We are delighted to offer you the summer edition of the Pelican, which has a very special focus on Leckhampton. This is for two happy reasons. First, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the opening of Leckhampton as a facility for Corpus graduates, with a lunch and afternoon party in the beautiful gardens. This will be in July, we hope in fine weather, and will have happened by the time you read this. Despite the parched time we have had in April and May, the gardens should be looking their best, though it will be a few weeks before Tom Stuart-Smith’s spectacular prairie garden comes into its prime. We look forward to seeing a number of alumni for that happy occasion.

Second, in July we are also starting construction work on the new building at Leckhampton. This is a very exciting development, which after much discussion the Governing Body decided on last year, and for which we were recently granted planning permission. It will provide about 34 single rooms and 6 small flats, for postgraduate students and research Fellows; it will enable us to bring into the Leckhampton community a number of our students who are currently housed outside, and possibly allow for a small increase in our overall numbers of graduate students. It will be sited between the Victorian house and the cricket pavilion, and involve the demolition of 25 Cranmer Road. We are financing the project mainly from the sale of property which the College no longer needs. We are also asking alumni – particularly those who have studied at Corpus as postgraduates, and who benefitted from their time at Leckhampton – if they can contribute to the new development, which is the first new building on the site since the George Thomson Building. We should like to name rooms after those who have given generously and we’ll be writing with more details of this soon. If any of you would like to discuss this with the Development Director, Liz Winter, please do contact her directly on ejw39@cam.ac.uk. We greatly look forward to seeing our Leckhampton community enhanced through this new building, which will be built to the best environment-friendly standards, and should come into use at the start of the 2012-13 academic year.

What else will catch your eye in this Pelican? In addition to the interesting range of interviews and profiles (a Professor, Jonathan Haslam; an alumnus, Hugh Bonneville; and our Lectrice, Alicia Tromp), I hope you will be interested by Lucy Sparke’s article on University and College fees. You will know from the public debate what a crucial issue this is for all of us involved in higher education administration. We are all concerned about the expected outcomes from the changes being introduced by this Government tighter money for research and teaching, higher debts for graduates, and (we fear) more hesitation from students from less privileged backgrounds to go to the more prestigious and more expensive universities. Lucy’s article sets out the main issues and brings clarity to the costs involved.
Russia’s Cold War

by Jonathan Haslam


In a review in The Economist Online, April 2011, Edward Lucas wrote: ‘Many books, most of them nonsense, have tried to explain the Cold War from a western point of view, often claiming that the whole thing was got up by American arms manufacturers. The great virtue of Professor Haslam’s book is that it concentrates on the eastern side, with excellent archival research and canny characterisation of Soviet perceptions and decision-making. Reading this beautifully written account, the reader feels a certain sense of incredulous relief. How did a bankrupt and dysfunctional system run by geriatric nonentities, thugs and madmen manage to wage a global struggle so effectively for so long? Thank goodness we won.’

Jonathan Haslam explains here how his interest in the Cold War began in early childhood, and how the changing face of east/west politics gradually enabled him to explore the origins of this fascinating period of contemporary history from the original sources.

A safely suburban childhood with distant echoes of empire in a town where nothing happened; a home counties mother entirely absorbed in a household of five and a phlegmatic pin-striped father born under the Raj: these were not the most likely circumstances to prompt an all-absorbing interest in the Cold War.

One Thursday evening, however – it must have been 25 October 1962, my father startled us all on returning home by saying that the trip to see my brother at school some six hours away was cancelled as we would likely as not be blown up that weekend and better we were at home together (except my brother apparently).

The memory never left me and became something of an obsession as I watched in disbelief as the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia and destroyed the last vestige of hope for humane socialism in Eastern Europe. I confidently but foolishly believed that a university education would explain how and why our lives had nearly ended so early.

However you look at it, Russia was obviously critical. But without the language one was unlikely to find what had really happened and why it continued. Unfortunately in those days one was not allowed to study Russian at university if not done formally at school (my LinguaPhone course did not count). So instead I went to the London School of Economics because it offered International Relations with Economics. That seemed a likely alternative.

But the courses steered clear of the key issues of the Cold War (the political scientists refused to discuss Vietnam and the historians refused to proceed further than 1945). There I took lunch-hour language lessons along with ever decreasing numbers of PhD students and then travelled to Russia at every opportunity, taking Napoleon’s route, but by coach, staying at camping sites and trades union hotels (to be addressed as comrade). One had to get there in an organised group but it was exciting then to escape from the tour – which the authorities did not like but could formally do nothing about – and explore on one’s own, trying language skills to the amusement of the locals. Afterwards I became a research student because little was to be learned as an undergraduate.

It rapidly became apparent that Russian documents required to study the Cold War were unavailable, however. So I would have to study the prewar period instead and begin with declassified documents already in print. Since
no one at the LSE knew anything about the subject let alone the documents. I consulted a world figure, EH Carr at Trinity College, Cambridge and, still frustrated, brazenly asked to come and work under his supervision; a request he unexpectedly but kindly accepted.

This was 1973. But Carr was already very old (81) and extremely busy finishing a fourteen-volume history of Soviet Russia. Meanwhile in a test case pressed by the British Council the Russians refused my request to work in Moscow’s archives on the grounds I could be a spy. Forced to remain entirely in Cambridge, my plans forfeited. I lost heart and led a bohemian private life, attending the odd lecture, participating in Harry Hinsley’s seminar every fortnight where one could take pot shots at visiting speakers and reading my way through the University Library in search of stimulation, leaving as soon as a lectureship in my field opened up in Birmingham.

This meandering trail to the ultimate destination came to seem a one-way trip down a very long tunnel without any light at its end. Later it did become possible to do serious work on the contemporary period (on the SS-20 missile and its repercussions on détente in Europe when I moved to Johns Hopkins’ SAIS in Washington DC). This proved practicable only with informal guidance from those in and around the Pentagon in the mid-eighties (CIA people were on lie detectors and feared saying anything).

America, even under Reagan, was a breath of fresh air. Back home the Foreign Office was uniformly uninterested in helping or discussing anything with academics on Russia, let alone listening to what they had to say; whether from arrogance or ignorance, it is hard to know. In Moscow our diplomats had no contact with everyday life. Most had no working Russian. They did not shop in normal stores, they avoided the metro and were unknown at the cocktail bars or dances in the hotels (unlike the Finns). They had little or no idea what ordinary people thought. Being at the heart of empire, on the other hand, also proved invaluable as an education in itself. And at the Office of the Secretary of Defense the crucial figure of Andrew Marshall never assumed government, even the US Government, had all the answers: a seriously intelligent man rooted in common sense. Finally the Soviet system collapsed and archives opened partially in typically disorganised, Russian fashion (1992). Five of us – one American, one German, two Norwegians and myself – were asked to advise the Russian Foreign Ministry on the declassification of top secret documents courtesy of the Nobel Institute in Oslo. But by the time we began seriously to get to grips with how the files were organised (even finding aids remained classified at the Foreign Ministry which continued to deny the existence of a card index!) let alone exploit them properly, the most useful were withdrawn piece by piece. Thus the tunnel began once again to block up soon after the first Chechen war (1994-96). The second war (1999) which heralded Putin’s ascendency completed this depressing process. It was, however, much too late to consider other employment.

A saviour eventually came by in the form of colleague Tim Garton Ash from Oxford, a German and Polish specialist, who generously told me of the hoard of Russian documents at the Bundesarchiv in Berlin. This proved a treasure trove, making the hours on the S Bahn and U Bahn into and out of Lichterfelde just about bearable. Nobody had yet read these documents which were still ultra secret in Moscow. They included ‘eyes only’ briefings on current policy sent to the head of the East German Communist Party (SED) every few months giving a tour d’horizon from the vantage point of Kremlin policy on every important issue for the latter half of the Cold War. Additional sources became available, such as the archive of the Italian Communist Party at the Istituto Gramsci in Rome, the diary of a Soviet deputy foreign minister (at Stanford), the notes and memoranda of the deputy head of the military industrial sector of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee (including all the arms systems and their precise capabilities – also at Stanford) and so on.

Much had already been opened to the world by others taking full advantage of translations made available by the Cold War International History Project in Washington DC. But revelations focused on the well-known crises rather than the entire compass of policy. And aside from the foreign intelligence operations of the Soviet regime, a matter of means rather than ends which MI6* commissioned Chris Andrew here at Corpus to elucidate, almost everyone else researching the Cold War focused on the Western side of the conflict because the source material was more readily available. Most historians, like anyone else, are lazy. They rationalise their efforts by assuming that the accessible sources are the best sources; whereas one frequently finds that the sources most difficult to obtain are what one really requires.

Finally many outstanding matters could be settled. The Cold War emerged out of rivalry dating from the October
revolution of 1917 which declared class war on the capitalist world. One element was thus in place from the beginning of the Soviet regime under Lenin. Here a deep knowledge of the prewar period actually proved vital. So much earlier work did finally pay off.

The other element, however, was not in place until 1945. The twin threats to the Soviet Union from Germany (and Japan) triggered the total mobilisation of a now industrialised Russia to produce an army of 11 million that dwarfed the rest of Europe at the end of hostilities. Thus a fundamental conflict over the future shape of the world was compounded by the advent of a massive military capability and a determination to use it pro-actively.

All powerful Stalin, having believed Britain would come out on top in the West under the ‘devious Churchill’, suddenly realised that the United States would predominate. This diastic conversion occurred some time between Roosevelt’s re-election in November 1944 and the Yalta conference in February 1945. Thereafter it became a key objective to push the United States out of occupied Europe. President Truman, however, had no idea this was the case and it took time to wake up and act on this stark realisation. It is also striking that the Russians expected liberated Germany would readily swoon in the Communist embrace and that before long the Russians expected liberated Germany would readily come under the Soviet Union. They knew no other way. This became apparent not just in the Middle East—naturally at the time of the Yom Kippur War (1973) —but also during the revolution of the carnations in Portugal (1974) and subsequently the transportation by Moscow of Cuban troops to Angola.

Once again deep knowledge of the pre-war period highlighted later realities. It was so striking how the language of Pravda and Izvestia in those years showed absolutely no difference from that in the 1920s. They were incapable of new, independent thought, so it seemed. The brilliant professor of logic from Moscow University, Alexander Zinoviev, who parodied the regime in a series of works for which he was exiled, had it right: ‘When someone witnessing the board meeting of a major collective farm and the banal and ideological discussion that ensued asked what was really going on behind the scenes, he was promptly told: ‘No, you don’t understand, there are just the scenes. There is nothing else.’

To the extent that we were ignorant, the news was not good. What we did not know with any certainty was that the defence planners in Moscow were looking to outmanoeuvre the West Germany into a policy of détente with the Soviet Union.

And what astonished me most in Europe that momentous decade was the fact that the new leaders under Brezhnev and Kosygin designated the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia a counter-revolution when it had barely begun (March 1968). It also became clear that the invasion of Czechoslovakia was critical to persuading a hitherto obstructionist West Germany into a policy of détente with the Soviet Union.

The parallel but independent policy of détente pursued by the United States under Nixon, necessitated by the Vietnam disaster and the consequent collapse of the dollar, turned out to be a continuation of the Cold War by other means. The Russians never dropped their over-arching aim of ultimately overturning capitalism and installing Soviet-style socialism.

Soviet domination of Central and Eastern Europe was never a secret but the manner in which the Russians instructed a reluctant Czech Communist Party to seize power (1948) was hitherto a matter for speculation. The fact that Khrushchev was actually prepared to let go of Hungary in October 1956 until Israel, Britain, and France attacked Egypt was also unknown (he believed it could herald an attack into Central Europe headed by the Americans).

The Cuban missile crisis (1962), the origins of my own interest, also yielded new material in the degree to which the true focus was on resolving the division of Germany by readjusting the strategic nuclear balance to Soviet advantage. One fascinating insight was the degree to which the rest of the leadership were terrified by the situation Khrushchev had landed them all in.

Finally, many outstanding matters could be settled. The Cold War emerged out of rivalry dating from the October Revolution of 1917 which declared class war on the capitalist world.
In addition to my college supervisions, I teach a few hours of undergraduate language classes at the faculty. I have found the classes and supervisions to be highly varied. Students are asked to prepare for a different type of exam for each of their Tripos, sometimes written, sometimes oral, all domains of French expression are covered.

Before coming to Cambridge, I studied in Lyons, at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS). I did not grow up in France, but in the Netherlands, my father being Dutch and my mother French. Although I mostly spoke French at home, I went to Dutch-speaking schools in my hometown, Utrecht. After taking my Dutch final exams, I decided I wanted to postpone starting my studies—somehow, unconsciously perhaps, I must already have made a choice, that I would not stay and live in the Netherlands. For one year I wandered (as gap year students are wont to do), living for a while at my grandmother’s in Toulon, a port in the south of France which I found had little to offer, then moved to Prague where I attempted to secure a toehold on the grammatical intricacies of the Czech language.

After my gap year, I decided studying in French would definitely be a wiser choice than in Czech, and I started my studies in a classe préparatoire littéraire in Aix-en-Provence. Up to this point, the course consists of an array of traditional humanities subjects covering literature, philosophy, Latin, German and English as well as geography and history. Although this classical approach was not that different from the subjects I had been studying in the Netherlands, it was a big step in terms of language change and essay methodology. Other shifts included more imperceptible aspects such as French educational ideology, republicanism and laïcité (French-style separation of Church and state), Marxist readings of history and philosophy, and the hierarchically unbridgeable gap between students and teachers. I had come from a school in Holland where we used to call our teachers by their first names and addressed them with the less polite version of “you” that Dutch knows, “jij”, whereas in France teachers would call even us students “vous”!

After two years of classe prépa, I entered the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Lyons, where I started studying English language and literature. During my studies as a norm alienne, I spent one year as a lectrice in an American college in New Hampshire, and my Masters degree was done in conjunction with MPhil classes in Cambridge (at Pembroke College). Last year, I hesitated between an additional Masters degree (an MPhil in Russian literature) and applying for a position as a lectrice. After six years of “studenting”, I felt ready to move on, and I loved the idea of starting to teach. I applied for the position offered by Corpus, and like many Corpus students and Fellows, have since fallen in love with the small size and warm welcome by the College. The students I work with are enthusiastic linguists— as an early professional experience, you could hardly wish for a friendlier environment to start out with!
When I arrived in Cambridge, I was struck by the great difference between French and English academic culture. Although in both systems (at Cambridge and in the French grandes écoles) classes are taught in small groups, I was impressed by how approachable lecturers in Cambridge are. In French university hierarchy, professors and lecturers often retain an aura of grandeur that makes it difficult to open up discussions. The power balances are often so strong that complete silence and lack of interaction can be the rule between a lecturer and their class of students. (I remember talking to an American friend at the ENS who said she had to unlearn sharing her ideas in class, as she had the impression this was considered a silly interruption).

Generally speaking, I was pleasantly surprised by how much care is taken of the well-being of students at the University of Cambridge. In France, studying is seen as a purely academic occupation, and there is a separation of studies and private life which in some skewed way echoes the separation of Church and state. For example, during my MPhil year at Cambridge I participated in a peer support scheme as a listening volunteer. I was amazed to see how many support nets are created for students, trying to prevent a brief hiccup from turning into a slippery slope. Students in Cambridge often enjoy their social life as much as their studying life (when well balanced out!).

And yet, probably because it is in the French academic system that I completed most of my studies, I have grown to like it, and regularly find myself singing its praises to those who happen to criticise it, those who question its claim to egalitarian access or its insistence on five- to seven-hour-long exams. Perhaps one day I would even like to teach in one of those classes préparatoires I have accused of countless ills – who knows?

During my studies of English, my research interests have centred on literature. Oddly enough, until my baccalaureate I disliked “serious” literature and vaguely skimmed through the works we were asked to read at school in the Netherlands: Faust, Hamlet and Antigone. In Dutch class we did not even read that much literature (although I discovered later that there is a lot of humorous, subversive work out there, among which one of the best novels I have ever read, Max Havelaar: Or the Coffee Auctions of the Dutch Trading Company by Multatuli). I remember analysing Dutch soap operas and devising creative collage posters, probably in an attempt to bring the Dutch class closer to our teenage concerns. Successful in that, it was not too successful in getting me to take that step beyond the cocoon of childhood and teenage reading tendencies. In France in my first year as an undergraduate student I had a great literature teacher, and a whole new realm opened up for me. Literature no longer had to be seen as a collection of hackneyed themes and an exploration of eternal truths about human beings who are all in the end experiencing the same kind of feelings.

Since then I have enjoyed working mostly on American literature, because of its impressive mixture of ongoing utopianism and simultaneous capacity to undermine that trend of thought, with impressive end-of-the-world fantasies that can be observed in films as widespread as blockbusters like The Day After Tomorrow, The Road and I Am Legend. My research has led me to the area of queer studies (the term “queer”, originally derogatory, has been reclaimed by the field and reinstated as a respected term in literary criticism). Their status and legitimacy have sometimes been questioned, but they have also provided one of the most challenging and productive fields of literary criticism in the past few years. The specificity of queer studies being precisely that it does not analyse homosexuality per se, I have been interested in analysing the ideological and aesthetic implications of queer sexualities in contemporary novels such as Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides or earlier texts such as Willa Cather’s novels. These queer sexualities are to be understood as atypical, homosexualities, where homosexuality remains no more than homosexuality or homoeroticism: utopia, desire, but never overt and celebrated homosexuality. Cather, for example, although probably a lesbian herself, has even been known to write homosexual panic into some of her novels. And Eugenides creates an intersexual narrator whose sexual pheromones are in appearance nonconformist (lesbian), but when this narrator discovers he is hormonally and “biologically” speaking a male (and not a female as he had been led to believe during his childhood), this entire nonconformist desire is abruptly transformed into the most “natural” of longings. In these novels, queerness is very often associated with a highly conservative social nostalgia… Cather, for that matter, is fascinating in that the “homosexual” element, the sameeness, means preserving the American as an unadulterated, racially homogenous prototype.

For my PhD, I would like to continue working on queer studies, probably on Mark Twain’s burlesque and satirical writings, where gender inversions and male homosexuality are rife. I will continue teaching as a lectrice at Corpus and the French Department next year – the outstanding teaching and social environment at Corpus has so far proven of incredible value to me.
Interview with Hugh Bonneville

by Dr Simon Heffer (m1979)


“Looking back I think I knew from an early age that acting was something I was going to do,” he says. “For a time in my teens I thought I was going to be a lawyer. I even shadowed a QC for a few days. At the end of my time with him I said ‘sign me up for the dinners, this is what I want to be’ but he said ‘don’t be so hasty. I’m not going to let you go from one cloistered institution – Cambridge – to another without your having the chance to see the world a bit. I think you’re being too rash.’ It was probably the best advice I ever had.

“It gave me a chance to reflect. It was in my second year at Corpus that I came out of the closet to my family and told them I’d like to give acting a go. I set myself three goals: three years to get an Equity card; five to get to Chichester, which is my local theatre; and 10 years to get to the Royal Shakespeare Company. And if I didn’t achieve those I was going to give up and apply to do a law conversion course, or if not that then a ‘proper job’ of some sort. In retrospect, apart from getting the all-important Equity card, those goals were rather naïve. However, they all came to pass, if not in the order I’d anticipated.

“I sometimes wonder whether, if I hadn’t got those three things under my belt, I’d have actually stopped. To my pleasant surprise, my parents were right behind me from the outset. They said they’d seen me in enough plays at school, the National Youth Theatre and at university to think that maybe it was worth my having a go.

“Then one of those coincidences that can play such an important role in life happened to Hugh. “This series of experiences was crowned when the actor Michael Bates, who was in It Ain’t Half Hot Mum and the early series of Last of the Summer Wine, and who was a friend of the family, came to lodge with us in Blackheath while he was doing a play at Greenwich theatre. One night my father said we’d go and pick Michael up after the show. We stood at the back of the stalls watching the last five minutes. There was pin drop silence in the auditorium, then rapturous applause, and I recall being stunned that our lodger – whom I knew as a very funny man with a moustache who ate his egg every morning – was having this effect on a group of complete strangers. That in turn had an effect on me: the idea of somehow transforming into someone else and by doing so being part of a collective experience that brought enjoyment to an audience.”
That is something one rarely associates with lawyers, though Hugh was still in two minds. “I loved the Old Bailey and the theatricality of it — the performing element of advocacy. But I enjoyed going to the Chancery courts just as much and watching Lord Denning, then Master of the Rolls. I found his ability to distil a complex argument into something homespun quite intoxicating, but I also realised it wasn’t for me — I don’t have that ability to distil a complex argument into a nugget of thought.”

Maybe that particular hobby, because that’s what it became, is why I’ve always seen myself as a character actor rather than a leading man.”

Is adopting another persona a means of escape for him? “Actors are often asked that and I suppose there is some truth in it. I sometimes find being in someone else’s head more interesting than being in my own. I don’t think of myself as a neurotic or lacking in self-confidence, but I get a kick out of dressing-up box, put on granny’s fur stole, and deliver my lines to the stairs at home, too, and I used to cajole my friends into closing their eyes between scene changes and being furious. In private and relaxed conversation in crowded rooms, say at university functions. “Lots of people found Larkin aloof. But in his 40s he started to see the world through their eyes.”

He refers to one specific role — when he played Philip Larkin — and how he went up to Hull to meet people who had known the poet and trying to understand him better as a person. “Lots of people found Larkin aloof. But in his 40s he started to lose his hearing, and that made it very difficult for him to pick up conversation in crowded rooms, say at university functions. And being tall he would have to stoop to hear properly. He had also stammered as a young man, which occasionally returned, particularly in times of stress. In private and relaxed he was by all accounts terrific company.”

“All these physical characteristics affect how one comes across to others and in turn affect one’s development as a human being.”

Hugh moved up a gear in his acting when he joined the National Youth Theatre. “When I was about 15 or 16 and doing school plays at Sherborne I auditioned. The NYT was relatively small then. What was remarkable about it for me, coming from a middle-class public-school background, was doing plays with people from all over the country and with totally different backgrounds to mine — a policeman’s son from Newcastle; a bank clerk’s daughter from Belfast. To be thrown together for three or four months over the summer doing something we all loved, being coached by people with an equal passion, was incredible.”

Was he talent spotted at this stage? “No, I’m still waiting to be talent-spotted! It wasn’t about that — it was an end in itself — you got a taste of team work, mutual respect, the sheer fun of putting on a play, obviously, and a glimpse of what professional standards of theatre production might be like.” He had some distinguished contemporaries in the NYT, notably Gina McKee, Nathaniel Parker and Jonathan Cake (1986). “Jonathan was at Corpus too, and came and slept on my floor the night before his interview.”

Another coincidence preceded Hugh’s arrival at Corpus in 1982. “I’d been handing out drinks to the governors at my school, in my A Level year. I said to one of them that I was thinking of applying to Cambridge — my father had been at Emmanuel, so there was always a bias to light rather than dark blue. The governor asked which college I had in mind. I said I hadn’t really thought about it. I wanted somewhere small, and I was used to a single-sex environment. So he said: ‘Well, you should apply to my College’. I asked: ‘What do you mean my College?’ He said: ‘my name’s Michael McCrum, I’m the Master of Corpus Christi’. I don’t think he had any bearing on my getting a place — at least I hope not — I applied, and after A Levels came and met Hew Strachan and Geoffrey Styler, who was director of studies, and was given an unconditional place to read theology. I even managed an Exhibition when I sat the exam. Forty pounds, I think, which I suspect went straight into the pint glasses of the butty.”

“I think it’s fair to say, though, that I wasn’t the best of students. William Horbury took over as director of studies and was very patient with me when I kept skiving off to rehearsals, and Rowan Williams supervised me for early church history. There was one other theologian in my year at Corpus, Richard Harlow, who took his studies far more seriously — he subsequently went into the church — and I would corner him after supervisions and ask him what Rowan had been going on about, because all I could do was sit in a corner and stare at his beard, and consider how much wildfowl was in it. I was mesmerised by his beard. I still am. And I found his voice incredibly soothing, and I have to admit to nodding off once or twice. If I had my time again I’d work harder, definitely.”

Is Hugh religious? “I’m not. I’m a humanist really. I went up to Cambridge an atheist and came down an agnostic. I gained enormous respect for, and a deeper understanding of, faith — without making the leap of faith myself.”

“The central tenets of the virgin birth and the Christian miracles I don’t subscribe to myself, but everything else about Jesus the man and his message are tenets worthy of any human being’s respect.”

He had hardly arrived at Cambridge when he plunged into acting. “With the European Theatre Group I toured all round Europe in a coach for three weeks before Christmas, in Romeo
and Juliet. After that I did about a play a term. My studies did suffer, but it exposed me to the world I sensed I was going to go into.”

He never acted in Corpus, but did direct. “The Fletcher Players were fairly active. Richard Bainbridge was in charge of it, and I directed Two Gentlemen of Verona in Old Court. I cast Richard in a role and this resulted in our budget being increased by, I think, £50 Drama was important in Corpus in those days. There was a chap in the year above me in this College, Nick Ward (m1981), who’d write and put on a play every week in the basement of The Playroom in St Edward’s Passage, under a light bulb with two or three actors. There was a real energy, a creative buzz about the Playroom.” His other contribution to College life was that he rowed in the Gentlemen’s boat. “The one condition was we never rowed until after lunch”.

“I then went to drama school, Webber Douglas, and was horrified that in this my postgrad year there they weren’t going to let us appear in front of an audience. It was like something out of the TV show The Bionic Man: ‘we’re going to take you apart and rebuild you’. I couldn’t wait to leave, frankly, and I didn’t survive the year. I started writing letters – over two hundred, in fact – as soon as I got to drama school, and out of them I got two auditions, one for Chichester and one for Regent’s Park, and that’s where I got my Equity card.

“I’m glad Cambridge doesn’t do drama as a degree. One of the joys of acting at Cambridge is that you’re doing it with natural scientists and architects. Inevitably there was a drama clique, but there were a variety of energies and talents coming together. It was that sort of happy amateurism that I loved, and which would be in danger of evaporating if there were to be a drama course.” Does he think that studying drama at university is a way to become an actor? “As a theatre practitioner, I don’t. I don’t think you can teach acting. You can refine acting.”

It is in this spirit that he takes the occasional master class. “I have been doing some recently, and I find them terrifying. Doing master classes on technique I find very hard, because I don’t really know what my own technique is. My approach varies from project to project.”

While touring with the Regent’s Park company he was seen on stage playing Lyndsay, by Jonathan Lynn, the writer and director, then working at the National Theatre. Having heard that Lynn had been complimentary about his performance, Hugh wrote to him to ask for an audition there – something he had tried several times before, but to no avail. “Within a week I had an audition at the National, and went and held a spear there for about a year.” He soon acquired a reputation as a promising understudy, and found himself playing for several weeks opposite Juliet Stevenson in Yermawhen her co-star, Roger Lloyd Pack, was hurt in a car crash. This, and the rest of his time on the South Bank, were crucial to his learning his craft. “I learnt so much by osmosis. I would just hang around in my copious free time and watch from the wings – people like Judi Dench and Anthony Hopkins in Antony and Cleopatra, and Michael Gambon in A Small Family Business.”

Gambon is Hugh’s hero. “I always said the performance that changed my life, without wishing to sound too melodramatic, was Antony Sher playing Richard III at the RSC. Fresh out of Cambridge of course I knew everything about ACTing” he laughs, “but I was totally floored by that performance; I realised I knew next to nothing. Then, later that year, and almost as influential, I saw Tony Hopkins in Pravda at the National. Within a couple of years I was a new boy at the NT myself, seeing characters like Gambon and Hopkins bantering across the backstage canteen was amazing.”

At the moment, however, the theatre is in check. “I haven’t done a stage play for six years and I miss it hugely. I’d love to do a play but it’s got to be the right one – if it’s going to muck up my family life eight shows a week for months on end. I’ve always wanted to do Chekhov. That’s a possibility. I wouldn’t be surprised if I were on the boards twelve months from now.”

His role as the Earl of Grantham in Downton Abbey came about through a connection with the writer and originator of the series, Julian Fellowes. “Julian was directing me in a film he’d written called From Time to Time; and I asked him what else he was up to. He said, ‘I’ve only got four other projects that I might do, but one of them’s called Downton Abbey’.” He outlined it briefly and I thought it sounded like a wonderful setting – as he said at the time, it’s one of the few locations for a drama in which you find a cross-section of society living under one roof.

“A year later I was sent the script and I couldn’t put it down. To have 16 characters introduced in a 75 page script, and for each of them to be so vivid in one’s mind’s eye and for one to want to know what happened to them next, is a fantastic skill which few writers possess. When it came to shooting I think it was brilliantly cast throughout. The attention to detail in the design was superb, too. The sense of authenticity that Julian aspires to is second to none.”

For Hugh, the great success of the series defies the assertions that the public only want down-market, “accessible” television. “I think, Downton proves that if you make drama that aims high in its script, acting and overall aesthetic, it doesn’t matter where it’s set or in which era, people will flock to watch it. Look at the production values of Mad Men or The Sopranos, and see what successes they have been.” The two American series he named used to run for 13-14 episodes: Downton was only seven. “This is because television bosses on this side of the Atlantic cannot believe that the public can even sustain interest for that long.”

“The audience isn’t the problem, it’s pure economics” says Hugh. “A UK broadcaster can’t afford, in every sense, to risk creating a long series straight off the bat. So Julian had to draft the first series with one eye on it finishing, and another on it carrying on: but until the show was broadcast and the figures were out, ITV, understandably, couldn’t green-light a second series; a very difficult balance for a writer to strike. The stories for the second series are equally rich in character detail and emotional roller-coasters. Julian has said himself that the longer format of a TV series means he can develop stories in a more subtle and complex way and explore characters further. This, surely, is why television is no longer considered the poor relation of film: writers can enjoy the opportunity of exploring their imaginary worlds for longer than 90 minutes.”

Hugh is modest and rather surprised about the fame Downton has brought him. “It’s very strange, because while it felt good doing it, I’ve done plenty of things that felt equally promising and have then nosedived – so I never predict the success of a project. But the response...
IN A PERFECT WORLD WE WOULD BE MARKING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF LECKHAMPtion WITH A FANFARE OPENING A FINE NEW BUILDING. BUT THE WORLD IS NEVER PERFECT WHEN IT COMES TO FINANCING AND DESIGNING NEW BUILDINGS, LET ALONE GETTING PLANNING CONSENT FOR THEM, AND IT WILL BE THE FIFTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY THAT WILL BE THE OCCASION FOR THE FANFARE.

Leckhampton opened as a graduate community in 1961, then with a mere 50 or so students. It was centred on Leckhampton House, soon supplemented by the modern George Thomson Building and Edwardian houses in Cranmer Road and Selwyn Gardens. A group of fellows and students hacked their way through the wildly overgrown garden and found the swimming pool, originally the lily pond of Frederick Myers, the original owner of the House, restoring it to use. The gardens were brought under control, and a Henry Moore statue, Fred, appeared in them. More students came.

Any former Leckhampton student returning after five decades will find little changed. Those who played croquet will find the lawn less heavily used than it once was, and get a sense that it is somehow smaller than it used to be; the copper beech (a sapling in Myers’ time) has grown and overshadowed it more and more, pushing it imperceptibly further down the garden every year. Fred is still there, watching over it. The swimming pool is still there, though now it shelters behind a wooden fence to satisfy more modern health and safety concerns. The rose garden – in Myers’ time the tennis court – has been grubbed up in the last few years and replaced with a prairie garden, flowering splendidly from the middle of summer until well into November. The lupins are still as fine as ever, but unless memory plays tricks they have crept slowly up the garden towards the house. Leckhampton House itself feels somehow just a little different, the result of a new wall having been put across the principal ground-floor room (more modern safety regulations, this time worries about fire) and the bar having moved. The incessant tapping of typewriters, a feature of Cambridge before the arrival of the word processor, has disappeared completely.

by Professor David Ibbetson, Warden of Leckhampton
The heart of Leckhampton’s life, though, is and always has been its graduate students. There are more than there used to be, though not many more; today’s students are more diligent at finishing their theses (or more pressurised into doing so) than when the present writer was a student, and the Corpus graduate body reflects the shift in the University more generally towards having more Masters students. But at heart the students are very much as they always were: an international group studying many different things, with a bewildering range of interests, committed to their work and to getting the most out of their time in Cambridge.

While change has not been alien to Leckhampton, it has largely taken the form of a gradual adjustment to new circumstances as they have arisen. The new building, scheduled to be complete by the summer of 2012, promises to be the first major alteration for half a century.

A number of sites for the building were considered, but it was quickly decided that the best place for it would be between the end of the drive from Grange Road and the sports pavilion, where 25 Cranmer Road currently stands.

Despite concerns from the planners that we should not be allowed to demolish such a distinctive building – perhaps because of its status as the ugliest house in the whole of west Cambridge – the site was eventually approved.

Different alignments of the building were discussed. The choice finally fell on placing it at right angles to the drive, so that those approaching it do so square-on, and not at the side. This had the advantage too that it could be done without interfering with any of the fine trees at the rear of Cranmer Road and with minimal disruption to the gardens of the Cranmer Road houses. Elaborate plans, producing relatively little accommodation but taking up a good deal of space, were rejected from the start as too costly, and a more traditional single block was chosen, with careful landscaping and design features to prevent it appealing as a monolith dropped from the sky. Advice from the planners that it should be in sympathy with the George Thomson Building was taken, so there will be a flat roof rather than pitched one and a good deal of glass.
The aim is to be able to house somewhere in the region of forty graduate students in the building. In part it would substitute for houses owned by the College in Newnham and on Barton Road; in part it would give the possibility of offering accommodation on-site to students who currently live out of College as they complete the writing up of their theses. More accommodation, too, would allow us to increase the number of graduate students we admit if the College decided to go that way sometime in the future; at the moment, probably the greatest uncertainty within Cambridge lies in the way in which graduate education will develop within the collegiate university, against the background of pressure from faculties and departments to increase the number of one-year Masters students.

New buildings are not cheap, so how did all this happen? Primarily, Paul Warren, our sharp-eyed Bursar, noticed that building companies were suffering badly from the recession with the result that building costs were - comparatively speaking - very low; while at the same time the housing market in Cambridge had remained very buoyant. The sale of three or four small houses, away from the Leckhampton site and very costly to maintain, has provided a substantial part of the building’s costs, so that we can realistically expect the rents from the rooms to bring in a surplus over the medium term to cover the remainder.

We cannot know what our successors will think of the building when they celebrate the Leckhampton centenary, but we hope that they will still approve of it if they should happen to be thinking of adding another building themselves; we should pass on some advice. Allow at least a year longer than you think it will take to get through all the hoops and over all the hurdles. Be prepared for multiple disappointments and frustrations with the planning process and in dealings with architects, builders and all the other professionals involved with a building project. Never assume anything will be simple. But keep faith that everything will turn out well in the end.

WHILE CHANGE HAS NOT BEEN ALIEN TO LECKHAMPTON, IT HAS LARGELY TAKEN THE FORM OF A GRADUAL ADJUSTMENT TO NEW CIRCUMSTANCES AS THEY HAVE ARisen. THE NEW BUILDING, SCHEDULED TO BE COMPLETE BY THE SUMMER OF 2012, PROMISES TO BE THE FIRST MAJOR ALTERATION FOR HALF A CENTURY. THESE ARTIST’S IMPRESSIONS SHOW THE PLANS FOR THE NEW BUILDING. SOME DETAILS MAY CHANGE.
My Leckhampton Years

a personal recollection by Pratapaditya "Eddie" Pal (m1962)

There is a pre-history to my arrival at Leckhampton on an autumn afternoon in 1962 (it was not a rainy day, I remember). I had been determined to come to Cambridge ever since my school days in Darjeeling. After my school finals in 1951 I applied to Trinity and was given admission but was not allowed to go as the family elders thought I was too young to be exposed to the temptations of England. So I waited until 1956 when I chanced to see an announcement of the Bridges Scholarship and sent off an essay on a subject I don't now remember. To my surprise a couple of months later I received a letter from the Senior Tutor Michael McCrum. Unfortunately, I could not accept the invitation but I did save the letter.

Four years later in 1960 while on a research scholarship for my doctorate degree in the University of Calcutta on the history of architecture in Nepal, I still hadn't given up my dream about going to Cambridge. I was now 25 years old. So I applied for a Commonwealth Scholarship, giving my subject as the history of painting in Nepal. This was not as absurd as one might think, for a cache of illustrated palm leaf Buddhist manuscripts from Nepal dating back to the 11th Century was preserved in the University Library. This together with McCrum's letter did the trick and I received the scholarship and admission to Corpus for the academic year 1962-63, which allowed me to submit my doctorate thesis at the university at Calcutta before leaving.

So when I arrived at Leckhampton House on that autumn day it was not as an undergraduate as I had originally dreamt, not even as a graduate student but as a post-doc and at 27, the oldest among the other graduates in residence there, among whom, I subsequently learnt, was one young Oliver Rackham. It was not the English Oliver who greeted me however as I knocked on the front door at Leckhampton but Canadian Peter Barnard (alas now deceased) who set the tone by extending his friendly hand and saying, "Hi there, I am Peter Barnard. You must be the new student with that unpronounceable first name. What do we call you?" Without hesitation, I said, "Call me Eddie." From that day until I left Cambridge for India in August 1965, I was known universally as Eddie Pal, even to all the Indians I came to meet. I had acquired the nickname at my school in Darjeeling (how is another story) and I thought that reviving it in Cambridge would simplify life and it did. So much so that a year later when I would visit a particular pub in a nearby village – it being a favourite with the denizens of Leckhampton – the publican's wife would greet me, as a sign of endearment, with "Edward my dear, lovely to see you."

What was astonishing was how small the number of residents in the old house (the Thomson building was still two years away) was. Apart from the eight of us (three Canadians, one American, one Indian, two Englishmen and a Welshman), there were two dons, Christopher Longuet-Higgins (also now deceased) and John Roach. To look after us was an English couple with a black and white TV in their cosy parlour (which was my first introduction to the instrument). Mrs. Rowe was not a gourmet cook but served us hearty breakfasts every morning and home-cooked dinners twice a week.

In retrospect, I must admit that I really felt I was living in a private manor house, the type I had only read about in English novels. The Victorian building with its lush, verdant lawn, a rose garden and an unkempt grassy stretch (all replaced now by a prairie garden) rolling down to a small swimming pool at the end was too good to be true.

—

The Pelican Easter Term
My spacious room was in the attic with dormer windows overlooking the garden. I shared the floor with three other students with a common bathroom that had a bathtub but no shower which I missed. Apparently, these were the rooms occupied by the servants of Sir Louis Clarke who was the last occupant of the house until his death a couple years back. It was thrilling for an art historian to live in a house inhabited by so eminent a collector and ex-director of the Fitzwilliam Museum. Later I learnt how Queen Mary had been a visitor there and how two Leonardo da Vinci drawings – now the treasures of the Fitzwilliam – once hung in the bathroom of his suite on the floor below which now belonged to John Roach. (Stranger still is the fact that among Sir Louis’ personal collection were a couple of Buddhist bronzes from Kashmir which he had picked up in a Peshawar Bazaar in the 1930s and donated to the British Museum. The arts of Kashmir became the subject of my research interest a decade later.)

It was a constantly stimulating adventure to live in Leckhampton for three years with fellow students who had some of the brightest minds in diverse fields, both science and humanities. The twice-weekly dinners, where brilliant guests were often invited, kept us always on our toes. Sir George斯顿 was a frequent guest and I remember him very well (he always followed the match laced with the warm hospitality of the gracious Lady Lee. (It was thanks to these croquet games and the bonding with Sir Frank that I got to travel in the summer of 1964 to the US, which from 1967 became my home.)

Another memorable experience was the Stephen Hales Society which was founded with Peter Barnard heading it in the second year of the establishment. It was decided to take advantage of the wide range of research conducted by the graduate students and ask each one to present a summary of their current investigations by turn at an informal monthly meeting. Since I was the only one who already had a doctorate under my belt, I was asked to be the inaugural speaker. I did so on the art and architecture of Nepal and with slides showed how very similar the old medieval cities of Kathmandu Valley with its traditional architecture and narrow streets and lanes were to Cambridge and how the University Library was the home to some of the oldest treasures of Nepali painting. It was my first experience in public speaking and I haven’t stopped yet. I believe the Stephen Hales Society is still alive and well but its function has changed.

Another tradition that we began in my last year (May 1965) at Leckhampton was the Leckhampton May Ball, on alternate years which I gather has become a fixed feature. I don’t remember who mooted the idea first but a committee was quickly formed with both graduates and undergraduates. John Roach was appointed the treasurer and yours truly the secretary, though I don’t know why. Although I had attended the Corpus May Ball the previous year, I must say the Leckhampton Ball was a more intimate, romantic and memorable experience as it was a perfect setting for such an event with the garden and the country house atmosphere, straight out of an English novel. I remember the fee was something like five guineas a head for which we were able to provide live music, unlimited champagne and a sumptuous feast that included a suckling pig or two, prepared by the chef. I was introduced to the game by my fellow Leckhamptonian John Earnshaw, one of the first batch, who was a Canadian graduate student. Both of us passionately adopted the game and as a team were often invited to the Master’s lodge where on the croquet lawn we saw a side of Sir Frank that few others in the College witnessed. The real attraction I think was the sumptuous tea that always followed the match laced with the warm hospitality of the gracious Lady Lee. (It was thanks to these croquet games and the bonding with Sir Frank that I got to travel in the summer of 1964 to the US, which from 1967 became my home.)

Now that the College is co-ed I have no idea what curfew regulations are in place and whether the old house is mixed, but in those years women had to be out of the premises by midnight, a big concession to our mature status as graduates considering that the deadline for undergraduates was 10 pm. Well, someone violated the rules and was reported by a bedmaker. So we were asked by Christopher Longuet-Higgins who was the Warden to gather one evening in the drawing room. The occasion was clearly more awkward for him than us. Anyway, he gave us the usual pep talk about why discipline was necessary when we lived communally, etc. etc. However, the remark that sticks in my memory began: “We all do it from time to time, but…” “No,” we were never able to discover if and when he “did it.”

I wish I had kept a diary of my days at Leckhampton; nevertheless, here are a few memories in a lighter vein. The Henry Moore sculpture in the garden was a donation from Sir Frank Lee who was a friend of the sculptor. One day we were told that Moore himself would visit Leckhampton to place the sculpture at a suitable spot. And so he did, but not before spending almost half a day running around the garden along with one or two of us who were hard-pressed to keep up with him. It was my first lesson in installing a sculpture, as if a premonition of my then unknown career as a museum curator.

Now that the College is co-ed I have no idea what curfew regulations are in place and whether the old house is mixed, but in those years women had to be out of the premises by midnight, a big concession to our mature status as graduates considering that the deadline for undergraduates was 10 pm. Well, someone violated the rules and was reported by a bedmaker. So we were asked by Christopher Longuet-Higgins who was the Warden to gather one evening in the drawing room. The occasion was clearly more awkward for him than us. Anyway, he gave us the usual pep talk about why discipline was necessary when we lived communally, etc. etc. However, the remark that sticks in my memory began: “We all do it from time to time, but…” “No,” we were never able to discover if and when he “did it.”

1. McCourt with Eddie Pal
2. Peter Barnard at the Leckhampton barbeque
3. Punting with husband Peter Barnard and Ian Smith (standing) and Earnshaw and Pal (supine with ladies) proving the adage that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy
4. Clurmont Robertson at an opening at Sotheby’s Beverly Hills, 1980s
5. Leckhampton Ball committee second from right, John Earnshaw; third from right Chris Taylor
Music was a big part of the house then. Christopher was an accomplished pianist and often the sounds of the concert piano in his rooms would waft around the house and could be heard from the garden below. John Earnshaw played the trombone and the upright piano in the drawing room around which we gathered to sing, especially during the long white winter of 1962-63 when the frozen Cam became a popular skating rink (and where Christopher fell and broke a leg). That first year my immediate neighbour was the Canadian Brian Gregory who would practice on his bassoon frequently before dinner. I missed him when he left the next summer but not his instrument.

My only regret when I left in the summer of 1965 was that I had not yet met Michael McCrum who had admitted me as the Senior Tutor but had left before my arrival to become the Headmaster of Tonbridge School. The only time he came back to the College was in the summer of 1964 for the opening of the Thomson building, when I was away travelling in the United States, thanks to Sir Frank and our croquet matches. I finally met McCrum years later on a fleeting visit to Cambridge when he returned as the Master and the late Chris Taylor (who was on the first Leckhampton May Ball committee with me) was the Bursar. Chris and I were standing near the chapel in New Court when a tall, thin and straight man came out of the Bursary towards us. As McCrum reached us Chris introduced me by saying “Master, this is Eddie Pal, an old student,” or something to that effect. The Master shook my hand and followed up conversationally by asking, “By the way, whatever happened to one of your fellow countrymen who shared your last name and came up in the 60s to study art history?” As Chris smiled, I answered, “I am the same person, Master.” I don’t think there were too many occasions in life when McCrum was at a loss for words, but I was full of admiration that after so many years at Tonbridge and Eton and having met thousands of students, he remembered a young man from Calcutta whom he had admitted but never met. In any event, quickly recovering and echoing Peter Barnard back in 1962, McCrum said, “But you had a long first name, I remember.” I explained the mystery as we walked towards the Lodge for the first time since going down in 1965. There was no croquet this time but a lovely chat with both McCrums over a glass of sherry.

The only Leckhamptonian with whom I am in regular touch, exchanging hand written letters through the post, is John Roach whom I visited once in Sheffield. In case one is not aware, he makes delicious scones from scratch and still wields an elegant pen.

Peter Lewis unfortunately died before he could complete his history of Leckhampton. I hear someone sometime will complete that history. Hopefully these jottings from memory of those early years will help to flesh the narrative and encourage other Leckhamptonians to explore the cobwebbed attics of their memories.

IN DECEMBER 2010, PARLIAMENT APPROVED A NEW CEILING OF £9,000 A YEAR ON UNDERGRADUATE TUITION FEES FOR ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES BEGINNING IN THE 2012/2013 ACADEMIC YEAR. THIS WAS A RESULT OF THE BROWNE REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING AND STUDENT FINANCE AND IS ARGUABLY ONE OF THE BIGGEST REFORMS OF UNIVERSITIES SINCE THE 1960S.
The University of Cambridge is committed to sustaining the excellence of its teaching and research and this is not cheap. Corpus has always provided a generous subsidy worth thousands of pounds per undergraduate per year. The increased tuition fee will not stop this subsidy, but instead make up for lost government investment in higher education.

Current funding and the University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>£17,100 per undergraduate per year</th>
<th>£9,200 per undergraduate per year (£3,375 of which is paid by the student)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average cost for colleges and University combined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount received by the University from the government block grant and student fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total shortfall for University and college combined</td>
<td>£7,900 per undergraduate per year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current funding and Corpus Christi College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>£8,759 per undergraduate per year</th>
<th>£3,861 per undergraduate per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost to Corpus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fee received by Corpus from the University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortfall for Corpus (made up by the College’s endowment income and fundraising)</td>
<td>£4,898 per undergraduate per year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The future of funding

Over the next four years the block grant the University receives from the government will be reduced by more than 60%. This, combined with the tuition fee of £9,000, will result in a total income per student of around £10,000 by 2015 and still leaves a significant funding gap.

Undergraduate education from 2012 (provisional):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>£17,100 per undergraduate per year</th>
<th>£10,000 per undergraduate per year (£9,000 of which will be paid by the student)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average cost for colleges and University combined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount received by the University from the government block grant and student fees by 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total shortfall for University and college combined</td>
<td>£7,100 per undergraduate per year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The future of financial assistance

Under new arrangements, no student will have to pay the tuition fee upfront or whilst studying at the University. The Government will provide tuition fee loans which the student will only begin to repay after graduation and when earning a salary of over £21,000 per year. There is however, wide concern that the high level of debt students will graduate with could put potential students off, particularly those from poorer backgrounds. The Government and the collegiate University have therefore put in place grants, fee waivers and a bursary scheme to help overcome such fears.

Government financial support

As well as a student loan for tuition, UK students will be able to apply for a government student loan to cover living costs (known as a Maintenance Loan) and some will be eligible for a non-repayable government Maintenance Grant.

The maximum Maintenance Loan available for students starting their university course in 2012/13 is:

- £4,375 if living in the family home
- £5,500 if living away from home and studying outside London

Students can apply for 72% of these maximum Maintenance Loan amounts without his or her household income being taken into account. How much of the remaining 28% is received will depend on household income. The maximum Maintenance Grant available will be £3,250 for 2012/13 for those students with household income under £25,000, with grants being awarded to all students with a household income of up to £42,600.
Cambridge University and Corpus are determined that no suitably qualified UK student should be deterred by their financial circumstances from applying to Cambridge, and that no student should have to leave because of financial difficulties.

The University and College therefore plan to provide extensive and flexible support packages to ensure that a Cambridge education is accessible to all, regardless of background.

This will include the provision of Cambridge Bursaries of £3,500 per year to all UK students from families with incomes below £25,000 per year. UK students from families with household incomes between £25,000 and £42,600 per year will receive a lower level of Cambridge Bursary each year.

Cambridge Bursaries do not need to be repaid and students can choose to take them either as a bursary to help with their living costs or to reduce their tuition fees by £3,000 each year.

A higher Bursary of £5,650 per year will be available to UK mature students with family incomes below £25,000 per year who are also resident in Cambridge throughout the year.

The University also intends to provide students from particularly disadvantaged backgrounds with additional fee waivers of £6,000 in their first year through the National Scholarship Programme.

It is anticipated that this financial support will cost the University, the colleges and the Isaac Newton Trust a total of £9 million per year.

Outreach and Access

Perceived barriers to a university education are not only financial and the University and Corpus work hard on their outreach and access programmes to help ensure that all groups – whether they are from particular schools, neighbourhoods, or backgrounds – are encouraged to apply to Cambridge. To get this message across, the Schools Liaison Officer visits schools and colleges across the UK, there are open days in all colleges, summer school visits and an excellent admissions website.

Collegiate Cambridge financial support

The University and its colleges hope that a generous bursary scheme and a substantive access and outreach programme will make sure that the best students, from all backgrounds, will be able to study in Cambridge.

The Vice-Chancellor stated in his letter on the subject of tuition fees: “Under these proposals, every undergraduate should be well placed to take advantage not just of the intense intellectual development offered by Cambridge but also the rich extra-curricular activity that characterises collegiate life.

We cannot stand aloof from the world around us. In responding to the new environment, Cambridge must remain true to its core values an outstanding undergraduate education within a collegiate environment; an education available to all those who can meet our exacting standards, whatever their family and financial background.” Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, March 2011.

A brief history of university tuition fees in England

1962: Local authorities are obliged to pay full-time students’ tuition fees as well as a contribution towards maintenance.

1980: Student grants are increased from £380 to £1,430.

1990: Grants are frozen and student loans are introduced. Poorer students are able to apply for grants of up to £2,265 and loans of up to £420 are on offer to all applicants.

1998: Students are required to pay £1,000 per year toward tuition fees. The student grant is abolished and replaced by means-tested student loans.

2004: Labour introduces loans for tuition fees and increases the maximum a University can charge per year to £3,000. Graduates will only begin to repay loans once they earn above £17,500 per year and any unpaid loans will be written off after 25 years.

2010: The government announces that universities will be permitted to charge between £6,000 and £9,000 in tuition fees each year from 2012. Those charging more than £6,000 will be required to demonstrate that they are making more effort to encourage applications from the poorest students. Graduates will only begin to repay loans once they earn above £21,000 per year and any unpaid loans will be written off after 30 years.

The Pelican Easter Term