several indications lead to the theory that Aldrich was the major influence behind Guise’s interest in art and his extraordinary bequest. Prints after Giovanni da Vinci’s Adoration of the Shepherds and Cornelis van Cleve’s painting of the same subject, which we know were repeatedly used by Aldrich - must have made such a deep impression on John Guise that he subsequently acquired the paintings, which he then bequeathed to Christ Church.

It is also the combination of theory and practice which is specific to one of Henry Aldrich’s major interests: architecture. This union of interests can be seen both in his unfinished treatise, Elementa Architecturae, which drew strongly on Vitruvius and Palladio, and in his designs for the Peckwater Quadrangle at Christ Church, built between 1706 and 1708. The quadrangle can be regarded as the first English Palladian building in Britain, constructed several years before the publication of Colin Campbell’s Vitruvius Britannicus.

Aldrich’s considerable influence on the academic, political and social life of Oxford (and England) became increasingly evident in preparing the exhibition. To conclude the exhibition with a study day, therefore, allows us to investigate the cultural and political climate in Oxford in more detail. The sheer breadth of Aldrich’s interests invites the inter-disciplinary exchange of knowledge which the study day will provide. For the full programme, please contact the Picture Gallery or look at our website www.chch.ox.ac.uk/gallery.

Ticketing
Full conference fee, including coffee, lunch, and tea is £20 full price and £15 for student and unemployed concessions. To register for the conference please check availability with Laura Bleach at the Picture Gallery: laura.bleach@chch.ox.ac.uk; tel: 01865 276172.

Members may wish to know that the Gallery now has a Facebook page: www.facebook.com/pages/Christ-Church-Picture-Gallery/182732399294826.
If we learned of an Oxford don who spent the proceeds of his first book on buying a horse and the second on a large grey Bentley that he parked in the quad, we could safely bet that he was a Christ Church man; and it is as a Christ Church man that Hugh Trevor Roper (aka Lord Dacre of Glanton) would certainly want to be remembered.

Hugh came up in 1932 to read Greats, found the subject tedious and switched to Modern History, graduating with First Class Honours four years later. After three years as a research fellow at Merton and another four in the Intelligence Services, he returned as a Student in 1946. His heart remained here even when he had to move his base (though firmly, not his residence) to Oriel when he became Regius Professor of Modern History in 1957. When later he emigrated to Cambridge as Master of Peterhouse he was utterly miserable and let everyone know it.

Even at Christ Church, though, Hugh was restive. He liked the company of undergraduates so long as they were clever, well-connected or good drinking companions, but he found teaching them a chore. He was no happier in a Professorial Chair, with its endless drudgery of committees. Indeed he regarded Oxford (always excepting Christ Church) as ‘a retrograde provincial backwater’ and took little trouble to conceal this view from his academic colleagues. As for Peterhouse, it was a comic nightmare, made tolerable only because it satisfied that insatiable need for combat, which ‘stimulated him’, as Adam Sisman shows in this magnificent biography, ‘rousing him from lethargy and curing depression’.

The trouble was that Hugh had been fed too much red meat when young. During his military service he had not only cracked a key German code but fought a ferocious battle at the highest levels of Whitehall to transform the entire governance of the Intelligence Services and gain unrestricted access to decrypted information. He had gone on to lead the official investigation into the last days of Hitler and write the book...
that made him famous and, alas, to his ultimate misfortune, an acknowledged expert on everything to do with that ghastly man.

After such a rich diet, anyone would have found it difficult to resign themselves to the humdrum porridge of academic life. Hugh had acquired a taste for hobnobbing with the great, for the rewards of the higher journalism, and for the company of the beau monde. He frankly preferred the company of dukes to that of dons because, as he put it, "I like the world of grace and leisure and the opulence necessary to maintain it", even though he was 'continually disgusted by the triviality and vulgarity of the great world, and bored by its lack of education'. That of course was one of the great advantages of Christ Church: it was a milieu where the world of dukes and that of scholars overlapped.

It is thus all too easy to dismiss Hugh, as did so many reviewers of this book, as a socialite and a controversialist, who got a well-deserved come-uppance over the affairs of the Hitler Diaries. He was, and he did. But he was also a true scholar, and one of the finest of his generation. His waters ran deep. He kept the shallows sparkling with his journalism and agitated by the controversies that he provoked (and conducted with quite unnecessary ferocity) with his academic colleagues. But deeper down was learning of awe-inspiring breadth and depth, learning inspired by a curiosity that kept him constantly questioning accepted historical explanations and unearthing new material in quantities that far exceeded his capacity to communicate it. Even his staunchest defenders found it hard to understand why he published so little, but it was not for lack of material to publish. He had, as his Nachlass has revealed, far too much. He was constantly fired by enthusiasm for his new discoveries, and all too often promised a book about them. Then further research would open new vistas, promise new topics, new interpretations, and somehow the books never appeared.

But what did appear were articles, essays, and lectures that opened our eyes to new ways of looking at the past. It was the timidity of his Oxford colleagues, so often unwilling to look beyond their familiar archives and professional specialities, which he found so unforgivable. Ranging as he did over the whole field of European and classical learning, he brought to every subject he touched a new and illuminating insight often denied to the specialists; and he transmitted those insights with a style, wit, and enthusiasm that made everything he wrote a pleasure even for the most ignorant layman to read.

To this must be added the staunch moral and physical courage that he displayed as much in academic disputation as on the hunting field, and a sense of the ridiculous that made him such superb company for those fortunate enough to be admitted to his friendship.

Only a master-biographer could do so complex and colourful a character full justice, but that is exactly what Adam Sisman has done; warts and all.

**HUGH TREVOR-ROPER: THE BIOGRAPHY.**

By Adam Sisman. (Weidenfeld & Nicolson London 2010)
Two regular events now characterise College life each spring. One is the Sunday Times Literary Festival. The other is our own annual Special Interest Weekend which continues to enjoy the support of Old Members as well as those regular guests from home and overseas, who enjoy building up their own affiliation with Christ Church. The twin themes for 2010 were History: The Korean War partnered with Science: Climate Change - Evidence, Impacts and Solutions.

Christ Church’s Professor Judith Pallot and Dr Mark New led the Science programme which was opened by Sir David King, former Chief Scientific Adviser to the UK Government and now Director of Oxford’s Smith School of Enterprise and Environment. Sir David’s work had led to the formulation of the UK’s energy targets, the first country to formalise this process. In his lecture ‘More Dangerous than Terrorism’ he spoke starkly of likely global catastrophes such as there being no large fish left in the world’s oceans by mid-century, oceans that are themselves acidifying, the destruction of the planet’s lungs – the rain forests – and the depletion of its finite resources. He characterized this as the Anthropocene Age, where man is himself determining the global temperature. The presentation was statistically impressive but not unremittingly pessimistic with examples of successful progressive collaboration and control, like automobile exhaust regulation in California and the reversal of CFC – induced stratospheric reduction over Antarctica in 1987. The very significant gains available from improving our immensely inefficient energy conversion process gave further grounds for lifting the gloom.

The co-stars of the History programme were Professor Allan Millett of Ohio State University and, once again, Professor Andrew Lambert, Professor of Naval History at King’s College, London. Professor Millett, himself a veteran, lectured on both Chinese involvement in Korea 1950-1953 and the wider People’s War to liberate Korea 1947-1954, which focused on the Communist perspective and Mao’s model for a successful war of liberation.

Sir Lawrence Freedman put Korea in the nuclear context, a subject broadened significantly in lively questioning. He reminded us of Churchill’s words, that ‘Peace is the sturdy child of terror and the twin brother of annihilation’.

Professor Lambert examined in careful detail the naval war around the Korean Peninsula; the overwhelming predominance of the navies of the United States, Great Britain, Canada and Australia and their successful force projection from fleet carriers. The first significant use of helicopters and the sensitivity of the USA to possible escalation in Taiwan were notable features of this war. The report of the sinking by a British warship in Korean waters of a Soviet submarine was regarded by the attentive audience as something of a revelation. In the endless debate between air
power and naval strength, the successful naval war right around the Korean Peninsula had confirmed the predominance of carrier borne power projection over land-based bombers.

The volcanic closure of United Kingdom airspace throughout the weekend added the unexpected challenge of absent speakers, to which the leaders of both options rose magnificently. Judy Pallot and Mark New chaired a lively concluding debate, and Christ Church’s Professor Sarah Randolph gave a well-received presentation on disease and health.

Professor Lambert showed his wide-ranging scholarship and versatility by delivering, with strong authority, presentations prepared by stranded and volcanically challenged speakers on Inchon and the Amphibious War and the still relevant Armistice along the 38th Parallel.

Through the courtesy of Old Member Mizfal Ahmed (1997), the Climate Change Adviser to the President of the Republic of the Maldives attended the weekend both to speak about that country’s unique concerns and to award the luxury prize of a six-star Maldives holiday!

As guests departed, with warm praise for the good service and fine food, many had already signed up for the 2011 Special Interest Weekend: Blood and Roses. This study of the thirty year conflict between the Houses of Lancaster and York will be held between 24th – 27th March next year.

The programme will be led by Christ Church’s Dr Rowena Archer and run in collaboration with the Richard III Society. Regarded by many as an historically neglected but pivotal English conflict, the Wars of the Roses are nevertheless a familiar theme in English historical memory. But the origins and consequences of this prolonged warfare are less understood. Was this really a conflict between dynasties badged with white and red roses? And what about that most vilified of English kings, Richard III? As recently as 2009, research into the precise location of the battle of Bosworth came to a revealing conclusion.

The printed programme is available as a PDF, online at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/ematters or by post or email.

Contact Becky Favell or Joanna Malton on 01865 286848 or e-mail specialinterest@chch.ox.ac.uk

THE SUNDAY TIMES OXFORD LITERARY FESTIVAL will be held at Christ Church between 2nd – 10th April next year. The speaker programme is published early in the New Year and advance information provided on www.oxfordliteraryfestival.com.
Dr Edward Keene
Lecturer in International Relations and
Official Student of Christ Church

A politics tutor reads a lot of essays in what one might call a professional capacity. Most of my students' essays are, of course, a delight to read; a few, alas, are not. Some put me in mind of George Orwell's description of good bad poetry: 'a graceful monument to the obvious.' It may therefore seem strange, perhaps even masochistic, that when I read for pleasure in my spare time, of which I have less than my non-academic friends seem to believe, I particularly enjoy reading essays.

The quality of the essay that appeals to me is that, in the right hands, it is a marvellously well-equipped vehicle for combining imaginative thinking with beautiful writing. No idea is left untortured in a scholarly monograph or an article in an academic journal; yet, the essay is slender enough to sustain a fancy. By the same token, because it cannot rely on a barrage of facts or the massive authority that comes from endless footnotes, an essay has nothing else to recommend it but the sharpness of its insight and the quality of its prose. It lives under a ruthless Darwinism. If it is to survive, it has to have something important to say, and to say it well. Good essays have the same quality as a work of art: one does not tire of experiencing it.

The essays I read the most come from a group of writers who were operating from about the end of the Victorian period until soon after the Second World War; not much earlier than Oscar Wilde or Robert Louis Stevenson, and not much later than Orwell. This may seem restrictive, and obviously it leaves out a lot of wonderful essayists, but it still gives me plenty to play with: Beerbohm, Bell, Chesterton, Forster, Perelman, Thurber and Waugh, to name but a few.

There are two reasons why I find these particular writers so congenial. The first is to do with style. Leaving aside chameleons like Beerbohm or Perelman, who could write well in whatever register they chose, the writers mentioned above all share what Chesterton said of Stevenson: a 'beautiful and piercing sense of the clarity of form.' I do not want prose that is gorged with words, or sentences that meander down the page in a blizzard of sub-clauses. The first duty of the writer is to write just enough words to convey his meaning, no fewer than that but certainly no more. The essayists I most admire all take this responsibility seriously. The result is prose so clear-headed that reading it is like taking a cool shower on a hot day.

The second reason is to do with content. Again, Chesterton put it well in an essay on another writer; this time Kipling: ‘he has something to say, a definite view of things to utter, and that always means that a man is fearless and faces everything.’ I think also of Orwell's famous description of Dickens as ‘a man who is always fighting against something, but who fights in the open and is not frightened.’ I see both Orwell and Chesterton (strange companions!) and many of their contemporaries in a similar light. They are sensitive enough to irony not to moralise with blind over-confidence, yet they retain the independence of mind and courage to take their own view of things in defiance of ‘smelly little orthodoxies’. It is a difficult balance, and I wonder that so many writers from this particular age were able to achieve it.
FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Event booking forms are available to download at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/ematters

JANUARY 2011
30 January
NORTHUMBERL AND HOUSE LUNCH
George Holein
Catherine Blacklock (1938) invites all Old Members in the Northumb area to a buffet lunch at her house at 1.30pm. Partners/friends welcome.
Contact: Simon Offen, Deputy Development Director +44 (0)1865 286 075 simon.offen@chch.ox.ac.uk

MARCH 2011
13 March
CHRIST CHURCH FAMILY PROGRAMME LUNCHEON
Christ Church
Family Programme Members and parents of current undergraduates are invited to attend a lunch in Hall. Booking forms will be sent out in January 2011.
Contact: The Development Office +44 (0)1865 286 325 development.office@chch.ox.ac.uk
20 – 23 March
OXFORD AT WAR
Christ Church
An event organized by Holts Tours, combining lectures at Christ Church, a look at the College’s WW2 Archive, as well as visits to Bletchley Park where many Oxford Dons worked on the Enigma codes during the Second World War, and Blenheim Palace, the birthplace of Winston Churchill.
Contact: info@holts.co.uk
24 – 27 March
Christ Church
A weekend organized by Holts Tours, combining lectures at Christ Church, a look at the College’s WW2 Archive, as well as visits to Bletchley Park where many Oxford Dons worked on the Enigma codes during the Second World War, and Blenheim Palace, the birthplace of Winston Churchill.
Contact: info@holts.co.uk

APRIL 2011
2 – 11 April
SUNDAY TIMES OXFORD LITERARY FESTIVAL (see page 31)
Oxford
14 April
THURSTON GALLERY PRIVATE VIEW
14 Old Bond Street, London, W1S 4PP
Drinks reception, behind the scenes’ tour and specialist advice from William at his gallery in London.
Contact: The Development Office +44 (0)1865 286 325 development.office@chch.ox.ac.uk

MAY 2011
5 May
PATRONS’ LECTURE
Christ Church Picture Gallery
The first Christ Church Picture Gallery Patrons’ Lecture to be given by Sir Nicholas Penny (Director of the National Gallery London) in Blue Boar lecture theatre at 6pm. Booking essential but admission is free.
Contact: Picture Gallery +44 (0)1865 378 763 picturegallery@chch.ox.ac.uk
21 June
EIGHTH WEEK
Christ Church Boat House
Come to support the House as the Men’s 1st VIII fight to retain their Headship!
Contact: The Development Office +44 (0)1865 286 325 development.office@chch.ox.ac.uk

JUNE 2011
11 June
IRELAND EVENT (see back cover)
Christ Church Association’s first ever event in Ireland.
Contact: The Development Office +44 (0)1865 286 325 development.office@chch.ox.ac.uk

SEPTEMBER 2011
10 September
1961 REUNION
Christ Church
A reunion dinner for Old Members who will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of their matriculation.
Contact: The Development Office +44 (0)1865 286 325 development.office@chch.ox.ac.uk
16 – 18 September
2010 OXFORD ALUMNI WEEKEND
Oxford
Join fellow alumni for three days of talks, lectures, walks, tours and many more activities.
Contact: Oxford University Society alumniweekend@alumni.ox.ac.uk +44 (0)1865 286 075 or sign up for email updates at www.alumniweekend.ox.ac.uk

18 September
1546 RECEPTION
Christ Church
Contact: Helen Smith, Steward’s Secretary +44 (0)1865 286 580 helen.smith@chch.ox.ac.uk
On a peninsula to the north of Dublin, with breathtaking views over the Bay, sits Howth Castle. It is 15th century in origin but much altered subsequently, notably in the mid 18th century and in 1910 by Lutyens. Thanks to Old Member Julian Gaisford St. Lawrence (1976) it is here that the Association will hold a dinner on Saturday 18th June 2011. Julian is the direct heir of Dean Gaisford. The castle contains many artefacts with a Christ Church connection such as the remains of the Dean’s library, his letters, his furniture and his pictures; these include some given to the Dean by John Ruskin.

And if that is not sufficient to entice you to join us, on Sunday 19th June the Hon. Dr Desmond Guinness (1951) invites Association members to visit Leixlip Castle (bottom left), with origins in the 12th century, for a private tour and lunch.

Christ Church connections with Ireland’s rich heritage are numerous and we invite Old Members not just from North and South but also those living in the U.K., the U.S. and Europe to take advantage of this splendid weekend of events and to come and look up old friends and spend time in the Emerald Isle.

Julian has arranged special rates at his hotel in the grounds of Howth Castle: www.deerpark-hotel.ie

Please contact Catherine White at the hotel to book at these discounted prices. You might also like to enjoy the golf, the spa, walking, and a visit to the local fishing port of Howth or a tour of Dublin, which is easily reached by public transport. A special lesson on local Irish food has been arranged for those who wish to book into the Castle Cookery School, housed in the magnificent Georgian kitchen of the castle. www.thekitcheninthecastle.com

The visit to Leixlip Castle on the Sunday lunchtime does not have to be the end of your stay in Ireland, although Dublin airport is handily placed for those who have to fly home that afternoon/evening. Should you be free to stay longer Old Members Sir Brendan Parsons (The Earl of Rosse) (1957) and Charles Keane (1956) are also eager to welcome you to visit their homes, Birr Castle www.birrcastle.com and www.cappoquinhouseandgardens.com respectively.

For more information on this event please look on the Alumni and Development section of the Christ Church website or e-mail simon.offen@chch.ox.ac.uk