

# KING'S

P A R A D E

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF KING'S

## Fantasy football

Autumn  
2000



Eden Lilley

**King's College Women's Football team 2000.** Front row left to right: Elise Ford, 1999, Marita Manley, 1998, Roxana Saberi (Hughes Hall), Orla May, 1998, Laura Thomas, 1998, Rachel Sandbrook, 1998, Clare McLean, 1997. Back row, left to right: Angela Grainger, 1999, Catherine Bolten, 1999, Beccy Lock, 1998 (Captain), Sarah Petrie, 1997, Esther Waters, 1997, Grace Pickering, 1997.

 King's may not be famous for its success on the sports field, but there is a team which is starting to change that: the women's football team. Set up only three years ago, King's Women have now been promoted up the University league divisions two years in a row and

are about to take on the 3<sup>rd</sup> division. Not one league match was lost last year; the most successful result was a 7-0 victory.

Many of the team were initially nervous of getting involved in a sport that few women are given the opportunity to play – be it

socially or competitively – at school. But the opportunity to compete as a team, and to play what is basically a contact sport demanding heart and soul, has provoked massive enthusiasm.

**Beccy Lock, 1998, Captain KCWFC.**

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members' news

## Vignettes from the garden party



A large group mainly from 1991, gathered round an even larger collection of wine bottles, were very keen to be photographed. "We saw the pictures (of the last garden party) that's why we're here!" said Tom Smith, 1991. Many of them seem to have left King's and gone to Brighton. Tom explained that he spends his time making robots play football. Football, he assured me, was the most complicated computational domain: "If you can get a robot to play football, it can do anything." Tom, Anil Seth, 1990, and Andrew Philippides, 1991, work together in the Centre for Computational Neuroscience and Robotics at Sussex University.

cial analyst. That's what they all say! But he was serious; and not for the first time during the afternoon, the mobile telephone made its cheerful appearance. He was warned that anything he said would be taken down etc. "Look, I'll ring Amy Jenkins right now, here's her number!" Old friends Rachel Heywood, 1982, and Paul Aylieff, 1983, an investment banker, struggled to keep him under control, saying they *must* have a photograph because otherwise no-one would believe how much he'd changed. Well, judge for yourselves. Rachel chairs two charities involved with children, the arts and community regeneration. She commented that people at the party seemed to be "beside themselves with amusement" when she told them she's been given the freedom of Brixton in recognition of her work. "It's very gratifying," said Rachel, "but carries even fewer privileges than my exhibition (ie., no £40 pa), although I do intend to investigate the possibility of grazing sheep outside Lambeth Town Hall." Paul was one of many who said they missed David Baddiel. Despite making an appearance on the guest list, he was no-where to be seen. David, many of your fellow students feel they have jokes to tell you.

This year's garden party, for years 1980-1995, was a bouncy affair, a suitable inflatable having been provided for the (many) children attending with their parents. There was even a traditional game of skipping going on. Steve Yianni, 1980, a director at JCB, and Simon Atkinson, 1980 (now back in England after ten years in the aerospace business in Germany) were putting their engineering degrees to good use at either end of the rope, while their respective families, Pamela, James, Richard and Helen, as well as Clea, Bennath, Jenna and Jowan had all the fun. Sadly, they were moving too fast for the camera. Steve and Pamela were married in the Chapel sixteen years ago and also took the opportunity to show their children round.

Others in the Brighton cabal include Sophie Major, 1991, who studied biological anthropology at King's, but is now enjoying working in internet software development, Suzanne Mayhew, 1991 and Vivienne Barros D'Sa, 1991. Becky Willis, 1991, studied SPS, followed by a Masters at Sussex on environmental policy and now works for Green Alliance, an environmental think-tank. She is always on the look out for good women speakers on environmental issues. Where are you?

There was another group edging into the limelight: "I was the inspiration for *This Life*," insisted Richard Thomas, 1983, a finan-

Over on the left field, towards the flower-bed, sat a group of cheerful cynics. Siân James,



Left: Richard Thomas, 1983, Rachel Heywood, 1982, and Paul Aylieff, 1983.



Left to right: Siân James, 1989, and her husband Matt Jackson, Menna Jones, 1989, Ian Pratt, 1989, Menna's husband Mike Murray, Richard Seward, 1989, and John Aspden, 1989

1989, once KCSU co-ordinator, was playing with her new WAP phone, to general amusement. John Aspden, 1989, who rather alarmingly confessed to being "freelance computer scum" is currently working on speech recognition systems for mobile phones. "It's a gimmick," he said, "don't buy one!" He should know and you have been warned. John was disappointed not to see Susie Rutteman, who had said she'd come. Next year maybe?



The Brighton connection: Left: Rebecca Willis, 1991, Vivienne Barros D'sa, 1991.

## Non-resident members' weekend

One of the problems with reunions is how to recognise people; the other is what to wear. Robert Erskine, 1956, solved both by wearing bright red tartan trousers. It was very fortunate because *King's Parade* wanted to talk to him about his new book, *The Erskine Agenda: a blueprint for economic regeneration*, and he was immediately identifiable amid the sports jackets and grey flannels. Outraged by the true scale of public sector waste and corruption, Robert, who lectures at Glasgow Caledonian University, is campaigning for an abuse containment statute and an independent authority which he believes would help solve the problem.

Nick Tucker, 1955, chatting to Laurence Hayek, 1954, and Roger Prior, 1956, expressed concern over dress. "In the fifties," he said, "everything was formal. We all wore ties and sports jackets every day." Coming back he instinctively



Members from 1956 trying to recognise each other prior to the taking of the official photograph; labels helped a bit.

felt he should put his tie back on, though it was swiftly removed. Nick reviews children's books, and was looking out for an old friend, children's author Jan Pienkowski, 1954. He revealed that the eagerly

awaited final volume of *His Dark Materials*, by Philip Pullman, is due out in November, and that JK Rowling has already written the last lines of the seventh and last *Harry Potter* book.

## KC2000 – Events

June 24 was a day of celebration and looking forward. The inventors of the day (among whom the Provost, Fellows Emma Rothschild, Martin Rees, Robin Milner, and Tess Adkins, KCA chairman Nigel Bulmer, new Honorary Fellow Hermann Hauser and Dennis Stevenson) had the idea of creating a forum for imagining the creativity of the future not only ‘Beyond Keynes’ and ‘Beyond Turing’ but also to celebrate the ‘Musical Invention’ of King’s.

James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, talked on *New possibilities in information technology and knowledge for development in a global economy*, in a session chaired by Baroness Blackstone, Minister of State for Education and Employment, and with a surprise appearance by Esther Dyson.

Professor Sir Roger Penrose, a world leader in cosmology and relativity, and Professor Donald Michie, an associate of Alan Turing who pioneered research in artificial intelligence, spoke on *The Future of Computers: Prospects and Limits*, in a session chaired by Martin Rees and Robin Milner.

Composer Errollyn Wallen, 1999, and pianist Tom Poster, 1999, provided ‘Musical Invention’, Fellows Peter Jones and Stephen Alford lectured on the history of the College, and the Turing Archive went online. With administrative support from graduate student David Grumett, 1998, a memorable day was made.

# KC2000

**Tam Dalyell MP, 1952, was among the 500 or so Kingspeople to hear James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank. King’s Parade asked him for some of the background to his question: “Isn’t the World Bank being cavalier about the environment in Chad?”**

In the *New Scientist* of 20 May, I read that the World Bank was going to give the green light to exploitation of one of the world’s largest untapped oil reserves. The Bank was considering joining oil companies to build a 1000 kilometre pipeline through the rain forest of Central Africa to the oil fields of Southern Chad. The pipeline could double the size of Chad’s economy within a decade and eventually carry some 15 billion barrels of crude oil from an area the size of Germany. The Bank admitted that construction work and oil spills would damage the rainforest’s ecology and the livelihoods of forest tribes. But the Bank would fund an environmental mitigation plan and pay compensation.

Now it so happened that the evening before KC2000 day, I had been asked to speak at the Dinner in the Hall of Trinity College in honour of the unveiling of the bust of Sir Neville Mott in the Cavendish Laboratory. The present Master of Trinity, Amartya Sen (being a fellow pupil of the late Harry Johnson – unforgettable Economist Fellow of King’s – and having stayed in Scotland with my mother and me during the Christmas Vac. 1955 when he could not return to India) had invited me to stay the



Chris Tine

Some of the organisers and participants in KC2000: From left: Donald Michie, Martin Rees, Esther Dyson, Emma Rothschild, Tam Dalyell, Tessa Blackstone, Roger Penrose, The Provost, James Wolfensohn, Steven Paul.

night in the Lodge. At breakfast the following morning, cooked by Emma Rothschild, I had the pleasure of meeting James Wolfensohn, and the opportunity to chide him about Chad. He was unapologetic. He positively relished criticism. Yes he would be delighted if I would ask him publicly about the World Bank and the Environment. He had nothing of which to be ashamed.

By some alchemy I caught the Chairman’s eye, and asked the second question. How could the World Bank justify the Chad pipeline? I do not think I truncate to the point of distortion the full text of the reply, when I say that Wolfensohn retorted, “How can you justify denying Chad, one of the very poorest countries on the entire planet, the means by which its people can command a decent living?”

The KC2000 day took me back half a century, to that day in 1952

when I arrived as a first year undergraduate, fresh from being tank crew in the Royal Scots Greys, on the Elbe, 25 kilometres from Stalin’s Armour – and very naïve. To my supervisors, Christopher Morris, devil’s advocate extraordinary, and his hospitable wife Helen, to John Saltmarsh, great scholar of the Medieval World, to Arthur Hibbert and Eric Hobsbawm, prolific writer, who came to supper with me a few months ago, and the formidable Noel Annan, I owe a lifetime’s debt. Even they, however, had not prepared me for the razor sharp treatment of the King’s dons who supervised me in Economics, Richard Kahn and Nicholas Kaldor, Harry Johnson and Robin Marris, and that Honorary de facto Fellow of King’s Joan Robinson. Robin is very much alive and can speak for himself – I suspect the other four would have supported the Chad pipeline.



# The *New Yorker* in King's

A Festival of American Literature – organised and jointly supported by the King's College Research Centre, the literary journal *Stand*, and the Faculty of English – was held in March to celebrate the life and achievements of the late Tony Tanner, 1960, and to mark the publication of his last book *The American Mystery*. The Festival opened with Frank Kermode's tribute to Tony, who died in 1998. Tony was Professor of American Literature and it is thanks to him that Cambridge is now a flourishing centre for American literary studies – though it now has no Professor. The English Faculty is currently seeking funds to endow a new Professorship of American Literature.

As part of the Festival, Bill Buford, 1977, *New Yorker* magazine Literary and Fiction Editor and some of his fellow staff gathered in King's to celebrate the magazine's last 75 years. Bill joined the *New Yorker* in 1995 after sixteen years as editor of literary magazine *Granta*, and entertained Sunday morning *literati* with inside information about the changing times at the *New Yorker*.

"For years," Bill explained, "it was the magazine which defined the parameters of the American class system, effortlessly conveying the idea of culture that everyone seemed to want." But then things changed; financial problems struck, Tina Brown was appointed and Bill joined her in what he described as a

deft balancing act between culture and commerce. He went on, "Before the recession, advertisers would come to the *New Yorker*, which had so many pages booked long in advance that it sometimes turned them down – reinforcing a certain image that the magazine had of itself. After the recession the magazine had to go to advertisers and pitch, sell, and grovel like everyone else."

As well as the statutory grovelling, they also raised subscription charges. Surprisingly, when the price was increased, the average rate of renewals also increased, going against every normal practice and every reasonable expectation. Circulation, now at 900,000, up from 450,000, is bigger than the *Sunday Times*. "The vitality of its circulation illustrates that, whatever problems there might be in the world of advertising, the magazine has a healthy, intimate relationship with its readers; that the publication, a magazine of words more than pictures, is for people who read."

"It's a privilege to run the fiction," said Bill, who is very proud of providing a place where authors can play...writers like Annie Proulx, George Saunders, Louise Erdrich, William Boyd, Alice Munro, Saul Bellow, Don DeLillo, or Philip Roth. Now owned by *Vogue* publisher Condé Nast, there are some practical benefits to sharing offices. "Model-like women with very long legs now also use the

elevator, proving an invaluable lure to (some) writers." The staff, however, seem to be their same old selves. As Bill reported over-hearing in the elevator: "Can you believe these *New Yorker* people, they look just like the Waltons!"

Participants in the Festival events included *New Yorker* poetry editor Alice Quinn, cartoonist Edward Koren, Richard Gooder and Ellie Herrington. During the weekend John Hollander, Sharon Olds, Robert Coover, Willam Gass, Tama Janowitz and Mary-Jo Salter read from their work.



Cartoon by Edward Koren by kind permission of *Stand* magazine

## Parade Profile: Alan Macfarlane

Senior Research Fellow 1971, Fellow since 1981, Fellow of the British Academy, 1986, and since 1991 Professor of Anthropological Science.

“sometime between 1920 and 1965 the past was reinvented, history was reinvented”

“My thinking path,” said Alan Macfarlane, proffering a photo of a delightful curving umbellifer-fringed grass path in his Cambridgeshire garden. Alluding to Darwin, who had just such a path, and a favourite author, Borges – whose path famously forks – he was about to talk his way down some of its twists and turns. He describes his work as ‘diverse’ and it impinges on several major theoretical disciplines; history, legal history, historical demography, anthropology, sociology, and...computing.

Alan Macfarlane read Modern History at Oxford and gained a D.Phil. under Keith Thomas for the work which became *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (1970). Moving to the LSE he did an M.Phil. in Anthropology on “The regulation of marital and sexual relationships in 17th century England”. The insights he gained led, twenty years later, to *Marriage and Love in England 1300 – 1840* (1986). His Ph.D. was on ‘Population and resources in central Nepal’. *The Day the World Took Off* (a series for Channel 4 earlier this year, filmed partly in King’s) enabled him and several other academics from different disciplines to explore one of the oldest of riddles; “the astonishing nature of the ‘escape’ from agraria, against all the odds”, or why England in particular moved so fast and so spectacularly into the modern world in the period prior to the industrial revolution. That the answer to the riddle takes in the

sex life of the English, and the health-giving properties of tea, not necessarily in that order, makes for a good story.

One of the dicta he finds helpful is “study problems not periods”. In what he considers his most influential book, *The Origins of English Individualism* (1978) he had a chance to get to grips with a problem which had exercised him since his undergraduate days. What caused the increase in population which made the industrial revolution possible? Finding the answer to this question involved Alan in what was to be both pioneering computing and the upsetting of historical apple-carts. The link is the project to collect and computerise four hundred years’ worth of records of an English village, Earls Colne in Essex, in which his wife, Sarah Harrison, has been a key collaborator.

When they started on this project they were told it was too big to go on the Cambridge computer. Since the volume of data was equivalent to the tax records of the Greater London Council, it took three or four people seven or eight years to do the work. “Thanks to Ken Moody’s help, we had three generations of Ph.D. students, the very best brains.” It also involved some serious cutting edge software development. “In the late seventies King’s had a project on information retrieval systems. Up till then all database systems had been hierarchical searching systems, but Keith van

Rijsbergen wrote a specification for a new generation of probabilistic search systems.” Via an entrepreneurial anthropology student of Alan’s, John Snyder, and Dr Martin Porter, this eventually became the software which helps many of us search the net so effectively now.

What is the significance of the results of the Earls Colne project? “The central nugget is that sometime between 1920 and 1965 the past was reinvented, history was reinvented.” By Marxists? “Yes. To make a big dichotomy. Feudal peasant society broke down in the sixteenth century and then came the beginnings of modern society. The work of RH Tawney and much of the most exciting work of Christopher Hill and EP Thompson were based on this assumption. This is where Earls Colne came in. You see, none of these people had ever looked at the documents. If you look at the records, it was continuous. There was no capitalist revolution. The assumption was not challenged.” He was able to refute the interpretation of this period of English history, based as it was on the assumption, made by both Marx and Weber, of a change from a pre-capitalist to a capitalist structure.

Thinking paths allow for thoughtful meanderings, divergences and tangents, and in being able to follow these Alan Macfarlane considers himself a lucky man. He has been able to make his work and his personal

Alison Carter  
talks to  
Alan Macfarlane

interests coincide, his head and his heart. Leaning forward, he offers his palms for inspection. They both have a conspicuous single deep line from side to side. "These are the only ones you'll ever see that have the head and the heart line the same. There's no separation."

But does he believe that? The significance of palms, the integration? "Well I'm striving for integration." He feels that, as with the four thinkers (Montesquieu, Adam Smith, De Tocqueville and Ernest Gellner) whose work he examines in his new book, *The Riddle of the Modern World* (2000), productive striving comes out of the need to reconcile deep personal contradictions. Born and brought up in India, he was nurtured by the emotional warmth of ayahs, but was sent to a cold grey England at five. He hardly saw his mother for the next ten years. "I remember being desperately miserable and unhappy. How can you reconcile the emotional and affective living of one system with the rational, individualistic and efficient world of the West?" By

extension, how can you have a balance between individualism and collectivism?

Important to his own sense of balance is the connection he maintains with the integrated culture of Nepal, where he and his wife go each year to do field work. Adopted by a Nepalese family, he has access to a solution, albeit sporadic, to what he calls "Cartesian disassociation". He feels very Nepalese. "We are regarded as wage earners temporarily over here, with our heart in Nepal, which it is really. When my (adopted) sister died, I had to return and perform the rituals for her death. I was one of the four who lit the funeral pyre. I felt more devastated than I have ever felt about anyone in my life...more so than my father." How does he explain this kind of kinship? "It's a child-like innocent trust. If someone puts their complete trust in you and just assumes a depth of relationship, you either reject it or accept it completely. To find people who absorb you is much more real than anything here. There's no ambivalence."

Is he completely out of love with the West? Is there hope of finding a similar enchantment in Cambridge? In King's? In fact he believes there is. And he goes on to give an analysis of the strengths and benefits, the magic even, of something like a college fellowship. He follows FW Maitland, "a professor of law who died tragically young...the greatest British historian," who argued that a legal, technical device, invented at first to overcome inheritance problems, offers the key to the peculiarly English solution: trusts. Quasi-affective organisations set up as trusts inhabit a space somewhere between the citizen and the state and involve a group of people who freely associate in pursuit of some task. It could be the local Gilbert and Sullivan society, the Bank of England or the Inns of Court.

To Alan the benefits are clear. "They're magical because they have the freedom of association, the freedom of individual choice. You join them or you don't. But when you join them they assume a warmth and a meaning which is well beyond a contractual agreement. These institutions have in many ways the character of a marriage. They are freely entered into, but once it's done it has a moral and emotional overtone which is way beyond its contract. This is really what King's is about. As CS.Lewis said, 'the English don't have friends, they have friends *about* things.' We're not held together by caste, kinship or religion, so we make up excuses to be together. When you get the magic of all these things right there's a chance that some of the alienation and separateness of our efficient and over-rational world fades away."



Alan Macfarlane



## letters

Enjoying *King's Parade*, as I always do, am I the only old Kingsman (I doubt it!) to notice that your picture of "three porters" was in fact of only two – Frank Iredale and Wilfred (of blessed memory!) – while the man clearly refusing them access to Chapel was Mr Haggis, chapel verger for many years. Whatever, it was a joy to see this "rare" photo of three special people.

**Brian Kay, 1963.**

I happened to be in the Lodge when the libretto of *Billy Budd* was being conceived. A rather timid and sheepish EM Forster entered with Benjamin Britten – the former to ask if the latter might be permitted to park his old Rolls in Webb's Court. Mr Powell duly gave permission – and as Forster was later to remark in a famous speech at Founder's Feast in 1952, in posing the question: "Who runs the College?" – if my memory is correct, the answer was – "The Head Porter".

**Philippe Oboussier, 1949.**

I was glad to see the prominence given to King's Porters in the Spring 2000 issue of *King's Parade*. Your article refers to the sensitive way in which rules are still enforced. One night Wilfred caught me climbing *into* Chetwynd Court and there was a witness. Quick as a flash he called out "Come down, Mister Mattinson; you mustn't climb *out* at this time of night!" – and he had words with me afterwards.

**Brian J H Mattinson, 1951.**

## development

## Progress on the Garden Hostel Annexe

*"Oh...oh," puffed Ivor painfully. 'So now...the Fellows' Garden of Lancaster College...is open to anyone who wants to walk in?"*

*Jacquiz shrugged.*

*"Does it matter?" he said.*

*"They ruined the garden anyway when they built the new hostel right on top of it."*

*Both men turned their faces to a prominent red-brick building which stood where there had once been a grove of lady-birch and now glowered over the rest of the garden as if threatening to advance and occupy it all in the name of utility and progress.*

The passage is from *Places Where They Sing* (1970), one of the ten novels in the *Alms for Oblivion* cycle by Simon Raven, 1948. The story centres on events surrounding a debate about new buildings in a fictional Cambridge College, not unlike King's. (See page 11.)

Now, at the edge of the Fellows' Garden, the Garden Hostel

Annexe, a year 2000 take on utility and progress, is currently at first floor stage. Bobby Open, from Nicholas Ray Associates, is the project architect, and took me on a guided tour of the site. We watched striking stainless steel columns being lowered into position, gleaming supports for the balconied section which will extend at an angle from the main building. The first phase of the Annexe, due for completion in October 2001, will provide 33 fully-wired en-suite study bedrooms, suitable for students and conferences.



Contractors RG Carter at work on the Garden Hostel Annexe

Bobby explained that because of its listed site, the building will make a feature out of what might have been an impediment. The roots of a very fine plane tree stretch perilously close to the foundations, and the architects have solved the problem by scooping a section out of what would have been the corner of the building. In place of the corner, there will be an inset curved glass wall surrounding the staircase, flooding the interior corridors with light. "It's the most exciting part of the building," said Bobby. "We have 200 square metres of fully-transparent glass brick going in here with very tight tolerance." The balconied rooms facing the Fellows' Garden will be clad in untreated oak, and there will be spectacular views from the roof garden over towards the Chapel.



## Website re-launch

The King's College website was re-launched at the start of November. The address remains [www.kings.cam.ac.uk](http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk). The new site has been designed by Martin Lucas-Smith, 1997, and features many improvements designed to make it easier to use and more relevant to the range of people who visit it.

The old site, put online two years ago, represented at the time a huge improvement in the public

face of the College, as it replaced what was a relatively empty site with little information of interest. However, time has moved on, and so has technology. But rather than fill the site with gimmicks and special effects, attention has been focused on the needs and wishes of the user, and what he or she wants to get out of the site. As well as featuring a more modern-looking design, the site employs a more logical and intuitive

structure, and the content will be up-to-date and regularly updated too.

A few new features have been added to the site, in particular a proper section on forthcoming events. This will be at [www.kings.cam.ac.uk/events](http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/events) and we hope that non-resident members in particular will find this section of interest. Please do let us have any comments to [webmaster@kings.cam.ac.uk](mailto:webmaster@kings.cam.ac.uk)



## development

### Gala Wine Evening and Auction

Come and enjoy a unique evening in King's – a wonderful dinner with the best wines, musical entertainment from Robert Tear, 1958, and an auction of some of the best and rarest wines from the world's greatest wine makers.

Author and broadcaster Hugh Johnson, 1957 – whose publications include *Hugh Johnson's World Atlas of Wine* and his annual *Pocket Wine Book* – is orchestrating this very special

event to raise funds for the Chapel Foundation. Donations for the auction so far include all the Bordeaux first growths, fine wines from the Old and New Worlds, many great vintages, jeroboams and imperials, cases from the best Port and Champagne houses, great Burgundies and some rarities. The catalogue will be available in early Spring and, as a guide, lots are expected to fetch between £150 and £5000. Wines to be served with dinner include

a Corton-Charlemagne and Château Lafite-Rothschild.

The Gala Wine Evening is on Saturday 12 May 2001. Matthew Mellor in the Development Office can supply further details. The College is grateful to the members and others who have already given wine for this event, and if you have fine wine which you would like to donate to the College for auction please contact Matthew to discuss arrangements.

## stateside

### The King's Millennium Stateside Tour

A group of Kingspeople who were every bit as extraordinary, exuberant and sceptical of authority as the King's student body traditionally is, met in Washington, DC on April 12, 2000 to commemorate the last leg of the King's Millennium Stateside Tour. The Development Office of King's and local co-ordinator, Sarah Papineau Marshall, managed to corral a fascinating and diverse group, including both American and British Kingspeople residing in the Washington area, who are journalists, economists, educators, attorneys, physicians, public servants and officers in the military, for a lovely spring supper at Restaurant Nora.



Left Victoria Rostow, 1978, Sarah Papineau-Marshall, 1974 and Head of Development Tess Adkins.

While the group expressed its disappointment that the meetings of the Royal Society of London required Provost Patrick Bateson to return to London before the Washington event, Fellow and Head of Development, Dr. Tess Adkins rose to the occasion magnificently, presenting a detailed description of current college life for the group that clearly evoked many fond memories. The group engaged in some rather creative thinking aloud regarding the

potential for exporting aggressive American fund raising techniques to King's and suggestions, ranging from serious to less serious, were politely heard by Dr. Adkins. We are sure that Dr. Adkins was reassured both that members do not lose their iconoclasm and enthusiasms upon years of residing in the US capital, and that it is perfectly possible to find more than adequate food and drink within a mile of the White House.

**Victoria Rostow, 1978.**



Dinner in the Restaurant Nora: guests included Riyaz Jinnah, 1971, and Sarah Jane Jinnah, Lew Ferguson, 1966, Kathy Dwyer, Hugh Southern, 1953, Yannis Monogios, 1993, and guest. In the back row, Richard Strange, 1960 and Matthew Mellor, Development Director.

### Letter from Matthew Mellor

In April, fifteen King's students spoke to nearly 2,500 Non-Resident Members on the telephone on behalf of the College. They were following up a letter from the Provost asking members to consider making a gift to King's, with the result that – in the space of four weeks – £250,000 was raised. Thank you all; we are delighted. The new Garden Hostel Building, studentships, bursaries and the Chapel Foundation have all benefited.

This year a large number of people in the UK and USA have become members of the Chapel Foundation; you may not know that membership of the Chapel Foundation (available at several levels from £50 p.a. upwards) brings with it discounts, free entry and a special newsletter, and is open to all supporters of the Chapel, whether members of King's or not.

A final word about legacies: over a hundred people have now indicated that they intend to leave a bequest to King's. This gives us real confidence about our long-term future development. If you are considering leaving a legacy to King's, or have already done so but not told us, I would be grateful if you could let me know. All enquiries are dealt with in total confidence and my advice can sometimes be helpful!

# Problems ... shared

Personal development and academic excellence:  
Rob Wallach, Senior Tutor, explains his approach.



I was impressed with the huge letters spelling out "Welcome to King's" which current King's students had stuck up inside the windows of Gibbs' in early October to greet the incoming class of 2000. The message made a strong impression on everyone; the new students, existing members of the College and also residents of Cambridge.

I also welcome each student individually during their first weekend, as has been the College practice for many years, and always encourage them to take full advantage of what being at University can offer. It is important to be clear that King's, while placing a firm emphasis on academic work, also believes strongly in personal growth; the time at King's should be an education of the whole person.

King's students are bright individuals, but in my experience it is sometimes the most talented students who have the greatest difficulties while at University since academic and personal development do not always occur simultaneously and conveniently between the ages of 18 and 21! Hence part of my job as Senior Tutor is to make sure that

those first class minds keep in touch with more general development and even reality. For most students the tutorial system works very well, and I think that King's, and collegiate Universities generally, are in a strong position meet the academic and personal needs of students. The tutorial system ensures that students get to know at least one person (and ideally several) well enough for problems, academic or personal, to be addressed quite quickly.

While each student is treated as an individual, problems which can have an impact on academic work do generally fall into recognisable categories. Students may have been under pressure from parental expectations, and when at King's – and freer from those expectations – it will be a challenge to some to work out who they are and what their own expectations are. This may even involve radical course changes ...for example from Natural Sciences to English. Some students find that they have the space for the first time to come to terms with difficulties experienced prior to coming to university – e.g. family problems which could not be tackled while still at home, their sexuality, parents'

divorces or bereavement. A student might have difficulty, especially in the first terms, adjusting to the workload or the culture. And this can apply whether they come from a school with no Oxbridge tradition or one with much more experience.

For some students, simply finding someone here with time to talk will be enough. For others, and where appropriate, we encourage the use of trained counsellors. We also allow a few students to interrupt their studies in order to get new perspectives. We do try very hard to meet the needs of each student and approach any problems on an individual basis. But these measures don't always work, and by definition King's can't work for everyone. A few members express regret, disappointment or anger about their time at King's, sometimes even much later on in their lives. For some, King's will have been the wrong place, or it will simply have been the wrong time. Others will realise only much later how much more they could have done, or experienced, whether academically or in other ways.

King's believes in the potential of all the students it admits (even if this sometimes mean both sides taking risks) and the College prides itself on endeavouring to make University life as positive and rewarding an experience as possible for all its students, while also meeting its high academic expectations.



Yun Long Wu, 2000, left and Yiling Zhang, 2000.

## books by members



## Super-Cannes

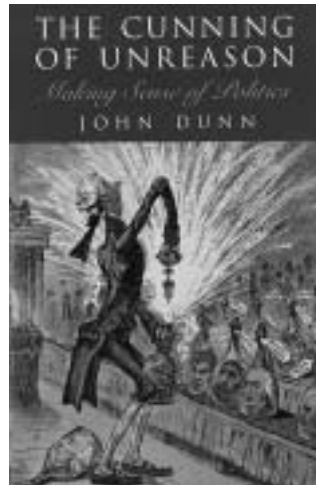
The *Independent* calls it “the first essential novel of the 21st century”. Aviator Paul Sinclair and his young ex-hippy doctor wife, Jane, arrive in Eden-Olympia, a residential business-park paradise behind Cannes. She’s the community’s new paediatrician (there are no children) and he’s recuperating from a flying accident. The executives of the world’s biggest corporations work, live and play there, but all is not well in Eden. As Paul tries to find out why Jane’s idealistic predecessor went berserk with an automatic rifle, he uncovers the chill 21st century world of Ballard’s Riviera revisited. Overwork (work is the new play) has dulled creativity and killed off sex, but the messianic resident psychiatrist finds that a little organised weekend violence, with racist undertones, works wonders. “Bandaged fists and plastered shins on Monday mornings, but clear, confident heads.” Are these executives turning into executioners?

*Super-Cannes* by JG Ballard, 1949, is published by HarperCollins at £16.99.

## Alms for Oblivion

*Alms for Oblivion* by Simon Raven, 1948, is a series of ten novels, all telling separate stories but linked by the characters they have in common: soldiers and dons, men of business, politicians and writers. Written between 1963 and 1976, the narrative starts in 1945 and concludes in 1973; full of hearty rancour, they form a scathing chronicle of the upper echelons of postwar English society. Jonathan Bouquet in *The Observer* compared *Alms for Oblivion* favourably with *A Dance to the Music of Time*: “Raven’s world...is peopled by quite some of the vilest, funniest characters in English literature...so please don’t waste your time with Powell.” His characters (largely people) appear and reappear, though not chronologically. *The Guardian* said: “Sparkling and fizzing—Raven has the mind of a cad and the pen of an angel.” In *Places Where They Sing*, the sixth novel, Lancaster College is a loosely disguised King’s.

*Alms for Oblivion*, by Simon Raven, is available in three paperback volumes from Vintage, at £9.99 each.



## The Cunning of Unreason

In *The Cunning of Unreason: Making Sense of Politics*, John Dunn, 1959, Fellow and Professor of Political Theory, gives readers a choice. “You could think of it as a book about the inevitability of disappointment. But I prefer myself to think of it as a book about how (and how not) to hope.” His hope is a kind of caveat, and, with the spotlight on American democracy, the book is timely. “Even such fundamental desiderata as decisiveness of outcome, accuracy in the registration of opinion and will or fairness to all citizens must often pull sharply against one another.” *The Observer* enjoys Dunn’s “wit and insight as well as scorn”. *The Guardian* calls it “a serious jewel”. For the *Financial Times* he is “perhaps the most original and important political thinker of his generation...not the least of Dunn’s achievements is to help us away from the current evisceration of political sense by the already collapsing Third Way”.

*The Cunning of Unreason*, by John Dunn. HarperCollins, £19.99.



## events and information

### Events 2001

#### Thursday 15 February

The Provost's Seminar  
"Information and the Individual."

#### Saturday 12 May

Gala Wine Evening and  
Auction

#### Saturday 23 June

KCA Luncheon

#### Saturday 30 June

Garden Party  
Members 1965 – 1979

#### Saturday 22 September

Non-Resident Members'  
Weekend  
Members 1960 – 1964

#### Thursday 15 November

The Provost's Seminar

### Choir concerts 2001

#### Monday 19 March

St John's, Smith Square,  
London  
020 7222 1061

#### Friday 23 March

Sheldonian Theatre,  
Oxford  
01865 243041

#### Monday 9 April

The Megaron, Thessaloniki  
0030 31 895 800

#### Tuesday 10 April

The Megaron, Athens  
0030 31 728 2000

#### Friday 22/Saturday 23 June

Haarlem Concertgebouw  
Haarlem, Netherlands

#### Monday 2 July

Tewkesbury Abbey

#### 16 July to 7 August

Tour to Singapore and  
Australia  
(Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne,  
Adelaide, Perth.)

### Talking to JG Ballard about King's

"You're welcome to ring me about my memories of King's – though to be honest those memories are probably more hostile than the usual bland tosh published in the King's College magazine," Ballard wrote in reply to my letter. "I didn't enjoy my time there and thought the whole place deeply provincial and second rate. I hope the place has changed, though I doubt it – it sounds like the same very twee middle-class finishing school, deeply flattering to all those state-school entrants deluded into thinking that they've cracked the system. And from what I've seen, Cambridge itself is a vast science park with a pseudo-gothic heritage centre crammed with mystified Japanese tourists." Vintage Ballard. But his last line was the real incentive to make the call. "You're welcome to use the above, and save yourself the trouble of phoning me."

Born in 1930 in Shanghai, where his father was a businessman, he and his family were placed in a civilian prison camp after the attack on Pearl Harbour. His 1984 novel about his childhood experiences in China, *Empire of the Sun*, won the Guardian Fiction Prize and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, and was later filmed by Steven Spielberg. His controversial 1973 novel *Crash* has been made into a film, directed by David Cronenberg. His other books include *The Kindness of Women* and *Cocaine Nights*. He came to King's in 1949 to study medicine, leaving after two years to work as a copywriter and Covent Garden porter before joining the RAF.

In fact he seemed quite happy to talk, critically and at length, about Cambridge and King's in the early 50s, and warmed rapidly to the theme – or should that be theme-park? Asking him to expand on what he meant by "deeply provincial and second-rate", the picture he etched was of an institution hopelessly out of touch with the new ideas coming from America and continental Europe; dons in King's "laughed at psycho-analysis" and existentialism was derided. He sounded very cross still, but perhaps writers need to keep faith with their memories despite the passing of time and the changing world.

What about the personal side, had he made good friends? Yes, yes. With an audible nod to his own lack of political correctness and in almost confessional tone he said, "of course, the place was packed with perverts". When he smuggled his girlfriends in, fellow students backed away alarmed. "I hated the Chapel", he added, and I detected almost fresh loathing for what he bundled together as "all that jugged hare – and grace." There were other contributors to the antiquated atmosphere; "that old writer", he said only half-jokingly, and the Provost, whom he thought a ridiculous tottering figure. So he "took a chance" and left, considering it a lucky escape. He could not subscribe to a future measured by the conventional yardsticks of the time; there would be no "slaving away in ministries". He could hardly wait to leave then, and I was, sadly, not convinced that I had persuaded him to come back now.

Alison Carter

*King's Parade* aims to keep Members of King's informed about their College and about each other.

Contributions for the next edition are gratefully received.

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