

The Matrix

Spring
2001



Brian Barber

Last autumn, amongst the College Archives, Archivist Ros Moad and Librarian Peter Jones came across an intricate inlaid wooden box about six inches across sealed with red wax and dated 1588. It was among other mysterious boxes, large and small, which had been transferred with the College Archives from the old Muniments Room. Perhaps sensing an historical moment coming on, and

with admirable restraint, Peter called on John Cherry, Keeper of Mediaeval and Modern Europe at the British Museum, to officiate at the cutting, with a scalpel, of the seal ribbon. What they had found (though technically it may never have been lost) was the silver matrix of the College Seal.

The matrix is a masterpiece of late Gothic art. For ease of viewing the image shown here is in

positive. In a Gothic canopy it shows (centre) the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin; she is surrounded by clouds, and angels bear her up to God the Father, whose head and hands appear above; (right) St Nicholas, mitred and robed as a Bishop; (left) the Founder, kneeling in prayer. The same characters appear on the Foundation Charter, and the College itself was named by King Henry VI as the 'College of the

contents

www.turingarchive.org	2
Exiles in the Archives	3
Members' News	4-5
Parade Profile: Charlie Loke	6-7
Provost's Seminar	8
College News	9
King's College Drain Society	10
Books by Members	11
Letters	12-13
Development	14-15
Events & Information	16

Blessed Virgin Mary and St Nicholas' (of Bari, the prototype of Father Christmas).

A seal matrix was probably first cut in 1443, within two years of the Foundation, and certainly before 1446. When the College was granted new arms in 1449, alterations were made to the shield. This meant replacing the lilies of Eton with the Tudor Rose

of King's. The legend, still in reverse, and minus the marks of abbreviation, reads: "Sigillu: coe prepositi scolarium: collegii: rigalis (sic) be marie sci nicholai de cantebri". (Common seal of the College Royal of Blessed Mary and St Nicholas of Cambridge.) As matrix of the Common Seal, it was once the legal instrument of the College. A Fellow of the College is still required to witness

and sign the sealing of a deed of property, using the latest successor to the 1449 matrix. The fact that the box itself, identified by John Cherry as nineteenth century, was "sealed", probably in the nineteenth or early twentieth century, using a seal of 1588, suggests that the Fellow or Fellows who carried this out were either keen to re-create tradition or wanted to add to the mystery.

www.turingarchive.org

Alan Turing, 1931, was an undergraduate and then a Fellow at King's, from 1935 until 1952. In 1936 he developed the classic concept now known as the 'Universal Turing Machine'. He was a codebreaker at Bletchley Park during the War, and after the War he had a key role in developing the first computers at the National Physical Laboratory and then in Manchester.

The Archive Centre in King's holds unpublished material by Alan Turing which an imaginative project is making available

online. The aims are twofold: to provide a sound scholarly guide to Turing's published and unpublished papers and, through the popular interest in Turing, to enhance the public understanding of science.

So far, a trial project to digitise and make material available online has been undertaken with funding and expertise from the Department of Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton, The British Computer Society and The Institution of Electrical Engineers.

Now, a donation from scientific publisher Elsevier is enabling further progress to be made. "As the world's leading scientific journal publisher, and the publisher of Turing's Collected Works under our North Holland imprint, we were delighted to be able to support this important project," said Michael Mabe, Elsevier's Director of Academic Relations. "Our ScienceDirect service hosts 1,200 on-line journals, none of which would have been possible without Turing's pioneering work in computing."

At the King's end, Jonathan Swinton, 1983, has been enthusiastic in developing the project and explained that its costs lie largely in the hardware and software necessary to provide high quality facsimiles rapidly over the web. At a later stage, the project hopes to commission educational guides to the material.

Keith van Rijnsbergen, 1969, Professor of Computing Science at the University of Glasgow, whose own research interests are in quantum computation and information retrieval, has been instrumental in bringing the project to fruition. He said, "I am delighted that the project has secured \$35,000 funding from Elsevier. I believe that online access to the Turing archive material will be of service both to academic researchers and teachers of psychology or computer studies wishing to introduce A-level students to artificial intelligence."

The project is seeking additional funding to complete the work. For further details contact the Development Office on 01223 331313.



Alan Turing was a candidate for the British Olympic team in long distance running and this photograph shows him, left, with members of the Walton Athletic Club, c.1946.

Exiles in the Archives

The Cambridge of Mary Tudor's reign is still relatively unknown territory. Equally, the potential of the College Archives is just becoming clear. Stephen Alford, 1999, Ehrman Fellow at King's investigates.

In December 1553 William Temple and John Seaman received from the King's College of Our Lady and St Nicholas in Cambridge permission to travel overseas for the purposes of study and other 'necessary causes'. The two men were Fellows: Temple, twenty-five years of age and an MA, Seaman a year younger and a Bachelor of Arts. On the face of it their request looks uncontroversial. But the reality was rather different. Seaman, Temple, and another Fellow, Nicholas Carvyle, left the College in a period of profound upheaval. After 1553 the Protestant Reformation of King Edward VI was progressively reversed by his half-sister Mary, and the heresy-hunters began to visit the colleges of Cambridge and Oxford.

King's in the sixteenth century was probably more self-contained than other institutions in Cambridge. There was a natural progression in its membership: from Eton to King's, and from scholar, three years and a day after matriculation, automatically to Fellow. This was an integrated and coherent community, populated by men who would have known one another from boyhood. The College Archives testify to this: the rhythm of life in the community was reflected by the records it kept of admissions, of dining and food consumed, and of quarterly salaries.

The institutional lives of Seaman, Temple, and Carvyle are recorded in fascinating detail. Temple and Carvyle were born in Stour Provost in Dorset, Seaman in Tring, Hertfordshire. The two Fellows from Dorset had been admitted to the College on the same day in August 1545, and their colleague Seaman a year later. In 1551 the three exiles had contributed to volumes of Latin and Greek verse edited by three luminaries of King's in the middle of the sixteenth century – Provost John Cheke (Cecil's brother-in-law) and the lawyers and rhetoricians Walter Haddon and Thomas Wilson – in memory of the German Protestant reformer Martin Bucer and the young sons of Katherine Brandon, the evangelical Duchess of Suffolk.

Like all Marian Protestants after 1553, Carvyle, Seaman, and Temple each had to choose one of three routes: stay in England and keep their heads down, go into voluntary exile abroad, or die for their faith. All three chose the second. Seaman is difficult to trace, but Carvyle was at Zurich in 1554 and in Frankfurt in 1555, and Temple enrolled as a student at Basle in the winter of 1555. The Bursars' accounts in the College Archives reveal that even during his time in Switzerland King's continued to pay Temple his salary! They enjoyed influential connections. On his return to England in 1560

Carvyle was recommended for an important ecclesiastical office at Durham, and it appears that Temple may have spent time in Basle with Francis Walsingham – a Fellow Commoner of King's between 1548 and 1550 and later the secret servant of the Elizabethan state responsible for gathering evidence against Mary Queen of Scots.

The archives offer researchers outstanding sources for the study of architecture, religious upheaval, patterns of consumption, development of the curriculum, social and political history. *Mundum Books* recording payments for goods and services, and *Commons Books* documenting Kingsmen dining in Hall, are continuous series of accounts both dating back to 1447. *Protocol Books* recording admission of Scholars and Fellows form an unbroken sequence from 1500, and the *Ledger Books* containing copies of wills and conveyances date back to 1451.

With Dr Thomas Freeman of the University of Sheffield and the British Academy's John Foxe Project, I plan to reconstruct the impact of the Marian years on King's and its Fellowship.

For an online archival exploration of the life at King's of John Baker, a colleague of the exiles, visit: www.kings.cam.ac.uk/library/archives/college/tour

Conserving the College Archives

With administrative records dating back to the College's foundation in 1441, and records of estates granted by King Henry VI dating back to the 11th Century, there are many conservation requirements for the College Archives. These documents are our College's memory, its historic reference, and its future resource ... but their physical condition is far from secure. A conservation programme is already in place, but we would like to ask for your support in continuing this work.

£16,000 will pay for the completion of the College Archive catalogue

£1,000 will pay for one week of intensive cleaning

£500 will pay for the de-acidification, paper repair, and re-binding of one volume in the Commons Book series of accounts

£100 will pay for repairs and cleaning of one damaged estate map

£50 will pay for the de-acidification, repair, and encapsulation in clear melinex sleeves of 10 letters sent to Provosts and Bursars

Your gift will be acknowledged in the *Annual Report*, the conserved document will have a name-plate, and you will receive a detailed conservation report on the work undertaken.

Contact Dr Rosalind Moad, Archivist, King's College, Cambridge CB2 1ST. 01223 331444. Or archivist@kings.cam.ac.uk or the Development Office, 01223 331313.

members' news



Alan Caiger-Smith, 1949.

Lustre

"I think I must be the only Kingsman to have been awarded a scholarship from a London Art School," writes Alan Caiger-Smith, 1949, who went on, after reading History and English, to found the Aldermaston Pottery. His work is being celebrated in a special exhibition this summer.

"I was fascinated by all the pots in the Fitzwilliam, but especially by those with brushwork and colour and I treated myself to long sessions with the Glaisher Collection of tin glaze wares and the Adès Collection of Persian Lustre. Now, fifty years on I see that much of my work is related to the ceramic traditions that these collections represent. I have spent much of my time trying to make pots that also have a place in people's lives...the colours and the brushwork 'the dance around the silent form' are I hope, more than decorative. They look outwards, to people, and inwards to the forms themselves."

"I hadn't enjoyed Camberwell much and would have given up painting, but was very happy at King's and began again, encouraged by Bryan Robertson, who in those days ran the gallery at Heffers. I began with clay as an undergraduate, making not pots but figures. The clay came from the land-drain factory in the Newmarket road and the foreman kindly put my figures among the pipes in their enormous kiln."

An exhibition of the work of Alan Caiger-Smith and Peter Layton will be at the Fitzwilliam

Museum from 3 July to 2 September, and his work can be purchased through Primavera, 10 King's Parade, Cambridge. 01223 357708. www.artandcrafts.co.uk

Good Egg

Mike Appleby, 1977 is moving to a job with the Humane Society of the United States. He explains why:

Why did the chicken cross the Atlantic? Because there's work to do on the other side. Since leaving King's in 1981, where I did a PhD on red deer behaviour, I have done research on the behaviour of farm animals, particularly poultry. An increasing concern has been animal welfare, for example the effects on hens of being housed in battery cages. I worked at the University of Edinburgh on improved designs of cages, providing hens with perches, nest boxes and litter for pecking and scratching. That work has proved influential: in 1999 the European Union accepted our recommendations and legislated to phase out battery cages and to require improved conditions for hens by 2012. I have also worked on other farm species, edited a book called *Animal Welfare* (CAB International, 1997) and written another called *What Should We Do About Animal Welfare?* (Blackwells, 1999).

However, Europe is not the world, and conditions for farm animals in many countries are worse than here. In the US, for example, battery cages are even

smaller than in Europe. Yet the Millennium brought an interesting development. Last year the mighty corporation of McDonald's, which buys as many as 2.5% of American eggs, told its suppliers that they must give their hens the same conditions as in Europe. Things are moving. And so I have decided to move too, as I have been offered the post of Vice President of the US Humane Society (similar to our RSPCA), in charge of their department for Farm Animals and Sustainable Agriculture in Washington DC. It's a challenging and exciting post, and I expect to see many changes in agriculture over the next few years, in the US and throughout the world. michael.appleby@ed.ac.uk

Weather Informatics wins £15,000 prize

Rowan Sutton, 1987, is a member of the 5-strong team which won the top prize in the Cambridge University Entrepreneurs (CUE) Business Plan competition, announced on 2 March. With 70% of all businesses exposed to weather risks, their company Weather Informatics aims to provide customer-specific bespoke forecast products, based on a proprietary meteorological – financial model, to enable weather-sensitive businesses to improve their management of weather-related risks. The competition attracted 49 entries and the £15,000 top prize was sponsored by the Generics Group.

Rowan is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Global Atmospheric Modelling at the

University of Reading and fellow team members Emily Shuckburgh, Pierre Lafourcade, Warwick Norton, and Alan O'Neill all have Cambridge connections. "Our ideas have been developing over a period of time," said Rowan. "But it was the business plan competition itself which crystallised our thinking. It's very exciting."

The CUE business plan competition is student organised and takes place under the auspices of the Cambridge Entrepreneurship Centre. This was established by the University in 1999 with government funding and enthusiastic support from Hermann Hauser, 1973. Its aim is to inculcate a culture of entrepreneurship within the University, and develop the entrepreneurs and managers who start and grow businesses both within and beyond the University. Hermann Hauser, founder of Acorn Computers, Chairman of Amadeus Capital Partners and Honorary Fellow at King's, introduced this year's awards. Praising students for



John Barton directing

having set up and run the competition he said, "It's the most satisfying thing I've done in the last ten years."

Tantalus

There were hundreds more dramas written by the Greeks than the 33 we have access to now, and John Barton, 1948 (Associate and Advisory Director of the RSC since 1960, and director of *The Wars of The Roses*) has always been fascinated by what else we might have known about the characters and relationships of those familiar mythical figures. "The peculiar thing is that what we all know are just a few surviving plays, so there's other stuff which has got lost... our view of the whole story is based on what we've got." So he has written a series of plays (to be performed originally over a two-day period) filling in some of the gaps, drawing on fragments and contradictory sources as well as the familiar stories we all know, or think we know. "The Greeks themselves were liberal and free with their myths and I wanted to tell the whole story of the Trojan War, having asked three fundamental questions. Who is to blame? What is the truth of it? Could it have been otherwise?"

His epic, *Tantalus*, which opened in Denver, Colorado, last autumn and comes to London in May, is the result of many years' work. For John Barton, the plays are about relationships and re-evaluations. He did not want the characters in masks and he intended his themes to be ironic rather than tragic. He believes that people have an appetite for all day theatre, citing the *Ring Cycle*, but he also needed the space to tell the story, in which,

as he sees it, the Trojan War is an event somewhere in the middle of a much longer story. He uses the story of Tantalus as the over-arching myth and metaphor for the human condition. Most of us know that Tantalus was punished for having stolen the secrets of the gods. He must stand up to his neck in water which recedes whenever he tries to drink; though hungry, he can never reach the grapes suspended above him. Less well-known – but to Barton more significant – is the rock balanced above him, which constantly threatens to fall. And though it doesn't, it definitely will one day.

Peter Hall's production bears little resemblance to John's performance text. Reluctant to talk about the trouble between them (they have been colleagues for thirty years) John did comment on the irony of the fact that Hall – in seeking to make *Tantalus* the culmination of his own career – rather overlooked its equal importance to the author.

The Mayflower Pilgrims – new cantata
Andrew Seivewright, 1944, has received a Churchill Travelling Fellowship, to enable him to spend several weeks in the USA working on a new cantata exploring the faith and achievements of the 1620 Mayflower pioneers. Andrew has spent thirty years as Organist and Master of the Music at Carlisle Cathedral. Now resident in the Lake District, he plays at Grasmere Parish church, and has recently completed a choral work *Clouds of Glory*, for Wordsworth's 150th anniversary. He expects the new cantata to be ready for first performance at Thanksgiving 2002.

Parade Profile: Charlie Loke

Professor of Reproductive Immunology, Director of Studies in Medical Sciences and Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

“We would like to think that the vast majority of the most important diseases of pregnancy will be related to what we are doing.”

Yung Wai (Charlie) Loke, 1953 – slight, modest, fit and youthful – on the cusp of retirement, speaks as though he’s still slightly surprised to find himself in King’s at all. It’s as though he feels he should not only perhaps “go home” but that he should also have got science and academia “out of his system”. It’s an unusual take on life for a man with a very distinguished record in medical research and plaudits as a teacher.

There is definitely an oriental polarity at work, evident when trying to select a suitable photo. The process seems to pose more than the usual problems of angle, lighting or expression. There’s Charlie the white-coated research scientist at his bench – “I’m an experimental scientist, it’s what I do” – Charlie the serious academic giving a supervision...and Charlie in a sarong on an idyllic Malaysian beach. But he’s not just an academic on holiday. “It’s the yin and yang of my double life,” he jokes.

He was brought up in Penang, where his father ran the family business. His grandfather, originally from Canton, had been instrumental in setting up the rubber and tin industries in Malaysia, and was subsequently one of the founders of Hong Kong University. Charlie describes his childhood in the tropics as totally non-academic. “I had a happy Huckleberry Finn-type existence, roaming beaches on my own with a fishing rod, later playing lots of

tennis and golf.” As an undergraduate he was captain of the King’s tennis team, and though he once played golf to a handicap of six, he chuckles wistfully, it’s now back in double figures. The dashing sporting hero remains in his continuing love of fast cars, something he lets slip with slight embarrassment.

But how did he end up an academic in King’s when other options – like running the business – might have been tempting? Well, at the time he just wasn’t interested in business; his passion was for science...and he wanted to be a marine zoologist like Jacques Cousteau. “But in the Far East in those days, nobody understood fundamental science, only applied science. So I started medicine, and I finished too, but then I realised that the *science* of medicine and the *art* of healing are two totally different things. I’m good at one, but not the other.”

The two worlds he inhabits are very different, yet he has deep roots in each. In Cambridge for nearly thirty years, he has an English wife and they have raised their family here, but he still holds a Malaysian passport. As he talks about his options for retirement, whether to stay or go “home”, whether to stay in science or change tack, speculating on how despite deep roots, he is an alien – “There’s a difference between a very anglicised foreigner, which is what I am, and a foreign Englishman” – it becomes appar-

ent that there are resonances between his “dilemma” and the subject of his medical research. Charlie is a reproductive immunologist and he works on the placenta. It is an organ which also has feet, so to speak, in two camps. It is part of the embryo, therefore technically “alien”, but it also invades the mother and she, while putting up a fight, allows it to establish roots. But only for nine months...after which it’s time to move on.

He got interested in this understudied organ shortly after qualifying, when he returned to Malaysia to start research on a tumour, choriocarcinoma, by chance a placental tumour, which is very common in the Far East. “It suddenly occurred to me the reason we didn’t know how these tumours actually arise is because we didn’t know how the normal placenta implants.” So his work has moved from the abnormal to the normal, going back to first principles.

Why don’t we know how it works? “Traditionally the placenta is an organ you discard. It’s the crucial component of pregnancy, though most people didn’t realise.” Charlie, it turns out, has been drawing the front line in the battle between the sexes. His work elucidates the opposing roles of paternal and maternal genes in the evolution of viviparity, a dangerous reproductive strategy. And in identifying the placenta as the locus of the mother of all battles he is

Alison Carter
talks to
Charlie Loke

asking questions about how (and why) half-foreign tissue can persuade its mother to alter the structure of her blood vessels in order to guarantee it sufficient nutrition.

“Blood vessels usually have muscular walls that they can contract. But if they can contract then it means they are subject to control by the mother’s vasomotor nerves. We don’t want that to happen in pregnancy because if the mother were to eat or run upstairs the blood would be diverted away from the uterus. And you don’t want that. You want a constant low pressure blood supply.” What happens is that placental cells invade the walls of the maternal blood vessels and destroy them, converting them into non-muscular sack-like structures where blood just flows gently. Too little invasion – fetus and placenta are starved; too much – the mother may die.

“We would like to think, without being arrogant, that the vast majority of the most important

diseases of pregnancy will be related to what we are doing. The major diseases of pregnancy are miscarriage, intra-uterine growth retardation and pre-eclampsia. And they are all due to the fact that not enough nutrients are going through from the mother.”

“The human placenta is very, very invasive though, and the mother has to put up a defence, at a cellular level.” For Charlie, the ultimate question is not what the placenta does but how it survives pregnancy in the first place, because it is *foreign* tissue. “Our view is that the mechanism for the control of this invasion is immunological. These invading placental cells are fetal: they have paternal antigens and are foreign to the mother.” One side of the uterus, Charlie and his team knew, has a great concentration of natural killer (NK) cells. But five years ago no-one knew what NK cells were for or how they worked. His laboratory was one of the first to isolate, characterise and culture human placental and uterine cells, and the

techniques are widely followed. Finding out how these NK cells operate during placental invasion has enabled him to put forward a new theory about the immune system. “What is new is that *this* immune system is totally different from the transplantation type of immune system.”

It is also, he suspects, much older. “Recognition of *non-self* does occur naturally way back in evolution among invertebrates, like sponges in the sea. They had to *guard* their individuality against being colonised and taken over by other species. Transplantation is *not* a natural situation.” The sponges use cells very similar to NK cells. “We *do* have two systems which can recognise non-self.” For Charlie this is the most exciting thing. “We are *changing* a prevailing paradigm. After fifty years we have managed to move the question – that’s the important thing to me. People can now look at the immunology of pregnancy in a different way. Transplantation immunology was the stumbling block; but we haven’t really got the answer yet.”

What about the answer to Charlie’s retirement dilemma, his next challenge? “I don’t mind leaving *England*, I don’t even mind leaving Cambridge *per se*, but leaving King’s is going to be the wrench. I’ll miss the place and the people. I feel I *ought* to go,” he laughs at the *ought*, “but I also feel I might not make it.” As a young man he never wanted to go into the family business, but he confesses to being more tempted now, and for good scientific reasons. “So much research time is now taken up in the search for funding that perhaps I would be more useful to the academic community by *generating* some of those funds.”



Charlie Loke



Are the Arts Worth it?

Nicholas Goodison, 1955, Chairman of the National Art Collections Fund and the Courtauld Institute and former Chairman of the Stock Exchange and the TSB Group, chaired the November Provost's Seminar.



Nicholas Goodison, 1955.

We chose the question "Are the Arts Worth it?" because state financing of the arts is still a burning issue. But the question was deliberately worded so that we could explore the deeper meanings of worth.

Alan Peacock, the distinguished economist, former Chairman of the Scottish Arts Council and one of the country's leading authorities on public finance opened the discussion with a definition of the arts. They are "cultural activities represented by the creative arts, past and present, and their presentation or performance in the theatre, concert hall, opera house, museum or gallery and as heritage artefacts." To judge from people's willingness to devote resources to the arts, not least their time, the arts are clearly "worth it". People not only enjoy the arts, they strive to improve their appreciation of them.

Professor Peacock detected a common view that it is the duty of government to both finance and manage artistic activities. This had not always been the view of thinkers in the past. Roger Fry and Maynard Keynes (both Kingsmen) had feared official management of the arts, and Keynes did not see the Arts Council, which he founded, as more than a pump-priming operation.

We found ourselves suspecting that Professor Peacock would be happy to see the arts run by market forces, but he reckoned

this was impractical and assumed that the present financing regime would continue. This was rather disappointing – we had hoped for a heated argument on this subject. But he did attack, courteously, the attitude of museums to charging for entry, saying that the traditional policy of free admittance is a legacy of the nineteenth century, and that no one believes that plays and concerts should be free. Museum directors who complain about under-funding, he said, assume that alternative uses of public funds are inferior. He was a keen supporter of the arts but he concluded that there "is no better way of ensuring that the arts are worth it than in the sacrifices that the public wish to make by giving up alternatives otherwise available to them, and by expressing their willingness to enjoy them by voluntary payment."

Neil MacGregor, the Director of the National Gallery, took a decidedly uneconomic view. To him what mattered most was the ability of the work of art to move us. To demonstrate the importance of art in inspiring a nation he showed us Clemenceau visiting the aged Monet in the terrible days before the end of the First World War, offering him the Orangerie to house the 'Waterlilies'. And when, during the Second World War, London's citizens were invited to select one work for display from the evacuated national collections, the unexpected first choice was Titian's moving 'Noli me tan-

gere'. The request, he said, must have come from a deep spiritual need. He also argued convincingly that art is a social leveller: the impoverished can be as moved and as curious about a work of art as the more privileged. Art is therapeutic both for the artist and the audience. Museums, like medieval cathedrals, contain the equivalent of holy relics and attract pilgrims of all social backgrounds. People have a sense of being in touch with the artist just as pilgrims felt they were in touch with the saint whose tooth or finger or hair they were visiting. The worth of art in fulfilling the need for both enjoyment and spiritual fulfilment is inestimable.

It was fun planning the seminar, but the Chairman is there to see fair play and to encourage others to contribute. Had I been speaking myself I would have been a MacGregor man. For me the worth of a work of art is spiritual, intellectual, fun. What matters is the mystery of it. It should inspire, move the viewer or listener, provoke the imagination and pose questions. And citizens should not have to pay to see our great national collections, which have largely been given by other citizens and are a huge educational resource.

Nicholas Goodison is revising his 1974 publication *Ormolu: the work of Matthew Boulton*, for publication next year.

college news

Right up Darwin's street

A Leverhulme grant has enabled the University to establish a new Centre for Human Evolutionary Studies, which has strong King's connections. Acting as a focus for studies on evolution in the now post-genomic world, the Centre will extend work on the evolution of human diversity previously carried out in the Research Centre. The successful proposal was put together by Provost Patrick Bateson, King's Fellow Barry Keverne, 1985, and Marta Lahr, a Fellow of Clare, who was closely involved in the King's human diversity project, as well as King's Fellow Robert Foley, 1987, who will be the Centre's Director. The grant will fund the Centre for ten years, creating four new University posts. Further funding from the Wellcome Trust and the University will provide a refurbished building in Fitzwilliam Street (where Darwin lived after returning from the voyage on the Beagle) for the Centre. Rob Foley explained that it will bring the new world of genomics and other branches of biology and anthropology within an evolutionary framework. "It is a wonderful opportunity to study humans as complete beings, rather than as biological bits and pieces." A full report will appear in the next issue.

In the balance

Eleanor (Leo) Sharpston QC, 1973, Director of Studies in Law, and a specialist in European law, has been dividing her time between her London chambers, King's, and Sunderland, where she has been (successful) prosecuting counsel in the much-publicised "metric martyr" case. Since

1 January 2000, it has been illegal to sell food loose from bulk in imperial measures. The defendant, a Sunderland greengrocer, Mr Thoburn (whose case was supported by the UK Independence Party) ignored warnings from the local Trading Standards officers that his imperial-only scales were no longer legal; and prosecution under the Weights & Measures Act 1985 duly followed. The facts were not in dispute. But in what was claimed by anti-EU campaigners to be a test case, the defence questioned the continuing legitimacy of the European Communities Act 1972 and the landmark decision of the House of Lords in Factortame, the 1990 Spanish fishermen's case in which primacy and supremacy of EC law were accepted. The defence argued that the 1985 Act as originally passed preserved imperial measures and should take precedence over EU law. Leo Sharpston argued that the local authority was under a duty to enforce this part of trading standards law just like any other aspect of consumer protection; and that the weight of legal authority and academic writing supported Sunderland Council's view that enforcement was perfectly lawful.

From the chained library
From the moment Iain Fenlon, 1976, spotted the words "From the Chained Library in King's College..." in a Maggs antiquarian book catalogue while he was Acting Librarian, he was determined to get the book back to King's. Written in Greek before 1348, by Barlaam, a Calabrian monk, the book concerns the computation of whole numbers,

fractions and sexagesimal fractions. The *Logistica* had been printed in Paris in 1594, bound circa 1600 and presented to King's at the same time by the editor and translator John Chamber. This edition contains the original Greek text with a Latin translation, notes and demonstrations by Chamber. The book has an Eton binding and damage on the front cover where the hasp for a chain has been removed. Iain, Reader in Historical Musicology, outlined the book's importance. "Barlaam's book was written at the time when the beginnings of the epochal shift from qualitative to quantitative perception were taking place. This is reflected in the invention of all sorts of things – from mechanical clocks to geographically precise maps, and from algebraic and musical notations to perspective painting." Aware that the College's financial belt was unlikely to be loosened for the book, asking price £3200, Iain persuaded Fellows, including the Provost, Fellows Commoner, and generous Non-Resident Members to dig in their personal pockets and buy the book back.



Brian Barber

Barlaam's *Logistica*

more members' news



Back row left to right: Norman Livingston, Gordon Blair (Corpus), Donald Gillies, Tom Banfield, Joe Watson. Front row, left to right: Miles Gaythwaite, Mark Hill, Quentin Rappoport. Absent: Rodney Eatock-Taylor, Martin Robiette, Peter Smith. All from 1962.

King's College Drain Society

The infamous "Drain" was highlighted in a recent edition of King's Parade. For many decades, the sets there were allocated to freshman scholars, not least Provost Sheppard when he first came up in 1900. The privilege of living in college was somewhat dubious however, quite apart from the damp white-tiled tunnel that led us into Chetwynd Court, since the heating and washing arrangements were so primitive. We had small gas-fires in our studies, no warmth at all in the bedrooms, and all toilet and bathing facilities were down in the basement.

1962-3 was one of the coldest winters of last century, making it possible to skate all the way to Ely – but at the same time freezing the Drain urinals solid for many weeks, and causing ice to form inside the bedroom windows both day and night! We scholars of that year found that cramming as many bodies as possible into a single room after Hall at least guaranteed a warm evening, and in such

adversity were our friendships formed. So it was no surprise in June 1965, on the occasion of our graduation, that nine of us arranged a private dinner in college especially to celebrate the demolition of the Drain to make way for the Keynes Building.

Two events mark that evening: firstly we acquired the painted "M & N" board that had marked the underground tunnel entrance to the Drain; and secondly we declared, as one does, that we would try and meet each year and continue to dine together.

And yes – we have managed to do just that, with only a couple of gap years. Early on we underpinned the organisation of each year's dinner by founding the King's College Drain Society, hitherto quite hidden from the world, with a president each year whose job it is to make the necessary arrangements. We use the full college Latin grace; a specific list of toasts is always drunk, commencing with *The Queen* and *In Piam Memoriam*; the president holds the "M & N" board as his token of office; and the names of each year's attendees are inscribed in the Society's record book. It was these seemingly quaint formalities that got us through the critical early years, when we might otherwise have drifted apart.

Over the years we have been joined by two other close friends, one a King's graduate student and the other from Corpus. It was not until the mid-1980s that we decided to admit our wives to the dinners (remember it was an all-male college in our day), but it is a move we have never regretted.

Our 34th dinner took place in North Yorkshire at the end of September, and those present are shown in the attached photo.

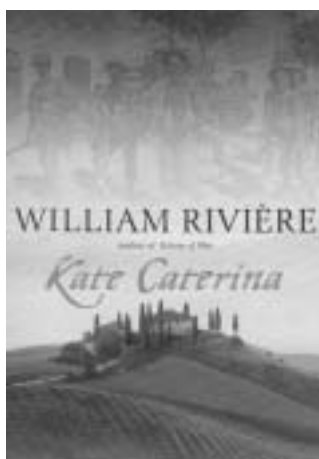
Are there any other private groups who meet along these lines, especially those with a longer history than the KCDS?

Tom Banfield, 1962, (KCDS President, 2000)

The Other Prize

David Humphries, 1995, won Cambridge's "The Other Prize" for his first play, *August*. This is a new prize for drama set up by John Kinsella, the Australian poet and Fellow of Churchill College, who also funds the Kinsella prize for poetry. David writes: "The prize was £750 plus a workshop by the RSC in September at the Barbican, led by Simon Reade, Literary Manager at the RSC, and with seven professional actors; it involved a read through then a discussion of the play by all those involved – it was very enlightening, and led to my rewrite of the play which was performed in the Playroom, in mid-November." Awarding the prize, Simon Reade said, "*August* is a drama of high aspirations which boldly embraces exorcism as a metaphor for the canker in the modern world, framed by a witty dystopian vision. The stakes could not be higher with its battle for the soul. In its captivating, horror-genre portrayal of evil it is also sexually highly charged, thus broadening its examination of the human condition *in extremis*. And its poetic diction burns like acid."

books by members



Kate Caterina

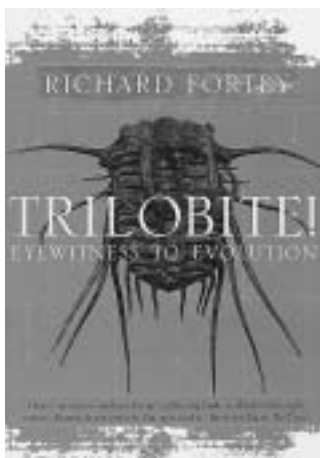
William Rivière, 1973, wrote his first novel, *Watercolour Sky* (1990) one rainy season in Kyoto “in a fit of nostalgic longing for Norfolk”. *Kate Caterina*, his sixth novel, is set in Arezzo during the first years of World War II. Kate, a young Englishwoman, is married to an Italian anti-fascist doctor; but the book opens with the marriage of her sister-in-law Esmeralda to a prominent Fascist politician. Kate is later torn between loyalty to her brother who is fighting with the Allies and her new, if divided, Italian family. But politics count for much less than people. David Robson in the *Sunday Telegraph* says, “*Kate Caterina* belongs in the great tradition of the European novel: it has breadth of outlook and bristles with political ideas. At its best it reminded me of Giuseppe di Lampedusa’s *The Leopard* – and there can be no higher comparison”.

Kate Caterina by William Rivière is published by Sceptre at £14.99.

Trilobite! Eyewitness to Evolution

Richard Fortey, 1965, has written a book with an exclamation mark in the title: reviewers acclaim it and exclaim about it too. “This sparkling book reminds us what science is really about...” writes Roger Highfield in the *Sunday Telegraph*. Richard Ellis in the *Times* calls it a “glittering book...filled with insight, science, history, charm and wit.” Trilobites, sea-creatures of all shapes and sizes, persisted for 300 million years, died out before dinosaurs, and are fossilised in huge numbers. “I have collected trilobites in the very centre of Australia, in a spot so remote that even the dingoes were tame...” he writes, before explaining how the spread of trilobites can help map long-vanished continents. That they were also able to see, with their “stony stare” through crystalline calcite eyes, qualifies them as eyewitnesses to evolution.

Trilobite! Eyewitness to Evolution by Richard Fortey is a Flamingo paperback at £6.99.



Sexual Slander in Nineteenth-Century England

“You are a nasty, bloody, thundering whore,” one Gloucestershire woman said to another in 1852. Slander of this sort was, until the defamation jurisdiction was abolished in 1855, punishable in the ecclesiastical courts. Stephen Waddams, 1963, in a study of the hitherto neglected defamation cause papers makes it possible to read depositions of witnesses not accustomed to put their opinions in writing, and whose perspective is usually unavailable to historians. Ninety per cent of sexual slander cases were brought by women. “We are accustomed to think of nineteenth-century reform as improving the legal and social position of women,” he writes, but his research suggests that the defamation jurisdiction went some way to protect the interests and sexual reputations of women.

Sexual Slander in Nineteenth-Century England: Defamation in the Ecclesiastical Courts, 1815 – 1855, by Stephen Waddams, is published by the University of Toronto Press.



 letters and memories



The all-conquering King's squash team of 1949-50.
 Back row Michael Martin, 1944, Peter Gautier-Smith, 1949
 Front row Hubert Doggart, 1947, Nigel Tomkinson, 1948, John Crace, 1944.

In view of the general impression that King's doesn't shine in the field of games playing, I thought you might be interested in the enclosed photograph of the all-conquering King's squash team of 1949-50.

I enjoyed the last edition very much, particularly the piece about JG Ballard as he was in my year and I also read medicine. To my mind, the fact that the dons laughed at psychoanalysis was ahead of its time, rather than being out of touch. The craze for it, particularly in the USA and in the entertainments industry has proved to be a dying fashion and a narcissistic self-indulgence. I sound just as pompous as Ballard!

Peter Gautier-Smith, 1949.

I have been reading the Autumn *King's Parade* with considerable pleasure. However, I do have one concern: your occasional references to "Kingspeople". This is completely out of order. The correct term is "Kingsmen",

regardless of gender... There is no objection to calling the football team King's Women (two words) to distinguish their special qualities. But preserve us from these PC neologisms.

Alan Hakim, 1953.

Well done for putting your head into the lion's mouth for the article on JG Ballard. What a refreshing blast of wind blows through the old humbug and what shame and anger I feel, as one of the deluded state scholars who lived through their days at King's in woeful ignorance of the System. Looking back, I can hardly believe that I was sufficiently naïve to think it was just a nice old place! How I regret not having known Mr Ballard during my King's days; his leaving early was a sad blow to the College. I could have learned so much from him, though at least, thanks to your article, I have learned a lot about Mr Ballard. But it is far too late now for me to learn to hate the place as I should. Just keep up with more of the usual bland tosh, please.

Ken Dodsworth, 1949.

A story is told of the late Christopher Cory, 1950, an Old Etonian of quite considerable girth. One evening, he became hopelessly wedged between the bars of a popular escape route in Webb's Court. Wilfred appeared on the scene. "Excuse me, Sir," he said. "Are you trying to climb in or climb out? I ask because I'm not sure whether to pull or to push."

Peter Orr, 1950.

In the Spring 2000 issue of *King's Parade* you ask for memories of former porters at King's. I should say that, as a grammar-school

boy from Cheshire in the 1960s I found the whole structure of college life alien and intimidating — starting with men in the Porters' Lodge, much older than myself, who insisted on calling me 'sir'. My first experience of this was when I came to King's for interview, locked myself out of my room, and had to ask a porter for help. This was when I discovered that 'sir' could mean 'you prat'.

I was therefore most alarmed when, a month or so into my first year in college, I received a note from the Head Porter (FW – Frank – Iredale) asking me to visit him in the Lodge. In the inner sanctum of his office he explained that he had seen a list of the schools from which the Freshmen had come — and that, like me, he had been to Sir John Deane's Grammar School in Northwich. He had kept an eye out for Old Wittonians (as former pupils of the school are called, for reasons too tedious to recall here) but not seen any up to that time. Indeed, I was the first ever student at King's from the school, a fact in which he took some pride. He and his wife later entertained me to tea, when we reminisced about Cheshire, and he took an avuncular interest in my progress: they very kindly also entertained my parents at graduation time in 1969. In private he let me call him Frank and agreed to call me Richard, but on duty it was always 'Mr Iredale' and 'sir'. Though 'sir' stopped meaning 'you prat', even from his colleagues.

Richard Dutton, 1966.

In my first year there was an extensive scaffolding structure in the Front Court. Whether it was

during a Chetwynd Society 'meeting' or after a Rugby Club Dinner I cannot remember; but on one occasion Wilfred was confronted, late at night, by a swarm of inebriated undergraduates clambering higher and higher up this edifice. "Come down from up there Sirs!" he shouted. And again, and many times: "Come down from up there Sirs!" I was one of those who obediently dismounted. Not being a classicist, I was not forced to parse his ejaculative sentence – but I surmised the meaning well enough.

Stan I also remember well. His manner must have been the most serene imaginable for a King's Porter – and that's saying something. Stan greeted an incident of any sort by slowly, oh so slowly, rolling himself an 'Old Holborn' cigarette. Perhaps I should not mention this – it may be irrelevant – but Simon Bennett, who mediaevally occupied one of the rooms yet to be converted into part of the 'College Bar', adopted a habit of delivering pints of Greene King Abbot Ale, or at least IPA, to the Porters' Lodge whenever the discretion of the Porters might most be required. This custom was, at least temporarily, adopted by David Calvert-Smith, whose rooms in 1965 faced the Front Court.

For much of the time that I was living in Peas Hill Hostel, Bill was the night porter; his surname I forget. Bill used to make rosehip syrup, which he claimed would defeat any fenland cold. When he had sufficiently bent the ear of a passer in the night as to its efficacy, he would undertake to

bring in a jar the next night, refusing any payment. However, Bill's ace product was his exceedingly hot horse-radish sauce. He was very proud of its strength and – just to see the expression on their faces – loved to offer spoonsful to unwitting innocents who had sociably staggered in.

Now I realise that I may have got Stan confused with Frank. Is that possible? Whoever it was that I best remember as the most serene, whether Stan or Frank, was much shorter than Jack and wore glasses.

Graham Evans, 1965.

I was an ordinary undergraduate in the years 1954 -7 during which I developed a great respect and even affection for the college porters. Their gentlemanly deportment and treatment of me, as a gentleman, did much to communicate a culture of civility (note, NOT servility). When I was fortunate enough to take up a two-year position in the Research Centre ten years later I was readily recognised by the porters I knew, and I was grateful for this. The book I wrote as an outcome of that research (into English Girls' Boarding Schools) has a first acknowledgement to Mr Iredale and Mr Childerley, for their welcome to me. Notwithstanding the current ructions at Oxford (in the tradition given shape and momentum by Annan), there is surely huge value in a continuity of civility, one of whose elements is respect for and recognition of the individual. From what you report, this continues to be in good hands and long may it remain so.

Mallory Wober, 1954.

My King's

I like to think that quite some Kingsiness is ingrained in me. What is Kingsiness? It is a unique property composed (unhelpfully) of a series of opposites held in tension: open-mindedness and conviction; arrogance and humbleness; the beauty of the grounds and the shabby dress of the students and staff. King's people feel massively superior to everyone else, yet would never dream of admitting it, because we are supposed to be anti-elitist. Kingsiness is probably little more than the confidence to be oneself.

My main memories are playing cards, going to chapel, doing my laundry, smoking and drinking tea. I was never at all involved in the College workings, nor on any committees or anything, but the place seemed to function well without me. I got a very, very high 2.1, and I claimed my MA as soon as I could and boast of it misleadingly and shamelessly. I take a very patronising interest in the activities of today's undergraduates, and enjoy reading about distinguished celestial Kingsmen. If I ever become very rich I will give the College something big and unnecessary, and perhaps force the choir to have girls in it. Ten years on, I am heartened by how unsuccessful most of my contemporaries are, and especially that the "top people" (eg KCSU and Cellar DJs) are now traffic wardens, opticians etc. Most of my friends now are ex-King's people, which I think is the greatest possible legacy of the College. Floreat King's!!

Harry Hobson, 1989.

There is a 'My King's' section on the College website.



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The Ferris Bequest

James Ferris was an undergraduate in King's between 1931 and 1934. He graduated in law and subsequently practised as a solicitor. He died in February 2000 and left the residue of his estate, valued at slightly over £2.5 million, to King's. He specified that the money should be used for resident members of the College in statu pupillari for educational travel abroad during the vacation. The College moved swiftly last year to make the funds available during the long vacation, when over 150 awards were made. Essentially all students are eligible for an award of up to £500 once during their residence in Cambridge, with higher sums being available for course-related travel and in special circumstances.

Tess Adkins, Head of Development, remembers James Ferris well. "When I was Senior Tutor he used to drop in and ask me all sorts of difficult questions about our educational policy. He was widowed and had no children and liked to take an interest in what we were doing here. But the legacy was unexpected and unexpectedly large. It is a magnificent gift and the funds are being put to excellent use in exactly the way he wanted."

Teaching Tibetan refugees

Armen Papazian, 1997, is one of the recipients of a Ferris Travel grant. In the final year of his PhD in Finance, entitled "An Endoscopy on Stock Market Winners and Losers" he tells *King's Parade* how he will use the grant.

I am originally from Armenia, but spent the first 22 years of my life in Beirut. My travels for educational purposes, and the knowledge and skills I have subsequently developed, have made me conscious of a need to make education and learning as free and global as financial markets are thought to be.

I first came in contact with ELST (English Language Scholarships for Tibetans) in October 2000. It is a Cambridge based charity

whose main purpose is to advance education and facilitate skill development in the Tibetan community in exile, in Dharamsala, India. I was chosen by the ELST committee to lead a team of 8 Cambridge students, whose task was to design and implement a multi-disciplinary residential summer school "Communication Skills and the English-speaking World" to be held from August 20 – September 8, 2001. This was the first project of its kind, and was perceived to be setting an important precedent. Our team had to design the structure as well as themes of the summer school.

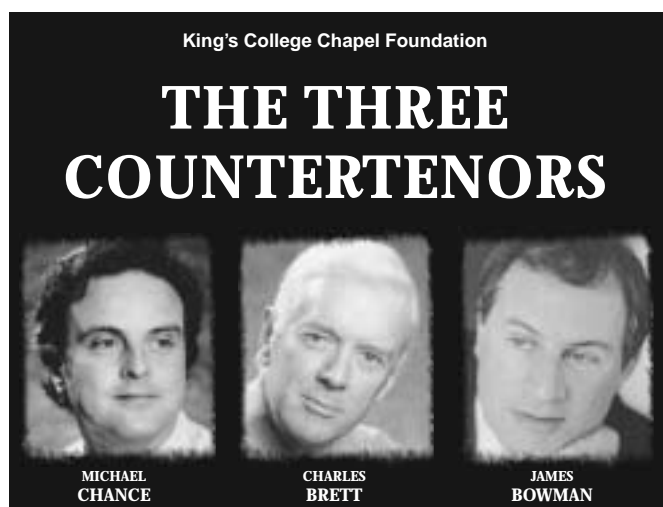
We started work in November 2000, and given the team's expertise and knowledge base, narrowed down the content of the

summer school to five main themes. This breakdown was done in line with the summer school's original purpose: to reinforce confidence and competence in handling the international English world of NGOs, academia, and multinationals. The main themes will be: English Language and Literature; Cultures and the Global Village; Presentation and Communication Skills; Finance and Development; Information Technology and Science.

The summer school is funded through a variety of sources, and King's College has made an important contribution to the project through the Ferris Travel Fund. Being a member of King's, I have had the pleasure of making the channelling of funds into the project possible.

Chapel Foundation Update

The Chapel Foundation is reshaping its approach to its North American Appeal and is always looking for supporters and volunteers to help King's find potential benefactors and leaders in that continent. At home, events have continued to be successful. The Grand Wine Feast and auction, announced in the last issue of *King's Parade*, is sold out, and in February, the Chapel played host to an extraordinary performance by three



counter-tenors, Charles Brett, 1960, Michael Chance, 1974 and James Bowman (New College, Oxford). They sang works by Dufay, Purcell, Schütz, J.S. Bach and "Ode on the Death of Mr Henry Purcell" with the Cambridge Baroque Orchestra. The purpose of the concert was to celebrate the Amicabilis Concordia of 1464 agreed between the Wardens of New College, Oxford and Winchester and the Provosts of King's and Eton, and to raise funds for the Chapel Foundation.

In July, Ian de Massini, formerly Ian Moore, 1979, conducted Cambridge Voices in the "Spem in alium" by Tallis in aid of the Chapel Foundation.

King's Spreads The Net Wider

This year, for the first time, the Telephone Campaign will be approaching a number of King's members overseas as well as in the UK. The intention is not just to raise money, though the importance of that cannot be denied, but also for us to learn how we might improve communications with the large number of Non-Resident Members who are living abroad, make our contact relevant and, possibly, meet local concerns. So far the response has been good, but it's too early to arrive at a general consensus. What is clear is that no matter where Non-Residents live, there is immense good will and support for King's.

Yorkshire Reception

There are several hundred Non-Resident Members of King's living in Yorkshire and in meeting with a few of them, it has become clear that it is about

time the College came to see them. John Cleland, 1983, has very kindly offered the premises of Pinsent Curtis Biddle in Park Row, Leeds, to host a reception for members in the area. It will be held on Tuesday 16 October 2001, and further details will be announced nearer the time.

Polack Studentship

We are continuing to seek funds for the Ken Polack Studentship, which supports graduate students in Law, the Humanities and Social Sciences. The first beneficiary, Andrej Savin, has just been awarded a Fellowship at Emmanuel College.

Some £170,000 is needed to complete the project, and it is hoped that those who gave originally as well as new donors will support our efforts. Michael Mathews, 1960, has kindly offered to meet anyone who would like to talk about it or wants further information on this important objective. He can be contacted through the Development Office on 01223 331313 or development.office@kings.cam.ac.uk.

Andrej Savin writes: "I will officially be starting at Emmanuel College on 1 April and the post is for 5 years, 3 years initially. I will be a College Lecturer and Research Fellow and I will be teaching European Union Law and Conflict of Laws. The work mainly consists in supervising undergraduates but I will also have enough time to do my own research, which at the moment concentrates on the Internet and private international law (including such cases as Yahoo and Napster) and accession of new states into the EU and legal challenges that this imposes on

their legislative branch. Needless to say, I have solved all the administrative problems I told you about last time!"

2001 North America visit

The Provost and Tess Adkins will be visiting Members in Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Toronto, Vancouver and Washington during April. They are taking with them a digital movie, created by Cambridge University Moving Image Studio, showing among other things the virtual view from one of the new rooms in the Garden Hostel Annexe, for which funds are being sought.



Nancy Myles, front, is the new Development Co-ordinator. She comes to King's after two years with the Eastern Arts Board and previously worked in scholarships management for the British Council. Other Development Office staff you may meet at events this year are Sue Turnbull, left, who manages the database, and Angela Reeves, right, who co-ordinates events. Matthew Mellor, back, is Development Director.

Letter from Matthew Mellor

I've been looking at some numbers, and not just those with pound signs in front of them. During 2000 some 300 members and friends came to a Garden Party, 180 to a reunion dinner, 100 to Provost's Seminars, 400 to the KC2000 day in June, 50 to High Table dinners. Dozens came to Chapel Foundation concerts, well over 100 to gatherings in the USA, 50 visited from overseas and we talked to 2,000 on the telephone. We try to make sure we provide a variety of events, in King's and elsewhere, for members to enjoy. Some like an informal garden party, others a formal dinner, some enjoy the stimulus of a Provost's Seminar-style debate, others will prefer to assemble as Economists. We welcome your comments and suggestions on our programme of events.

We aim to cover costs with some events, while others are more specifically geared towards fundraising. For example, tickets for the Wine Auction have sold out at £200 per head, and the Garden Party, at £15 per head, looks likely to be just as popular as last year. As for fundraising approaches, some members prefer to talk to the College privately, and there are occasions when members are invited to join High Table to do just that, or we are happy to visit members in person if they wish to make a gift. So there are opportunities for participating, and donating, at several levels.

Donations last year amounted to over £4 million, including the James Ferris legacy. So thank you, everyone.

events and information

Events 2001

Saturday 12 May
Gala Wine Evening

Saturday 23 June
KCA Lecture, Lunch
and Exhibition
Lecture 11.30,
Keynes Hall.

"We are what we eat – but does
it kill us?"
Exhibition in the Archive Centre
'King's – Real and Imagined.'

Saturday 30 June
Garden Party
Members 1965 – 1979

Saturday 22 September
Non-Resident Members'
Weekend
Members 1960 – 1966

Tuesday 16 October
Leeds Reception
Pinsent Curtis Biddle, Park Row,
Leeds

Thursday 15 November
The Seventh Provost's Seminar
"Enlargement of the European
Union: Essential Despite the
Costs?"

Wednesday 19 December
Christmas Concert and Dinner

Choir concerts 2001

Friday 22 / Saturday 23 June
Haarlem Concertgebouw

Monday 2 July
Tewkesbury Abbey

16 July to 7 August
Singapore and Australia

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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Wilfred: a memory

I was up at King's in the '40s when Sheppard was Provost and Dadie Rylands Bursar. I matriculated in 1944 but came back as an ex-serviceman after the War. Having spent all my time in the Navy being trained as an engineer I started on the Mechanical Sciences Tripos but, repeatedly failing the qualifying exam, was relegated to Engineering Studies. This left me free to pursue my natural bent, and I used to attend the first lecture of the day, purely because it was the only means of keeping warm in a room where heating was limited to a few lumps of coal a week. The pubs did not open until 10 am, so thither I would repair for the rest of the morning. Lunch was taken in Hall, after which I proceeded to the KCBC Boathouse to row all afternoon, followed by a visit to the Cruising Club before Hall. Very seldom did I spend an evening in College; most of my friends were outsiders. In consequence climbing-in was virtually routine. I also

objected to having to give my name to the porter when I came through the main gate. College porters come in all shapes and sizes, some more terrifying than others, but my favourite was always Wilfred. When Wilfred was on I knew I could expect a friendly reception, whatever the hour. It was not that Wilfred would do anything illegal when he was on the front gate. It was just nice that he greeted one as a friend, rather than as a potentially hostile miscreant. I graduated in 1948 and took my Master's a few years later. Emigrating to Canada my contacts with King's grew gradually fainter. Only occasionally would I return to the UK to see my aging mother.

It was while preparing for one of the last of these trips, that I determined that I should take her to the Carol Service. It was through my father's friendship with Milner White (who had started the service) that I had got into King's, and I wanted her to enjoy the full glory of the service.

So I wrote off well in advance and in due course received two tickets. I decided to get there early, both so that my mother could enjoy the newly installed windows and also so that I could rest up and not fall asleep during the service, a habit that I am long prone to in the Church of England Liturgy.

We had therefore arrived about an hour in advance. It was the height of an IRA scare and there was heavy security on the Chapel. But after a while I found myself in urgent need of the bathroom and slipped out in plenty of time to return before the service commenced. Those in charge of security were checking incomers. But I thought I recognised a familiar face as I left. Returning I knew what to expect. Looking nether to right or left, I strode boldly forward. As I passed the checkpoint I said "Good afternoon, Wilfred". Without a moment's hesitation the answer came back. "Good afternoon, Mr Crosse."

In that instant, thirty years of never having seen each other vanished. I forget what happened next, but I will always remember Wilfred. Wilfred was the College Porter who used to sometimes let me in at the back gate, the other side of King's Bridge, opening it specially for me, and closing it silently behind. Wilfred was there unaccountably, to guide my feet as I came in over the wall on many an evening. Wilfred was the College porter, who, in all those years since, had never once been caught – by itself an incredible record; for I am sure what he did for me he did for other 'young gentlemen'. Wilfred was the man who, when there was a real threat of a terrorist attack at the Carol Service, was selected, because of his memory for faces, to act as security for what the in-flight British Airways magazine I had read on the way over called 'the heart of the British Christmas'. Thank you Wilfred for that wonderful memory.
John Crosse, 1944.