Welcome

As we go to press, the College is delighted to announce the election of Stuart Laing, currently Her Majesty’s Ambassador to Kuwait and Old Member (m1967), as Master from 1st October 2008, following the retirement of Professor Oliver Rackham FBA. Corpus is grateful to Professor Rackham for his outstanding service as Master, and looks forward to welcoming Stuart and Sibella Laing back to the College. See the website for biographical details and more information. A profile of Stuart Laing will follow in the Michaelmas edition of the Pelican.

This issue of the Pelican focuses on the new Taylor Library and the student centre. These buildings, planned and awaited for 6 years, opened their doors at the end of January and now it is hard to remember what life was like without them. An official opening is still to come, but from the first moments the doors opened, the library and bar have been in constant use. Students, Fellows, staff and visitors embraced the space and vastly improved facilities immediately. Christopher de Hamel, Fellow Librarian, talks about the ‘myopic’ perspective of the seemingly long time taken to build the library against the centuries of the College’s existence and indeed, in terms of 656 years, it passed in a flash.

We acknowledge with gratitude the many donations from Old Members that made the new library and centre possible. In particular, Dr John Taylor (m1956), Honorary Fellow and benefactor after whom the library is named, gave the principal gift towards the library. Dr Taylor has also donated an extraordinary clock which he designed and which will be installed over the summer in the space that was the entrance to the NatWest Bank. Mrs Mary Insall, widow of Dr John Insall (m1950) gave a large gift in memory of her husband and this is commemorated by a carved stone which is laid in the floor inside the main lobby. The Worshipful Company of Girdlers which sponsors a student from New Zealand each year, also made a large donation to the library, and the seminar room is now named Girdlers’ Room in appreciation of their extraordinary generosity.

The many Old Members – almost 600 in all – who made donations to the new library and centre and to the Parker Library, which is being expanded as a result of the Taylor library being built, are named in the Book of Benefactors. This is being made in the Conservation Centre and will go on display in a specially made cabinet, donated by our former Master, Professor Hanoum Ahmed who was so instrumental in driving the library court project forward.

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The Pelican
Easter Term

The Library Court opens
by Dr Christopher de Hamel

During excavations for the new Taylor Library a few pieces of Roman pottery were found, suggesting occupancy of the site long ago. It was later part of the churchyard of St Benet’s Church, built in the early eleventh century, and several medieval skeletons emerged too from the diggings, and a graceful Tudor jug.

In 1867 the building became the London County Bank, with an adjacent neo-gothic house for the bank manager, afterwards merged into a single building and reformed as the National Westminster Bank. In early 2005, the bank’s lease expired and the College took the property back into its own use, for the purpose of creating a library. A site which has served Roman settlers, Anglo-Saxon undertakers, Elizabethan revellers and earnest Victorian bankers, is now setting out on a new journey, perhaps the longest of all, as a working library for Corpus Christi College.

The project is a thoroughly satisfactory result of breaking a deadlock which had greatly exercised the College in the 1990s. Since 1929 the student library had been on the ground floor beneath the Parker Library on the southern side of Wilkins’s New Court. Some of the most valuable and vulnerable medieval manuscripts in existence were stored upstairs immediately above the Butler Library, an articulation of cramped rooms which were open for 24 hours a day and were unsupervised at night. The risks of accidental fire, especially, were too great for comfort. The College applied for Lottery money to construct an entirely new and secure Parker Library elsewhere and it was turned down. That was a pivotal moment in recent College history. The subsequent resolution to continue regardless and to raise money independently was controversial, to say the least, for one faction deplored the proposed abandonment of Wilkins’s finest
The Pelican

This was to create a new student library instead (placating the liberals, with student interests at heart), which, in turn, would vacate space for a secure vault and rare books reading room on the ground floor (pleasing the conservatives, for whom Wilkins’s Parker Library was a precious and historical setting). Money already raised for saving the Parker Library will now secure its future, as safely as ever envisaged in the Lottery application, but in its old room and at a fraction of the cost. It was a satisfying piece of diplomacy, skilfully steered through its various committees, at least in part, by the then Master, Professor Haroon Ahmed.

In February 2002, the Governing Body opted for locating the new student library in the bank site. Like a conjurer with perfect timing, Dr John C. Taylor, inventor and Old Member of the College, pledged a large proportion of the estimated cost of the library. Architects were appointed and preliminary work began almost at once. The bank building was vacated on schedule, and construction started. In the long view of things – we are speaking of a site with 2000 years’ occupancy, owned by Corpus since the 1360s – a few years here or there are nothing. From the myopic perspective of the College staff and students on the ground, however, the project seems to have lasted for a lifetime. The whole building has been hidden behind dark street hoardings and under scaffolding, subjected to industrial noises that would have frightened even Dante, for an entire generation of undergraduates.

It is sometimes said that the most expensive sentence in the English language is ‘While we are about it.’ The creation of a new Library Court seemed an opportunity for undertaking other long-cherished projects, such as creating a new student bar and common-room beneath, and Fellows’ rooms and offices above, which, in turn, engendered unexpected tasks, such as underpinning the medieval stonework of the north-west corner of Old Court, for its original builders were found to have compromised on the foundations, doubtless under pressure from an impatient College in the fourteenth century.

Quite suddenly, on a gently raining day in late January 2008, the scaffolding came down and the students were let in. It was rather like releasing seals into their new enclosure in the zoo, and we all watched to see where they would go. There are just over a hundred seats in the new Taylor Library, in rows and clusters and in little projecting balconies, like opera boxes, on three levels. The sun came out and the light poured in. We saw unexpected vignettes of the students were let in. It was rather likereleasing seals into their new enclosure in the zoo, and we all watched to see where they would go. There are just over a hundred seats in the new Taylor Library, in rows and clusters and in little projecting balconies, like opera boxes, on three levels. The sun came out and the light poured in. We saw unexpected vignettes of the students were let in. It was rather like releasing seals into their new enclosure in the zoo, and we all watched to see where they would go. There are just over a hundred seats in the new Taylor Library, in rows and clusters and in little projecting balconies, like opera boxes, on three levels. The sun came out and the light poured in. We saw unexpected vignettes of the students were let in. It was rather like releasing seals into their new enclosure in the zoo, and we all watched to see where they would go. There are just over a hundred seats in the new Taylor Library, in rows and clusters and in little projecting balconies, like opera boxes, on three levels. The sun came out and the light poured in. We saw unexpected vignettes of the students were let in. It was rather like releasing seals into their new enclosure in the zoo, and we all watched to see where they would go. There are just over a hundred seats in the new Taylor Library, in rows and clusters and in little projecting balconies, like opera boxes, on three levels. The sun came out and the light poured in. We saw unexpected vignettes of the students were let in. It was rather like releasing seals into their new enclosure in the zoo, and we all watched to see where they would go. There are just over a hundred seats in the new Taylor Library, in rows and clusters and in little projecting balconies, like opera boxes, on three levels. The sun came out and the light poured in. We saw unexpected vignettes of the students were let in. It was rather like releasing seals into their new enclosure in the zoo, and we all watched to see where they would go. There are just over a hundred seats in the new Taylor Library, in rows and clusters and in little projecting balconies, like opera boxes, on three levels. The sun came out and the light poured in. We saw unexpected vignettes of the students were let in. It was rather like releasing seals into their new enclosure in the zoo, and we all watched to see where they would go. There are just over a hundred seats in the new Taylor Library, in rows and clusters and in little projecting balconies, like opera boxes, on three levels. The sun came out and the light poured in. We saw unexpected vignettes of the students were let in. It was rather like releasing seals into their new enclosure in the zoo, and we all watched to see where they would go. There are just over a hundred seats in the new Taylor Library, in rows and clusters and in little projecting balconies, like opera boxes, on three levels. The sun came out and the light poured in. We saw unexpected vignettes of the students were let in. It was rather like releasing seals into their new enclosure in the zoo, and we all watched to see where they would go. There are just over a hundred seats in the new Taylor Library, in rows and clusters and in little projecting balconies, like opera boxes, on three levels. The sun came out and the light poured in. We saw unexpected vignettes of

Luiseach Nic Eoin
2nd year, Archaeology and Anthropology

The Pelican Easter Term

Iwona Krasodomska-Jones
Taylor Librarian

SIX YEARS AGO I HAD AN INTERVIEW FOR THE BUTLER SUB-LIBRARIANSHIP IN CORPUS. I WAS ASKED WHETHER I WOULD LIKE TO BE PART OF THE NEW LIBRARY STEERING COMMITTEE...

Of course, I agreed. It sounded as though it was an extremely exciting proposition and I looked forward to being part of it.

At the end of January this year, the project was finished and we opened the door to the readers. Students, Fellows, College staff and hundreds of visitors, photographers, Old Members, other librarians, have already flocked to see the most modern library in Cambridge. I have been overwhelmed by the positive remarks and compliments I’ve received. During our informal opening something happened which made me feel we must have got something right. Seven minutes after the students came in to their new library they were already making use of the new desks, connecting their laptops, books and notes in use.

Someone wrote to me after visiting, “You have such a nice new library, you must be very proud of it. Your library is so beautiful it is like a piece of jewellery. It must be one of the most beautiful libraries in Cambridge.” It is, and I am very proud of it.

The Pelican

Luiseach Nic Eoin
2nd year, Archaeology and Anthropology

The Pelican Easter Term

The new library is beautiful. We’ve been waiting a long time for it, but I think everyone agrees that it has been worth the wait.

The Butler Library felt occasionally dark and airless, but there is no danger of this in the Taylor, which has windows stretching three floors. The response from students has been very positive, even those from other colleges; I’ve now given tours to three friends from different colleges who all expressed varying degrees of envy...
All buildings reflect the ethos of their organisations. College buildings do not tend to be showy to the outside world, instead the architectural interest is usually on the inside, designed for the benefit of their members. The importance placed on the relationship between buildings and outside space has led to the formation of courts, creating an atmosphere of tranquillity. Old Court and New Court were designed more or less for their current functions and have both individual and particular architectural qualities of legibility, intimacy and formality.

If the bank hall became a primary College function, such as a library, how would it fit within the whole?

In approaching this project, the first questions for us were: If the bank hall became a primary College function, such as a library, how would it fit within the whole? How would it relate to external space? The idea of turning the bank ‘inside out’ was developed, so the front became the back and the back became the front. The new court off which the library is entered creates a new relationship between the building and the external space within the context of the series of existing courts.

Hostel Yard had developed incrementally as a back yard, with none of the characteristics which Old and New Court share. Originally it housed privies and outhouses for both Old Court and the terrace of houses fronting Trumpington Street. Over the years the College has been under pressure to find more accommodation. In the early twentieth century this led to the development of the Lyons Building and the conversion of rooms around the yard to undergraduate rooms and for miscellaneous functions, such as a laundry and a maintenance workshop. Despite this development, it still retained the ambience of a service yard. It was agreed that there were ways in which this could be altered to create a new, more formal small Court.

For example, the Crystal Palace, staff bike shed and 1930s bridge building were demolished and some activities relocated elsewhere. The brief was revised to include a new Student Centre with bar, café and JCR; staff offices for administration; new washrooms to serve Old Court; and two new rooms for Fellows. Some of this is underground and other parts are tucked into existing buildings. The new element is a stone clad L shaped building at the end of the court, with the significance of the library signalled by means of a large window on axis. The building is stitched in with its 14th, 19th and 20th century neighbours and our aim was to make it part of a harmonious whole in a relatively relaxed setting.

The resolution of the internal organisation and form of the library proper were determined by logistical factors such as the volume available within the bank; the disposition of the existing windows, the existing structural lines; a desire to minimise the environmental impact of the building; and the particular functional characteristics of a College library. The latter are quite different from those of most other sorts of library. Those who use College libraries are usually familiar with them and this affects the way in which they can and should be organised. Instead of stringent security and constant staff supervision, as in a public library, study spaces are required where individuals can be introspective, insular and undisturbed.

“When we build let us think that we build forever.”

John Ruskin

To accommodate the library, the ground floor of the main banking hall was removed and the basement level dropped by a little more than half a metre, to provide a large volume into which a three storey oak “building within a building” has been fitted. One enters it from the newly formed Library Court, via an entrance lobby overlooked by the Librarian’s office. These, with lockers and lavatories, are sited within what was the Lyons Building. Each of the four buildings affected by the works had different floor and ceiling heights and reconciling these while also providing access for the wheelchair disabled was a challenge that helped determine what the building wanted to be. The scale of the entrance area provides a contrast to the three storey library hall proper.
The hall is entered on the middle of three floors and this tripartite arrangement of bottom, middle and top makes the building legible. From there, one then enters the circulation space, kept distinct from the study carrels for clarity and to avoid readers being disturbed. This area also serves to house some of the College’s splendid silver collection in royal red lined display cases. The next space on each floor comprises the oak bookcases, which are in the centre of the plan, where there is least daylight. These are densely arranged and slot into and conceal new cruciform shaped steel columns. This combination creates an unusual depth of wood for a contemporary building, which gives the library solidity. Beyond this space are the readers’ seats, which are concealed behind the bookcases and contained within framed balconies. Although the readers cannot be seen from the outside they all benefit from having natural light from the banking hall windows. These and the form and geometry of the original external walls are deliberately out of sync with the internal arrangement of the oak box creating contrasting forms. Consequently one has glancing views of spaces beyond spaces and each of these is unique and asymmetrical. The intention of these arrangements is that one could metaphorically lose or hide oneself in the maze of the library, in which the boundaries between spaces are not altogether clear but readers’ seats are contained and views framed for contemplation and respite from study.

The project was developed in collaboration with several consultants. Robert Bowles (m1968), a partner in Alan Baxter and Associates, who is also an Old Member of the College, led the engineering team dealing with this work. The environmental strategy was devised by Max Fordham LLP. Costings were provided by Davis Langdon and project management by EC Harris. The artwork on the glass and signs was carried out by Lida Kindersley.

The structural engineering works were complex as the development is within and adjacent to three listed buildings, dating from the 14th century, which have had many major and minor adaptations made to them over the years. Much of it was inaccessible until the building works began. The NatWest Bank had a lease on the building which meant invasive investigatory works could not be done there until the building was handed over. Inevitably and despite detailed pre start investigations, there were a number of surprises in store. The original post tensioned timber beams uncovered with the removal of the bank ceiling had begun to fail with concealed props introduced in an earlier 1920s conversion. Adaptations were required to adjust our design to preserve these timbers instead of replacing them as we originally planned. Clearing the volume occupied by the bank was inevitably structurally demanding. It entailed removing the existing floor and structure and replacing it. The bank floor was carried by very heavily reinforced vaults in the basement. These had to be removed while maintaining the support for the College accommodation above. A ‘forest’ of temporary steelwork was installed to carry this load, while the 1920s structure was removed and replaced with the permanent cruciform steel columns and new beams. The demolition works were highly intricate and incremental, with select elements of the existing structure retained to provide a working platform for the new construction. The bank vaults and floors were particularly well made to avoid theft and so were difficult and noisy to remove.
However, walking into the Taylor Library for the first time I found myself overwhelmed with options on which way to turn. Each corner seemed to be hiding some neat little secret: another workstation, equipped with funky halogen lighting, powerpoints and an internet connection; a display cabinet of Corpus’ finest silver; books, empty shelves waiting to be filled with potential book orders and more books; furniture, embossed with the Corpus logo; a large frosted glass window; and, more ‘extra-features’ than you could count, included because of the love and attention given by our wonderful librarian. It is a library that makes you want to spend time in it, engrossed in work or a fine book, and one which I look forward to using in the future.

Blake Hansen
2nd year Natural Sciences and Girdler Scholar

ONE SHOULD NEVER BE LOST IN ONE’S OWN COLLEGE AFTER NEARLY TWO YEARS OF STUDY THERE.

Kate Rosin
3rd year, Social and Political Sciences

I THINK THE NEW LIBRARY IS FANTASTIC. BEAUTIFULLY DESIGNED, PLenty OF LIGHT, SPACIOUS AND COMFORTABLE. A MASSIVE IMPROVEMENT ON THE OLD LIBRARY WHICH I WAS NEVER INCLINED TO WORK IN.
This reaction and the atmosphere of silent appreciation has remained in the building ever since. From the student perspective the sheer size of the place practically guarantees a space for work, a fact only counter-balanced by a College-wide new-found enthusiasm for study. New facilities such as internet access at every table, localised lighting and increased storage space for books have also been greatly appreciated. By far, however, the strongest appeal of the new library seems to be the overall aesthetic feel. The views from the top floor down to the bottom mean that one is never far from other workers whilst the abundance of nooks and crannies ensures that we cannot feel lost in the size of the place. The building is exceedingly light during the daytime due to the massive windows on the top floor which, combined with the triple-glazing and view of King’s Parade, combine to give it a weird feeling of transcendence – cut off from the outside world but still gazing out onto it. The whole atmosphere is entirely conducive to work – silent and tranquil without feeling anaesthetised or deadening.

A similar sort of description might be given to the new bar area – it would, however, be false. Where the library feels calm and quiet the bar has a distinct cosmopolitan atmosphere. The small room at the back with sofas and tables is full throughout the day of people chatting and working over coffee while the larger section at the bottom of the bar fills at night with drinkers. Once the photographs and oars from the old bar are moved over the continuity between old and new will be complete – a modern coffee bar at the top coupled with the slightly more traditional pub atmosphere of the lower floor. The open-plan format of the new bar also gives a much greater sense of space; this on top of the actual improvement in size on the old bar. This is ideal for events and concerts – already there have been two musical evenings in the bar, a blues evening at the weekend and a live student band on the opening night. There has yet to be a College ‘slack’ but it is obvious that these can be much bigger events now that there is actual freedom of movement!

Overall everyone seems exceedingly happy with the new facilities – the countless laptops in the library and coats in the bar indicate their immediate popularity. Although it has taken a long time to get here, and it hasn’t always been entirely easy, the Library Court Project meets and surpasses the long built up student expectations.
For arts and humanities students, libraries are the places in which we spend endless hours pouring over archives and secondary sources. For science and medical students, although they have their labs and hospitals, libraries are also key places for study sessions and research. Libraries are therefore synonymous with research: the graduate students’ bread and butter. So for us, the addition of a new and beautiful library is happily welcomed.

As members of Leckhampton, we are lucky enough to have our own library underneath the George Thomson Building. However, it is also very useful to have a central library in the College with a larger collection of secondary resources. Other libraries in Cambridge, such as the University Library, are not always conveniently located when running home from the lab or department, and it is very helpful to have an easy resource located within the College.

Furthermore, the fantastic design of the new building makes it a very aesthetically pleasing place to study.

Some of the comments made by MCR members about the new Taylor Library attest to its aesthetic qualities and convenience:

“I like the design, and having internet terminals at every study space is great. Will certainly visit it frequently.”
The workshop, which is situated on Victoria Road in Cambridge, was founded by David Kindersley, lettercutter, sculptor and inventor, in 1946, following his apprenticeship to Eric Gill. David was joined in 1976 by Lida Lopes Cardozo, beginning a partnership which lasted until David’s death in 1995. Now run by Lida, his widow, with her husband Graham Beck, it consists usually of two lettercutters and three apprentices. Teaching is a vital part of workshop life.

Lida and the workshop make letters in stone, glass, metal, paper and wood, including headstones, commemorative plaques, heraldic carving, sundials, typefaces, bookplates and lettering cut straight into buildings. They cut with hammer and chisel and avoid using machines. They design, cut, paint, gild and prefer to fix all their own work. Lida has also written and published several books on lettering and workshop practice.

Over the decades since 1946, the workshop has undertaken thousands of commissions, large and small, from private individuals as well as public bodies. Examples can be seen at the British Library (the entrance gates), in the British Museum, Westminster Abbey, St Paul’s Cathedral, St Giles in Edinburgh, numerous Cambridge and some Oxford colleges and institutions and in countless cemeteries and churchyards across the UK. The workshop has also fulfilled commissions from countries as far apart as China, Japan, North America and Europe.
The Corpus Clock

This Autumn a new face will be arriving at Corpus. The Corpus Clock, which is both a piece of public art and a unique device for the measurement of time, will be installed at the corner of Trumpington Street and Bene’t Street as the final adornment of the new Taylor Library.

Described by Dr Christopher de Hamel, Fellow Librarian, as ‘both hypnotically beautiful and deeply disturbing’, the Clock is bound to become a talking point for College and town alike.

Clocks have been associated with great public buildings in England from at least 1386 when the Salisbury Cathedral clock was installed – not long after the foundation of Corpus Christi. Time and death have also been themes of Corpus Christi College since its beginning; the College was founded in 1352 as the result of the Black Death, and the College’s name, Corpus Christi, reflects the late medieval veneration of the Holy Sacrament and the dead Body of Christ, as it was in the hours between the Crucifixion and the resurrection.

The Corpus Clock has been invented, designed, and built by Dr John Taylor, principal benefactor of the Taylor Library, and is the world prototype of a new kind of clock. The library site originally opened on to the street, but when the striking triple-height design of the new library meant that the old doors would need to be sealed up, Dr Taylor suggested an ingenious and exciting solution to the problem – a piece of public art that would both challenge and entertain, to be sited within the old Victorian portico.

The Corpus Clock has been produced over 4 years by a team of highly skilled engineers, craftsmen and fabricators overseen by Dr Taylor and its creation has resulted in six new patents. The Chronophage has been made from beaten copper by Cambridge-based sculptor Matthew Sanderson.

The Clock will be kept under wraps until its unveiling in September, but here is a glimpse of one of its highly detailed features – the Blinking Eye…

“The unblinking eye of a CCTV camera has an air of menace. Likewise a snake paralyses a rabbit by its stare. The blink of the Corpus Chronophage changes the mechanical precision of a metallic monster into a believable Faustus.

The blue pupil of the eye is surrounded by a network of gold blood vessels across the bloodshot red cornea. The gold eyelids travel across the eye and disappear again in an instant; if you are not watching carefully, you will not even notice. You will need to watch very carefully to discern the graceful tracings, giving the illusion of the blood vessels. Sometimes you will even see two blinks in quick succession. The Blink is performed by a hidden spring drive, controlled in the best tradition of seventeenth century clockmakers of London. The spring is coiled up inside a housing that can be seen mounted on the large gearwheel visibly protruding from the bottom of the mechanism. As the huge pendulum below the Clock rocks the Chronophage as he steps round the great escapewheel, each backward and forward movement is used by spring clutches to wind up the drive spring. A position stop prevents the spring being overwound yet allows the spring to be ready at an instant to drive the Blink. The mechanism is released by a countwheel with semi random spacing so the Blink takes place at any position in the to-and-fro motion of the pendulum. A further countwheel mechanism chooses a single or a double blink whilst the air damper at the top of the gear trains slow the action to a realistic pace.

This brief information has not been obtained in the best Walsingham tradition but I am sure Faustus’ creator would approve. At the very least it gives a taster for the mechanical complexities of the Corpus Chronophage. All will be revealed by the Autumnal Equinox.”

Dr John C Taylor (m1956)
This year’s Beldam Dinner was attended by some 140 Old Members of Corpus who matriculated between 1988 and 1991.

The evening began with the opportunity to tour the new Taylor Library and also to view some of the ancient manuscripts the College is proud to hold in the Parker Library. Guests then braved the sporadic downpours to enjoy a drink in the Master’s Lodge before heading up to Hall for a six-course feast. The College was abuzz with the noise of excited chatter of old friends and acquaintances catching up on years gone by throughout the evening and well into the night.

The occasion was very enjoyable and many of the guests have written to thank the College for the evening and express their gratitude to the late Robert Beldam for the privilege.

Next year’s Beldam Dinner will take place on Saturday 04 April 2009 and all those who matriculated between 1963 and 1966 will be invited back to dine.

This year’s Cooks’ Lecture will be delivered on 22 October by Dr Pamela Ewan, entitled The Food Allergy Epidemic. Dr Ewan is head of the Allergy Department in Cambridge, a major centre recognised nationally for clinical excellence and part of Addenbrooke’s Hospital. Her particular clinical and research interests are nut allergy and anaphylaxis. In various national roles she worked to develop the specialty of allergy and improve NHS allergy services, for which she received a CBE. She is Chair of the National Allergy Strategy Group and past President of the British Society for Allergy & Clinical Immunology.

The Responder will be the celebrated chef John Williams MBE, head chef at the Ritz.

Last year’s lecture was given by Professor Steve O’Rahilly, FRs, Professor of Clinical Biochemistry and Medicine at Addenbrookes, entitled My Genes Make Me Eat That. The responder was Prue Leith, celebrity cook, author and Chair of the School Food Trust.

Tickets may be obtained from the Development Office.

The lecture and reception are free and open to all.
New Zealand Reunion

Corpus’s links with New Zealand date back to the first Girdlers’ Scholarship being awarded in 1952. The Scholarship was established by the Girdlers’ Company to allow the most distinguished New Zealand school students to undertake their degree at a Cambridge or Oxford College, now specifically Corpus Christi. The Girdlers’ Company intends that scholars, after completion of their studies, will use their education in ways that are beneficial to New Zealand,, meaning that many of the scholars who have studied at the College have now returned to their home country, while others act as unofficial ambassadors all over the world. A number of the College’s Old Members who weren’t Girdler Scholars have also been drawn to New Zealand and have emigrated there over the years, resulting in a total of 62 Old Members currently known to be living there. It was therefore thought that it was worth attempting a small reunion when the College’s Alumni Relations Officer visited New Zealand on holiday at the end of 2007…

Lucy Gowans, Alumni Relations Officer

Last October, a rather last minute email was sent to as many as possible of the 62 Old Members of Corpus now living in New Zealand to discover how many would be interested in attending a small reunion at some time in late November or early December. There was a very positive response and Rob Wilson, Girdler Scholar (m1972), was kind enough to offer his home on the outskirts of Auckland for the event. Invitations were hurriedly emailed and posted and Corpus’s first ever New Zealand Reunion was underway!

After a very long plane journey and a few days relaxing with my family in Napier, I was on another plane back to Auckland for the event. It was a beautiful day in the city and as the taxi pulled up to Rob Wilson’s house, the bright pink of a Corpus scarf hanging over the front door confirmed that I was in the right place. The 14 guests arrived and soon began talking about their College years while enjoying a glass or two of wine and some delightful food. It was a wonderful way to spend a warm and sunny Saturday evening in December and I hope that some of our alumni have kept in touch since discovering they live so close to each other, all those miles away from Corpus. The College is very grateful to Rob Wilson for his kind hospitality.

The bright pink of a Corpus scarf hanging over the front door confirmed that I was in the right place.

Freya Burton (m2000)

Last December, I found myself in a very surreal situation. Surrounded by Mow alumni from Corpus I was not in fact standing at a garden party eating strawberries or drinking sherry before a formal hall, but in a garden, in Auckland around 18,000km away from Cambridge. This was a chance to get to know alumni from Corpus from various eras - in fact it took me a moment to realise that the old photos around the room didn’t have any women in them...

It was also a chance for some to renew past acquaintances, with both ‘regular’ students and Girdler Scholars reliving past times at Corpus. It was a fantastic way to spend a summer’s evening – I never thought that I would find myself at such an event having emigrated to New Zealand 2 years ago. It was a shame that not all Corpusians in New Zealand could make it to the event, which was held in Auckland, but it definitely gave those who attended cause to arrange further reunions in the future.

The Pelican Easter Term
Invitation to Old Members –
Barbeque with the MCR

On Sunday July 13th at 1:00 pm, the Corpus Christi MCR is holding a Postgraduate Alumni Barbeque, and you are cordially invited.

This is your chance to catch up with old friends, wander around the Leckhampton gardens, and find out what current graduate students are working on. We have over 200 MCR members working in subjects ranging from biochemistry to classics. Alongside fantastic conversation we will be holding various activities, such as a students versus Old Members croquet match and swimming, so don't forget to bring your swim suit! Children are always welcome, and there will be activities for them as well, so please feel free to bring them along. In between all this fun you can enjoy a selection of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, and quench your thirst with drinks both alcoholic and non-alcoholic. We hope you will come and join us at Leckhampton for a great day.

Tickets can be bought through the Development Office and cost £12 for adults and £6 for children. We look forward to seeing you there.

Development Office: 01223 339731 or email dev21@cam.ac.uk or write to Lucy Gowans, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge CB2 1RH.

Dr Peter Raymond Lewis (1924 -2007)
By Professor Karol Sikora (m1966)

In December 2007 one of the best-loved of Corpus’s Fellows, Dr Peter Lewis, died. Peter, along with his wife Joyce, was a key figure in the medical life of the College for over four decades. He will be remembered as much for his pastoral care in the lives of many young medics both at Corpus and throughout the University as for his considerable achievements in research and teaching. Karol Sikora, a former student of Peter’s, remembers him.

It was a glorious autumn morning and I was up for my first ever visit to Corpus. The flower beds in the New Court glistened in the orange sunshine glinting off the mellow stone. Peter sat under the elegant clock in the Senior Tutor’s office and asked me what I found exciting about doing medicine. That was 43 years ago - frightening to think where all the time has gone. It was also the beginning of a remarkable love affair with Cambridge for me. Peter was just an amazing Director of Studies - open, friendly, always available and willing to give advice.

Fiercely loyal to the College, he did so much to support its infrastructure but never sought any recognition or reward. Leckhampton was his pride and joy, named after the Gloucestershire village in which he and Joyce were both born. The Master at the time, Sir George Thomson, wanted to name it St Mary’s Court but Peter’s perseverance and popularity won the day. The concept of a graduate only environment was unique at the time and broke the mould for Oxbridge. I remember swimming in the beautifully clear, if slightly cool, pool amidst the pine trees and spending time revising in the elegant gardens. When I returned as a PhD student, dining at Leckhampton was the highlight of the week. Peter also became Bursar and Steward of Estates for the College.

The Medics and Vets of Corpus were incredibly privileged to have someone so committed to managing their academic and pastoral development. The Lewis Medical Society was formed by a group of enterprising students at the end of last year. One of its aims is to continue with the holistic care of undergraduates that he excelled at. He was very touched by this but sadly too unwell to come to the inaugural meeting, although he knew it was happening. A longer obituary will appear in the Corpus Letter.