

pelican

The magazine of Corpus Christi College Cambridge

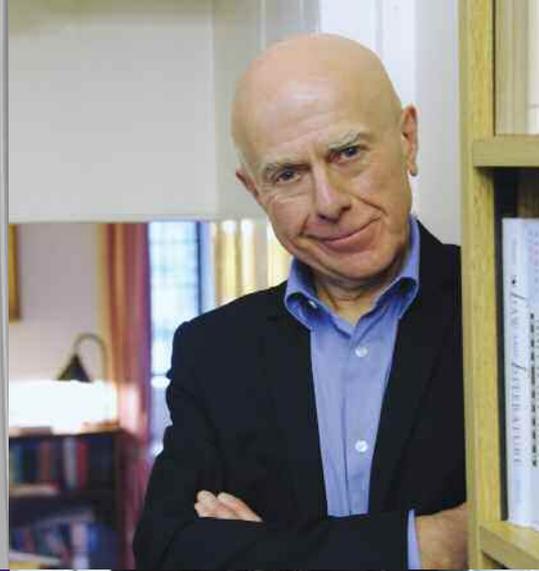


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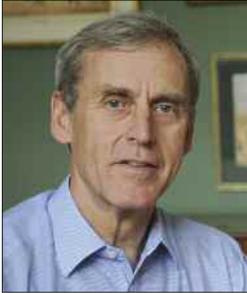
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Master's Introduction



Again it is my pleasure to introduce a new issue of the *Pelican*; and again I think you will agree with me that the Editor – Liz Winter – and her team in the Development Office have done a remarkable job. While on the subject of the Development Office, let me here welcome Rowena Bermingham and Robin Morton, who have approached their new jobs with great enthusiasm and efficiency. I expect several of you have had dealings with them already.

This issue features our new Honorary Fellow, Dame Jacqueline Wilson, whom we are delighted to have as our first female Honorary Fellow for many years. Articles about our academic Fellows include interviews with Dr Barak Kushner, whose recent book cleverly draws historical and political lessons from the study of Japanese noodles; and Dr Paulo Amaral, a Research Fellow in molecular biology. Barak and Paulo reflect the international nature of our Fellowship – Barak being American and specialising in Far Eastern studies, while Paulo is Brazilian with a doctorate from Australia.

This *Pelican* also brings to you our two current Fellow Commoners, holders of a post which we have recently revived in order to bring into the College people with eminent careers whose work is of interest to both students and Fellows. Tim Walker, CEO and Artistic Director of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and Rita Bellamy-James, an international lawyer, have already met a number of students and Fellows, and both hope to discuss their areas of expertise with any interested parties, particularly students who may be looking at a career in music or law. I am sure you will enjoy the interviews with these two inspiring people.

In addition, you will find articles about the summer visit to Ethiopia organised by the Dean of Chapel, James Buxton, and interviews with some of our current students about College life and their exploits outside of Corpus.

Sibella and I would like to join the College in wishing you the very best for the year ahead.

Stuart Laing



Corpus Through Fresh Eyes

by Rowena Bermingham

IT IS A TYPICALLY GRIM AUTUMNAL DAY IN CAMBRIDGE AS THREE CORPUS STUDENTS TROOP IN FROM THE COLD AND SIT AROUND THE TABLE. THEY LOOK SURPRISINGLY CHEERY CONSIDERING THE CLIMATE, ESPECIALLY SINCE ALL THREE HAIL FROM COUNTRIES KNOWN FOR MUCH WARMER TEMPERATURES. FEELING STEREOTYPICALLY BRITISH, I OFFER THEM SOME TEA, THRUST SOME PASTRIES IN THEIR DIRECTION AND TURN THE CONVERSATION TO THE WEATHER.

'It's so grey!' Kate Poskitt, a fresher studying Politics, Psychology and Sociology (PPS) says. 'If it's this grey in New Zealand it always burns off by 9am!'

'The weather is incredibly unpredictable,' agrees Suhail Idrees, a 1st year Engineer, 'It's very different from Lahore.'

'I know everyone complains about the weather but if you're ginger, like I am, it's great. All your stories don't end with *and then I got sunburnt*,' Mary-Irene Lang, a medic from California, says.

'Yeah, in New Zealand there's a hole in the ozone and everyone gets horrifically sunburnt,' says Kate. 'I don't ever get sunburnt here. Going outside at home, even just to play football, you have to put loads of sunblock on every bit of skin that's showing.'

Mary-Irene has just finished a physics degree in the US before coming to Cambridge to study medicine. I ask her if, apart from the weather, things are different in American universities.

'The American system doesn't require specialism so early, so I took a lot of other classes in my time at MIT. I took classes in creative writing as well as physics.'

I ask Suhail if he was ever tempted to go to America for university and mix in some humanities subjects with his engineering degree.

'I was, because you generally get a lot more choice and freedom in what you get to study in a US university. I always ended up taking subjects from science and humanities at school just so I could get a broad range. It's very hard to choose what you want to be at such a young age. But I guess as long as you know what you want to be, it's not that much different here.'

And how did he know he wanted to study engineering?

'Well,' Suhail says, smiling. 'When I started A-levels I was all set for computer science. When I looked at university websites I saw that the requirement was for further maths. I took further maths but that changed my mind and I moved towards engineering.'

And why Cambridge? 'The education system in Pakistan is based on the A-level system, like it is here, so that's where I first got introduced to Cambridge. I researched the University a bit – it seemed really interesting and it's amongst the top universities in the world, so that was pretty much it! I really like the course structure for engineering – it starts off as a general course and narrows down later on. That really appealed to me.'

I ask Mary-Irene whether she prefers the American or British system and whether she had any idea what she wanted when she started university.

'I'm from near Silicon Valley so everyone I know is in computers. That was the only thing that I knew I did not want to do! I've had the advantage of having gone through the system where I didn't have to choose. But now I'm here and I know what I want to do, that's good too. I think there are advantages and disadvantages to both,' she says diplomatically. 'I liked doing a little bit of everything. But in the States it does take a lot longer to achieve any professional goals: medicine is a postgraduate programme there.'

So how did she decide to switch from physics to medicine? 'It is a bit of a change! I think it has to do with the difference between studying physics and actually being a physicist. I figured out most of the



Mary-Irene Lang (above) and Kate Poskitt (below)

way through my degree that, although I'd enjoyed studying physics, I didn't actually want to be a physicist. So I regrouped and decided what I actually wanted to do. I like people and I like science so medicine is somewhere in the middle of that.'

I'm really glad I'm at Corpus. I feel really lucky that I ended up here.

And how did her parents take the news? 'My parents were slightly confused, but they took it in their stride. I didn't tell anyone I was applying because medicine takes so few international students and I was so sure it wasn't going to happen. So when I got in, they were completely shocked because I basically told them I was moving to England for six years and possibly indefinitely! I plan to be a doctor here eventually. I just really like it here.'

I ask Kate about what the New Zealand university system is like, comparatively.

'I had about six months at university in New Zealand because our academic terms are different. Then I found out I was coming here so had to leave,' she says. 'It's completely different from university in New Zealand. The workload is a lot more intense, but that's what you'd expect from Cambridge. I was studying law there, but PPS here, so the course content is obviously very different as well. In terms of class size there's just over 100 students in my year studying PPS, whilst in New Zealand there were 1,100 in first-year law. It's lots smaller in tutorials and supervisions too. My supervisions are all two, maximum three, people whilst before they were twelve to fifteen.'

And does she like the size of the classes and the workload? 'It's a lot more intense here and you're learning a lot more, which I really enjoy. It's a challenge but it's also really interesting.'

Kate is this year's Girdler scholar and I ask her to explain the scholarship to the others. 'The Girdler scholarship is funded by the Girdlers' Company, which is a guild in London. I'm the 48th Girdler scholar, but it's been running for more than 48 years because initially they had one every three years. Basically they fund a New Zealand student to attend Corpus. I heard about it from another Girdler scholar as she's a family friend. I had my interview just as I started university in New Zealand. It was a fantastic experience to have a full-on interview.'

So does she play any sport? 'I play College football and netball and Blues football. It's a really good way to meet people outside of College and we have a really great team.

Our Blues coach is actually from Corpus. We had our last fixture last week where we drew, but that team got second in the league last year. Varsity is in March so I'm looking forward to that – hopefully we should win!'

Have either of the others got involved in sport here? 'I've actually taken up ultimate frisbee,' Mary-Irene says, laughing, 'perhaps somewhat more intensively than I intended to. I train early mornings Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. I'm really terrible but it doesn't seem to matter. Everyone who does it is really nice. I'd not played it before. People described it as 'netball with a frisbee' but I had no clue what 'netball' was either! Most of the art is in getting nice passes to each other and it going where you want. I managed to bruise my thumb because I didn't get a frisbee quite where I had intended. There's a lot of running in it as well – I'm running about 80% of the time.'

'I decided before coming here to completely change my sport choices, so I gave up playing football,' Suhail says. 'Now I've started playing squash and rowing. It's fun but I only ever go on Sundays so I don't have to get up early!'

I ask Suhail about his scholarship to Cambridge. 'It's called the 800th Anniversary Scholarship; it was introduced a few years ago,' he says. 'They generally pick one or two students from Pakistan every year or every other year to come here. I'm the first one to come to Corpus on the scholarship.'

Suhail seems pleased to have found his way to Corpus. 'The buildings are very beautiful and people are friendly,' he says.

'I'm really glad I'm at Corpus,' Mary-Irene says. 'I like that it's small and central. I also like that it's old and beautiful. We think that something's old in the States if it's from the 1800s. I feel really lucky that I ended up here. I wouldn't change it.'

'Having around 80 in your year means you essentially know everyone and even just sitting down in Hall you'll always have someone to eat with,' Kate adds. 'Because you have such a small year you can get to know people from other years. I've been playing sport with people from other years and even postgrads, so it's quite cool being able to mingle like that. In other universities, and even other colleges, you don't have that: you really only know your year.'

'In my year in medicine there are just six of us,' Mary-Irene says. 'In some colleges they don't even know all the medics in their year. Here we've been almost inseparable. I can't imagine not being able to study with them; we're a real community.'

And how has she found the work here? 'I was a little bit apprehensive about things, especially dissection. But actually it's been really good, though pretty hard and time-consuming. It turns out there are quite a lot of muscles, ligaments, nerves, veins and arteries in the human body! It's really such a privilege that someone has allowed you to use





Suhail Idrees

their body as a learning tool. You spend a lot of time looking at diagrams and schematics but nothing is like seeing what people are like at a visceral level. Humans are amazing. It boggles my mind that something so complicated works so much of the time. It's really remarkable.'

Feeling a bit queasy from overindulgence in pastries and the talk of dissection, I ask whether England is what they thought it would be. They turn to look out of the window at the darkening sky.

'New Zealand's actually quite similar to Britain. But the people here are slightly more reserved and really polite. People don't punch you in the arm when they tell a joke, so I'm getting used to that,' Kate replies.

'It's been really lovely. I was slightly worried I'd get some flack for being American but everyone's been great,' says Mary-Irene. 'They sometimes laugh at the way I pronounce words. I have to explain what I'm talking about when I say 'vase' because I pronounce it so differently. There's also phrases I've had to get used to from here – like when people say 'are you alright?' as a way of saying 'hello.' To me that means 'Oh my God! Are you alright? Is everything ok?' and at first I was scared that there was something wrong with me because people kept asking if I was alright!' 'I know!' laughs Kate. 'People kept asking me that and I kept saying 'Yes, I'm fine? Honestly, I'm fine!' – I thought they were worried about me!'

People here don't punch you in the arm when they tell a joke!

I ask whether they're planning to spend the Christmas vacation here, but they all plan to return home for the holidays. Kate wonders whether spending them here would be nice: 'I want a white Christmas. At home it's the summer holidays and so everyone's at the beach for Christmas.'

I point out to Kate that it's more likely to rain than snow here over Christmas. I advise her to bring her wellies for next term. 'Do people actually wear gumboots here? Really? Will I need to?' She looks slightly afraid.

I want to tell them about the floods in Cambridge. Or maybe warn them what happens when lots of snow melts. But I decide it is best to let them return to the library, the sportsfield or the river without knowing what April in England will bring. They will find that out for themselves soon enough.

Dame Jacqueline Wilson

by Dr Robert McCrum (m1972)



OLD MEMBERS IN THEIR EARLY TWENTIES OR THOSE WITH CHILDREN AGED 7-15 WILL DOUBTLESS ALREADY BE AWARE OF THE PHENOMENON THAT IS DAME JACQUELINE WILSON, OUR NEWEST HONORARY FELLOW. HER WORK IS RENOWNED FOR EXPLORING CHALLENGING THEMES IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE. WE ASKED SOME OF OUR CURRENT UNDERGRADUATES TO COMMENT ABOUT HOW HER WORK SHAPED THEIR YOUNGER SELVES AND IN A CANDID INTERVIEW WITH THIS AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR, ROBERT MCCRUM DISCOVERS HOW A YOUNG GIRL FROM A COUNCIL ESTATE IN KINGSTON BECAME ONE OF THE MOST PROLIFIC AND WELL-LOVED CHILDREN'S AUTHORS OF THE GENERATION.

Meet Dame Jacqueline Wilson, former Children's Laureate, and now one of the newest Honorary Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. At sixty-six, she has sold more than 30 million books in the UK alone. Her fans are legion. Few children born after 1989 will be ignorant of her work; for many, it defines their childhood. During the Big Read, a 2003 poll conducted by the BBC, four of her books were ranked among the 100 most popular books in the UK. In 2004, she replaced Catherine Cookson as the most borrowed author in Britain's libraries. Until recently, she used to swim fifty lengths before breakfast, she has a collection of more than 20,000 books, a private passion for dolls – and she regrets that she never attended a *Queen* concert.

I'm catching up with her in London between a hospital appointment ('I'm a bit of a physical wreck', she says, 'with various bits of me failing all over the place') and another school visit to promote her latest (approximately her 100th) book, *Emerald Star*. I know from Google that Dame Jacqueline (she was made a Dame in 2008) was born in Bath, and grew up in Kingston, but I'm curious to explore her attitude to Cambridge, and more especially to Corpus, where her daughter, Professor Emma Wilson, is a Fellow in Modern Languages. So, to begin at the beginning...

Dame Jacqueline's childhood, she says, was spent in 'a very ordinary home on a council estate.' That expression triggers a small detonation of laughter. Dressed in black, looking like a contented elf, with a lot of flamboyant silver jewelry, her trademark, she seems to relish the ironies of her situation. 'My pushy Mum always said, 'You must say it's a better class of council estate''. She considers the hilarity of this crucial nuance. 'Well, it wasn't ultra-scary, but it was still a council estate.'

So what about Cambridge? Was the University on her childhood radar?

'I had *heard* of Oxbridge,' she replies, carefully, 'but with my sort of background you never thought of going to university. When I was growing up in the sixties, you thought you were quite posh if you stayed on at school till you were sixteen, and did your O Levels, rather than leave at fifteen and go to work in Woolworths.'

She was good at English, but 'hopeless at maths', she remembers. 'The horrible solution for girls like me in the sixties, especially if you had quite a domineering mother, was to train as a secretary. The only other career options were nursing and teaching.' Little Miss Aitken (as she was) didn't fancy those choices. 'What I always wanted,' she declares, 'was to be a writer.'

Who knows where this ambition came from, but – looking back – she had an almost ideal upbringing for an author: enough, but not too much, security; imaginative solitude; an earnest, slightly tense, relationship with her mother and father. The only child of 'totally unsuited' parents, who 'had me too soon' after the war was over, Dame Jacqueline was always conscious of being the odd-one-out. She admits to being the awkward reminder of a wartime romance. 'In another generation,' she tells me, 'they would have had a little fling, and moved on.' Hers, she says, with refreshing candour, was 'a dysfunctional family.'

Harry Aitken, her father, a civil servant in the Treasury, now dead, was 'a strange man, who had terrible moods and could get very angry. He was not a very good father, but he became a fantastic grandfather to Emma. He used to go to



I knew my way around many different ways of life. I think that's a huge advantage for a writer.



'Jacqueline Wilson was my favourite author growing up, and hugely responsible for my passion for literature. Not only are her books compelling and accessible, they also challenge young readers to take on

difficult and troubling ideas. Reading the final pages of *Vicky Angel* was the first time I was ever moved to tears by a book. I'm certain future generations of children will continue to enjoy and learn from Wilson's work, and I'm very proud that she is now a part of our College.'

Anna Skelton, 3rd year, English



'When I received an email inviting me to comment on Jacqueline Wilson's appointment, I thought I'd visit her website and remind myself of the titles which were hovering in the back of my

mind. Five minutes later, having trawled through some forty of her books, I find myself feeling strangely emotional and incredibly nostalgic for a portion of my life which seems to have been coloured by Jacqueline Wilson's wonderfully entertaining, tragic and eye-opening stories. They were books which showed me – as a privileged girl from North London – how some other children live. Just seeing their brightly illustrated covers and their lively titles has transported me back to my childhood bookshelf in the most unexpected way.'

Jess Franklin, 1st year, art history

the Westminster library and would choose books for me to read that were absolutely spot on.' As a child, then, she read Rumer Godden, Noel Streatfeild, Catherine Storr, a lot of Puffins, and children's classics like *Black Beauty*, *Little Women*, and *What Katy Did Next*.

I find this rather interesting, and interrupt the flow of reminiscence to suggest that what's notable about her work as an established children's writer is how, unlike J K Rowling, a writer obviously influenced by Tolkien and C S Lewis, her literary antecedents are so well-disguised. You might say, as she does herself, that her work is characteristically 'gritty', but it's also as if it has come out of nowhere.

'I am very lucky with my background,' she replies, cheerfully hunting down this line of inquiry. 'My mother used to call us lower middle class.' She breaks off to describe a 'highly eccentric, still domineering', eighty-nine year old whom she 'loves dearly, and who drives me nuts'.

Back to the English class struggle. 'I think,' she goes on, making a fine distinction typical of her generation that's more or less incomprehensible today, 'we were respectable working-class, even though my father was a civil servant. I was always wary with the other kids I grew up with. They used to call me 'snobby'. Anyway, I went to a comprehensive, one of the first, where I mixed with all sorts. Today, most people would say I was middle-class, and I certainly have middle-class taste.'

What, I wonder, is Dame Jacqueline Wilson saying about herself here?

'Well,' she answers, 'I suppose I really knew my way around many different ways of life, as I grew up. I think that's a huge advantage for a writer.' She believes this means that, in social terms, she can be almost classless. As she sits before me in her witchy black outfit with those distinctive silver rings sparkling on her fingers, it's no stretch to imagine Dame Jacqueline making herself suddenly invisible, like an elf stepping into another dimension.



She stresses her adaptability. 'I didn't grow up with one typical way of thinking. Yes, mum kept me immaculate, and fussed about the way we were, but I always felt able to see every side of any situation.' She focuses intently on this quality: 'I like to get inside people's heads and know what they're like.'

The instinct to put her social intelligence to work in stories came early. Young Jacky Aitken, as her friends knew her, wrote her first novel at the age of nine. 'Just eighteen pages [entitled *Meet the Maggots*], really, but I still have it.' She launches another self-deprecating laugh. 'I'm well aware that it's not the work of an infant phenomenon. I kept writing throughout my teens.'

Here I can picture young Jacky, an only child with the unhappily married parents, taking refuge in a private world of make-believe. When you are sitting with Dame Jacqueline, her presence is so vivid, easy and unaffected, that it is not difficult to make the connection to her juvenile self.

All writers need luck, plus the ability to recognise their good fortune. This moment first came for the future Children's Laureate when she was just seventeen. 'I saw an advert in the *Evening Standard*,' she recalls. 'It was D C Thomson, the Scottish magazine company, wanting material for a new teenage magazine they were launching.' She smiles. 'So I applied. No -- this was not my pushy mum -- this was me!' D C Thomson accepted the very first thing she wrote for them, a piece about the horrors of teenage discos, and she never looked back. 'I just kept on writing. I was only seventeen, but very earnest, shy and self-conscious. They [Thomson's] thought I was this cool London teenager who knew about the swinging sixties, and all the clubs, when really I was living on a Kingston council estate.'

That lucky break turned to pure gold when D C Thomson offered her a job in Dundee. 'It came,' she says, 'at just the right moment. Off I went to Scotland for two years, where I had the most brilliant training. I got this opportunity to write anything. I did the readers' letters, and I also did a horoscope.' Thomson's new teenage magazine was named after their new recruit: *Jackie*. She laughs this off. '*Jackie* was just a trendy name, thanks to Jacqueline Kennedy, and they wanted something a bit different from other girls' magazines like *Annabelle* and *Bunty*. For me, it became a crash course in writing. I learned to write to deadlines, and I learned not to be precious about my prose.'



'Jacqueline Wilson's books were my Mum's and my common passion, her being a social work professional and me just intrigued by peering into other people's lives, fictional or real – and Jacqueline Wilson certainly made fictional feel real. *The Illustrated Mum* and *Dustbin Baby* featured in social work lecture rooms and consequently on my book shelf (or maybe it was the other way round...). If someone was to suggest renaming Corpus as 'The College of Corpus Christi and the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Supreme Jacqueline Wilson,' I would have no objections whatsoever.'

Anna Hollingsworth, 2nd year, linguistics



'As a kid I devoured all of Jacqueline Wilson's books, starting with *Double Act* when I was about 7; I read most of them when I was too young to understand the serious issues I was reading about. Her characters taught me so much about what it means to grow up, to be a teenage girl and an outsider, and particularly the importance of pursuing your interests. That's probably why I'm studying English right now.'

Kathryn Hunter, 3rd year, English



She says her parents had been 'taken aback' when she told them she was heading off north, but they rallied behind their daughter's determination. Jacky had no doubts. 'I thought: This is your chance.' Her mother inadvertently did her a favour by insisting that she live in a hostel, an experience which gauche Miss Aitken made the most of. She says: 'It was a way of learning that you can't be shy. I'd never been in a pub in my life. This was the first time I ever saw women having a fist fight. It was like stepping into a Victorian novel. Yes, it was extremely good for me to leave home and learn to stand on my own two feet.' She relishes the memory, and then defaults to her writer's identity. 'I suppose I was a bit of an outsider in Dundee.' A reflective moment of pride: 'I've earned my living as a writer since I was seventeen. There have been some lean times, but I've always got by.'

Jacqueline Wilson's elfin presence has its quirky side, too. Looking back on her Dundee years, she confides, 'I was dotty enough to get married when I was nineteen.' She sighs. 'I suppose I fell in love.' She starts another narrative. 'But I was lonely and I married a young printer [Millar Wilson] who was desperate to leave Dundee.' The young couple came south, but her new husband could find no work in the heavily unionised print industry and joined the police. 'I never imagined I'd become a policeman's wife,' she says drily. On top of that – not a great career move for a would-be writer – she became a mother.

'I had Emma when I was twenty-one,' she says, but has no regrets about the pram in the hall. 'I adored having Emma.'



The Pelican Michaelmas Term

Dame Jacqueline and Emma Wilson



Mother and daughter have remained very close. Emma Wilson, Professor of French Literature and the Visual Arts, says of the woman she calls 'Jac' that 'my mum and I speak on the phone at least once a day (if not more) and we talk about everything really. A lot of the conversation is about what she's writing and about books one or other of us is reading and films or things in the papers. Jac is very imaginative and funny and open-minded. I like being in touch like that when she's working and traveling so much, and I'm caught up with teaching and research.'

This seems to be a continuation of a childhood dialogue. 'My ex-husband did not read, so I've read to Emma since she was a baby,' Wilson remembers. Nursing a baby was only a temporary brake on her literary career. When Emma was two, Jacqueline took a week's holiday to write a novel, on the Georges Simenon model, a crime novel. At first, published by Macmillan, and still married to a policeman, she seemed set on a career as the moderately successful author of police procedurals. 'Gloomy, dark crime novels,' she remembers. 'But I knew I always wanted to write for children.'

Jacqueline Wilson had a long apprenticeship. For many years, during the 1980s, she wrote two books a year, for a variety of publishers, plus 'a lot of magazine stuff to pay the bills and keep us going.' Her breakthrough came in 1991 with the publication of *The Story of Tracy Beaker*. 'I changed publisher,' she says, 'I had a slight change of style, and I began to work with [the illustrator] Nick Sharratt.'

The book was absolutely of the moment, and it just took off. It was a case of the right book at the right time. I was very lucky.' Several Tracy Beaker books have followed, but not to commercial excess. Wilson's latest book, *Emerald Star*, also illustrated by Sharratt, explores the life and adventures of another child heroine, Hetty Feather who, on the face of it, bears more than a passing resemblance to Dame Jacqueline herself. ('She is bold. She is brave. She is bright. But which path will she choose?')

Why does she write for children? It's a strange genre, one that Martin Amis once said he would need a lobotomy to undertake. Jacqueline Wilson doesn't have a ready answer to this question. She's never written for Emma who, she confides, does not like conflict in narrative. 'I suppose my sort of book is for me as a young girl. I didn't like the bland stories I read growing up in the fifties. I wanted to get away from fairytale endings.'

Today, Wilson is renowned for fiction that addresses modern life: adoption, divorce, family breakdown and mental illness. Her most notable works have titles like *Dustbin Baby* and *Girls in Tears*. Part of her, she says, hinting at the struggles of her younger self, wants to take young readers by the hand to explain that troubled homes and dysfunctional families can have their own meaning and satisfactions. 'I automatically take the side of the child who is the outsider. As a writer you must find the one kind of thing that expresses yourself. This is mine.' Childhood, she believes, can still find fulfillment



through conflict, awkwardness, and dislocation. By implication, hers is the very British message that happiness is rather more elusive (and complicated) than the fairytales would have us believe.

For Jacqueline Wilson, something adjacent to happiness comes from her work. She never stops, and also conscientiously performs her role as a public figure for kids. 'I write every day,' she says. 'I'm quite good at writing wherever I am. I use a pen and a notebook, so I can work anywhere. So long as I get that little bit of writing done each day I feel free. It's a routine,' she adds, 'I'd feel uncomfortable if I didn't write.'

Refreshingly, the IT revolution seems to have passed her by. She says she is 'a klutz' with computers, has no interest in the Kindle, though her publisher gave her one, and much prefers to collect new books, in hardback and paperback. Her house in Kingston has books overflowing into every room.

'Books are my passion,' she says. 'I can't stop buying, but I never buy them on Amazon.' Now that she has money in the bank, she likes to treat herself to antiquarian editions, and is delighted at the prospect of rambling round David's second-hand bookshop off King's Parade.

I suggest that she might enjoy the treasures of the Parker Library, and speculate about the possibility of her writing something in Corpus. At this, she comes over all uncertain. 'I'm not very good in libraries,' she says doubtfully. 'I think I might feel a bit overwhelmed.' There's a pause in the conversation while she digests the prospect of writing in College. 'I don't know. I might. I'm charmed to have an Honorary Fellowship. I used to feel that I wasn't really educated. Literature was what set me free. And now, here I am.' Dame Jacqueline Wilson FRSL flashes one more magic smile, as if she can't quite believe her luck. 'It's delightful,' she concludes.





I couldn't be happier with Jacqueline Wilson's appointment. She's a wonderful writer; imaginative, funny and deeply compassionate and her books meant so much to me growing up. Her books tell the most vulnerable of us that it doesn't matter if you're coping with divorce (*Suitcase Kid*) abandonment (*Dustbin Baby*) or instability (*The Bed and Breakfast Star*) – your own story has as much chance of ending happily as any fairytale princess.

Aileen Devlin, 3rd year, law

I think what I feel most strongly about Jacqueline Wilson's books is that to relegate them to the category of literature solely 'for girls' does them a huge disservice. Indeed, despite my continued interest in femininity in literature, my strongest memories of Jacqueline Wilson's stories have little to do with the gender of their protagonists. What struck me most was her unmistakable and characteristic honesty. Here is an author, no reader of her books can fail to realise, who is not going to lie to you about the realities of life. Wilson's portrayal of the real world is bleak and gritty, though not without hope, and uncompromisingly difficult to navigate without empathising with the characters she so brilliantly brings to life.

All these qualities are exemplified perfectly by my favourite Jacqueline Wilson book, *Vicky Angel*. This dark children's novel tells the tale of a young girl, Jade, whose best friend, Vicky, has died in a traumatic car accident, yet whose spectre lingers on. Laden with enough disturbing psychic content to warrant a full Freudian analysis, this dark fairytale set decidedly in a post-modern, urban world is at once funny, scary and moving. It is a testament to the power of the work that (more than a decade on) images and motifs from the text remain seared on my memory: a frightening dream of animals emerging from Jade's mouth; a supernatural ascent to Heaven at the novel's climax; Jade's near-suicide at the grim behest of Vicky's ghost.

Writing children's literature that deals uncompromisingly with themes of grief, guilt and loneliness is no easy task, and Jacqueline Wilson always walks the line between good taste and adamant frankness with unparalleled skill. In my view she is one of the greatest children's authors alive, and fully deserves the recognition she is now receiving from Corpus.

William Friend, 2nd year, modern and medieval languages

Dr Nigel Simmonds

Fellow and Reader in Jurisprudence

AFTER 27 YEARS IN THE POST, I CEASED TO BE DIRECTOR OF STUDIES IN LAW AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER 2012. I AM HANDING OVER THE REINS TO DR JONATHAN MORGAN WHO I'M SURE WILL BRING NEW ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM TO THE JOB. I WILL, OF COURSE, CONTINUE TO TEACH: BOTH SUPERVISIONS AT COLLEGE LEVEL AND LECTURES AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL, AND I WILL ALSO CONTINUE AS DEAN OF COLLEGE.

Over the years I have taught quite a lot of legal subjects as the need has arisen. However, in the last few years I have narrowed my teaching down to focus upon my own specialism, which is the philosophy of law. Law is an excellent, knockabout undergraduate subject, and it is fun to teach. The students learn to draw refined distinctions, and to approach complex problems in an orderly way. I think that they acquire very good intellectual habits, which will serve them well even if they choose not to be lawyers. But I would not want to spend the bulk of my time thinking about the technical details of contract law, or any other doctrinal topic. By disposition, although not by training, I am a philosopher rather than a lawyer.

My various books and essays are all contributions to the philosophy of law (which English-speaking lawyers usually call 'jurisprudence') and I cannot really imagine writing on anything else. When I applied for university I was actually planning on applying to read philosophy, but my brother (who was then just starting his career at the Bar) persuaded me to read law instead. If you are the sort of person who feels attracted by philosophy, however, you are going to wind up doing philosophy whatever else you choose to study. Other subjects all seem to stop short in their questioning, resting content with answers that the person of philosophical bent will find inherently unsatisfactory. Certainly, this was my experience with law. I enjoyed playing around with the cases and statutes in the way that my teachers wanted me to, and I have always particularly enjoyed the sense of trying to bring a very traditional body of thought (the common law) to bear upon up-to-the-minute problems that have yet to be resolved. But, right from the start, I found myself puzzling over questions that did not interest my teachers or my fellow students, and wondering how legal thought could proceed without trying to answer these questions first. Before too long I discovered that these questions constituted aspects of an ancient and well-established subject called jurisprudence, or philosophy of law. My fate was sealed from then on. Certainly I would not be an academic were it not for jurisprudence.

Although I am immensely grateful to those in Cambridge who introduced me to the subject (Mickey Dias at Magdalene, and Bryan King at Pembroke), Cambridge was not really the best

place to be studying jurisprudence in those days. I came up (to Sidney Sussex) in 1970, at a time when jurisprudence was starting to arouse a great deal of interest over in Oxford. From this Oxonian root, the subject was to undergo an immense renaissance. In one respect, however, I have benefited greatly from my Cambridge roots. Had I been studying jurisprudence in Oxford, I would almost certainly have been swept along by what was to become a rather suffocating orthodoxy in jurisprudence (it goes by the name of 'legal positivism'). Being geographically slightly removed from the main theatre of events has helped me to keep my distance from such fads. Now a lot of people in jurisprudence are starting to feel that the insights supposedly provided by legal positivism do not really amount to very much in the end: they are looking elsewhere for insight. Having always had an independent stance, I feel that I am now well placed to offer a viable alternative.

The great upsurge of interest in jurisprudence, initiated in Oxford in the 1960s and 70s, shows no sign of abating (even if Oxford's favoured 'legal positivism' is showing signs of exhaustion and collapse). It is significant that a high proportion of the most influential political philosophers at present have their roots in jurisprudence, and those thinkers without such a background have started to gravitate towards jurisprudential inquiry in their more mature work (the German theorist Jürgen Habermas is a good example of this). I think that the causes of this development lie deep within liberal democratic thought.

Liberalism tends to render law central but also problematic. This is because liberalism envisages a society of considerable moral diversity, held together by the institutions of the rule of law. But how, we might ask, can such a pluralistic community sustain a shared fabric of law? Will not any framework of laws privilege some conceptions of value at the expense of others? And will not the laws be construed in different ways according to the religious or philosophical or moral outlook of the interpreter?

Liberal democracies erode traditional cultures of deference to authority, because the exercise of power must always be justified by an appeal to principles that citizens might reasonably endorse. As a result of this change in the political



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By disposition, although not by training, I am a philosopher rather than a lawyer.

culture within which they operate, judges are increasingly expected to be able fully to explain the principles that underpin their decisions, and to clarify the ideas and values that they invoke. The more intelligent members of the judiciary, here and in other countries, are starting to see that this necessitates a serious engagement with fundamental jurisprudential questions of a kind that they might once have hoped to avoid.

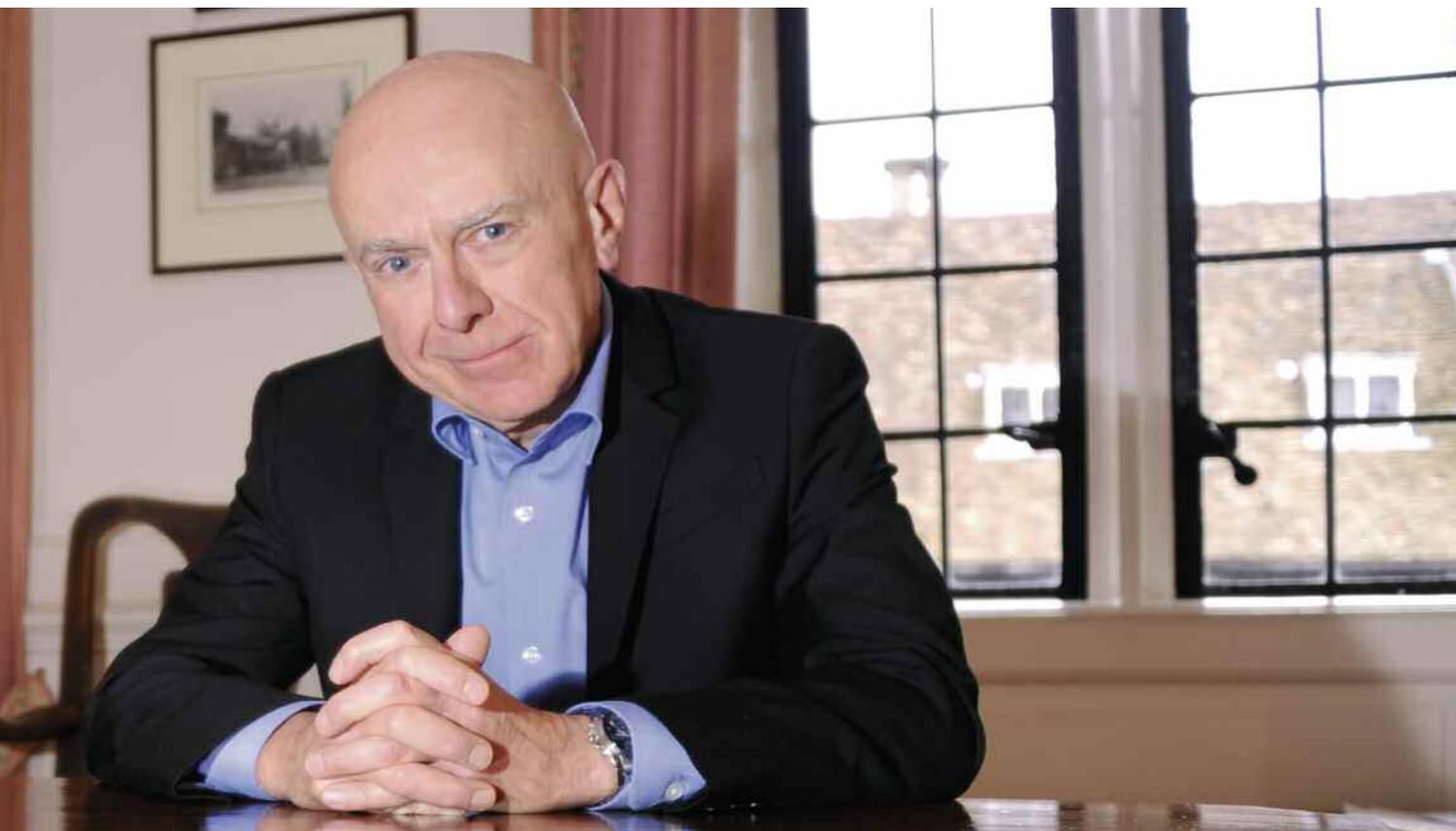
For example, judges in all liberal democracies have a duty to maintain the rule of law, but the concept of 'the rule of law' is hotly contested. It cannot simply be equated with the situation where the laws are followed and applied, regardless of their content, for the laws may themselves fall short of the requirements of the rule of law in various ways (eg they may confer too much discretion upon officials, or exempt officials from some of the ordinary requirements of the law). It therefore becomes necessary for judges to reflect very hard about what exactly the value that we call 'the rule of law' amounts to, and why it is of value.

It is on this issue that my more recent work concentrates. In 2007 I published a book (*Law as a Moral Idea*) that tries to defend a fairly austere account of what the rule of law requires and why it is of value. That is to say, I want to emphasise the difference between the notion of the rule of law and other legal values such as justice and human rights: a judge's duty to uphold the rule of law is, on my account, quite different from the duty to decide cases justly or to respect human rights. At the same time, the rule of law is not unrelated to these other ideas, but stands in a rather complex relationship with them. In relation to justice, for example, I argue that, while in many situations the rule of law is distinct from justice (and can therefore compete with justice), the two values are ultimately

linked in so far as each of them is fully attainable only in conjunction with the other.

The book has attracted quite a bit of interest, I am glad to say. I think this is for a number of reasons. Partly it is because, as I said earlier, people are starting to feel that the dominant legal positivist agenda has led nowhere, and they are searching for an alternative. But it is also because I try to resolve a key problem with the notion of the rule of law. Many people addressing the question of the nature of the rule of law find it hard to see any intrinsic moral value in the rule of law when it is treated as something distinct from justice, or respect for human rights. They conflate the rule of law with other values, such as justice and human rights, in order to preserve our sense that the rule of law is intrinsically valuable. But that is a very dangerous route to follow, for a number of reasons. It can, for example, have the effect of giving judges too free a hand in the implementation of their own ideas of justice even in the face of a legislature that takes a different view. Furthermore, it offers aid and comfort to governments all over the world that are tempted to violate the rule of law in their struggles with terrorism. If we are the good guys and they are the bad guys, does it really matter if we violate our own rules in our attempts to suppress evil and injustice? I want to say 'Yes, it does,' and to explain why that is so.

I now want to press the argument beyond where I left it in *Law as a Moral Idea*. In part I want to respond to some political philosophers who have portrayed liberal democracy as a historically contingent assemblage of ideas that do not exhibit any real coherence. I want to argue that this picture of liberal democracy seems convincing only when we have ignored or misunderstood what, in my view, is the central value for liberal democracy: the rule of law. When, in the 1920s and 30s, the



German theorist Carl Schmitt attacked liberalism (his attacks playing a significant part in the constitutional crisis that led to the breakdown of the Weimar republic) he focused his attack upon the notion of the rule of law. In one respect he was right to do so: the rule of law is indeed the central value for liberal democracy, by reference to which all other liberal values (freedom, democracy, and human rights) must be understood. Yet, in spite of its centrality, the rule of law remains very poorly understood, by lawyers and political theorists alike.

I also want to think my way through some issues of public law concerning the state's emergency powers and whether these are fully subsumed under the law, or whether the state must in its very nature have residual authority to override the rule of law. These are tough questions and I need the time and space to think about them carefully. Not being Director of Studies any more may help me to do that!

Outside of work, I have always been a very keen walker and mountaineer. Even when I was a small boy I loved walking, especially solitary walking. For many years I drove my family nuts because, when asked what I wanted to do when I left school, I would always insist that I wanted to be either a shepherd (I thought of it as involving roaming around the hills on my own) or a lighthouse keeper (since it involves living in a wild place and having very direct contact with wind and weather). Very unrealistic, of course: but I was deadly serious, and my mother and older brothers (my father having died) became genuinely concerned.

Fortunately I found a better focus for my great love of wildness and solitude. I grew up in west Cumberland on the edge of the Lake District, where there were lots of very good

climbers (and shepherds!) so, when I was 15, I was able to take up rock-climbing, with which I simply fell in love. The Lake District is very rich in really high quality rock-climbing, and provides a superb and beautiful landscape that burns a place in your heart and your memory. As I have grown older my joints have got too stiff for serious rock-climbing, which demands a high degree of flexibility, but I still think about rock-climbing a great deal and even occasionally dream about it (sad isn't it?).

Climbing is not just a physical activity, but has a very pronounced inward and spiritual dimension to it. The local men who taught me climbing on the Lakeland crags, and who took me on my first trips to the Alps, were devoted and expert mountaineers. They made a very deep impression on me, with their resourcefulness and their steadiness in the face of adversity. I owe them a lot, not just for introducing me to mountaineering, but for revealing to me that it is the life of the mind and the spirit that matters, and not material success or popular applause. I am still in touch with some of them, and that continuity in my life helps to keep me sane (I think!).

Now I stick to hillwalking. My partner June and I completed the Scottish Munros in 2006, doing them mainly in winter and spring conditions when they are at their best (Highland summers being wet and midge-ridden, while snow transforms the mountains into a truly magical place). We are now picking off Corbetts and repeating the better Munros. We both love mountains, and Scotland is a staggeringly wild and beautiful country. I was brought up an atheist, and consequently have no conventional religion; but one cannot really love the hills without finding a basically religious attitude towards the world completely natural, indeed unavoidable.

Dr Barak Kushner

Fellow and Senior Lecturer in Japanese History

BORN AND RAISED IN NEW JERSEY, BARAK KUSHNER DESCRIBES HIS UNUSUAL JOURNEY FROM STUDYING MATHEMATICS IN AMERICA TO TEACHING HISTORY IN BRITAIN. HE EXPLAINS HOW HIS FASCINATION WITH ASIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE DEVELOPED FROM HIS FREQUENT VISITS TO CHINA, TAIWAN AND JAPAN.

'Essentially, I am a failed car mechanic,' says Barak Kushner. 'All through high school I had jobs that required fixing engines or working on carpentry projects and that progression just seemed the natural choice.' Kushner, who was awarded a 2012-13 British Academy mid-career fellowship to finish his third book, comes from a family where attending university was a given. 'Unfortunately, when I told my parents of my plans they finessed me by saying that I could be a car mechanic but only after I graduated from university. My father's parents had been immigrants from Russia and he was the first one to enrol at university. There was no question, as the descendent of immigrants in America, that I was not going to follow suit. For better or worse, I listened to them and my life has never been the same since.'

University was not precisely what he expected and Kushner began his undergraduate years reading maths and physics only to discover by his second year that he was one of the few who needed a pencil and paper to figure out equations written on the board. 'I would watch others nodding their heads as they mentally calculated but I needed to visualize it in numbers. It was obvious there were several levels of students in that class and although I had excelled at these subjects at high school, the speed and depth of the university method of teaching far surpassed my ability.' American universities are well-known for being flexible and letting students try many subjects before choosing their 'major', or field of study, and soon Kushner set his sights on English literature.

'Regrettably, I am not the biggest fan of Shakespeare, having perhaps been over-instructed in it during high school, so that choice quickly went bust. By the end of my second year I knew that I wanted to travel abroad to study and that left a limited selection of majors that would allow it – my preferred, computer science, not being among them.' In the end he settled on history because it had the least number of required courses and would permit him to use his study abroad in France towards his graduation credits. Kushner had kept up his study of French but was still not prepared for the shock of having to use it in class: 'I was abysmal at first and it took nearly six months of hard work to get my French up to any workable order.'

Strangely, it was Kushner's experience in France that led him towards the study of Japanese and East Asian history. 'I took a class on the history of French film and noticed that wartime French films were not included in the syllabus,' he said. This seeming omission led him to write his graduation thesis on wartime French film and to ask a similar question of what happened in other wartime societies. 'My undergraduate library was stocked with books on the history of Nazi culture and film but there was not one book on the same history in East Asia. I am not sure what the reason was, but this absence intrigued me,' Kushner says. He says he naively thought he could learn Japanese quickly and begin to pursue Japanese history. 'I was grossly unaware of the difficulties.' Getting to Japan was not easy in 1990 and he had no introductions. After teaching in a high school in Chicago for a few years, he finally found a job that took him to the remote northeast corner of Japan to teach English. 'It was about as far away from the high tech image and lifestyle of Tokyo as one could be,' he recalled. 'No one in the town spoke English and, with the exception of one or two people, it was a fairly lonely existence.'

The job offered little in the way of interaction with townspeople since the schools did not know how to use him and so Kushner ended up suggesting that instead of teaching he would attend elementary school with the students and get them used to meeting foreigners. 'Studying with first-graders was one of the best introductions to Japanese society.' Each morning he would collect his bento (a boxed lunch) from the local temple family, who had essentially adopted him, and go to school. In the afternoons, he would return the bento and stay around the temple practising whatever Japanese he had picked up and written in his notebook. 'It probably was not pedagogically the most sound method, but it kept me sane,' he says.

The year in Japan helped Kushner get a scholarship for further study in the US, but he realized that to truly study Japan he needed to return there. He dropped out of the US program at Indiana University and enrolled in a language school in Yokohama. He kept up a schedule of five part-time jobs to make ends meet, and took classes at Rikkyo University in Tokyo.

A man with short grey hair and a goatee, wearing a dark suit, a striped shirt, and a patterned tie, is leaning against a stone archway. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background shows a rustic building with weathered stone walls and a cobblestone path. A dark semi-transparent box is overlaid in the top right corner containing white text.

Studying with first-graders was one of the best introductions to Japanese society.



'Rikkyo was a formative moment because for the first time I was studying history alongside real Japanese students, which of course meant that I was way behind.' After several years in Japan, by 1996 Kushner was ready to branch out further, into China, and took a job with his father at Shenyang University teaching western Marxist history. 'Living with my dad for six months way up in north China, where it dips to minus thirty in the winter, was a great experience, but it also turned me off being a Marxist historian.' Teaching in China gave Kushner the desire to look at Japanese history transnationally rather than merely domestically, an experience that later influenced his scholarly choices.

Kushner had resolved to obtain his PhD in Japan, but even in the mid-1990s other scholars were telling him this would not be a good career choice. 'Attitudes are currently changing,' he says, 'but for me back then, it was decent advice so I ended up returning to the US and got a scholarship to Princeton University.' In Kushner's words, 'Princeton funded its graduate students like princes,' and for several years he engaged in coursework before returning to Japan for more research. In addition, he won a US Security Fellowship that allowed him to take a year in Taiwan for Chinese language study and research.

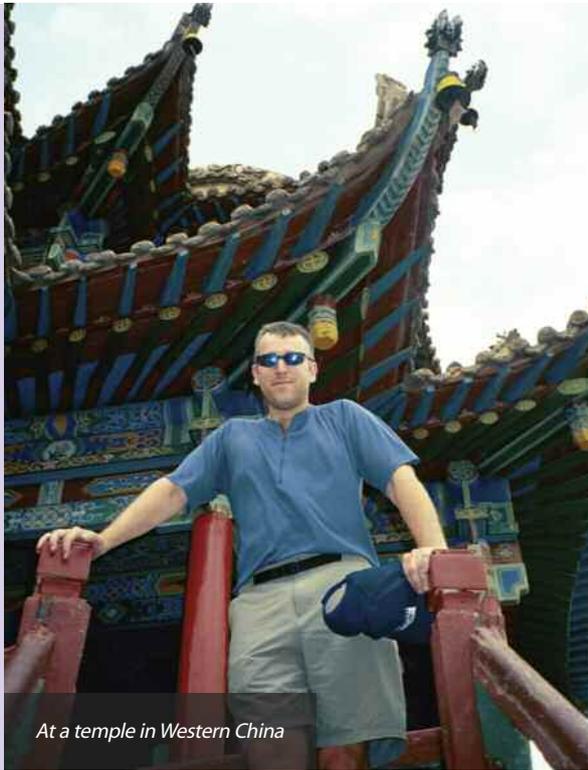
The result of Kushner's residence in Japan and Taiwan was his first book, *The Thought War – Imperial Japanese Propaganda* (University of Hawaii Press, 2006), which in some ways answered those questions he had first asked as an undergraduate. 'It was not precisely the book I set out to write because in the interim I discovered a scholar who I felt was much more talented than me and who was writing a film history of the war. So I decided to stick to the more nebulous topic of propaganda at large,' Kushner says. Graduating from Princeton and having a book published so soon after gaining

his PhD did not seem to help Kushner find a secure teaching job. 'At one point of unemployment I began to think a better future lay elsewhere,' he admits, and he even went so far as to look at car mechanic's schools again. He eventually found a post at Davidson College. He had also, in the meantime, applied to the US State Department. 'By the time my security clearance came through I had been at Davidson for several years and could no longer see a future in academia,' Kushner says. 'I thought I had one book in me and that I had written all I wanted to say.'

While the switch to the State Department proved to be a boon in terms of salary, it was not quite the research environment Kushner had expected. 'In fact, within eight months or so, I was longing to return to the classroom and teaching. I realised that teaching really was my calling.' It remained difficult for him to find employment in the States, but in 2006 he successfully interviewed for a post at Hong Kong University. 'I thought that was it and I would move to Hong Kong. Far away, but certainly the place to be for someone interested in Sino-Japan relations,' Kushner said. Almost at the same time, a colleague had passed his name on to the faculty at Cambridge. They were looking for a replacement for Dr Stephen Large, the modern historian of Japan for several decades at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. 'My friend told me that I needed to apply since he had introduced my name, but I was of mixed opinion. I already had a job and I also did not think of myself as a typical Cambridge Don. I was a Jewish guy from New Jersey. I was far from posh and had never lived in England before. In fact, I knew virtually nothing about Cambridge.' However, he figured the interview would make a good story and made the trip. 'It turned out upon meeting people in the faculty that they were all really talented and interesting. They are a great group and the interview experience completely changed whatever stereotypes I had of the place.'

In fact, within eight months or so, I was longing to return to the classroom and teaching. I realised that teaching really was my calling.

Kushner knew so little about Cambridge or the college system that when he arrived by bus from Heathrow he asked the driver where the University was. The driver responded by asking which college he wished to visit. Kushner did not have an answer. 'Essentially, the first several years here one enjoys a steep learning curve because the system is so different from elsewhere. Ironically, the best book I found to



At a temple in Western China

explain Cambridge was written in Japanese a few years ago by an academic visitor. Like many excellent Japanese introductory books, it starts with the basics and goes into great detail explaining the college and University structures,' he says.

Once at Cambridge it took a while to find a college, but luckily Corpus seemed interested. 'I am not sure if Corpus is aware but they are the college that launched Japanese studies at Cambridge,' Kushner says. The first lecturer in Japanese was Eric Ceadel, a Corpus Fellow who later became head of the University Library. The second was the renowned scholar of Japanese literature, Donald Keene, who was a Corpus Fellow from 1948-1954 before he accepted a professorship at Columbia University in New York. Douglas Mills followed and Kushner is delighted to be the fourth Fellow of Japanese studies at Corpus. 'It is an honor to be a Fellow at the college that started it all in Japanese studies for Cambridge. Not only did the College introduce the sport of rugby to the Japanese in the late 19th century but we have been home to some of the most influential and important scholars in Japanese studies. That history is a very weighty responsibility.'

After arriving at Cambridge and settling down at Corpus, Kushner got back to work on an idea that had intrigued him during the research for his first book. 'I was interested in the sorts of influence China has historically had on Japan. From the Meiji Restoration (1868) onwards most scholarship emphasizes the role of the West, but several books that I had read in Japanese suggested overlooked areas of Chinese influence.' Kushner realised that food history, more specifically the evolution and history of ramen noodle soup, was an excellent way by which to introduce a different type of modern Japanese history to students and readers. 'The book took a bit longer to finish and longer to find a publisher willing to tolerate my juxtaposition of academic prose and

talk of comedy, feces, and food all in one book. But in the end I am pleased with the result,' he says. His second book, *Slurp! A Culinary and Social History of Ramen, Japan's Favorite Noodle Soup*, has recently been published by Brill/Global Oriental.

Because producing the book took a bit longer than expected, Kushner embarked on another research trajectory at the same time. 'In 2007 I won an Abe Fellowship from the Japanese and US governments, which allows researchers to spend time in several countries. In 2008 I spent three months in Nanjing for research and nine months of 2009 in Tokyo.'



Those months allowed Kushner to start an entirely new project, focusing on the lesser war crimes trials, colloquially known as BC class war crimes, of Japanese soldiers in China. This is an area, he said, in which scholarship is booming in Japan but on which there is virtually nothing in English. 'This is what makes the field of Japanese history and East Asian studies so exciting. New archives are constantly being opened and offering more access while the history remains to be written.' Gaining the Abe Fellowship also led to Kushner getting married as he remained in Tokyo for an extended period of time. 'I honestly did not think it would ever happen because I kept travelling around so much. But then my partner decided that her high-flying career in the Japanese diplomatic corps had reached its pinnacle. Many people were surprised that she left and returned to England with me but she tells me she made the right choice!' His partner, Mami Mizutori, is now executive director of the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures at the University of East Anglia.

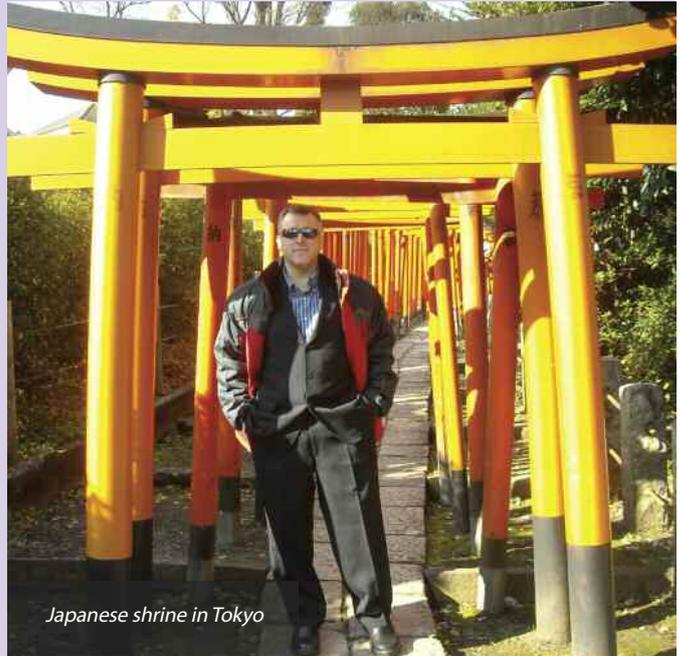


Sculpture garden outside of Taipei, Taiwan

Since being awarded the British Academy fellowship this year, Kushner is now able to finish his third book, on Chinese trials of Japanese war crimes, tentatively entitled *Men to Devils and Devils to Men: Japanese War Crimes and Cold War Sino-Japan Relations (1945-1965)*. 'I just signed a contract with Harvard University Press for this book and if all goes well then it should come out by 2014,' he says. Fortunately

for Kushner this was a banner year for Fellowships. 'Normally,' he says, 'researchers apply to a host of scholarships and hope to hit one. Over the last several years I have been lucky, but also been rejected a number of times. This year I hit paydirt!' Kushner was recently awarded a £1.17 million grant to direct a project entitled, 'The Dissolution of the Japanese Empire and the Struggle for Legitimacy in Postwar East Asia, 1945-1965'. The five-year funded project will hire four postdocs and offer two full scholarships for PhD students. 'Obviously, I like to think that I won the award because the research is novel and interdisciplinary, but I also realize that it may be because of the growth of China Studies that the ERC panel was interested in giving a nod to the dearth of Japan-related project proposals. In any event, it is an enormous grant, one of the largest my faculty has seen, and will certainly require a lot of work,' he says.

Kushner will lead the project and write an overview monograph detailing how political rule and legal authority were redrafted in postwar East Asia after the Japanese surrender in 1945. The postdocs and PhD students will engage in research that will shed light on the social and political transformations that continue to have a deep worldwide resonance in the form of East Asia's regional alliances and Japan's relations with its closest neighbours – China, North and South Korea, and Taiwan. In addition to the research team, Kushner plans to host two international conferences focused on issues related to law and responsibility from the East Asian postwar perspective. 'We have the money, now let's hope we get great applicants as well!'



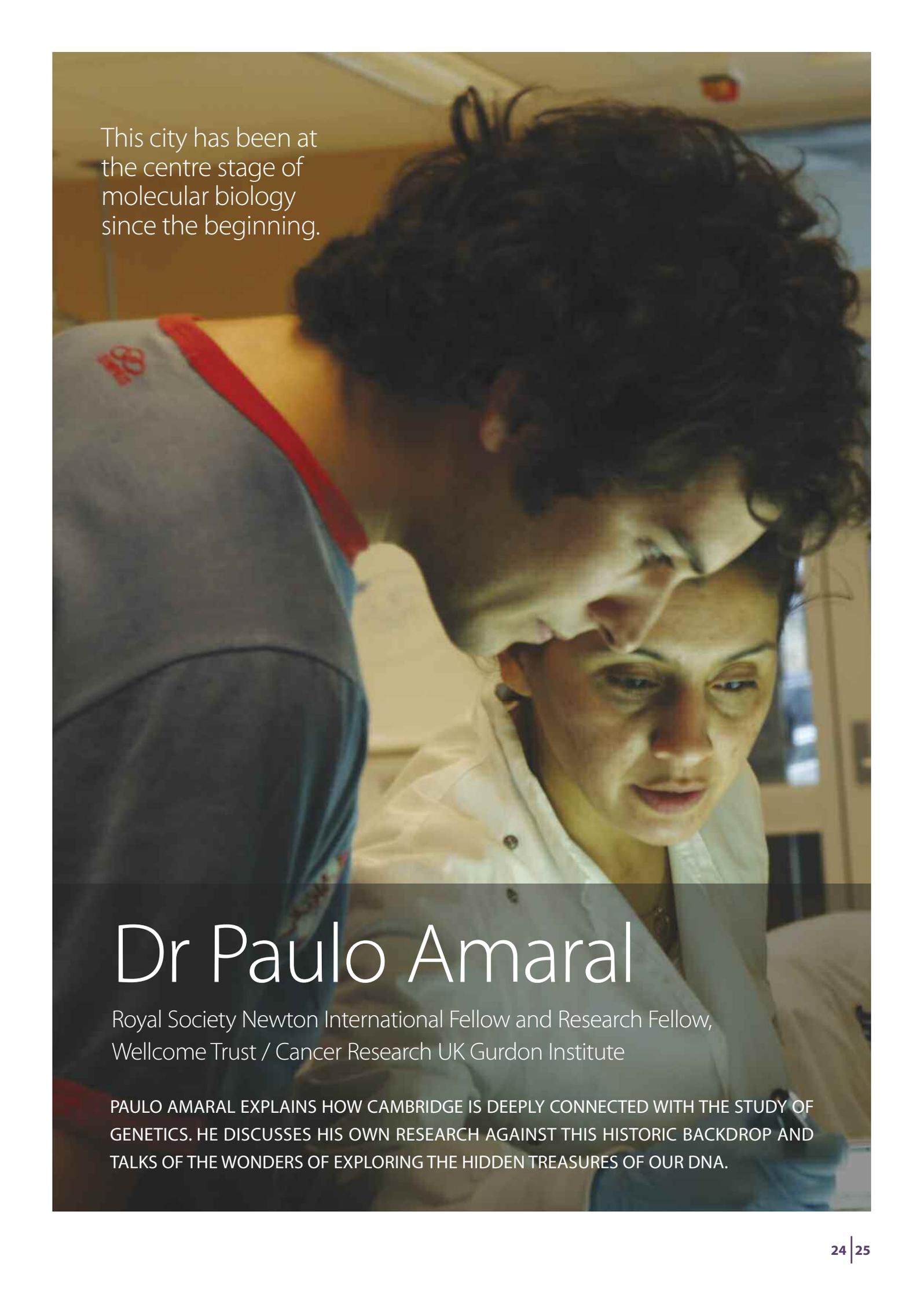
Japanese shrine in Tokyo

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Kushner says that he never really saw himself as an academic but is beginning to realize that this is what he has become. 'A friend of mine said it best a number of years ago when we were living in Tokyo. The goal is to become the instructor you would have liked to have met when you were in university,' he says. 'I am not sure if I have actually attained that goal yet but I still have time to perfect it.' What Kushner does enjoy, he says, is the daily camaraderie and conversation that Cambridge supports not only among fellow faculty members, but within the colleges and between instructors and students. 'It is a wonderful place to be an academic and live,' Kushner says, 'but I could never become completely English. Being English would require me to speak differently and, being a Jersey boy, when I return home if I even have a slight accent, old friends mock me incessantly. Even if I don't think I have changed in the slightest, acquaintances still tell me I am putting on airs! But I don't mind, I am used to being the outsider.' Having lived in France, Japan, Taiwan and China, Kushner finally feels at home in Cambridge. 'Because it is so international you can always find mates,' he says. 'I really don't think I would want to be anywhere else at this point.'



Barak visiting Yamada machi, his first home in Japan, several months after the March 2011 tsunami



This city has been at
the centre stage of
molecular biology
since the beginning.

Dr Paulo Amaral

Royal Society Newton International Fellow and Research Fellow,
Wellcome Trust / Cancer Research UK Gurdon Institute

PAULO AMARAL EXPLAINS HOW CAMBRIDGE IS DEEPLY CONNECTED WITH THE STUDY OF GENETICS. HE DISCUSSES HIS OWN RESEARCH AGAINST THIS HISTORIC BACKDROP AND TALKS OF THE WONDERS OF EXPLORING THE HIDDEN TREASURES OF OUR DNA.



I joined Corpus Christi a little over a year ago on a Research Fellowship. Having lived all my life in the southern hemisphere, first in my home country, Brazil, and then in Australia, I have found the experience of living in Cambridge extremely rewarding; Corpus, rather than the freezing winters, being a major factor. Not only is it almost surreal for me to take part in the traditions of this College where people were going about their business long before my country was even discovered, I have been fortunate to find friendship and a great academic atmosphere. Since joining Corpus, I have had the privilege of being exposed to the acute intellect and interests of Fellows and students in all fields of knowledge. All of these experiences have stimulated me to think more deeply about my own area of research, molecular biology.

Broadly speaking, this is the study of how genetic information is conveyed by molecules, not only to propagate life through the process of reproduction, but also to express and sustain it during the stages of our existence. Its ventures have revealed to us how our own characteristics are passed on to our offspring and how we develop from a microscopic fertilized egg to a functional trillion-celled organism. This quest has also provided insights into profound questions such as how we are related to other living beings and, ultimately, where do we come from?

I find it particularly exciting to contemplate these issues in Cambridge. This city has been at the centre stage of molecular biology since its beginnings in the last century. In the 1950s and 60s at the old Cavendish laboratory, just behind Corpus, Cambridge scientists pioneered techniques that taught us how to 'see' the atomic structure of proteins – the building blocks of life. The most influential insight in life sciences since the ideas of Charles Darwin – the atomic structure of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) – was uncovered there. The illustrious double helix was famously announced to the world, at our beloved Eagle pub by co-discoverer Francis Crick, as 'the secret of life.' It is hard to overstate the significance of that finding to mankind. In addition to attracting hordes of pilgrims to The Eagle, it has been the basis for an explosion of advances. These include the production of insulin in bacteria and the development of DNA-based diagnostic tools. Since those early findings, molecular biology keeps expanding at an astounding speed, with Cambridge remaining a major force in this process.

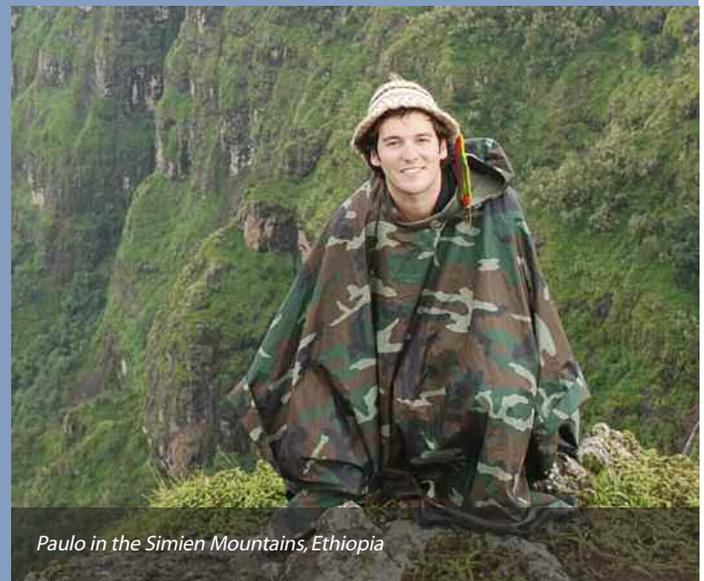
My own interest in biology was captivated during my high school years by one such advancement: the cloning of Dolly the sheep in Scotland. The fact that a complex organism so closely related to us could be copied into a new and physically perfect individual demonstrated to me the prowess of molecular biology. I have always had an interest in science, and, in particular, a fascination with living things. As a child, I had a 'lab' at my grandparents' house, where I kept and dissected scorpions, spiders, fish, lizards and snakes, which I could collect in large numbers in the neighbourhood and countryside where I grew up in central Brazil. Nevertheless, it was the grasping of the beauty of the molecular mechanisms behind life that compelled me to enrol in a biology university course in Brasília, with the goal of pursuing a career in science.

Now, having achieved that goal, my research aims to further our knowledge about the molecular programming of organisms; how the processes through which we are built and function are performed and coordinated. On a day-by-day level, for over 10 years, my work has revolved around RNA (ribonucleic acid). All along my training I have been fortunate to be supervised by very supportive group leaders, who always allowed me to define my projects and direct the research. I started to work in a real lab at age 18, as a first year undergraduate supported by a small junior scholarship from the Brazilian federal government, and I have never left the lab since. For the initial years, I studied basic features of RNA viruses that infect plants and cause significant economic losses. During my undergraduate period, I also joined the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation, where I studied transgenic papaya plants genetically engineered to be resistant against RNA viruses.

Although not known by many non-biologists, RNA has many properties that make its celebrity cousin DNA look rather boring and is now, arguably, at the centre of a revolution in biology. If I had to pick just one reason to justify my enthusiasm towards this molecule, it would be that it is tipped almost universally to be the ancestor of us all. Simply put, RNA is recognized as the ancient molecule that originated cellular life as we know it and which, through the familiar processes of descent with modification and natural selection, brought us and every other being into existence.

There are many technical explanations to why this 'ancient RNA world' hypothesis is widely accepted. In short, despite being chemically similar to DNA, RNAs have unique chemical properties that allow them to be both informational molecules (even capable of self-replication in a test tube) and also to behave like proteins. This means they are able to form complex tri-dimensional structures that allow them to work as enzymes, which in turn allows basic life processes to take place. Virtually all fundamental processes shared by every known life form have RNAs as critical components.

While there are plenty of other reasons to be enthusiastic about RNA, most of its remarkable properties have already been known for decades. So why is RNA currently causing a revolution in biology? At least part of the answer lies with the intermittent, often erratic, nature of the scientific progress. It is also due to how we humans tend to get comfortable with dogmas when we think we have nailed down a scientific problem and the fact that these can take a long time to be overturned. Shortly after the discovery of the DNA double helix, the simplest organisms able to be manipulated in the laboratory (most commonly *Escherichia coli*, a bacteria found in our gut) were used to reach a series of major conclusions with long-lasting implications. The bottom line of these being twofold: firstly, that the information present in DNA genes instructs the production of proteins in our cells, and secondly that RNAs are transient intermediate molecules in this process. Unfortunately, this became known as the 'central dogma of molecular biology,' encapsulated as 'DNA makes RNA which makes protein.'



Paulo in the Simien Mountains, Ethiopia

As a matter of fact, we knew that all life forms (with the exception of some viruses) use DNA as genetic material, and that proteins are major structural and enzymatic components of the cells. Therefore, the immediate assumption of what happened following the 'RNA world' period was that RNA transferred its original properties to DNA and proteins, and was then relinquished to a middle-man role in the complex cellular life that ensued. In this picture, proteins were the final destination of the genetic information and this was extrapolated to be a universal feature of life. This view was consistent with the composition of DNA found in those microscopic study-objects. Almost all of it did seem to encode proteins. However, since then we have studied more complex organisms in greater molecular detail, including humans. Many discoveries in these studies have not fitted in with the dogma.



Getting ready to dive in Australia

One of the most important of these findings was that, in stark contrast with bacteria, only a minority of the DNA of complex organisms appeared to encode proteins. The prevailing interpretation of this observation at the time may sound surprising: that it was nothing more than unpurged DNA debris accumulated during evolution. The term 'junk DNA' was adopted for this non-protein-coding stuff, and it featured in genetics textbooks for many years (I remember being puzzled about the existence of junk DNA when I was a first year undergraduate) and endured in some quarters until today.

The revolution only really started in the 21st century, when we determined the almost complete composition of human DNA, an international and multi-billion dollar endeavour whose results were jointly announced by Bill Clinton and Tony Blair in the year 2000. Also known as the human 'genome,' it comprises a sequence of three billion chemical units believed to constitute the 'blueprint' of humans. Clinton hailed this feat as 'the scientific breakthrough of the century, perhaps of all time.' Among many intriguing insights obtained from this project, it was found that less than 1.5% of our DNA comprises protein-coding sequences. Therefore the vast majority of our DNA would have been called junk according to the old paradigms! Subsequent genome studies showed that most of this 'junk DNA' is used to produce a large variety of RNA molecules. Given that these RNAs do not have the capacity to encode proteins, a major controversy emerged as to whether these molecules are indeed functional or simply background biological noise – 'junk RNA'. As they correspond to most of the genome output and given that their existence and functions remained unknown for so long, they have also been nicknamed the 'dark matter' of the genome.

Since these discoveries, the study of the biological significance of these non-protein-coding RNAs (ncRNAs) has been my main interest. The realisation of these findings prompted me to change plans and abandon a second undergraduate course in chemistry, which I had started with the aim of learning as much as possible about the properties of biological molecules and their chemical environment. These revolutionary findings drove me to São Paulo to undertake a master's degree in biochemistry, where I investigated how ncRNA molecules are produced in human cells. After this I went to Brisbane, Australia, where my PhD thesis focussed on the roles of ncRNAs in the 'development' of complex organisms. This included a stint of a few months in Cambridge with collaborators. This highly positive experience brought me back, in time, to the same group.

Altogether, what our teams have shown is that rather than being background noise, different ncRNAs are produced in each type of cell in precisely controlled doses. We have found, for example, that individual RNAs are produced only at certain times and in specific biological locations during the development of the embryos in which they occur. Different human tissues, such as kidney and liver, also produce unique groups of these RNA molecules; and similar observations were also made for different kinds of cancers.

To investigate the biological functions of the ncRNAs, I have mainly used mouse embryonic stem cells as a model. These cells are obtained from embryos at a very early stage of development, and can be kept and propagated in the lab and be manipulated. They have gained much attention from scientists and the general public alike because of their capacity to originate any cell type in the body, thus holding considerable therapeutic promise. What my colleagues and I have found is that these stem cells are also characterised by a cohort of hundreds of ncRNA molecules, and we demonstrated that some of these are crucial for the properties and correct functioning of the cells. Now back in Cambridge, I have joined the group of Professor Tony Kouzarides at the Gurdon Institute to study the biochemical details of how these functions are performed in cancer and stem cells.

Nowadays, many other groups around the world are studying ncRNAs, and in only a few years of research we have catalogued hundreds of them, encompassing a wide array of hitherto unknown functions. With these research efforts intensified, it is becoming difficult to find a process in any living system that is not influenced by ncRNAs. Their roles are being demonstrated in both normal cells and in a number of diseases, including cancers and neural pathologies whose molecular causes have long been elusive. The overarching conclusion is that most functional RNA molecules in complex organisms do not encode proteins and therefore the old protein-centric paradigms simply do not hold water.

There is a final element derived from the study of the DNA of humans and other organisms which highlights just how

important these ncRNA molecules may be for our evolution. As the complete DNA sequence of multiple species started to be compared, it quickly became apparent that we share almost all of our protein-coding genes with other animals, including flies, worms, and even marine sponges. Now we must ask: what exactly makes us human? It has become apparent that it is not the number or complement of protein-coding genes that defines the biological complexity of different species, but how combinations of these genes are deployed in each cell during the development of an organism from a single fertilized egg. Interestingly, there is a remarkable positive correlation between the proportion of noncoding DNA in an organism and its biological complexity. For example, while in bacteria around 20% of the DNA is noncoding, in fungi it is nearly 60%, in worms nearly 80%, and in humans and other mammals over 98%. The answer to how the coordinated deployment of genes is accomplished is almost surely embedded in the regulatory properties of the noncoding DNA.

Whilst some known functions for noncoding DNA itself are crucial in controlling these processes, it is the widespread role of ncRNAs in gene regulation that is bringing about the change in our understanding of the molecular programming of life. These ideas started to be elaborated in Cambridge back in 1994 by Australian researcher John Mattick, my pioneering PhD supervisor in Brisbane, but only in the last few years have they received overwhelming support with the discoveries described earlier on the sheer abundance and regulatory properties

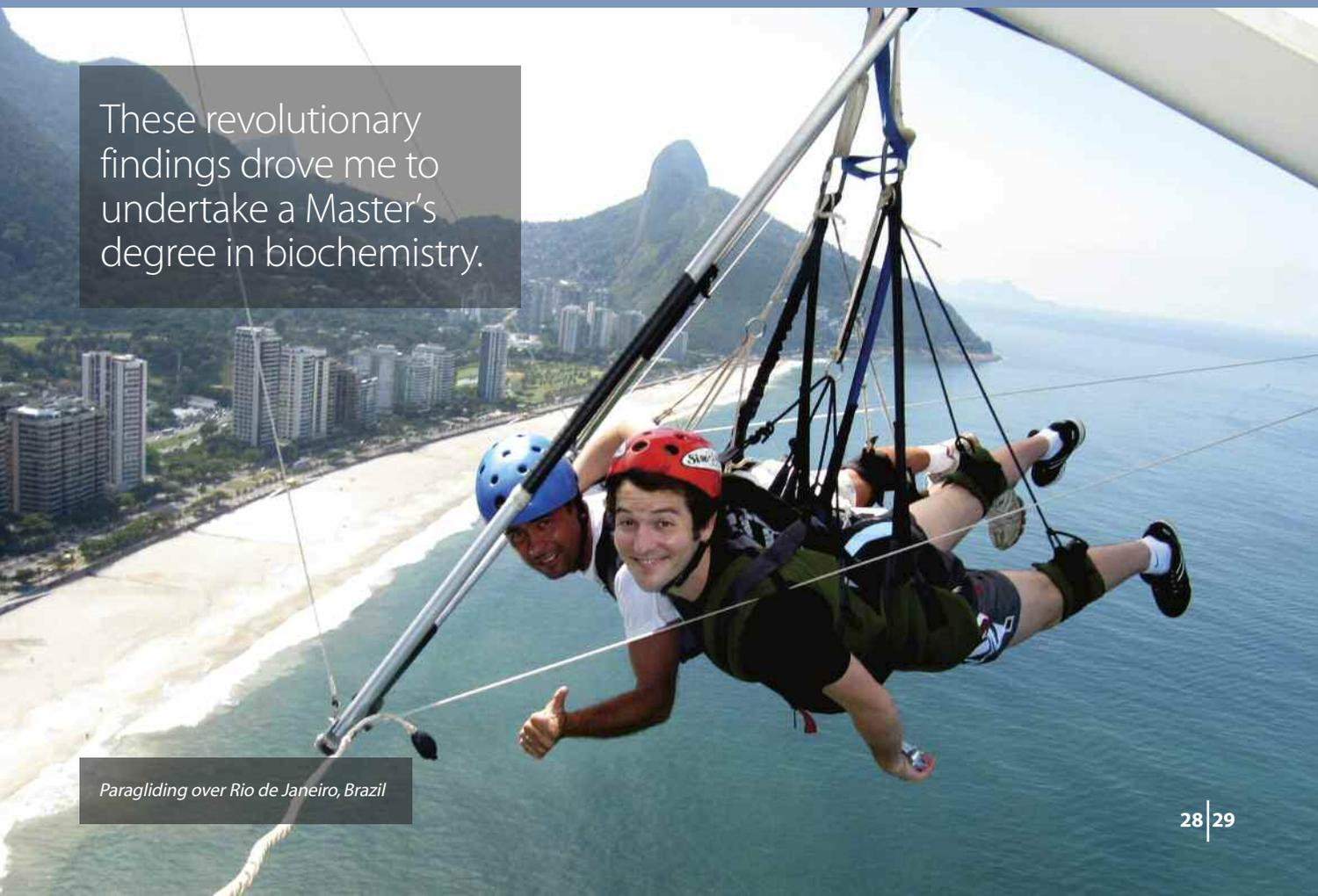
of ncRNAs. Over the years, it has been very satisfying to see the tide changing and to be able to contribute with new ideas to the growing field.



Paulo explains his research to his goddaughter

The picture currently emerging is that of our genomes being sophisticated 'RNA machines.' This new view allows the suggestion that we live in a modern RNA world where early in evolution proteins and DNA were 'invented' and coopted by RNA to perform specialized roles, largely controlled by RNAs themselves. This system then expanded progressively during the evolution of complex organisms. Exploration of the properties of noncoding DNA and of these novel RNA-based systems has just begun. They may prove important for several practical reasons, including the employment of RNAs as agents and targets to treat diseases. They also help us to better understand the most basic mechanisms underlying life.

These revolutionary findings drove me to undertake a Master's degree in biochemistry.



Paragliding over Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Tim Walker

Fellow Commoner 2012-13

by Elizabeth Winter

Journey from Tasmania

TIM WALKER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT ORCHESTRAS: THE LONDON PHILHARMONIC. HE WAS APPOINTED FELLOW COMMONER AT CORPUS FOR THE CURRENT ACADEMIC YEAR. ELIZABETH WINTER TALKED TO HIM ABOUT HIS LIFE AND CAREER.

When Tim Walker was growing up in Hobart, Tasmania, he used to listen to his mother, a talented amateur musician, playing the piano. As soon as she thought his hands were big enough she arranged for him to start piano lessons. He would have been about five or six, around the same age he was taken to his first concert. However, it wasn't until he was 11 and at a concert that he was struck by the beauty of the violins and their role in an orchestra. 'I suddenly realised that piano playing is a lonely business.' I thought it was much nicer to be playing as part of the orchestra,' he says, 'so I decided to take up the violin.'

His love of music and in particular, the orchestral repertoire, grew from this early start and has become his life – though perhaps not, as he originally expected, as a musician. As Chief Executive and Artistic Director of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Tim Walker is responsible for one of the world's leading orchestras, bearing the ultimate burden for its funding, programming and organisation, along with his team and the orchestra's representatives. The LPO was founded in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham as the first salaried full-time orchestra in the UK. In 1939 when the orchestra's sponsors withdrew their funding, the orchestra's reaction was to become self-governing and ever since it has operated as a cooperative. It has always had a place at the centre of British music-making; in 1941 an air-raid in the Queen's Hall destroyed most of the players' instruments. The BBC broadcast an appeal for help and the response was overwhelming. So many instruments were donated by the public the orchestra was able to carry on.

For Tim though, the path to professional music took a sideways turn when he went to the University of Tasmania to study political sciences. 'I'd been the leader of the school orchestra,' he points out, 'and had some experience leading the college youth orchestra, but by then I knew I didn't want to be an orchestral musician.' He did, however, study for a diploma in piano alongside his political studies. 'Although I loved playing, I wasn't planning on a career in music at that point. I thought I'd become a diplomat, but then when I

graduated the diplomatic service wasn't recruiting, so I did a postgraduate diploma in education instead.'

As it turns out, his natural diplomatic skills haven't gone to waste. Managing a diverse group of 100 or so super-talented musicians who originate from almost as many different countries is no pushover. And raising funds in the UK to support the intense programme of home and international performance is an endless headache. He did it immensely successfully in Australia with the Australian Chamber Orchestra but it was a very different climate. 'In Australia you get the State Premiers – even the Prime Minister – coming to concerts, being seen supporting the arts. You get politicians and businessmen very publically coming to the opera and concerts. There is a much more openly supportive attitude from the government and the business community towards the arts. It is a different story here,' he adds somewhat ruefully. 'The fact that the arts in this country are served by the Ministry for Media, Culture and Sport speaks volumes,' he points out. 'Each of those areas deserves its own department.'

His first job in Tasmania was to head the music department of a 6th form college for three years and then a further five years at Canberra School of Music as Concert Manager and subsequently Executive Officer. He rose up the orchestral management tree to become Marketing and Development Manager of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and then the General Manager. During this time he turned it into a full-time orchestra and extended its subscription series from two cities to nine, ranging across Australia. But after 10 years he wanted a bigger challenge and in 1999 he went solo. He started planning an international series of concerts, with different orchestras each season, bringing foreign bookings to Sydney and Melbourne.

'My venture was called World Orchestras and I created the International Orchestra Series. I brought orchestras, the BBC Symphony Orchestra with Sir Andrew Davis, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra with Mariss Jansons, the Leipzig



When I was at university I thought I'd be a diplomat.



Gewandhaus with Herbert Blomstedt, the Israel Philharmonic with Zubin Mehta, the State Orchestra of Radio Moscow with Vladimir Fedoseyev and the Philharmonia with Vladimir Ashkenazy, to the Sydney Opera House and the Melbourne Concert Hall. I raised the funds and was responsible for booking the orchestras, the venues, the programming... the series got off to a good start.' At the same time, he was also doing freelance consultancy for the Australian National Ballet and was on the Board of the International Society for the Performing Arts, among other positions. I describe him as an impresario and he doesn't disagree. It got him noticed.

In 2002, the LPO was looking for a Chief Executive, preferably one who understood the quagmire of fundraising associated with performance and sponsorship as well as having a stellar track record in orchestral management. Tim must have stood out like a beacon. The head hunters approached him, and he responded 'with interest'. After the rounds of interviews with the orchestra, he took over as Chief Executive and – unusually – Artistic Director. The intense, brilliant Russian conductor Vladimir Jurowski became the Principal Guest Conductor, consolidating the position in 2007 as the Principal Conductor in the 75th anniversary season of the orchestra. Under the leadership of Tim Walker and Vladimir Jurowski the orchestra has flourished. Music critic Ivan Hewett, in a review in *The Telegraph* in July 2011, wrote 'This performance was a reminder that under Jurowski the LPO has become a fabulously refined instrument.'

Touring forms a significant part of the orchestra's schedule. In the 2012-13 programme the LPO's overseas bookings include Spain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria and the US. In addition, it is resident at the Royal Festival Hall in London and holds two popular residences in Brighton and Eastbourne. The summer, however, sees the LPO take its place at Glyndebourne as the resident orchestra, a position it has held since 1964. Tim is a keen opera lover and the weeks at Glyndebourne are a pleasurable part of the musical year, even if he only spends a small amount of time there. He is an admirer not only of the extremely high standards of performance, but also of the work done by the Glyndebourne team on education and introducing school students to opera. This is an area close to his heart. Since he has been in charge of the LPO, Tim has introduced more outreach into the community and the orchestra's Education & Community Programme has grown in strength: it now works closely with schools across the boroughs of Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark to enhance musical education and open the orchestra to young people. The programme also offers vital support and training to emerging professional musicians on the threshold of their careers.

We discuss how important it is to attract younger audiences to music of all kinds. 'The LPO has Young Contemporaries,' he says, referring to the group that is headed by Corpus alumnus Christopher Rogers. 'That is open to people under 35; they get discounts on tickets and they get together and



have supper, and chat and network. It's a great success with those who join, but we'd still like more members.'

Our conversation turns to chamber music, for which he has a particular affinity. In 2005, the Festival Hall closed for two years for major refurbishment and rather than leave his soloists and section leaders without a platform in London, Tim created the LPO Soloists Chamber series, based at the Wigmore Hall. It is an extremely popular venture, allowing the brilliant section leaders an opportunity to play repertoire in which solo quality performance is needed. The series came to Cambridge too as the 'Chamber Contrasts' series, playing both larger chamber pieces like the Mendelssohn Octet and the Schubert String Quintet, as well as small intimate duets like the Prokofiev Sonata for two violins (opus 56) that connected the players to the keen audiences who supported the concerts. The series is now in its seventh year at the Wigmore Hall, continuing long after the re-opening of the Festival Hall.

Although lack of funds prevents the Chamber Contrasts concerts coming to Cambridge for the time being, they did open up a relationship with the city that Tim is keen to continue. He joins Corpus this academic year as one of our Fellow Commoners, an ancient title recently revived to introduce eminent people from other walks of life into the community of the College. It is a warm though unstructured relationship with the Fellowship and student body that brings benefit and interest on both sides.

'I'm the sort of person who, if a door nudges open, will go through it,' he says. 'I'm looking forward to the stimulation of the academic environment, the conversations and discourse with people here, and hope that I will open doors for some of them to the world of music performance.' I ask him to elaborate. 'Well, apart from the concerts we're offering at the moment, interested students could attend rehearsals and meet the orchestra, and we can offer very cheap tickets to students. I might bring some of the players to the College to give workshops. I can give talks, and arrange for others to do the same. We'll see what people want.'

Given the frenetic pace of his life it can only be his huge enthusiasm for music and its performance that gives Tim Walker the energy to include Cambridge in his diary, but this enthusiasm is an impressive and infectious thing. It drives him to be out almost every evening of the week and to travel around the world in kaleidoscopic patterns.

However, when he's not in the concert hall, or the administrative offices on the 4th floor of a rather ugly building in Vauxhall, or, more often than not, on a plane with the orchestra or attending a meeting somewhere, he dreams of his garden in Tasmania where he still has a house. 'It's home, of course, even if I only get there a few weeks a year. It's the only place I can go where I'm not working.' He pauses, doubtfully. 'At least, not all the time.'

Rita Bellamy-James

Fellow Commoner 2012-13

by Rowena Bermingham

MANAGING PRESS RELATIONS AND DEALING WITH HIGH-PROFILE PUBLIC INQUIRIES, ACTING AS CONSULTANT ADVISER IN A CITY LAW FIRM, HEADING A TEAM OF SPECIALIST ADVISERS IN THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE – ONE MIGHT ASSUME THESE ARE THE CAREER PINNACLES OF THREE SEPARATE PEOPLE, BUT THEY ARE, IN FACT, JUST GLIMPSES OF THE CAREER OF ONE INDIVIDUAL: RITA BELLAMY-JAMES.

Twice nominated as one of the UK's Women of the Year and deeply engaged in numerous fields, Rita has carved out a fascinating path for herself. The most recent string to her bow has been her election as Fellow Commoner of Corpus Christi. 'I think it's wonderful,' Rita says of her appointment. 'I feel very blessed.'

Rita began her career in social work, having studied a professional qualification in the subject at the University of Strathclyde. Progressing quickly, she soon found herself in the position of a senior manager. It was at this point that Rita realised that she had both an aptitude and an interest in law. Bravely, leaving a career she had progressed in so quickly, Rita returned to university to study for her LLB. After completing her second degree she was recruited as the Advice and Representation Officer by the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) and worked with the media, presenting policy and views on television and radio. Her aim was to dispel the misconceptions surrounding social work and project a more positive image of the profession. Rita points out how easy it is for people to criticise social workers: 'They get quite a hard time. It's a very difficult position to be in. People want something to be done, but they don't want to do it and they don't want to know the details. There's a lot of misunderstanding because people don't want to know the details.' Rita was also heavily involved in a number of major public and internal inquiries into the practice of social work in the UK, including those into high profile cases following the death of a child, such as the Kimberley Carlisle case.

Having progressed to Deputy General Secretary of BASW, Rita used a sabbatical to study for her Bar exams and, following a period of practice, she began a career in consulting as a legal adviser to a City law firm. During this time she worked in a variety of fields, including planning and environmental law and family law. Rita found planning law suited her mindset as 'for most law you're looking backwards at something, but in planning law you're always

looking forward.' However, it was family law which engaged her interest most, as the same aspect which had attracted her to social work again appealed to her in family law. 'I've always been people-focussed,' Rita says. If there is anything which links up her career, it is this interest in others.

When the FCO were searching for a lawyer to advise specifically on consular matters in 2000, Rita came to their attention. The role required someone able to deal with the social and legal aspects of child abduction, sex tourism, mental health, forced marriages as well as other human rights issues. Rita's unique combination of experience in social work and legal knowledge made her the ideal candidate for the role and, soon after she took up the position, she found herself leading a team as Head of Specialist Advisers.

In this 24-7 job Rita advised the FCO on consular matters worldwide. This included joining high level discussions on child trafficking in Cambodia and prisoner transfer agreements in Vietnam. She was in this post during some extremely difficult world events such as 9/11, the Bali bombing crisis and the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, which tested the mettle of consular staff in London and at the location of the crises as they worked around the clock to assist victims and their families. When travelling abroad to train diplomats and to speak at conferences, Rita always made sure to visit any British citizens imprisoned in the locality. She visited prisons from Peru to Cambodia because she believed that 'if I could somehow experience it then I could look their families in the eye and say that I understood what it was like.'

It is clear, then, that Rita does not shy away from the difficult. 'I like a challenge,' she admits, 'and I like change.' It is this willingness to take on opportunities which she sees as the key to her success. 'I'm a great believer in being open to opportunities,' she says. This attitude was shown whilst she spent a year away from work raising her baby daughter.



I like a challenge and
I like change.



Rita's attention was caught by an advertisement for Christies Education's London Art Course. She applied immediately, unaware of the rather daunting interview required for admittance. Always a lover of fine and decorative arts, she was delighted to be accepted and studied part-time alongside raising her daughter. Rita has always managed to fit a multitude of other pursuits into her life, including good food, travel, walking and opera. Married to Deputy High Court Judge Stephen Bellamy-James QC (an Old Member of Trinity Hall and Bencher of Lincoln's Inn), the family schedule is frequently a busy one where negotiations with diaries over a kitchen table have to occur in order to coordinate their hectic lives. But Rita firmly believes that if you want to pursue something 'you just do it, you make time.'

When asked about her views on education, Rita replies: 'Education has been a thread that's run through my whole life and it's always changed things for me and opened

doors.' She has had a deep involvement with this sector for many years. She is the Governor and Director of the University of Westminster and now Corpus Christi's first female Fellow Commoner. Rita has a specific interest in female education. 'When you educate a woman, you educate a family,' Rita says. This interest led her to being a Governor of Hillcroft College, a further education institute for women. It encouraged young mothers, women from disadvantaged backgrounds, and others who might not have considered further education, to take part-time courses. 'One of my greatest pleasures,' Rita recalls, 'was seeing a woman in her 70s come to pick up her degree.' Having worked in some male-dominated environments in her career, she remarks that employers are actively seeking educated young women more and more, but those at the top can only do so much: 'Young women have to be prepared to step up to the plate.' Rita knows better than most how taking opportunities can transform your career path and is keen to encourage young women to do likewise.



Preparing for a hike



With Baroness Hale of Richmond



Rita receiving Freedom of the City of London



With her daughter now at university, Rita reflects on the difficulties facing young graduates today. She advises commitment to whatever you are doing: 'Take your degree work very seriously, because in today's competitive market there is no doubt that you need a good degree.' However, she does not think that a degree subject should set the path for your life. As shown by her change from social work to law, she believes in following your interests and passions: 'I think you should follow your heart. There's lots of time to worry about money and mortgages. But if you're stuck in a job that you don't like and you wish you hadn't chosen – I think you will end up disappointed.'

Rita recognises the special position Corpus is in, with the network of tutors and a pastoral welfare system, but her experience with family law and social work leaves her with

the knowledge that many people do not seek the help they need or take the advice given to them. 'Don't be afraid to ask and don't be afraid to take advice,' she says. 'The safety net is there – you just have to use it.' She mentions the frustration felt by each generation as she has come to realise that a wealth of experience cannot be passed on to young people: 'You just want to package it up and give it to them, but you can't.' I suggest to Rita, as we finish talking, that perhaps she could write an advice column for our current undergraduates. She recalls being asked to write one for a newspaper but having too many other commitments to fulfil at that time.

Now chairing the board of National Family Mediation, the UK's largest provider of family mediation, Rita believes that this is not the final step in her journey. 'I've had three major bites of the cherry, and I'm still nibbling!' Who knows where her interests will take her next? Whatever her next step, her enthusiasm and willingness are infectious.

Expedition to Ethiopia

by the Revd James Buxton, Dean of Chapel

IN SEPTEMBER 2012 I LEAD A CORPUS ADVENTURE TO ETHIOPIA. MENTION OF THE WORD 'ETHIOPIA' TENDS TO PRODUCE A RANGE OF OFTEN RATHER NEGATIVE MENTAL IMAGES, MAINLY RELATED TO THE DEVASTATING FAMINE OF 1984. FOR ME, THE WORD BRINGS VERY DIFFERENT CONNOTATIONS.

I grew up in a home where I was surrounded by wonderfully positive images of Ethiopia thanks to my late father's accounts of his adventures there in the 1940s.

My father (David Buxton, 1910-2003) trained as an entomologist at Cambridge (Trinity m1928) and then went on to work in locust and tsetse fly control in west Africa. He had always longed to explore Ethiopia and the chance came in 1943, following the Italian defeat by British forces and the return of the Emperor Haile Selassie. He worked directly out of the office of the Emperor to set up the Ethiopian Entomological Service. It was a terrific job for him as it enabled him to travel to every part of the country. The search for locust breeding-grounds enabled him to pursue not only his interest in Ethiopian wildlife, but also his passion for the Ethiopian language and culture. Above all he could explore the Ethiopian Church with its unique architecture dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. During his seven years in Ethiopia he documented more than 170 rock-hewn churches, most of them in the north of Ethiopia and Eritrea. He also wrote *Travels in Ethiopia*, first published in 1949 and *The Abyssinians*, released in 1970 for the Thames & Hudson *Ancient Peoples and Places* series.

It wasn't until four years ago that I first visited Ethiopia myself, when I joined a trip organized by Canon Dr John Binns (Vicar of Great St Mary's, Cambridge). On that trip we visited many of the places that my father knew and loved, including some of the spectacular rock-hewn churches in the north. I felt it would be a wonderful place to take people from Corpus, and so the idea of a College trip was born.

We hoped to arrange the trip so that it would appeal to as wide a range of students and Fellows as possible. Firstly we wanted to experience the culture and faith of the Ethiopian highlands, which is so much shaped by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Secondly we wanted to get an insight into grass-roots development work in one of the world's poorest

countries. Finally we wished to experience the incredible landscape at the heart of the horn of Africa. To keep costs down we avoided internal flights and arranged to travel by our own coach which, as it turned out, gave us a brilliant overview of this spectacular country.

Dr Michael Sutherland has given a chronological account of the trip overleaf, and I would quickly like to mention the things that stood out most for me. John Binns' experience and contacts gave us the chance to see areas of Ethiopian life that are seldom experienced by visitors. We joined the mysterious, earnest and passionate Ethiopian worship. We observed the theological schools where boys and young men learn the ancient disciplines of the Ethiopian Church. These include *K'nae*, a kind of free-style oratory, delivered in the liturgical language of *Ge'ez*, in poetic metre – a skill which takes years to learn. We saw the spectacular rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, and the numerous monasteries spreading across islands and remote mountain vastnesses. These gave an extraordinary insight into a kind of Christianity that is largely untouched by Western influences, having come to Ethiopia in the fifth century, long before the more recent and well-known missions came to Africa.

The Ethiopian Church is one steeped in the law, history and legends of ancient Israel. This is to the extent that Ethiopians believe they have the actual Ark of the Covenant at the city of Axum in north-east Ethiopia, which went missing from the Temple at Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonian Exile (586 BC).

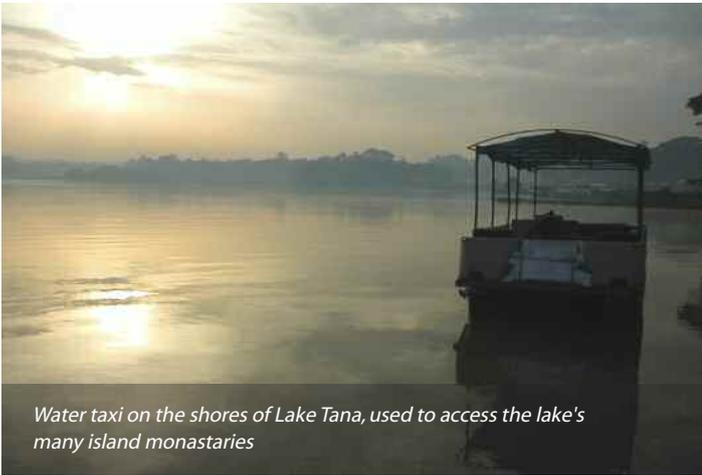
It was an unforgettable experience travelling in this country: We were blessed with a wonderful, good-humoured, energetic and occasionally long-suffering group of people, ranging from 18-year-old undergraduates to (I'm sure he won't mind me saying!) 73-year-old Professor Oliver Rackham. It really was a miniature Corpus moving through this wonderful land!



A monk from a lake monastery displaying a fifteenth century polyptych showing (left to right) St George, the crucifixion, the nativity and Jesus flanked by disciples



The papyrus tankwa is the principal craft on Lake Tana, as it has been for thousands of years



Water taxi on the shores of Lake Tana, used to access the lake's many island monasteries



A priest practices the art of K'nae in front of students in Gonder

Corpus on the roof of Africa

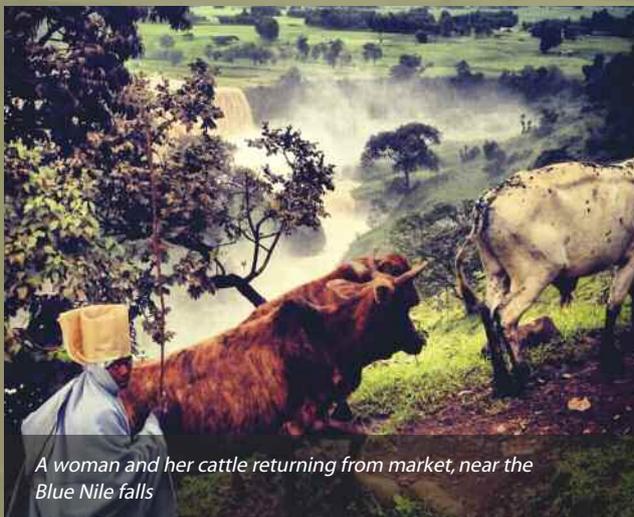
by Dr Michael Sutherland, Fellow and Royal Society University Research Fellow

Taking a 2000km drive through one of the world's least developed countries in the company of fifteen Corpus students and Fellows was destined from the outset to be a rather different sort of travel experience from a package holiday to the Costa del Sol. We began in the bustling capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, home to the headquarters of the African Union and Africa's largest outdoor market, the Mercato. One of the key objectives of our trip was to learn from first-hand experience about the activities of aid agencies in Ethiopia, and in Addis we were welcomed by the leader of the Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization (JeCCDO), a group with strong ties to Cambridge through the UK-based charity Partners for Change.

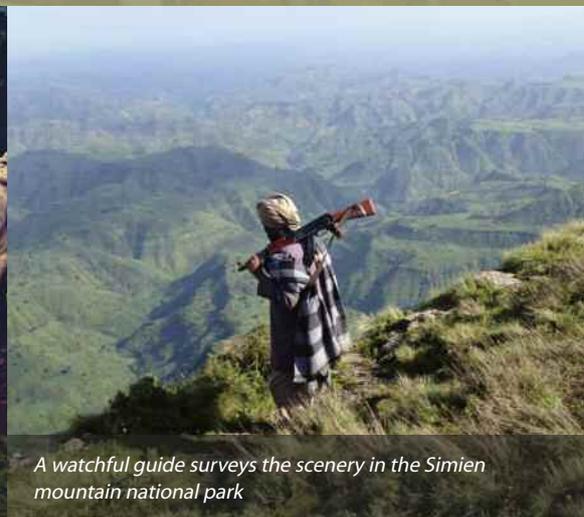
Two days in Addis gave us our first taste of the distinctive Ethiopian cuisine. The staple *injera* is eaten with every meal, and is a kind of yeast-risen flat bread made from a local grain called teff. It is used to scoop up juicy fingerfuls of fragrant stews and pulses, but as one unimpressed gourmand remarked 'it sits on the palate like sour dishwater' – an acquired taste.

From Addis we headed to the town of Bahar Dar, located on the shores of Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile. Visits to the isolated monastic communities on islands in the lake were memorable, but the highlight for me was spending time with members of poor local communities, organized through JeCCDO. Through many conversations we witnessed how well-directed aid can enrich the lives of the most marginalized in society, visiting women's business collectives, community-run libraries, and farms used to teach locals about modern agricultural practices.

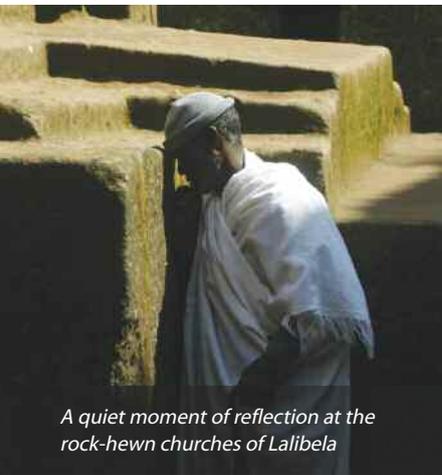
On our way out of town we stopped to view the spectacular Blue Nile falls. Swollen from water at the end of the rainy season, they thundered in the background as we were caught up in the stream of locals, sheep and cattle returning from market day. The scene was little changed from what early European travellers to the area would have witnessed, a reminder of the huge gulf in income and infrastructure development between Ethiopia and the more prosperous African nations.



A woman and her cattle returning from market, near the Blue Nile falls



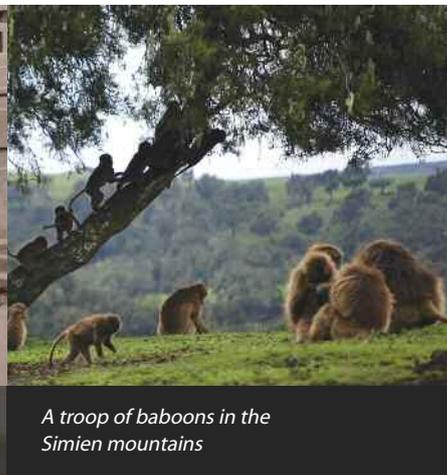
A watchful guide surveys the scenery in the Simien mountain national park



A quiet moment of reflection at the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela



The Corpus Christi Ethiopia trip 2012



A troop of baboons in the Simien mountains



Professor Oliver Rackham at Blue Nile Falls

From Bahar Dar we continued to Gonder, an ancient city of remarkable palaces and dusty streets, dotted with small theological schools that train young priests in the liturgy of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. It was fascinating to observe this teaching first hand, and to listen to *K'nae*, a style of poetry in which a deep truth is wrapped in layers of hypnotic verse. Those of us who ventured out to the local bars in the evenings were treated to a very different kind of poetry, accompanied by the sounds of the single stringed *masinko*, and best enjoyed with a glass or two of excellent local beer.

Our next destination was the vast Simien mountain national park. With peaks topping 4000m, daily hikes tested the fitness of even the hardest undergraduate. We were rewarded for our efforts with dramatic views across the mountain range and a remarkably close encounter with a troop of friendly Gelada baboons.

Three flat tires and 14 hours of driving brought us through to Lalibela, home of the rock-hewn churches, which have justifiably become world famous. The complex of buildings, some greater in size than the Corpus chapel, were handcarved from single blocks of stone some hundred years before the construction of our Old Court. Like Corpus itself, these buildings are made more remarkable by the fact that they are living, functioning places of work and worship still used daily. Returning back to Addis via the town of Debra Zait gave us another chance to observe the ground work of JeCCDO, and to cool off with a swim in one of the region's meteor crater lakes.

I think it is safe to say that the trip will not be remembered for its creature comforts (few will forget the plague of fleas that descended upon us in the Simien mountains). Instead, what we have taken away are vivid memories of the rich and vibrant cultural heritage of Ethiopia and the warm hospitality of the people we had the privilege of meeting there.

Student Digs the Bronze Age

by Ingrid Hesselbo (m2010)

UNDERGRADUATE ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY STUDENT, INGRID WRITES ABOUT HER EARLY MORNINGS AND MUDDY DAYS SPENT EXCAVATING A BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT IN HUNGARY.



Ingrid Hesselbo

'I think we should set it for four thirty.'

The prospect of getting up at this hour I suppose would not fill anyone with much enthusiasm, especially if it was during one of the hottest heat waves Hungary had seen, where every movement was a massive effort. I certainly wasn't pleased at the thought. The next morning, squeezed into a rickety minibus blaring Hungarian rock music, I looked out of the window. As I saw the sun rise up over the Carpathian basin and the continual flow of the Danube across the landscape, I realised that getting up at four thirty was really not much of a price to pay.

As an 'arch and anther' who took the archaeology option, it is part of my course to spend a month digging somewhere over the summer of second year. I leapt at the opportunity to dig in a country that wasn't England (digging in waterparks for four weeks was not my idea of fun). Hungary seemed like a great place and somewhere I knew almost nothing about. I am so pleased that I did my dig there. I learnt a huge amount, not just about how to dig, but also about Hungarian history and pre-history. Other useful learning curves included how to make friends with people where there's little common language, and how to work on very complex finds, even when you are the least qualified person. Oh, plus I got to live out my dream of being a female Indiana Jones!

The site I was digging on was the seemingly unpronounceable Szazhalombatta-Foldvar, a Bronze Age settlement site on top of a hill overlooking the Danube. Looking to the north about 30 km, the suburbs of Budapest could be seen, and to the south by about the same distance, a massive oil refinery.

I think most people's perception of archaeology is of amazing brooches and burials, perhaps the odd trip to inside a booby-trapped pyramid. In reality it mostly involves looking very carefully for tiny changes in soil colour. I thought I was okay at telling a sandy loam from a loamy sand (yes – they are different), but when I sat down in my one-by-one metre square and was told to remove only the clay layer, I realised that really I knew nothing. This was such complex archaeology, millimetre thick changes in the soil weaved their way over and under one another in an apparently chaotic pattern. Being able to understand these patterns would allow me to know what I was digging, and what I was looking for.

A couple of weeks in, it occurred to me that I was not just sitting in my metre square, but I was also crosslegged in a Bronze Age living room. Just to my north was a small step up to another part of the house, just behind me to the south would have been a massive central post keeping the roof up, and to my left, there was the 'front' of the house, looking out onto the main street.

Doing archaeology is kind of like doing a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle with only 300 of the pieces. And usually there are no edge pieces either. For example, the central post of the living room obviously was not still there, but there was a circle of loose soil that wasn't like the clay all around it. Also, we inferred that the house would have had a fronting, or a more open side onto the street, because the traces of the walls on this side of the house were so thin. Sometimes the picture of the past is pretty good: on the last day I found a whole pile of seeds that had been burnt and preserved in a pot in the corner of one of the rooms, giving a pretty clear picture of what was in the Bronze Age larder.

Digging in 'Szaz' gave an amazing insight into the actual lives of Bronze Age people. I stopped seeing the site as thousands of different coloured patches of soil. Instead I saw houses, lanes, streets, fires, rubbish dumps and workshops. When it came to the end of the dig I felt sad to cover the site up and return home, but perhaps not so nostalgic for those four thirty wake-up calls.



The excavation site, deserted during lunchtime



The beginnings of an evening thunderstorm



Hard graft at Szazhalombatta-Foldvar



Excavating a step in a Bronze Age house

Investing in Kenyan Education

by Kate Bulteel (m2011)

WHILST SOME FELLOWS AND STUDENTS EXPLORED THE WONDERS OF ETHIOPIA, ONE STUDENT HEADED TO A DIFFERENT PART OF AFRICA. KATE BULTEEL, A 2ND YEAR HISTORIAN, EXPLAINS HER WORK FOR AN EDUCATION NGO IN KENYA.



I've always had that vague desire of so many of my generation; the drive behind the 'save the world' t-shirts, the gap years and the Fairtrade this-that-and-the-other. This summer, I actually did something about it, and I think I managed to do something that will continue to grow. I spent the summer working in a poor rural school, Friends' School Lirhembe, near Kakamega town, Western Kenya. It wasn't the typical 'volunteering in Africa.' I wasn't teaching English – Kenyans learn it from a young age, with the addition of some charmingly old-fashioned phrases like 'I wish to alight at –' And I wasn't building a school, either: FSL has been around since the 1970s and remains well-supported by its founders, the Quakers.

I worked with an organisation, Education Partnerships Africa (formerly Kenya Education Partnerships), which is a UK charity and Kenyan NGO working to improve the quality of education for young people in rural Kenya. They work with rural Kenyan secondary schools by equipping disadvantaged schools with resources. The aim is to bring money, and other help, to established schools with driven head teachers and staff, but lacking the resources to succeed. 41 university students from Cambridge, Oxford, London and Manchester visited 21 schools in two sites in Kenya, Kisii and Kakamega this year. We will be expanding this coming summer to a site in Uganda, Mbarara. We work in pairs at schools and, after raising £1,790 of investment money per pair, we go to east Africa. The project workers and their individual school decide what the best, and most sustainable, way to use the investment is. It can be used for computers, gas for the science lab or even a cow. It is whatever the UK students and the school believe would be best for the school's development.

My project partner and I spent eight weeks with the wonderful students and staff of Lirhembe. I believe Lirhembe is now a much smarter school in terms of ability and technology. We put nearly half of our budget into textbooks (especially for maths, biology and chemistry) and science equipment (focussing on expensive items needed for KCSE exams, the Kenyan equivalent of A-levels). These are

the classic investment suggestions. They are items that the school really needs and will directly affect how well students can prepare for exams. By providing them, we gave a permanent boost to the school. However, the two investments we were most proud of were the smallest (red badges) and the biggest (a photocopier).



Kate Bulteel



Kate with students from Friends' School Lirhembe

Our bright badges stand out crisply against the green Lirhembe uniform, so that everyone can see who has won one for their academic work. The badges are for performance on each set of practice exams. On each is written 'Friends' School Lirhembe', the form, and the merit being awarded – Best in Kiswahili, Overall Champion, Most Improved – seven per form in all. Our intention is that at least one will be a realistic target for most students, and that the badges will be publically passed on at each post-exam assembly and worn until the next set of exams. In this way, students who win a badge will receive several weeks of notice and praise, and we hope this will boost their confidence.

The entire school – from the head teacher, Gladys Kokonya, to the students – was united in its desire for a photocopier to replace the ancient 'duplicating machine' which made near-illegible copies for exams. Our photocopier will drastically cut down on the two weeks it used to take the secretary to produce one set of exams, enabling students to take more practice exams and be better prepared for their KCSEs. According to the teachers, more legible exams will also improve the students' motivation and enable them to do better; the old exams were often impossible to read.

Lirhembe, both the school and the community, welcomed us with open arms. We had many invitations to simply drop by people's houses to 'take tea' whenever we wanted, and we took up the offers gladly. Gladys invited us back to her house for Coke, popcorn, and a discussion of the national stereotypes of France and England. And also to talk about her favourite topic – the merits of Michelle Obama! The students did their best to teach us Kiswahili, and our lack of success was not due to their lack of trying. However, after much practice, I still only remember how to say *nahi sanjaa*, 'I am hungry'. Not that I ever was, with the amount they tried to have us eat. It seemed that many Kenyan women, at least in the Luhya tribe, were proud to be big women.

Despite eating like a Kenyan, I did not attain big woman status, probably because I did not eat enough of the dietary staple, *ugali*, a ball of porridge-like cornmeal. This was mostly because it's not particularly tasty. More appetising is *githeri*, essentially the Kenyan version of chilli: beans, maize, and carrots, with chickpeas, and similar pulses. *Ugali*, *githeri*, and *sukuma wiki* (kale) made up our diet at the school, where we ate lunch every day. For dinner, my project partner and I cooked for ourselves. This involved Western staples like pasta and a lot of guacamole. Kenyan avocados are huge and delicious, and onions and tomatoes easy to buy. If we were out of pasta to have our guacamole with, we'd generally buy chapatti from a stall across the road – chapatti being an adopted national food thanks to large numbers of Indian immigrants. We had a running challenge all summer to find food that didn't go with chapatti. I am happy to report that we were unsuccessful. Guacamole, scrambled eggs, chocolate spread, lentils – chapatti go with them all.

I have come back from Kenya with a number of desires. One is a permanent sugar craving, thanks to the huge spoonfuls I got used to in the two-to-four cups a day of sweet milky chai. Another is the desire to barter, especially for food in the College hall: 'I won't pay these prices. Don't treat me like a tourist! Oh wait, we're in England.' But my biggest desire is to go back, to do more for others and to live the life of hand-washing, iffy electricity, dust and difficult travel that I came to love, because of the people who are there.

If you're interested in finding out more about EPA, or in helping out in any way (including if you know any contacts or NGOs in Kenya or Uganda), please email Kate at kb494@cam.ac.uk or visit epafrica.org.



Corpus visit to Hong Kong

by Stuart Laing, Master

NEARLY 30 OLD MEMBERS GATHERED AT THE HONG KONG BANKERS' CLUB ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE NICHOLAS BACON SOCIETY. THE MASTER, THE BURSAR AND HONORARY FELLOW SIR TERENCE ETHERTON ATTENDED THE EVENT. THE MASTER GIVES A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE EVENING.

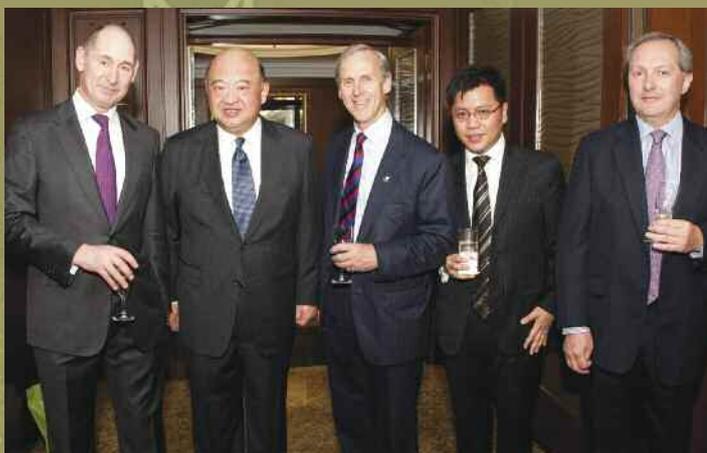
At the initiative of Sir Terence Etherton (m1969), Honorary Fellow and President of the Nicholas Bacon Society, we visited Hong Kong in September. We were joined there by the Bursar. All attended a magnificent dinner in the Hong Kong Bankers' Club on Saturday 22 September at which Sir Geoffrey Ma, the Chief Justice of Hong Kong, was the guest of honour. The dinner had been arranged to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the Nicholas Bacon Society, but also to meet as many of the College's alumni living in the region as possible. About 30 Old Members from all disciplines attended, not only from Hong Kong but also from Singapore, Malaysia and even Australia. We are most grateful to all those who made the effort to come, and particularly to those who travelled so far to get there.

Masters of the College have probably travelled to Hong Kong before, but this is the first time that we have organised an alumni-centred event. Our thanks go particularly to Anson Wong (m1999) and Alvin Cheung (m2004), who made contact with our alumni there, booked the Club, and made other arrangements.

These all worked out perfectly, and those present enjoyed a delicious meal and magnificent views over the city from the 40th floor of the Club as darkness fell. After the meal, the Bursar and I led a discussion on College matters, including College finances, and some useful ideas came forward on how east and south east Asian alumni might be able to help the College in the future.

Pelican readers will be aware that it is difficult to organise these overseas events, since the concentration of Corpus Old Members in any one place is seldom enough to justify the costs of travel. But we recognise that these gatherings, with representation from the College, are much appreciated. I also attended a dinner for alumni in Frankfurt in November, and we hope to arrange other overseas visits next year, and perhaps back to South East Asia the year after.

If you think you have a group big enough to make a visit worthwhile, or if you are interested in acting as a coordinator for alumni in your country or region, please contact the Development Office who can help with the arrangements.



Sir Terence Etherton, Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma, the Master, Mr Anson Wong and the Bursar at the reception



The Master greets Mr Garry Evans



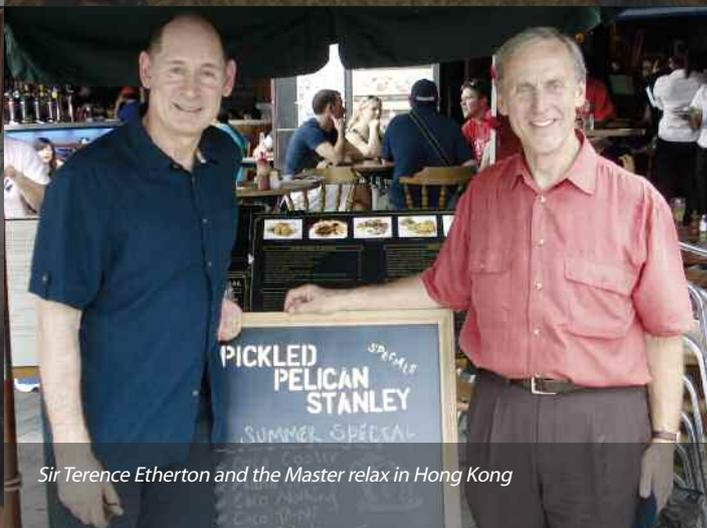
The Bursar and Mr Garry Evans enjoy the dinner



Mr Ian Pennicott QC, Sir Terence Etherton, Ms Alyssa King, Ms Birgit Buergi, Mr Anson Wong, Mr Alvin Cheung and Mr Philip Jeyaretnam at the reception



Mrs Sibella Laing, Mrs Wai Phin Kwee, Mr Philip Kwee, Mr Liong Kwee and Mr Phillip Jeyaretnam at the reception



Sir Terence Etherton and the Master relax in Hong Kong



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