New student library

The plans for the new student library are progressing well. The architects Wright & Wright have been appointed from a shortlist of three, and building will commence early in 2005. Meanwhile, the fund raising programme is gathering pace, with a substantial amount of the money already in place.

The next issue of the Pelican will focus on the library. It will include drawings of the architects plans, and details of the new library. We will be launching a public fund raising campaign and encouraging alumni to consider making a contribution to this major project which will greatly strengthen and enhance facilities for the students in the College.

Digitization of Parker Manuscript

The College has just finished a prototype project digitizing Matthew Paris’s Chronica Maiora. Under the guidance of the Master and Dr John Cleaver, the technical challenges of digitally photographing the ancient manuscript were tackled. Once underway, the project was completed more quickly than had been anticipated and resulted in a series of beautiful images which form the first stage in the College’s plans to digitize the entire collection of Matthew Parker manuscripts.
Silver Medal Award

Professor Andy Hopper with his wife Dr Alison Smith, also a fellow at Corpus

Professor Andy Hopper FREng has been awarded the Royal Academy of Engineering Silver Medal. Corpus Fellow Professor Hopper, Cambridge University Professor of Communication Engineering, received his prestigious prize at the Academy Awards Dinner in London on 5 June 2003. The Academy’s Silver Medals, instigated in 1995, are awarded annually to engineers aged 50 or under who have made ‘outstanding contributions to British engineering’. Only four awards may be made each year. The award recognizes Professor Hopper’s phenomenal record of developing and commercializing new computing technologies.

Andy joined Corpus as a Fellow in 1981 and was one of the first academics to exploit his research in order to create partnerships with industry and venture capitalists. One of his current projects is RealVNC Ltd, formed last year to develop remote control software for desktop PCs. “This one is really going against the trend,” he says. “We’re going back to the old-fashioned idea of dumb terminals, which carry only graphics, linked to a central computer that does the hard work.” Five million users have downloaded over 15 million licences for RealVNC from its open source on the web. “We’re exporting British engineering to a huge number of people all over the world. In its own field, this is revolutionary technology but we run it with three lads in an office in Cambridge.”

Profile

Rachel Shaw joined Corpus in 2002 as the College’s new Domestic Bursar. After completing her studies in Quantity Surveying at the University of Liverpool and in Land Economy at Wolfson College Cambridge, she worked in the City as a Project/Cost Manager on many construction projects and then in the West End as a Property and Asset Manager.

Rachel worked for Tesco for nearly eight years in a variety of positions including Property and Asset Manager and Programme Manager in Bangkok.

Outside of work, Rachel has a keen interest in animal welfare and gardening. She also plays for and is Director of Cambridge University Women’s Rugby.

Exam Success

Corpus students have achieved some pleasing successes this year; not only did the College attain 25% more First Class results than last year, but three of these were starred firsts, and five undergraduates were top of Tripos across the University.

In Classics, Sophia Whitbread won a Foundation Scholarship for excellence in her Tripos exams, an Eastbridge/Parker Exhibition, the Moule Prize for unseen translation, and the Farnshave Prize for prose composition in the classical languages, plus two University prizes, the Senior University Scholarship and the Hallam Prize for Classics. Other success in University Prizes were Ella Chaitow who won the Gregson Prize for Archaeology and Anthropology, Philip James (William Vaughan Lewis Prize for geography), Colm Mc Grath (George Long Prize for Roman Law), Abbie Long (Glanville Williams Prize for Criminal Law) and Thomas Clammer who won the Theological Studies Prize.
Genetic Fingerprinting of Medieval Manuscripts
by Dr Christopher Howe

In an unusual collaboration, Dr Christopher Howe (Warden of Leckhampton and University Reader in Biochemistry) and Dr Christopher de Hamel (Donnelley Fellow Librarian) have received funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Board for a project entitled 'Genetic Fingerprinting of Medieval Manuscripts'. The aim is to extract and study DNA from medieval parchment. The DNA could be used to identify the species of animal that gave rise to a piece of parchment and might allow manuscripts of unknown provenance to be matched up with manuscripts whose source is known.

The parchment on which most medieval manuscripts were written was made from animal skin by removal of hair and flesh, followed by drying and scraping. The treatments used in this process were fairly mild, and there is a good chance that some of the DNA in the skin would have been left intact. But will it have survived? Archaeologists have managed to extract and study DNA from material that is much older and has been subjected to much more extreme environmental conditions, from Neanderthal skeletal fragments to plant remains hundreds of thousands of years old, so there is good reason to hope that DNA may still be lingering in the Parker Library. The project will begin with samples of unimportant manuscript material first, rather than Matthew Parker’s finest. Using biochemical extraction techniques and the Polymerase Chain Reaction (also used in forensic science), one can amplify stretches of DNA from material like these parchment samples and determine the sequence of the individual ‘building blocks’ (nucleotides) of the DNA using the same methods used with the Human Genome Project. Comparing the nucleotide sequence of a particular gene from parchment with the sequence of the equivalent gene from a range of animals such as cow, sheep, rabbit and goat should identify the species from which the parchment was derived. Studying other regions of the genetic material that have more variation among individuals of the same species (rather than just variation between species) would allow one to ‘fingerprint’ individual pieces of parchment - analogous to genetic fingerprinting used in forensics, paternity testing and animal...
breeding. Comparing the fingerprint of different sheets of parchment would indicate if they came from closely related or unrelated animals. One of the potential pitfalls of this kind of work is contamination, and it will be important to assess the extent of this problem. As well as DNA from the animals used to make them, the sheets of parchment may contain DNA from people who have touched them over the years, as well as animals used to make glues for binding. Assuming the project succeeds in isolating DNA reliably, it will be important to see just how small a sample can be used before it can be applied to more precious manuscripts.

Readers of the Pelican can be reassured that large holes will not suddenly appear in the Bury Bible - but if the project were successful it might help to settle the argument over whether the pictures in the Bury Bible were indeed made on special expensive parchment of higher quality brought in from Scotland (as claimed at the time), or whether ordinary parchment was used in a medieval scam.

The project has been funded for a year under the Arts and Humanities Research Board’s ‘Innovations’ scheme. If the work is successful, Drs Howe and de Hamel hope that it could lead onto bigger projects with ramifications outside the direct study of manuscripts. Countless pieces of parchment are preserved and broader surveys could, for example, provide information on the relatedness of domesticated animals in different parts of the country, and thus on animal breeding and economics in the past: This may seem like an odd way for a biochemist to behave, but Dr Howe has already been involved in applying techniques from biology to the study of manuscripts. An earlier project, funded for three years by the Leverhulme Trust, was a collaboration with Dr Peter Robinson (De Montfort University) and other manuscript scholars to apply computer programmes designed for tracking changes in DNA sequences during evolution to the changes made to the texts of manuscripts as they were copied by scribes. The parallels between the evolution of DNA sequences and the evolution of a range of textual traditions, including the Canterbury Tales and the New Testament (to name but a few) are striking. This, too, was very much a Corpus-based project. The other directors of it were Dr Adrian Barbrook (Old Member) and Professor Linne Mooney (former Visiting Fellow) and the plot was hatched over dinner at High Table.

Corpus historian is awarded a junior Fellowship at the University of Toronto. Finalist Miles Pattenden will embark upon a one year Master’s program at the University of Toronto next year:

'I have always greatly enjoyed my time at Corpus, both in terms of the society and my subject of study. However, as the prospect of completion loomed I was forced to look to the future. Having been brought up in the city, I felt that after twenty-one years of living here it was time for a change.

'I applied for a Commonwealth Scholarship to the University of Toronto, North America’s leading institution in the field, to fund a Master’s program in Medieval History and was fortunate enough to be accepted by the Canadian Government.

'I will travel to Massey College in the University, where I have been elected to a junior Fellowship, and will take up my award at the end of August. While there, I will be pursuing my research interests in medieval ghost stories (one of the more fun subjects to emerge from my Part II papers). After that, I hope to return to Britain for a doctorate and to pursue a career in academia.'
The Beldam Dinner

The most recent Beldam Dinner was held on 5 April 2003 for those not so old, Old Members who matriculated between 1991 and 1993.

It was the first time back for many, this being their first formal reunion since graduation. Lots of people commented that it was like turning back the clock as they walked into New Court and saw familiar faces. It was lovely to see Hall full of men and women, some travelling from Europe and the USA to attend.

On behalf of the hundreds of Old Members who have attended Beldam dinners since 1999, the College would like to thank Mr Robert Beldam (m 1932) for his generosity and support over the years. It has enabled Corpus to host, on his behalf, many wonderful dinners which have been greatly enjoyed.

The next reunion dinner will be a MacCurdy Dinner on the 27 September for those matriculating from 1955 to 1958.

Mr Robert Beldam

20th Anniversary of the Admission of Women Students.

On the 14th June the College held a garden party at Leckhampton to celebrate the admission of women students to Corpus. It was attended by one of the first women Fellows to be admitted to the College, Professor Charlotte Erickson. There were over 90 female members past and present enjoying excellent food and drinks in the sunshine on Leckhampton lawns.

Organ Scholars Reunion

On 8th February, former organ scholars, choral exhibitioners and members of the choir returned to College to enjoy a reunion day, and celebrate a special evensong service under the musical directorship of Nicholas Danks.

Nick, who is currently Director of Music at St Martin in the Fields, organized a programme of music which included a specially commissioned anthem by Tarik O’Regan, Corpus’s Composer in Residence last year. The Rev Dr James Lawson presided over the service, joined by Rev Geoffrey Styler, who remembered all the Old Members and indeed, shared many happy reminiscences with them.

Corpus Association Dinner

The Association held their biannual dinner in Hall on Saturday 28th June. Professor Colin Blakemore (m 1962) gave the after dinner speech (see page 7).

In recent years partners of Old Members have attended these dinners, which makes for a more congenial atmosphere. The Association Dinner is one of the few occasions when Old Members can bring their spouse or partner back to feast in Hall. On this occasion 78 members of the Association and their guests attended. The Master and his wife generously opened up the Master’s Lodge and garden to host the pre-dinner drinks.
Awards and appointments

Professor Mark Warner is the co-recipient of the European Physical Society Agilent Prize, one of the most prestigious in European Physics. He was awarded for his mathematical prediction of materials hitherto unknown in elasticity, optics and thermodynamics. Experiments on these liquid crystal elastomers (LCE) by collaborators (including co-recipient Heiko Finkelmann from Freiburg) has recently brought the work international prominence.

Liquid crystals, used in displays, flow like liquids, but are ordered in many regards like solids – hence their paradoxical name. Elastomers (rubber) are also unusual - they are amorphous, flow at the molecular level as a liquid, but are (just) elastic solids. The force required to change their shape is much lower than in ordinary solids and the stored energy is huge. They stretch hundreds of times further than conventional solids.

Combining liquid crystals with elastomers give pseudo solids of an altogether new type. For instance, cooling to the liquid crystal phase gives an ordering which stretches out the elastomer. Spontaneous shape changes of hundreds of per cent can be generated and be reversed on heating. The same changes can be achieved with light. One can make heat or light-driven actuators and microdevices.

Stranger is the idea that shape change results from rotating the order of these “solid liquids”.

Normally all 5 aspects defining the shape of a body become rigid on freezing a liquid to a solid. Mark Warner and collaborators realised that there is an elastic intermediate between liquid and solid where only 3 aspects rigidify. The other two allow some shape changes to happen without energy cost – the attribute of a liquid. The classical subject of elasticity, going back to Hooke in the C17th, has been made complete.

Some LCEs are coloured and change their colour on stretching. They lose brilliantly and the laser too changes colour when on stretching. This belongs to the new science and technology of photonics – a possible successor to electronics. Some LCEs sense elastically whether a molecule is left or right handed, and can separate them. Mechanical work applied to the rubber sorts at the molecular scale, analogously to Pasteur’s sorting of left and right handed crystals under a microscope. Chiral separation is vital in pharmaceuticals and otherwise only achieved with considerable difficulty.

Colin Blakemore is the Waynflete Professor of Physiology at Oxford University and Director of the Oxford Centre for Cognitive Neuroscience.

The Medical Research Council is the eminent national organisation funded by the Government to support medical research. The MRC, which was established in 1913, has funded work that has led to some of the most significant achievements in medical research – ranging from the discovery of the influenza virus and chemical transmission in the brain, the development of penicillin, and the discovery of the link between smoking and cancer, to Crick and Watson’s description of the structure of DNA and a string of Nobel Prize winning work in molecular biology and genetics.

Colin Blakemore is a frequent broadcaster and communicator. In 1976 he gave the BBC Reith Lectures. He was awarded the Michael Faraday Award from the Royal Society for his contribution to the furtherance of the public understanding of science. He said of his new appointment: ‘I hope that my love of science and my commitment to the public communication of science will help me to respond to the daunting challenge of running the MRC. My objectives are to maintain the MRC’s extraordinary record of achievement, and especially to help young scientists. The MRC supported me when I was a young researcher in Cambridge: I want to do the same for the next generation of medical researchers.’
Student successes

Ginny Bonavia wins the TE Utley Prize

A proposal by Corpus undergraduate Ginny Bonavia has won the second TE Utley Memorial Prize for young investigative journalists. The prize recognizes an exceptional proposal for a project in contemporary investigative or documentary journalism by a current student of the College.

Ginny will investigate the challenges facing Native American youths in the modern day world. Her case study will be conducted in the Rosebud reservation in South Dakota. The project will hopefully be made into a television documentary. In the following piece Ginny explains what winning the award means to her;

‘Winning the TE Utley Prize is tremendously meaningful to me, on both an academic and a personal level. As a student in Social Anthropology, I am particularly interested in the possibilities of combining anthropological research with documentary film-making or indigenous advocacy work. As such, I would like to employ my degree in Social Anthropology to address the concerns of indigenous communities. This award definitely provides me with the opportunity to explore these interests in significant depth.

Beyond academics, however, my proposed project has a very personal basis. After a course in American history at school, I was left feeling outraged at the physical and cultural persecution of Native American peoples in the US. Always the idealist, I decided to join a volunteer program on the Wind River Shoshone reservation, in Wyoming. There I worked in a small rural community, helping with preparations for their annual ‘Sundance Ceremony’ and counselling local teenagers. The following autumn, during my gap year, I worked as a volunteer teacher on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico.

As a result of these experiences I gained an appreciation of the complex challenges faced by Native American youths today.

This summer I will attempt to explore these issues through my project work at the ‘Billy Mills Youth Center’ on the Rosebud reservation in South Dakota. The Center caters to disadvantaged Dakota Sioux youth from both the Rosebud reservation and the neighbouring Pine Ridge reservation. It provides an ‘after-school haven’ for children who have no other place to go, and professes a mission to help children develop the skills necessary for their futures. At the Center, I hope to conduct interviews with administrators, community members, parents, grandparents, and most importantly, young people, focussing specifically on stories of ‘youth opportunity’, especially in relation to the various challenges discussed above.

Ultimately, I would like to create a television documentary in which the stories of young people on the Rosebud reservation are told in their own voices.

Finally, I am honoured to have received this prize and cherish the opportunity to carry out a project of significance amongst a people whom I have long admired, and who have shown me tremendous warmth and generosity in the past.’
Varsity Polo Match 2003

History was made this year, when an all female Cambridge team took on an all male Oxford team in the Varsity Polo Match. Although traditionally a mixed sport, the number of women playing polo in this country has been rising rapidly—a trend which has been mirrored in the Cambridge University Polo Club. Having competed in the National Universities Arena Championships in February, the team trained hard during the Trinity Term in the run up to the big match.

Played at Guards Polo Club in Windsor Great Park, the Varsity Polo Match is one of the oldest Varsity Matches—the first match was held in 1879 in Oxford, and the series score stands at 52-49 to Cambridge. Unfortunately this year the Oxford team turned out to be the stronger team, and won 6-0, although the score line does not fairly represent the game, during which play was pretty evenly balanced between the two sides, and goals scored on break-away opportunities. The Cambridge team did not leave empty handed; captain Amber Clutton-Brock won Most Valuable Player of the match, and Best Playing Pony went to Ferrari, played by Rachel Bryant. The B team match, played earlier in the day, was won by Cambridge, while Oxford won the Old Blues match.

The May Ball

Walking through the beautifully draped entranceway and over the bridge on to the New Court Tropical Island, complete with a waterfall flowing off the chapel balcony, the scene was set for an evening of pure enjoyment.

The programme featured a tremendous spread of entertainment from local regulars the Stapleford Big Band through to international stars the Scratch Perverts and Radio 1 DJ Scott Mills. There was a huge range of sideshows and games to occupy guests throughout, from cork-shooters to giant Sumo Wrestling. Swingboats to Jenga. Among other things, fire jugglers warmed the frosty Ice Kingdom (the Master's Garden) whilst Old Court hosted the Enchanted Market and a fortune-teller.

The delight shown on the faces of both the workers and the guests showed that this was a Ball to be enjoyed by all; the exhaustion of the committee after the effort of creating the event only matched by their pride and joy at seeing it so well received.

Graduands Party

The sunshine and the heat were fitting and pleasant backdrops to the afternoon of 26th June: graduation day, the time-honoured signal of another passing year for Corpus. This year’s crop of leavers gathered with their families and friends in the charming surroundings of the Master’s Garden for some drinks, some food, and some poignant farewells as each graduand prepared for passage into the wider world. It was an excellent occasion for parents, siblings and family friends to gather, chat and enjoy a beautiful summer day in the College.

King’s Parade that day saw the procession of these happy few towards the Senate House for the ceremonial culmination of their stay at Cambridge, years that will hopefully provide a springboard for futures unique and individual but universally successful.
Blind Wine Tasting Society

Freya Cameron is first ever female captain of the Cambridge University Blind Wine Tasting Society.

Corpus students' achievements cover a wide range of areas ranging from academic to sporting success. Not least Freya Cameron's unusual (and many might say enviable) talent for blind tasting wines. Here Freya explains how her involvement with the University Wine Society led her to be asked to captain the Wine Society's Varsity Team, and ultimately to pursue a career in the wine trade;

'Most people enjoy a good glass of wine but not many take up the obscure practise of blind wine tasting. I am not exactly sure myself how I came to be hooked, but I suppose growing up in Brussels gave me a good start in the appreciation of food and wine. A subsequent gap year in Chile and Spain allowed for further development of my palate and a greater appreciation of all things Bacchanalian.

Upon my arrival in Cambridge, I was typically bombarded by societies with suggestions as to what to do outside my academic studies. I became a member of Corpus' Wine Society. Over the years, however, I decided to go a step further into the 'world of wine' and join the Cambridge University Blind Wine Tasting Society.

The first time you are faced with six glasses of red and white wine, you begin to wonder how it is at all possible to deduce grape variety, country of origin, region and sub-region, as well as the vintage. I decided early on, that in order to avoid embarrassment at the meetings, I should teach myself all I could. This soon became a passion, and I decided to take my Wine and Spirit Education Trust Examinations during the holidays. My palate was developing and becoming sensitive to the wines. This was reflected in my tasting sheets and I was asked to try for a place on the Varsity Team. In doing so, I became the first novice and the first Cambridge female team member. The team traditionally competes against Oxford each year in the grand 'Taste off' held in London, sponsored by Pol Roger Champagne. After the 2002 match, I was asked to become the Cambridge captain for the following year. With some trepidation I accepted and thus became the first ever female captain in the history of this competition, reputedly the longest running match of its kind in the world.

Unfortunately, we came a close second to the 'Dark Side' this year, but it was said to have been one of the closest run matches yet!

Having just finished my finals, I am now set for a career in the wine trade. Like other professions it has its own set of examinations, the first of which I have done alongside my academic studies. Now the going gets tougher! Becoming a Master of Wine is a lengthy (5+ years) process which requires academic study, practical experience and not a few examinations.

Dedication will also be called for, as there are hefty performance barriers to be met in order to proceed to the next stage. The study process is accompanied by practical experience, with the classic path being to work alongside producers in France as well as with merchants in London. The fun part of work is that you can be getting your hands dirty in the cellars by day, but have to be well turned out come the evening for some glamorous promotional event.

There are no big starting salaries in the wine trade and you need to develop a pretty solid network of contacts who can advise you on how best to go about gathering appropriate production and marketing experience. I have no illusions that the next few years will be hard work but it seems to me that, as careers go, spending my working life surrounded by wine has to be a pretty good option!'
Corpus: Within Living Memory – in time for Christmas!

We are delighted to announce the long awaited publication of this book, full of memories about life at Corpus over the past century. There was such an overwhelming response to our request for contributions that we felt it was necessary to extend the book to encompass a wider range of topics and years. We do apologize for the delay in publication but are certain that the final product will be well worth the wait.

Old Members and Fellows past and present have contributed in the form of written memories or pictures and photographs. The book takes the reader on a journey starting in 1921, through the war and difficult post war years, into modern times. All aspects of College life from dining to drama are mentioned. The book is due to be published in November, making it available to be purchased as the perfect Christmas present.

Thirty Years at Corpus Christi

Steve Symonds (left) with former Chief Clerk, Ken Simpkin.

On 17 June 2003 a garden party was held in the Bursar’s Garden to celebrate the College Senior Clerke, Steve Symonds’, thirty years of service to Corpus. Luckily it was a beautiful sunny afternoon. Champagne, strawberries and nibbles were provided for the enjoyment of the Master, Fellows and members of staff both past and present. The Domestic Bursar organized this successful event in recognition of Steve’s length of service and made a speech in which she offered him her thanks on behalf of the College.

Profile

Iwona Krasodomska-Jones

Iwona joined the College as the new Butler sub-librarian in September 2002. She comes from Gdansk, Poland (where the Solidarity movement was born) and is married with two children.

Iwona completed her degree in psychology at Gdansk University and then worked as a lecturer. She moved to Tokyo with her English husband-to-be where they married and then lived for two years. After this they came to the United Kingdom, living first in Edinburgh and then in Cambridge.

Once settled in Cambridge, Iwona completed a post-graduate course in Information Studies at North London University and trained as a professional librarian. She then worked at St John’s College Library part-time whilst teaching Polish at the Department of Modern and Medieval languages. When Polish was removed from the University’s teaching program Iwona became a full-time librarian, first at the Pathology Department and now at Corpus Christi.

Outside of work Iwona enjoys reading, and is a member of a Book Club. She also has great interest in painting, cooking and music and loves to travel when she has the opportunity.

The Development Office Team

Karen Aarestad, Development Director, is on maternity leave. During her absence the Development Office is being run by the team of Flora McCabe, Development Assistant, Liz Winter, Deputy Director and Lorna Forder-Steen, Alumni Relations Officer (pictured right).