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Welcome to our Autumn issue of The Pelican. Liz Winter and her colleagues in the Development & Communications Office have put together another great issue, of which one of the highlights must be the article about Professor Chris Andrew’s official history of the Security Service, MI5. I am writing this on the eve of the day of publication, but by the time you read this no doubt some interesting controversies will have been aired as a result of this fascinating book. Also in this issue you will find two of our new Fellows; Dr Pernille Røge, describing her research and Dr Jacob Lauinger, the first Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Research Fellow. You will also read one of our postgraduate students, Oliver Brewis (who made a brilliant showing in the English Tripos last term) interviewing Professor Oliver Rackham – whose fine portrait after his spell as Master now graces the New Combination Room.

The College is buzzing with the activities of the start of the new academic year. Many of you will remember the sense of anticipation and excitement through the process of the Matriculation ceremony (conducted nowadays with great aplomb by our Praelector Dr Berthold Kress), the Freshers’ photographs, the Matriculation dinners, and so on. Behind the scenes the College staff (in particular the catering staff) have worked tirelessly and at all hours to ensure that everything runs smoothly. We’re all grateful to them, and we wish our new students – both undergraduate and post-grads – every success.

Sibella and I have much enjoyed our first year in the Lodge, grateful for the warm welcome we received from everyone, and we look forward to this year and those ahead. Some further reflections on the year past, and College news, are in the Corpus Association Letter, whose 2008-09 issue we hope to distribute before the end of the year.
Oliver Rackham has been recognizable as a College institution to generations of Corpus students. A figure renowned for his distinctive sartorial stylings as much as his distinguished academic career, in 2008 he celebrated his fiftieth year as a member: he came to Corpus in 1958 on a Major Entrance Scholarship from Norwich School, and was elected to the Fellowship in 1964. His dedication to Corpus has been most visible in the roles which he has undertaken: he served as Praelector Rhetoricus from 1979 to 2007, Keeper of the College Plate from 1978 onwards, and Master from 2007–8. Yet his sustained research into its archaeological and general history is equally significant. Well-known outside the College for his extensive publications on ecological history – he received the OBE in the New Year’s Honours List of 1998 for services to nature conservation – he has this year been elected an honorary member of the British Ecological Society. Alongside his detailed book on Treasures of Silver at Corpus (2002), his publications on the history of landscape are extensive, from his 1986 book on The History of the Countryside to his 2001 publication (with A T Grove of Downing College) of The Nature of Mediterranean Europe. His portrait, unveiled this year in the NCR, embodies both his distinctive presence in the College and his ‘life-long interest’ in Hayley Wood, its setting. In this painting, a privilege of the mastership, he is shown at a specific point in the wood, his trademark red shirt and ‘the tools of the ecologist’s trade’, hand-lens and compass, around his neck.

Rackham’s first memories of Corpus are not, however, of ecological research or silver plate, but of an awkward discovery. He arrived at the College after taking an entrance exam as a result of which he was awarded a Major Entrance Scholarship (then the normal method of getting a place at a Cambridge college). ‘When I arrived at the porters’ lodge, my possessions delivered by a railway lorry, I was shown to a set on the ground floor of E staircase. My first thought was: how am I going to fill these palatial rooms with my meagre possessions?’ Yet it wasn’t long before he found his thoughts interrupted by more mundane concerns: ‘I noticed some suspicious cracks in the skirting-board, and smelt a suspicious smell. I drew my knife out,’ he says, miming the movement with what may be the same knife, ‘and stuck it into the wood.’ He immediately informed the Bursar that he had dry rot. After workmen had been sent for to douse the wood in a ‘nasty chemical’, he was warned not to smoke (advice which gave him some offence) and excused from paying room rent for a year.

Despite this inauspicious start to his Corpus career, he took to the College immediately: it offered him a chance to be among people who learnt because they wished to rather than because they had to – an experience which, he says, he had sampled briefly whilst attending Norwich City College for a year to work towards an A-level in botany. It was during this time, in which he became the close friend of a Nigerian nobleman, that he gained a taste for the intellectual independence which Corpus was later to foster. Arriving in Cambridge, he was delighted to find himself at an establishment ‘where nobody noticed if you were not to be found on the rugby pitch at two in the afternoon’.

INTERVIEWED BY OLIVER BREWIS (m.2006)
His undergraduate years encouraged his independence of mind, a fact which has clearly influenced his distinctive scholarly career. ‘I had been brought up in a rather conformist environment, and the idea of doing something eccentric or countercultural didn’t occur to me until I was an undergraduate and got into an environment where that sort of thing was encouraged,’ he says. Having come to Corpus intending to become a physicist, Rackham was persuaded by Tom Faber, then Director of Studies in Physics, to switch to Botany in Part II of the Natural Sciences Tripos – advice which was, he acknowledges, ‘good for me and for the science of physics’. Another important influence at this time was Peter Warren, who came to Corpus in 1960 and whom Professor Rackham knew as a research student whilst he was working on pre-Hellenic Mediterranean archaeology. When he conducted his first excavation in Crete, in 1968, he took Rackham as the trip’s botanist, sparking an interest in Crete which was to flourish in a later collaboration with the American archaeologist Jennifer Moody.

The direction of his distinguished career though, was not established until several years later, when his central interests migrated from plant physiological ecology – the relation between how plants grow in the field and how the environment affects them – to historical ecology: ‘the influence of historical factors on ecology’, as he explains. His initial work in the field of plant physiology developed into the sustained concern with the history of vegetation which has formed the central focus of his research from 1972 onwards. A particular interest in woodland led to his book on *Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape* (1976).

His first book set the pattern for his subsequent publications: he refuses to restrict his works to a specialist audience, aiming his books at both academics and the general public. ‘I’ve always made a point of doing this: my books, though they contain the results of my original research, can always be understood by the educated public.’ This comment offers a deeper insight into his commitment to ecology.
When I ask him about the importance of his work in preserving the environment, he refuses the title of ‘political ecologist’; yet, equally, he refuses to isolate his work from the public sphere. ‘Although I’m not a political ecologist, I hope that the sort of thing I do is taken notice of by political ecologists.’

And this commitment to drawing out the consequences of his research goes further: recently, in 2008, he joined with his long-term collaborator Jennifer Moody in orchestrating a campaign against a proposed luxury golf resort in the Toplou peninsula of Crete. This fiercely arid, windswept peninsula is noted for its rare plants and birds, but also has exceptional significance for archaeological research. An article the same year in The Guardian, based in part on their own archaeological study, outlined the damage which would occur if the golf resort were to go ahead: the development (known as Cavo Sidero) could obliterate the foundations of ancient buildings and irreparably damage the peninsula’s ecosystem. They took on the developer directly, using their own research to present a convincing case that the development company’s proposed provisions for environmental protection were woefully inadequate, and that the area was totally unsuited to this sort of resort. A Facebook group and an online petition soon followed. Though a definitive decision is awaited, in April 2009 an appeal to the Greek courts successfully halted the development, thanks in large part to the research and public awareness fostered by Rackham and his collaborator.

For all this, he remains characteristically modest about his achievements: ‘for much of my career I’ve thought of myself as something of a dropout’, he claims. But the past few years have brought many successes: an honorary doctorate from the University of Essex in 2000, election to the fellowship of the British Academy in 2002, an honorary professorship in historical ecology in 2007, this year’s honorary membership of the British Ecological Society, and the successful campaign against the Cavo Sidero resort among them. His book on Woodlands, the hundredth volume in the Collins New Naturalist series which he grew up with, was published in 2006. ‘Little did I think that I would one day write one myself’, he comments. All this on top of his successful year as Master, which brought with it his new portrait, and which carries the eventual privilege of a floorslab in the Chapel – ‘but we’ll cross that bridge when we come to it’.

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**Portrait by Andrew Festing (RSPP)**

Andrew has been exhibiting since 1968 and was elected President of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 2002. He is well known for his portraits of HM Queen Elizabeth II and HM Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother as well as numerous other members of the Royal Family.
Personally, I am an historian of eighteenth-century Europe, with a particular interest in the impact of extra-European affairs on this history. It is not entirely clear to me why I explore events beyond Europe in my approach to Europe itself. I suspect the answer is linked to my being born in a country which used to be a colonial power (and technically still is), and which has recently joined the European Community.

I was born in Odense, the city of Hans Christian Andersen, but grew up in a small village on the North-Western coast of Jutland. My first career was as a contemporary dancer, which I pursued for four years. Dancing took me out of Denmark and into countries and cities such as Switzerland, Germany, England, Paris and New York. It was, however, increasingly the cultural, historical and intellectual aspects of such visits that interested me, rather than dance itself. A broken foot made it easy for me to make the decision to give up dancing and turn to academia.

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The wealth of stimuli in Cambridge has undoubtedly helped to shape my doctoral research on France. In the last four years I have worked on the ways in which France endeavoured to rethink itself as a colonial power after losing Canada and North America to Britain and Spain in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). My work challenges the assumption that the origins of France's second colonial empire are to be found in the French Revolutionary period. I point to precedents of such ideas in the period from 1756 to 1789. Overall, I bring into view continuities between France's early modern colonial empire in the Americas and the nineteenth-century French colonial empire in Africa and further east: between an empire that was fuelled by African slave labour and an empire that was justified by a mission to civilize.

Continuity in French history is not a new theme. The nineteenth-century French historian and philosopher, Alexis de Tocqueville, began undermining the originality of the French Revolution already in 1856 in his now classical work ‘The Old Regime and the Revolution’, arguing that the state
structure of the old regime, which the French Revolutionaries set out to destroy, continued to be a feature of nineteenth-century France. Where my work is new, is in its aim to explore the same issue from the angle of French colonialism.

The origin of France’s renaissance as a colonial empire in the nineteenth century is often written as a history of Franco-British rivalry.

A substantial part of my argument relies on a resurrection of the colonial ideas of the Physiocrats, a group of political economists who are best known for their claim that agriculture is the source of wealth. Their political economy, however, was orientated towards the global and covered social, political and economic aspects. They wanted France to give up its mercantile colonial enterprise in the Americas, and instead expand into Africa where they believed that labour was plentiful and that the potential for new markets was immense. Because they attacked mercantilism and slavery and promoted free trade their ideas have often been compared to those put forth by Adam Smith in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. The parallel is apt, although it should not be stretched too far.

My next research project will expand on several themes explored in my doctoral research, by taking the perspective of the Kingdom of Denmark-Norway and in the context of the globalisation of Europe. As gatekeeper to the Baltic Sea, Denmark levied dues from Helsingør (Elsinore) on all ships passing the Sound (the strait between Denmark and Sweden). In the second half of the eighteenth century, Scandinavia and the Baltic countries were the most important region for the re-exportation of colonial goods for France and England. Moreover, both nations obtained important material for their shipping industries from this region, such as hemp and timber. The monarchy of Denmark-Norway was itself a colonial empire, with colonies in the West Indies, and trading stations in West Africa, India and China. It also had the colonies of Greenland, Iceland and the Faeroe islands. I am interested in exploring how Denmark’s colonial and regional interests interfered with the interests of larger European powers, in particular France and England. Through a study of the Sound, I intend to integrate the region of Northern Europe into the history of eighteenth-century Europe.

I will pursue this research as a Research Fellow at Corpus Christi College. Alongside this, I will also be Director of Studies in History and teach early modern European History and the History of Political thought. I have already received a warm welcome from the Fellows and history students at the College, and I am looking forward with excitement to my acceptance into what has been described to me as the Corpus family.
A group of children from the London Borough of Newham spent two days in Cambridge earlier this year as part of a creative programme for gifted and talented pupils. Newham has a highly diverse population with pupils in its schools speaking 250 different languages.

The 30 children, all from Year 5, came from seven primary schools in the borough. They were taking part in the fourth year of an initiative coordinated by the Newham Gifted and Talented Team. Each year has a different creative theme: this year’s is “Archways and Windows”.

In Cambridge, the group took part in activities at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Corpus Christi College and Kettle’s Yard. They then travelled on to Oxford. “The idea was to introduce them to two of the oldest and finest centres of education and culture in the world,” said Andrew Mutter, Arts Adviser for Newham.

“We wanted to show these young children, from a disadvantaged East End background, what they can aspire to and achieve if they are prepared to work hard and aim high. The trip encourages them to look closely at works of art, building and the environment, learning through drawing.”

At Corpus, the pupils did pencil drawings in the chapel and hall, using view-finders to frame sections of archways and windows.

Daniella Adu-Poku, 10, a pupil at Grange Primary School in Plaistow, said she enjoyed hearing the organ being played while she drew in Corpus Christi chapel. She also liked spotting the images of pelicans around the College.

Dr Melanie Taylor, Admissions Tutor at Corpus Christi, said she was keen to increase the College’s work with younger pupils. “I believe it’s important to welcome children into an academic environment at an early stage so that they get a glimpse of what the future can hold for them,” she said. Sketches made on the Cambridge and Oxford trip formed the basis of large-scale paintings which the children created when they returned to their schools.

This is an edited version of an article by Alex Buxton who is Communications Officer (Access) for Cambridge University. Photography by Jane Robinson and Catherine McGill
“There is no king who is powerful by himself. Ten or fifteen kings follow Hammurabi, the man of Babylon; the same number follow Rim-Sin, the man of Larsa, Ibali-pi-el, the man of Eshunna, and Amun-pi-el, the man of Qatna, and twenty kings follow Yarim-Lim, the man of Yamhad.”

This excerpt comes from a letter written around 1760 BC that was sent to the ruler of Mari, an ancient city in what is now Syria. While many of the people and places mentioned in this letter may be unfamiliar, one king in particular, Hammurabi of Babylon still enjoys a measure of renown, owing to his great Law Code. The letter is a remarkable piece of historical evidence, giving us ancient eyewitness testimony as to the political situation in the Near East when Hammurabi first began to forge his empire. (I use the term “empire” loosely here and in what follows to signify a polity that controls other polities. This definition allows me to focus on the mechanisms of control, my particular interest as I discuss below.)

That we have this letter at all is thanks firstly to the materials used to write it. The merchants, diplomats, and bureaucrats of the time wrote their letters and accounts in cuneiform, a wedge-shaped script formed by impressing a reed stylus into a clay tablet. When baked, these tablets are incredibly durable, and archaeologists have uncovered hundreds of thousands of them in the course of their excavations. As a consequence, Assyriologists, as scholars who study cuneiform tablets are known, have been able to study the ancient Near East not just from the bombastic inscriptions of kings but also from more quotidian texts. As the letter quoted above reveals, such quotidian documents offer a wealth of information about the politics, society, and economy of the ancient world the equal of which is hard to find.

However, the letter also emphasizes how great the gaps in our knowledge can be. For example, the first three empires it mentions are relatively well known, as a century of excavations has provided scholars with abundant textual evidence. The site of Qatna is currently being excavated by Syrian, Italian, and German teams, and promises to greatly increase our knowledge. But the workings of the final empire, Yamhad, are still obscure.

As, according to our own ancient informant in the letter, Yamhad was judged to be the most powerful, this mystery remains an important lacuna in our understanding of the ancient Near East. The situation has occurred because the capital of Yamhad lies below the urban expanse of modern Aleppo and so is largely inaccessible to archaeologists. Furthermore, with one exception that I will return to below, no archives from a city subject to Yamhad have been excavated. Our current picture of Yamhad, then, is drawn almost entirely from scattered references found in the archives of the empire’s neighbours and rivals. Such a picture is necessarily fragmented and far from objective. The goal of my research, which I am undertaking as the inaugural Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Research Fellow at Corpus Christi, is to look for the first time at this ancient Syrian empire from within. What were the mechanisms by which the rulers of Yamhad achieved and maintained their position of prominence? Or, to use the language of our ancient correspondent, what did it mean for 20 kings to follow the man of Yamhad?

Before describing the method by which I hope to answer these questions, I would like to introduce both myself and the Donnelley Fellowship, which, as it is newly created, may be unfamiliar to readers of the Pelican. I hope also that this personal aside will provide some additional context for my work. The Fellowship has been established by the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation to enhance scholarly exchange between Corpus Christi and the University of Chicago. The Fellowship enables a recent PhD graduate of the University of Chicago to pursue research unencumbered by other obligations at Corpus Christi for a period of three years, and, beginning in the 2010 academic year, a recent PhD graduate of Corpus Christi will do likewise at the University of Chicago. The Foundation established the Fellowship to honour the memory of Gaylord Donnelley who studied at Corpus Christi and was a Trustee of the University of Chicago.
I am honoured and grateful to be the first recipient of this Fellowship, both for the support it will provide for my scholarly endeavours and also for the increased awareness of the field of Assyriology that it brings. Assyriology is not exactly the most common of academic pursuits, and, like many of my colleagues, I did not begin my undergraduate education intending to become an Assyriologist. Initially, I studied classical art and archaeology at Princeton University, and it was there, while studying Eastern influences on early Greek art that I first became interested in the civilizations of the ancient Near East. Determining that, if I really wanted to study these civilizations, I needed to learn their languages and read cuneiform, I went on to do my graduate work at the University of Chicago’s Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, from which I received my PhD in Assyriology in 2007. Most recently, I have been an assistant professor of history at Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia.

During my graduate studies, I joined an archeological team that was renewing excavations at the Bronze Age site of Alalakh, in the Hatay province of Turkey not far from the ancient city of Antioch (modern Antakya). Alalakh was excavated previously during the 1930s and 1940s by Sir Leonard Woolley, and my job as epigrapher has been to study cuneiform tablets found at the site both by Woolley as well as by the more recent excavations. I wrote my dissertation on these tablets, in which I reconstructed the ancient palace archives that the tablets originally formed and attempted to articulate the principles by which these archives were organized. It was only after I had finished my dissertation and was teaching at Roanoke College that I realized how the Alalakh tablets could also let us peer for the first time inside the empire of Yamhad.
Many of the approximately 300 Alalakh tablets are bookkeeping accounts concerned with the internal administration of the palace and the rulers’ estates, and so the vast majority of previous scholarship on the tablets has focused naturally on unraveling the intricate workings of this administration. But Alalakh, never more than a local power itself, was also that one exception which I mentioned above, the only subject city of Yamhad that has to date yielded up its archives. Necessarily, the administration of Alalakh could not have occurred in isolation but must have been fundamentally influenced by policies put in place by Alalakh’s overlords, the kings of Yamhad. So, even though Alalakh’s archives may document primarily local affairs, we should be able to grasp some aspects of the larger imperial framework that determined how, in part, these local affairs were adjudicated.

Perhaps a specific example will help demonstrate my method and aims, as well as the circuitous path that my research often takes. Initially, I was interested in exploring Alalakh’s economy. Matters of distribution and consumption seemed relatively clear: Many tablets record the palace’s disbursement of grain to its employees and dependents. The question of who exactly was producing this grain was more difficult to answer, but eventually I managed to connect two distinct dossiers of tablets and demonstrate that the king of Alalakh owned a number of small settlements and that these settlements provided the palace with its grain. At this point, I had established sufficient context to return to one of the oldest tablets from Alalakh, one with which I was familiar but which heretofore I had not been able to properly appreciate.

This tablet opens with a story. Apparently, before he came to the Alalakh, the city’s first king had ruled another city subject to Yamhad. This city was destroyed in the course of a rebellion, and the ruler of Yamhad therefore settled the king in Alalakh. After its narrative prologue, the tablet records a swap, listing a number of different settlements that the ruler of Yamhad exchanged with the new king of Alalakh at this time. By focusing on historical geography, I have been able to reveal an interesting pattern. While Alalakh was in the west of Yamhad, the king’s new settlements were all in the west. In other words, the king of Alalakh did not rule a territorial kingdom, with clearly defined borders, but rather owned a collection of geographically disparate settlements that were spread throughout the empire of Yamhad.

Placed within the context of Alalakh’s economy that I established earlier, this conclusion gains new significance. These settlements provided the king of Alalakh with the majority of his income, yet his overlord at Yamhad deliberately kept him apart from them. On the one hand, this decision betrays a worry on Yamhad’s part about vassals developing their own bases of power. On the other hand, it signifies Yamhad’s confidence that its transport systems were secure and reliable. And hopefully, this example further shows how just one tablet, when contextualized within the corpus as a whole, can shed light on what it meant for a king to “follow” the ruler of Yamhad.

But this example should not suggest that my picture of Yamhad is complete, for it is really just beginning. It is a truism among academics that, when going to the library to look for one book, one finds by happenstance another more relevant sitting next to it on the shelf. In such a way, I feel most fortunate that I will be able to live and work at Corpus Christi in the coming years, for I believe that my daily exchanges with the College’s other Fellows will have a profound influence on the direction my research takes in the coming years.
Corpus Fellow Dr Emma Wilson received her medal for the prestigious Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Palmes Académiques in a ceremony with the French ambassador to the UK, Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, earlier this year.

The award recognized her sustained contribution to the dissemination of French culture and to education. The Ordre des Palmes Académiques (order of the Academic Palms) is an honour awarded by the French government to academics and educators. Originally created by Napoleon I in 1808 on his return home from his campaign in Egypt, it recognises the range and impact of scholarly writing by intellectuals who have advanced French national education.

Dr Emma Wilson is the former head of the French Department and a reader in contemporary French literature and film. As Head of Department, she initiated links with a number of French institutions, particularly the École Normale Supérieure-Lettres et Sciences Humaines in Lyon, where Cambridge now has a very successful Erasmus exchange.

The other recipient of the medal was François-André Penz who is a Reader in Architecture and the Moving Image in the Department of Architecture. François has over the years worked to bring the history of the relationship between cinema and architecture to bear on contemporary digital moving practice in architecture and planning.

Emma and François were also instrumental in setting up the very successful interdisciplinary MPhil in Screen Media and Culture which provides advanced training in the interdisciplinary study of the history and theory of modern screen media, and which has proved a very effective preparation for doctoral work in this area.

Philip Ford, Deputy Chair of the School of Arts and Humanities, commented: ‘It is very gratifying that the French government has recognized in this way François and Emma’s outstanding contributions to French culture. It was a particular honour that the French Ambassador presented the medals during his visit to Cambridge’. 
My initial reaction was to laugh it off; Cambridge was so far off my radar it didn’t even register. However, with a little reflection I realized that I didn’t actually know very much about it, I hadn’t even looked at the entrance requirements because I perceived Cambridge as a distant, elitist organization. Yet, here was Mrs Mcann, Modern Studies teacher to Ullapool High School (around two hundred pupils, beyond the edges of civilization in the North-West Highlands), telling me, without a hint of sarcasm, that there was no harm in setting my sights high. This was the same Mrs Mcann who routinely shredded wayward students with witty Glaswegian cynicisms; I was incredulous. The moment stuck in my mind. I accepted her offer to let me take Higher Modern Studies with one period a week of teacher-pupil interaction (these soon descended into one period a week of lively political discussion!). From there things snowballed for me academically, I went on to get an award for academic excellence from the Scottish Qualifications Authority and suddenly realized that I was actually alright at learning and that being a
perfectionist wasn’t a bad thing! No longer seeing my partial hearing loss as a barrier to language learning, I dropped physics to crash Advanced Higher French in my final year at school in order to give myself more options for university choices (the fact that I’m writing this from Provence indicates to me that I made the right decision there!).

When the moment came to start thinking seriously about university and further study I’d begun to see that Cambridge perhaps was not so unattainable. I had good grades, I was predicted more good grades so I just had to make sure that I was more than a handful of A-grades for the interview. The only problem was that I was oscillating between subject choices like a compass with bipolar disorder… The needle came to rest on Oriental Studies – Chinese at Queens (a decision more based on the need to make a decision rather than out of an acute desire to focus my studies on China) and I rushed headlong towards an immediate entry into university life.

continued overleaf…
I had a passion for travel and culture, the peoples, old and new, of this world, their traditions, ways of life and ways of expressing themselves – I just didn’t know where to aim it! My mother, travel writer and desert island dilettante Lucy Irvine, had always cultivated this passion of mine by letting me discover things for myself – from a long weekend on my own celebrating Easter with Melanesian islanders at the age of ten to giving me her blessing to travel alone to Mongolia at seventeen, she gave me every opportunity possible to interact with different cultures. (She only told me afterwards that the islanders had been secretly checking to see if I was of a marriageable age!). In retrospect Archaeology and Anthropology was definitely the obvious choice for me but at the time that wasn’t clear.

I did get the place at Queens. I remember arriving in Cambridge for the interviews and trying to connect the friendly, fascinating students with whom I stayed, to the be-suited gaggle of applicants. Although I’d studied in both private schools and state schools I felt distinctly out of place in my jeans, t-shirt and jumper. I may have taken the “We’re interested in your brains, not what you wear” literally but everyone else seemed to have gone for all out smartness! In any case, at the last minute, I panicked and turned my offer down in favour of idealistic travel plans and more time to think about what I really wanted to do.

I felt that Chinese studies was too specific for me, yes it was a fascinating culture and offered great job prospects but it just didn’t seem broad enough for me. The fact that Chinese is a tonal language and I’m partially deaf didn’t help either!

Running Clydesdales and Shires on the beach for Cumbrian Heavy Horses

Playing pool in the Pelican bar

She only told me afterwards that the islanders had been secretly checking to see if I was of marriageable age.

My extended gap year soon drifted into gap years... After months vagabonding in Finland and a decidedly unsuccessful attempt at working on a remote ranch in Canada (the cowboy boss’s work ethic generated a weekly staff turnover!) I found myself working with heavy horses in the English Lake District. The equestrian world provided both a medium for rapid progress through professional exams and learning and also plenty of time for contemplating and discussing further study whilst guiding clients from beach gallops to the high fells and idyllic lakes of Cumbria. I never lost sight of going to university and maintained my academic side by...
continuing to study French and taking distance learning qualifications in TEFL and psychology.

During this time my mother upped and left her Scottish retreat for rural Bulgaria (something about being fed up with not being able to put nails in rented walls). She settled in a mountain village far from any interfering expats and promptly asked me to drive a vanload of her worldly possessions out to her. This trip, ferrying Moroccan carpets, handmade Scottish bookshelves and conch shells from the Solomon Islands across Europe was to serve as an inspirational clout over the head for me. This was what interested me; comparing different cultures, crossing the wheat/rye divide in central Europe, seeing Romanian haycarts juxtaposed with ultra-modern SUV’s and discovering prehistory in the foothills of the Rhodope mountains at Perperikon. When I got back Anthropology was no longer just another vague ‘ology’ to me, it was a very real subject with broad scope and lots to suit my wide range of interests. Better yet, Cambridge offered a course that combined Anthropology and Archaeology! Suddenly the topic of conversation on rides was less on the merits of the ridden Clydesdale and Shire and more on the pro and cons of different colleges. I knew exactly where I wanted to be, it was just a question of getting there. Not knowing whether qualifying as a mature student was an advantage or not suddenly made the way I spent my few hours of free time after long days in the saddle all the more important – I needed to stay in the habit of studying.

Once again I found myself at interview, now comfortable with a shirt beneath my jumper and jeans. Corpus seemed more personal than Queens had done, almost familial, or perhaps my perception of things had changed. I had more to bring to my interviews this time round, I was more confident in myself and didn’t feel any stigma attached to the fact that I’d gone to a state school. Any residual shyness had evaporated in encounters with the Kazakh border police or in taking command of riders ranging from Household Calvary officers to imperious ten year old girls and their pink Wellingtons!

Needless to say, I somehow managed to persuade my interviewers that I hadn’t idled the last three years away and was worth having! Now I feel ready for Cambridge, Corpus and Arch and Anth - and I look forward to exploiting the opportunities and challenges I’m sure will be thrown at me…
I was born in India, but spent most of my school years in Germany. Moving from India to Germany was like immersing myself in cold water; it had my fists clenching and my head reeling with the shock of change. The sights, the sounds, the feeling – everything was suddenly new. My memories were waning, and the words were drying up in my mouth from lack of use because I did not know the language. Out on the streets, people spoke in phrases that merged together in a chaos of sound that made no sense to me. In the international school, I could pick up fragments here and there, but it was the first time I had been alone in an overwhelmingly unfamiliar community, disarmed and defenceless, with little possibility of interacting with others. And it was then that Cambridge came to my rescue for the first time, in the form of a heavy book bound in orange paper. The Cambridge International Dictionary of English did, indeed, “guide me to the meaning,” as its cover promised. It led me, step by tentative step, into the mysteries of the English language. Even after all these years, it is one of the books left on my bookshelf. I love books, and have collected more than I have space for. As a result, the books that I keep lined up on my shelves are the ones I have not yet read. They reflect how I feel about learning: insecure due to the immense amount of knowledge never to be possessed, and thrilled by the excitement that arises from all that is left to explore and discover. This dictionary, I now realize several years later, was produced in a building situated on the same street as Corpus, practically across the street from my next home.

The second time Cambridge delivered a solution to my problems was about one year ago. As a student just about to graduate from secondary school, I had nonspecific dreams of what I wanted to become in life, wonderfully rich wishes that would probably not become part of my reality.

They were simple in the sense that I knew that I wanted to save lives and make a difference. I wanted to sink myself into something that would fill me with a passion powerful enough to make me clench my fists around it as if it were my most prized possession. I wanted to drown in a whirlpool of discoveries and advancements that would make my head spin. I wanted to love learning my subject, and I wanted to be terrified of its influence over me and the world.

My ideas were complicated because I did not know how I wanted to find all of those things in one subject in university. I did not know what I wanted to be. I vaguely understood that for me, the most rewarding career was that of a doctor, but I also perceived the magnitude of repercussions that comes with being such a person. Being a doctor, to me, is not about having a job. It is about the patients, about taking as much as I can from life and sharing it with as many people as possible. It is about taking responsibility for others in a situation where mistakes cannot be fixed. It is about putting others first. And, of course, it is about not flinching at the sight of a needle or gagging at the smell of blood. In making such a commitment, one should be certain that this strength can persevere through unpredictable, unprecedented situations. I do not know much about life, and I am not yet sure I would make a good doctor. I want to be a doctor, but I still have to find out whether I am capable of becoming one. This is why I decided against beginning my further studies with medicine. Before dedicating to it, I want to test myself in a scientific context to see if I can learn and mature into a doctor.

While I was considering universities all over the world in search for a place that I could become a part of, I faced the dilemma of having to choose between the United States and the United Kingdom. The US offered the broad curriculum I was looking for – in fact, it seemed too open to me. Having studied in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, I felt that the American approach to education would not necessarily help me make the most of the IB experience. The IB has undoubtedly shaped me into the student I am today, and going to the US made me feel like I would be back at square one in terms of developing my personality as a student; it would be like relearning my instincts in a different way. However, I was scared of specialising as soon as would be required in the UK. I did not want to miss out on one side of my subject by focusing only on the other. I wanted to experience the discipline in its entirety. Yet I was afraid that a subject so dense with details
and phenomena would swallow me alive, find all my weaknesses and gaps in knowledge that would eat away at me until I failed.

Cambridge’s Natural Sciences Tripos will launch me headfirst into all of that. It will truly draw out all the things that I am lacking, but instead of allowing them to dominate my studies, it will teach me to search for and acquire them. I know this will happen because of the attention the university pays to individuals through supervisions. I do not think for a moment that being a student in Cambridge will guarantee instant success or an easy way into life; I think that it will arm me, personally, with the weapons I will need to reach my goals, and it will guide me in wielding them. Cambridge will provide the security and space for me to be myself. It will open the door to my future. Once it is open, I will be able to walk out myself.
My name is Corina and I am now reading Social and Political Sciences as a first year student at Corpus Christi College. Very often I find that people are particularly interested in knowing more about my personal journey to Cambridge, and each time I can only describe it as being rather adventurous.

I started from scratch, four years ago when my parents decided to make Britain our new home. I originally come from Romania, but we all agreed that our chances of success, in terms of education and careers, would be much greater here, in the UK. I could not say that our circumstances in Romania were particularly difficult. We used to live in a small, peaceful town, and my parents had secure jobs. It was mainly the political culture of the country which pressed us to take this step. Government institutions concerned with aspects of health and education frequently failed to offer me the necessary support as a visually impaired child. A country attempting to recover from the ruins of communism is yet unable to protect the individual’s integrity or provide equal care for all sections of society.

Yes, this sounds quite different from the British political culture, and every time I compare the two, I tend to use a loss versus gain principle.

We have certainly lost the sense of stability and security of life we used to feel. Back there, things moved at a much slower pace and it would be easier to predict what life would be like in a few years time (pretty much the same as ever). We used to live in a town where everyone knew everyone else so we had a clearly set status in society. Meanwhile, in London we feel like a drop of water in the sea. We also used to have the security of a home which we owned and this is no longer the case here in Britain.

Nevertheless, these losses are compensated for by the chance I have been given to stand out as an individual and this is only because here in Britain, hard work is more frequently rewarded and the individual’s integrity is considered. I also felt much less restrained by my disability.

This change also meant that I had only one and a half years to become an excellent speaker of the English language (completely unknown to me at the time), and obtain successful GCSE results.

Fortunately I achieved these goals, even though very few people believed in my potential. In just six months my knowledge of the English language was such that I was able to produce A grade pieces of coursework for English Literature, English Language and History. I often had private teachers supplementing me with all the material I could not study in school. In the end I achieved five As and two A*s at GCSE Level.

These have been some of the most difficult times I have ever experienced, but it was worth it. Moreover, this experience has allowed me to know myself a little better and prove my true potential. It helped me develop and strengthen my ability to memorize quickly and concentrate for longer periods of time. These nurtured qualities have since helped me throughout my journey to Cambridge.

It was somewhere along this period of time that I first became attracted by the idea of Cambridge. I guess this was at first just a naïve thought which simply matched my ambitious way of being. I was clearly unaware of all the implications this would involve. This also became one of my well hidden secrets, and I would say ‘never even mention the word Cambridge’. Besides, how could I? People would have mocked me. In fact the majority of my teachers thought that I would be lucky to pass half my GCSEs.

Once I began my A Levels, it all ran smoothly. I had already gained my status as a hard working, committed student (a very important factor of encouragement). With four As at AS Level and a great deal of appreciation and support from my teachers (who have often been as close to me as my parents) I decided to reach out towards my dream.
Nevertheless, my learning abilities are certainly not the only ones contributing to my success. What truly makes the difference is the fact that I enjoy what I am studying and feel that it comes from within me. My choice to study subjects such as politics, sociology and psychology, has not necessarily been meticulously calculated. I simply felt that I have a genuine talent and attraction for these subjects. None the less, what triggered my attraction towards this area of study has been my experience of two different cultures. I have learnt that culture should not be taken for granted, but always questioned and understood, because it really does affect all aspects of human life.

It may also be the explanation why, following my interview in December, I was offered a place at Corpus. I do not know whether or not what I said during this interview was correct, but I certainly enjoyed what I was doing and this gave me confidence.

It has been quite a while now since I first began to wonder what exactly attracted me towards Cambridge. Now I realize that it is because I believe in a system of meritocracy. This is certainly compatible with Cambridge, for its students can only be rewarded through their commitment and progress. In my case, I am just at the beginning of my journey towards a successful career, and this is why I am interested in progress and hard work.

Moreover, in my area of study, the only way to gain knowledge and experience is by aiming higher. This means that I must always be on the look out for experienced and competitive persons. Subjects like sociology or politics require a very open minded attitude. I can only obtain this by raising my standards, and now, Cambridge is the next level up that I need to reach.

Equally important, I am also aiming to settle down for a while and enjoy life a little more (give it a more relaxed pace). I guess that in this way I will later become one of the happy politicians of the country (since we do not find many of these around).
THE DEFENCE OF THE REALM

THE AUTHORIZED HISTORY OF THE SECURITY SERVICE,

BY CHRISTOPHER ANDREW

For most of its history the Security Service (MI5) has seemed to outsiders a deeply mysterious organisation. Successive governments intended it to be so. The Service, like the rest of the intelligence community, was told to stay as far from public view as possible. The historian, Sir Michael Howard, declared in 1985: ‘So far as official government policy is concerned, the British security and intelligence services do not exist. Enemy agents are found under gooseberry bushes and intelligence is brought by the storks.’ Even at the end of the Cold War, MI5 staff could scarcely have imagined that the Service would mark its centenary in October this year by publishing my authorized history of its first hundred years, The Defence of the Realm (published by Allen Lane/Penguin in the UK and by Knopf in the USA).

In 2003 I began part-time work as MI5 official historian with an office in its Thames House headquarters on Millbank and the help in London and Cambridge of a talented group of research assistants (including one old Corpuscle, Dr Peter Martland). It has been an exciting time to be a member of MI5. During the last six years the United Kingdom has faced the most dangerous terrorist offensive in its history from Al Qaida and its fellow travellers, who, unlike most IRA bombers of the previous generation, have no compunction about killing as many people as possible. In July 2004 the MI5 Director General, Eliza (later Baroness) Manningham-Buller (who has twice visited Corpus to speak to my Intelligence Seminar and have dinner with students), warned government; ‘There are worrying developments in the radicalization of some young British Muslims. Action collectively and internationally has prevented or deterred some [terrorist] attacks. But it can only be a matter of time before something on a serious scale occurs in the UK.’

A year later, on Thursday 7 July 2005, I arrived at King’s Cross from Cambridge and headed, as usual, for the tube en route to Thames House, only to discover that the underground had just been closed. Though news of the first tube explosion reached MI5 at 9.20 am, it was not until after 10 am that the evidence pointed to a series of terrorist attacks. By lunchtime, with tube carriages still trapped in underground tunnels, it was feared that the casualties might rise as high as the 191 deaths caused by Islamist terrorist attacks on crowded commuter trains in Madrid in February 2004. In the event the 7/7 suicide-bombings of three underground trains and one London bus led to the loss of fifty-two lives.
The shock generated within the Security Service by the slaughter of innocents was reinforced by further, this time unsuccessful, Islamist bomb attacks on London Transport a fortnight later. Once again the Service had no advance warning, though it helped to track down the perpetrators. The current Director General, Jonathan Evans (who, like Manningham-Buller, has also addressed the Intelligence Seminar and had dinner with Corpus students) remembers 21/7 as ‘even more of an emotional blow than 7/7’: ‘We were already feeling under the cosh and wondered, “Have they got wave after wave to throw at us?”’

Since 2005 MI5 successfully prevented a series of further Islamist terrorist attacks: among them a conspiracy to bomb seven flights leaving Heathrow during a three-hour period for North American cities. Suicide bombers were to detonate explosive concealed in soft drinks bottles, using the flash units on disposable cameras. As well as causing massive loss of life on the scale of 9/11 (even greater if the planes had exploded over cities), the plot would have caused lasting disruption to transatlantic air travel.

Shortly before the publication of The Defence of the Realm, the ringleader, Abdulla Ahmed Ali, was sentenced to life imprisonment with a forty-year minimum term.

The sheer size of the Security Service Archive, to which I’ve had almost unlimited access, is thrilling. Almost 400,000 paper files survive, many of them multi-volume. The files on the KGB’s ‘Magnificent Five’ (Kim Philby, Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess, Anthony Blunt and John Cairncross) recruited at—or soon after graduating from—Cambridge in the mid-1930s run to about fifty volumes each. They show vividly both the Five’s extraordinary skill as Soviet agents and the increasing stress they were under. During years of questioning by MI5 in the mid- and later-sixties about his work for the KGB, Blunt’s drinking ran out of control (despite being given immunity from prosecution). His drink bill grew to £100 a month—more than I earned at the time as a young Research Fellow at Gonville & Caius College. Philby’s drinking was as prodigious as Blunt’s. Despite his surface charm, thirty years of working for Stalin and his successors brutalised his personality. His behaviour to his second wife was so appalling that her doctor believed he was trying to persuade her to commit suicide. After he defected to Moscow, Philby lied to the KGB just as he had earlier lied to MI5 and MI6.

The files on the KGB’s magnificent Five ran to about fifty volumes each
One of the speakers at the Intelligence Seminar in Corpus last year played a recording, smuggled out of Russian intelligence headquarters, of Philby’s only speech to the KGB, given in English on the sixtieth anniversary of the Bolshevik October Revolution. Philby advised KGB officers to instil into their foreign agents that, whatever happened, they must ‘never, never confess’. But he did not reveal to his comrades (though some may have realized it) that, on the eve of defecting to Moscow in 1963, he confessed to British intelligence some of his past career as a Soviet agent. A copy of that confession survives in MI5 archives.

Corpus, to the best of my knowledge, has never produced a Russian agent

Corpus, to the best of my knowledge, has never produced a Russian agent. Since the days of Christopher Marlowe (whose portrait I pass each day in the Old Combination Room), however, it has provided some interesting recruits to British intelligence. Among them was Cyril Mills, son and heir of Britain’s leading circus owner, Bertram Mills, who as an MI5 officer during the Second World War took part in the ‘Double Cross System’ which used turned German agents to feed the enemy an unprecedented amount of disinformation. In the latter half of 1940 and 1941, when it was thought quite likely that Hitler might invade England, Mills was put in charge of a top secret operation codenamed MR MILLS’ CIRCUS to hide the double agents in Wales in hotels at Betws-y-Coed, Llanrwst and Llandudno, whose owners had been vetted. MI5’s local representative used circus metaphors in correspondence with headquarters, writing from Colwyn Bay in April 1941: ‘I have now completed arrangements for the accommodation of the animals, the young and their keepers, together with accommodation for Mr Mills himself.’ Though there was no German invasion and the CIRCUS operation turned out to be unnecessary, Cyril Mills was part of the most successful deception in the history of warfare, which played a key role in preparations for the D-Day landings.

For the past decade, more often than not, more candidates for Part II of the Historical Tripos have taken the paper on ‘The Rise of the Secret World: Governments and Intelligence Communities since c.1900’ than any other option. The debt I owe to the Corpus history undergraduates I have the good fortune to teach for this paper is exemplified by Pete Gallagher’s ground-breaking 2009 final-year dissertation which I cite three times in The Defence of the Realm. The Intelligence Seminar, which meets at 5.30 pm every Friday during term in the New Combination Room brings together a remarkable group of postgraduates from around the world expert at identifying the role of intelligence in a variety of fields which more senior scholars have often overlooked. I have learned much from them and their research.

If you have MA dining rights, you might like to sign in to dine on High Table afterwards with the speakers, myself and others.
Conserving the Parker Manuscripts

BY MELVIN JEFFERSON, CONSERVATION OFFICER

FUNDED BY THE ANDREW MELLON FOUNDATION, AND IN COLLABORATION WITH STANFORD UNIVERSITY AND CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, THE PARKER-ON-THE WEB DIGITIZATION PROJECT AT CORPUS WAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED IN SEPTEMBER, ON BUDGET AND ON TIME. ALMOST EVERY LEAF OF EVERY ONE OF THE 600 BOOKS WAS CAPTURED IN HIGH-RESOLUTION DIGITAL FORMAT, USING STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT, TO PROVIDE A FREE VIRTUAL PARKER LIBRARY ON THE INTERNET, COMPLETE WITH A COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATABASE COMPILED BY A SPECIALIST TEAM OF SCHOLARS. See: http://parkerweb.stanford.edu

Conserving the Parker Manuscripts

The project resulted in the largest programme of conservation work to the collection for many years. Carrying out the project entirely in house not only made the security issues in transferring priceless books to and from the photography studio easier to manage, but, crucially, allowed for close communication between librarians, bibliographers, photographers and conservators to ensure the safety of the manuscripts and the smooth running of the project. The conservation approach at Corpus Christi differed from that in other large digitization projects in that it has been proactive: the manuscripts were checked for damage and repaired before going to the photography studio so that they were in a safe physical condition to be handled, rather than after photography when damage may well have been exacerbated.

The conservation process began with the bibliographers in the Parker Library. As each manuscript was examined its opening characteristics were assessed and any damage to the binding, leaves, inks and pigments was recorded. The manuscripts were then transferred to the Conservation Department for treatment prior to digitization. Manuscripts which retain their original bindings were not digitized in full so as not to endanger the original structures. It is important to note that, although it is possible to read these manuscripts on a cradle, a camera needs a flat leaf for a good image: the ability of a manuscript to be read does not necessarily mean that it can be photographed. Many of the manuscript leaves were repaired in-situ, whether they had just one small tear or, in the case of some of the paper manuscripts, many stabilising edge repairs.
Cockled and distorted parchment leaves were also relaxed and flattened. The leaves were humidified in a conditioning chamber then flattened by having lined, padded bulldog clips attached to their edges to enable them to be pinned out to dry flat.

The lengthy process of consolidating the ink was carried out under the microscope using a 0000 miniaturist’s brush to apply the consolidant to the backs of the letters. This treatment caused the previously cupped films of ink to relax into a flat state, thus re-adhering themselves to the parchment leaves.

The inks and pigments of the great majority of the manuscripts appear to be in good condition, but there are books in the collection which needed work on a microscopic level to stabilise the text and images. Letters in the text of MS 49 were lifting off the page and there were already bare patches in the lines, with tiny letters which had become detached lying in the spine margin.

The major problem in digitizing the manuscripts, which threatened to derail the project in its initial stages, was the opening characteristics of the books. Two major rebinding programmes, one in the eighteenth century and one in the 1950s, have resulted in a collection of books whose openings make them difficult to read and almost impossible to photograph satisfactorily; yet these bindings also made the project possible: they are judged not to be of such
historical importance that they cannot be adapted by the conservators to allow the manuscripts to open properly. Ideally, one would like to replace all such bindings with new conservation bindings which would be more sympathetic – and less damaging – to the manuscripts, but to rebind such a large collection within the time-frame of the project was impossible. Furthermore, the manuscripts are in constant demand from readers and it is important to have as few manuscripts as possible in a disbound state for any length of time – the library continued to provide its normal services throughout the project. It was important to ensure that stress to the leaves during digitization would be at a minimum and that the cameras could capture text right into the inner margins. It was therefore essential that a suitable compromise was found to make the bindings work better. Disbinding was not ruled out entirely, but was only carried out in cases where the sewing structure had broken down beyond repair or where the leaves of the most important texts required extensive repair which it was considered unfeasible to carry out in situ.

Many of the eighteenth-century bindings are quite fragile and were consolidated to allow them to be digitized. The 1950s bindings were carefully adapted to make them open well without putting stress on the leaves.

The leather of these books was carefully peeled back from the spine, the linings were removed, then the leather was put back in place. There is a marked improvement in the opening of the manuscripts given this treatment, and the leaves flex properly from the spine fold.
Digital Imaging
The photographic cradles were of a bespoke design which enabled the supports to be adjusted easily to hold the manuscript safely during digitization. The conservation department also made small magnetic bone holders to keep the leaves gently in position, as well as additional supports for the digitization of disbound leaves and particularly fragile bindings. The temperature and relative humidity on the rigs was closely monitored and controlled at all times to ensure that the environment was kept to the same level as the library and thus minimise the ‘shock’ to leaves and pigments alike.

From Manuscript to Print to the World-Wide Web
What would Matthew Parker have made of the four-year project devoted to digitizing his manuscripts? Computing technology and the internet would probably startle him, but in essence he may well have approved of a project to publish his books: he had printed copies of several of his manuscripts published. Matthew Paris’s Chronica Majora was printed in Parker’s own lifetime and the manuscript still bears the inky fingerprints and blockmarks left by the printer as he held or weighted down the leaves while setting the type.

An engaging human side to the story of the books though these inky marks are, we have endeavoured not to leave such obvious evidence of our attempt to publish the manuscripts after the completion of this project! The digitization project has given the Conservation Department staff time to work intensively on the collection and to carry out remedial treatment to the worst-damaged and most fragile manuscripts. The work carried out for the digitization project is designed to be easily removable, so that much of the ground work for further conservation treatment has now been done. Furthermore, we have built up a detailed and comprehensive database of the current condition, make-up and conservation needs of the collection which will be invaluable in planning work into the foreseeable future. As time and funding permits, it is hoped to replace more of the eighteenth- and twentieth-century bindings with new conservation bindings, based on medieval structures, which will be more sympathetic and less damaging to one of the world’s great collections.