pelican

David Pickard
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Here is your 2016 Pelican! As always, we are grateful to Liz Winter and the Development team for writing and putting together another inspiring issue.

Once again, Simon Heffer has kindly conducted our feature interview, this one with alumnus David Pickard, who has recently moved from Glyndebourne to managing the BBC Proms – a highly responsible job at the heart of the country’s musical life.

We also have an interview by Sarah Gordon with current fresher Lydia Thorn, who was a member of the University Rugby Team that made history by playing the first women’s Blues match at Twickenham (and soundly defeating Oxford). Sarah has also written about Dr Richard McMahon, who is sadly leaving us to pursue his fascinating research in the development of electric-powered cars at Warwick.

Sarah herself in fact has just left Corpus, to take up the post of deputy development director at the Perse School. We wish her well in her new post.

Other articles and interviews show the broad range of our Fellowship, covering subjects as diverse as neuroscience, modern Italian film, social psychology, and robotics. I am sure you will be intrigued and inspired by these explanations of our Fellows’ research interests.

And then there’s a very special feature in memory of Oliver Rackham – but in a different style from most such articles. Here Jane Martin from the Development Office has assembled a number of individual memories from the people who knew him over many decades, for us to remind ourselves of the range of Oliver’s interests, and the witty and engaging personality that he was.

As is now customary, we have included with this issue the annual Donor Report. In it you can see how the College as a whole, and individual students, benefit as a result of donors’ generosity. Our ability to support our students, especially those from less privileged backgrounds, is an essential part of efforts to attract to Corpus more students from schools in the maintained sector – an issue on which we are coming under increasing pressure from Government. I take this opportunity to thank our benefactors, the vast majority of whom are alumni and thus Pelican readers; you provide tangible support and great encouragement to all of us at Corpus working to keep Cambridge at the top of the table of world universities.

Stuart Laing

FOREWORD
AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE MASTER
Just before he left Glyndebourne we spoke in his office there, littered with mementoes of his time in charge, and discussed his odyssey from choir school via Corpus to the helms of two great national institutions.

“I came from quite a musical family,” he says. “My mother was the leading light of the Harpenden Light Operatic Society. She’d actually trained as a singer for the Royal Academy but was of that generation when young ladies didn’t go on stage – they settled down and had families. But the really musical person in my family was my elder brother Martin, who went to choir school at New College Oxford, and I realised I had some of that gene as well. So I too went to a choir school, to Ely: and anyone who’s been to choir school will know that it’s the most intensive period of musical education you could possibly have.”

It wasn’t quite what David had expected. “I was homesick pretty much every day of my three years there – I loathed being away from home. I don’t blame my parents at all. I told them how much I wanted to go and I felt very guilty about not enjoying it. But the one moment when I didn’t feel homesick was the hour or so each day when I was singing in the choir. There was something about music that made me feel better.”

His first musical immersion was in the English choral tradition. “Because you have such a good memory at the age of ten I could sing all those motets by Parry, Stanford, Charles Wood and William Byrd by heart. But I fairly quickly got into opera; I remember singing in Mahler’s 8th in the Albert Hall when CUMS used choristers from Ely – it’s a rather operatic work – and I realised I liked music on a different scale. And I always loved theatre, and for me music and theatre came together in opera.”

After Ely he went to day school in St Albans, where he had five “very happy” years. His interest in music was kept alive by Simon Lindley - “a very interesting and very exotic music teacher”. Soon, the future became clear to him. “As soon as I was choosing my A levels I knew I wanted to do music, though I thought I might be a bit of a linguist, but I knew I wanted to read music.”
He chose Corpus because Martin had been the organ scholar at the College from 1975 to 1978, and in those days it seemed to make sense to apply to a college where you had had an elder sibling. David was a choral scholar. “Corpus was very keen, but the music faculty was not so happy for me to read music. They felt that I would struggle with certain aspects of it.”

“The music course at Cambridge is rather a strange and varied one, in that bits of it suit organists very well, bits of it suit academics very well, bits of it suit performers very well, but not all of it can everybody do. I was good at writing the essays but I don’t think I had such a good ear as some of those brilliant performing musicians on the course.” He felt the faculty thought he would struggle with harmony and counterpoint and at the composition side of the tripos – “completing a string quartet in the style of Haydn, for example” – but he was allowed to start the course, on the understanding that he would change history if he struggled.

WHilst I love and understand music I knew I was not, and was never going to be, a professional performer.

“That sort of thing has always been a spur to me. I worked very, very hard, and I got a 2:1 at the end of my degree. It was very hard to get a 2:1 – most in those days got a 2:2 – so I felt my hunch was vindicated.”

He wanted to work in music or the arts, but knew his talents lay in administration. “Whilst I love and understand music I knew I was not, and was never going to be, a professional performer. I don’t have the dedication to do it and I don’t have the natural talent. I was a singer and a perfectly decent singer – but being a choral scholar at Corpus is not the same as being a choral scholar at King’s. I was a reasonable pianist, good at sight-reading but not so good at technique, and I was and remain a pretty poor cellist. I wasn’t brilliant at any of those things.”

He played in concerts at Corpus, but never in CUMS. “Most of my spare time in Corpus was spent in theatre. I absolutely loved acting, and that’s where I met Liz, my wife.” Did he think about becoming an actor? “No. If the music profession is hard and cruel, acting is ten times so. All I knew when I left Cambridge was that I loved the arts and I wanted to be to be involved in them in some way – I just didn’t know how. I think I’m one of those very lucky people – I’ve never been a frustrated performer because I’ve never wanted to be one.”

When he caught “the opera bug” his mother told him to write to Covent Garden and offer to sell programmes. “To my amazement they wrote back and said they didn’t need someone to sell programmes, but they did need someone to put out the music for the chorus, and deliver pens and pencils to various offices around the Royal Opera House. So that’s what I did in my six months before going up to Cambridge, and it gave me a foot in the door. I went back in all of my holidays and stuffed envelopes. When I graduated in 1982, in the middle of a pretty bad recession, I wrote to the Royal Opera House to say I had my degree and to ask whether they had anything more permanent: and they needed an assistant in the planning office, and someone apparently said ‘what about that nice boy who used to work in the stationery cupboard?’ And that was me.”

He appreciates what a lucky break that was. “I went straight from a music degree into a dream job – assistant company manager of the Royal Opera Company. It involved first of all learning to type, because it was quite a secretarial and administrative job, and managing the day-to-day running of the opera house. It meant ensuring people were in rehearsals at the right time, and talking to conductors and directors about when they wanted their rehearsals the following week, and producing a weekly call sheet.” He had to navigate through various union rules and, if overtime was entailed for the chorus, budgetary restraints. “I was thrown in at the deep end. But the wonderful thing for me was that I was at the heart of the Royal Opera House for the five years I was there.”

It was the perfect grounding for his career. “I learnt about working with people more than anything else. I was responsible for the discipline of the chorus. I remember as a young man of 21 having to discipline a man of 62 for throwing paper darts across the room during a rehearsal – and I’ve never been so terrified in my life. I learnt you have to grow up pretty quickly. I don’t think from that job I learned a lot about music – although I did learn a lot of operatic repertoire – but I did learn about an artistic organisation, and how it all fits together.”

By 1987 David realised that “there was a lot about arts organisations that I didn’t know – I knew there was a marketing department at Covent Garden but I didn’t know what it did” – and he determined to find out. “I did something perhaps unusual – I went to work at the Open Air Theatre at Regent’s Park for three years, as the administrator. I wanted to learn more about running a business, and it was a fantastic place to go to. “He was one of just three staff – “I did the VAT returns, emptied the phone boxes and took the money to the bank, hired part-time staff and did the accounts. I learned more about finance than anything else – I saw every penny that came in and every penny that went out.”

He then went to Kent Opera, being keen to get back into music, having applied for the job of General Manager. “If I’m being honest I went in there without having my eyes open. I entered into a company that, at the height in 1989 of private sponsorship of the arts, was heavily reliant on Arts Council support – and didn’t really sniff the mood of the times about private funding having to supplement public funding. I inherited an organisation that was in a very precarious state. The Arts Council withdrew its grant about six months after I joined, and the company went into liquidation.”
He then had “a year of re-thinking, and of licking my wounds, and deciding what I would do next. For some reason it didn’t do me any harm – people would telephone me and say, ‘you’ve had this terrible situation, we’ve got another terrible situation, would you come and work for us?” He said no, but looked for other opportunities. “I soon found myself working on a Japanese festival, and then to the European Arts Festival, where I met John Drummond, who became and remained until his death a huge supporter of mine – a brilliant and sometimes infuriating man who I loved working for.”

He realised that massive reliance on state funding stores up huge problems, and he has never since worked for an organisation “whose stability relied heavily on Arts Council funding.” Glyndebourne “has to cut its cloth according to the funding that it has. If we can’t afford to do something, we don’t do it. We live within our means.” However, the Arts Council does support the touring opera that Glyndebourne sends around the country each autumn, “which covers the cost of moving it around and means we can have ticket prices of £60 top rather than £250 top. And if the Arts Council didn’t support the tour it wouldn’t exist – so it’s very clear-cut.”

He came to Glyndebourne in 2001. “It was a very strange recruitment process. They didn’t advertise, but just wanted people to write in if they were interested.” His predecessor, Nicholas Snowman, was leaving because “he and Glyndebourne were not quite the right fit.” However, Snowman persuaded him to throw his hat in the ring.

David was chosen for the job, and did fit. “I loved Glyndebourne, and what I saw here and have always seen here is a set of core principles behind everything this company has ever done. There’s the independent financial set-up, the commitment to excellence and quality, and to discovering new talent. All that really appealed to me, and to work for an opera company that’s all about discovering new stars rather than just employing them is immensely exciting.”

When he had been at Glyndebourne for a few years he heard a former patron say that he didn’t like to go there any more because it had once felt like a private club and now didn’t do so. This cheered David. “I think the work we do here is so excellent that I don’t want it just to be seen by those who can afford to come to the summer festival.” So they have under-30s nights, where younger people can sit in the stalls for £30. “We’re streaming our work for free, and we raise the money privately to do that. We’re reaching a bigger, broader and more diverse audience than we were 14 years ago. That’s the one thing that’s important to me. I love opera and I’ve always wanted to share the experience with as many people as possible.”

He and his music directors decided on programming jointly. “I know some people don’t approve, but we have expanded the repertoire we do here greatly. People say that Glyndebourne used to be about Mozart, Rossini and Verdi, and it’s a pity it isn’t any longer: but I’m not going to make apologies for Wagner, Britten, Handel and all the other things we now do. But I’ve always thought about what we can do in a special way at Glyndebourne that other opera houses can’t do - the reason we did Meistersinger here was that it’s normally done in four or five-thousand seater houses, and you’ll never experience it in a 1200-seat theatre the way you did here.”
He also especially loved Britten’s *Billy Budd*, and his last production, Handel’s *Saul,* all works he felt created “an extraordinary connection between the audience and the stage.” He praises the desire for innovation at Glyndebourne, mentioning the house’s proprietor, Gus Christie, and citing how his family pulled down the old opera house and created a new one that has turned out, despite early misgivings, to be a great success. “Part of the DNA here has always been leaping into the unknown. Gus has been completely supportive of the new repertoire we’ve introduced. The one thing he and his father didn’t like was Rameau, but I managed to sneak one in.” His one regret in terms of repertoire is leaving without having had the chance to put on a production of Wagner’s *Parsifal* – “we could do a brilliant Parsifal here.”

Given how patently happy he was at Glyndebourne, why did he choose to leave? “A lot of people have said that,” he observes. “I think it’s completely wrong for someone to stay forever. I think 14 years is probably too long I think festivals need fresh blood all the time. I look forward to someone coming here and doing all the things I haven’t thought of. And I felt there were very few jobs I’d be tempted to leave for but at the back of my mind I knew that if the Proms ever came up I’d be interested.

He’s had an association with the Proms for 20 years already, because both the OAE under his stewardship and then Glyndebourne have put on concerts and operas there every year. His new job “offers incredible opportunities that few other jobs in the arts world do.” He also relishes the Proms’ reputation for accessibility, because he observes that when one notes what a recent survey showed to be “the very narrow percentage of people who go to classical music” he fears it is clear that “we haven’t done enough to bring people in. We’re all still struggling to find the way in. I fear we’re failing all the more miserably in opera than everywhere else: yet opera is more accessible than anything – it’s absolute rubbish to say that you need intellectual superiority to enjoy opera.”

He hints he’d like the Proms to be even more informal. “I think we set up a series of situations that make people feel uncomfortable about going to a concert. We still do have some pretty old-fashioned traditions. There is the rigmarole of an orchestra coming on and standing for the conductor, and they’re all wearing black tie or tails, and the audience applaud when the conductor comes on but they don’t clap between movements. Theatre is continually reinventing itself. How do you explain these things to a modern audience?

He emphasises the importance of “participation” – getting people out to concerts and operas, and encouraging them to listen to more music at home as a result. “The Proms has always been about bringing top quality classical music to a broader audience. We’ve just got to find ways of doing that in the future.” With such experience, dedication and enthusiasm, David Pickard leaves one in no doubt that he will pull out every stop to succeed with the Proms.
I had no visions of a successful BA, MPhil or PhD graduation, nor, in fact, a successful first year at the University. My target was fixed, and it was narrow. My intention was to get through the first term of the first year without difficulty. It would of course later become apparent that while I was dutifully dedicating my time to meeting deadlines, several of the College’s Fellows in the Social and Political Sciences were spending theirs quietly sowing the seeds for my intellectual – and personal – growth.

My first encounter with the College’s academic experts in social psychology – then Dr Gerard Duveen and Dr Juliet Foster – was in 2006. It was winter and the admissions season was well underway. I had two interviews – one with Gerard, the other with Juliet – in which we discussed the relationship between the individual and society, the nature of social behaviour, and the concept of social identity. I didn’t realise it then, but it seems clear to me now that these were the first conversations I had about social representations theory, the social psychological perspective that today underpins my research, and that which has flourished from the intellectual efforts of Gerard, Juliet, and others.

Following a brief foray into the field of political philosophy during my second year of undergraduate study, I returned to social psychology in my third and final year, during which time I also elected to read an interdisciplinary paper named ‘The Family’. It was as a result of this decision that I met Professor Susan Golombok, the Director of the Centre for Family Research, under whose guidance I would later successfully obtain both my MPhil and PhD degrees. I soon became fascinated by the research conducted by Susan and others at the Centre. Of course, Susan’s work had been making waves long before I became familiar with it. As a developmental psychologist with over thirty years’ research experience, Susan’s extensive empirical research had consistently shown that good parenting – and high quality parent-child relationships – could come in families of all shapes and sizes. It was her latest work on families formed through the use of assisted reproductive technologies, however, that captured my academic imagination most of all.

When I learned in 2010 that Susan was to begin a new study of single women who had conceived their children using donor sperm, I realised that my reading and reflections on social psychology might offer an innovative perspective on this specific area of research. By this time, I had researched extensively on the theory of social representations, and relished my discussions with Juliet about this theoretical position in particular. Learning about social representations theory felt much like a process of learning the words through which to articulate my perspective on the social world and its inhabitants. The theory provided me with the tools to make sense of ideas I had about the social production of knowledge, a process that scholars in this area had suggested was particularly marked when people are presented with phenomena that are novel or in some sense unfamiliar to them. It struck me that assisted reproductive technologies were a clear example of this type of phenomenon.

It was from this theoretical base that the ideas for my MPhil and PhD research grew, and in October 2010, I became a member of the Centre for Family Research as an MPhil student in Social and Developmental Psychology. This year involved a great deal of training in research methods, and gave me a firm grounding in both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis. In April 2011, I learned that I had been awarded funding from the UK Economic and Social Research Council to undertake my PhD, the plans for which took shape soon after. Given my growing expertise in social representations theory, I decided I wanted to learn more about how women who had chosen to have a child alone thought and felt about their unusual path to parenthood from a social psychological perspective. Moreover, I wanted to understand the social responses to this particular form of family-building, and, of course, the relationship between these two
elements. Well aware of findings from several psychological studies that had shown that single-parent families were often accompanied by several ‘risk factors’ that could prove consequential for child development, I was, like Susan, also intrigued by the prospect of studying the outcomes of children in families headed by single women who had conceived using donor sperm – in which these ‘risk factors’ were not assumed to be at play.

Three years of reading, writing and research later, our findings were to provide the empirical foundation for extensive ethical debate about the welfare of children born as a result of gamete donation in the UK. In general, our research has shown that the children in these families are psychologically, socially and emotionally well-adjusted. However, our work has also indicated that the thoughts and feelings of women who seek fertility treatment without a partner may vary enormously, particularly regarding their representations of the donor involved in their child’s conception. Perhaps one of the most interesting findings of our research relates to the issue of telling children about their donor origins, on which public, professional and parental perspectives remain deeply divided. Although it is now recommended that children are told about their donor conception at an early age, our findings seem to suggest that single women may be no more likely to tell their children at ages 4-8 than are coupled parents. Moreover, it seems that although many parents do tell their children this information, it is not clear that they understand a great deal at this particular stage in their development.

Given these findings, it is perhaps not surprising that during the final months of my PhD, I became increasingly interested in the study of donor-conceived children’s understandings and experiences of donor conception and family life. Indeed, I realised that further work in this area would not only be academically worthwhile, but might be significant to policy-makers and practitioners working in the field, and, most crucially, of benefit to the children and adults in these family forms.

In 2014, I was elected to a Research Fellowship at Corpus to continue my work in the fields of social psychology and family research. In continued collaboration with Susan Golanbok, I have since begun the second phase of what is now a longitudinal study of single mothers by sperm donation in the UK. For this follow-up study, our focus has been on developing a methodological tool kit that will enable us to investigate the thoughts, feelings and experiences of donor-conceived children as they enter middle childhood. Since becoming part of the Fellowship at Corpus, my academic research has also continued to focus on the relationship between social representations theory and qualitative methodology, and the relevance of each to research on family life. Alongside my primary research interests, I have been fortunate to contribute to the Centre’s US-based study of parents in same-sex couples who have used a sperm or egg donor and/or a surrogate to have a child. Our next research project, starting July 2016, will explore the experiences of transgender parents.

Having been at Corpus for nine years now, I owe a great deal to the College, its Fellows, its staff, and its students. It is no surprise to me that my academic interests have increasingly aligned with Gerard and Juliet’s. It is a great privilege to be following in their footsteps in my current role as one of the Directors of Studies for students in Psychology and Sociology, and I am committed, as they were, to ensuring that the students I teach are always well supported. Indeed, many of my most rewarding moments as a Fellow of the College have been in supporting our current undergraduate students to pursue their intellectual interests, and in encouraging them to perceive themselves as entirely capable of academic excellence.

Since joining the Fellowship, I have also been an active contributor to widening participation and outreach activities at both the college and university level. In August 2015, I acted as Academic Coordinator for the Sutton Trust Summer School in Psychology, producing a week-long programme of lectures and supervisions for exceptional A-level students from backgrounds currently underrepresented at Cambridge, with a view to inspiring them to consider undergraduate study in the Psychological and Behavioural Sciences. In the same month, I also helped to organise Corpus’ first Summer School for Women in STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths – designed to encourage undergraduate applications to the College from outstanding young female scholars in these fields. I was thrilled to recently discover that of approximately one hundred attendees at this three-day event, forty-eight went on to apply to Cambridge in the last admissions cycle.

At such events, as in my teaching and mentoring roles, I assure students that I certainly did not anticipate spending almost a decade in academia. I go on to tell them that being part of the Corpus community has provided me with opportunities I couldn’t have ever envisaged when I first came to Cambridge in 2007, that I feel extremely lucky to have been an undergraduate, postgraduate, and senior member of the College, and that I am especially grateful to have been afforded the luxury of continued scholarship in social psychology.
The choice is important, especially for those who plan to go to graduate school afterwards, like myself, because whatever they choose is what they continue to research for the next two years as master students. When I faced the list of potential projects, I was puzzled because I didn’t know what to pick. Until then, I was not really sure why I was studying mechanical engineering; my motivation was very vague. Like other ordinary boys, I chose the subject because I was interested in machines like cars, airplanes and rockets. Besides, engineers in general are highly respected in Japanese society.

‘Face Robot Project’ - one of the projects in the list caught my eye; that was the moment I encountered robotics for the first time. In the following two weeks I went through many books and articles about robots in the library, with a naive ambition that I could quickly figure out “what robots are”. I confess I still didn’t know and will probably ask the same question again and again over the next 20 years.

My advisor was a well-known control engineering professor, who was famous for his research in the control of vibration, though his robotics projects were rather exploratory. When I look back now, the professor himself probably didn’t have a clear idea what he wanted to do with the project, as in many other research labs at the time in Japan, where there were many ambitious open-ended robotics projects.

The aim of the Face Robot project was to build a physical robot mimicking human faces, and to investigate how to generate realistic facial expressions for the purpose of non-verbal communication. The professor was interested in such a project because it was very different from his own expertise. A typical project in control engineering has well-defined tasks and control objectives given by human designers or project partners/clients, whereas for the Face Robot, we didn’t even know exactly what the goals of this machine were. Nothing was quantitative, everything was vague or undefined.

The project was extremely exciting because it raised so many interesting questions such as: what are machines in the first place; what are the distinctions between humans and machines; how do we make physical things move autonomously; what are the distinctions with computer graphics; what are the mechanistic aspects of ourselves and so on. I worked on this project for three years, literally day and night, studying all aspects including the low-level mechatronics techniques to construct mechanical faces, electrical circuits for sensors, and software components to orchestrate the entire system. In addition, I was strongly motivated to explore philosophical issues such as learning, emotions, and meanings and mechanisms of communication in general.

Though the project was highly stimulating, I was not completely happy with the outcome of my research, because the robots didn’t behave as we wanted. The robot was designed based on what we call the “boxology” approach, where we explicitly program “boxes” of mechanisms such as happiness box, sadness box, surprise box, and those are contained in a larger box of “emotions”, for example. As a result, the robot eventually behaved exactly as we programmed, but nothing was “spontaneous” or “emerging”, the kind of behaviours we observe even in a small insect in nature. I felt there must be something fundamentally wrong in the way we built animal-like machines.

By the time I graduated, I had an opportunity to work for a PhD with biologists in Switzerland. This was a fascinating opportunity because it gave a new perspective while still being related to the philosophical questions of Face Robot. Our collaborators were zoologists working on navigation mechanisms of ants and bees, and I had many opportunities to learn how complex real biological systems are. At the same time, I was also aware of my own ignorance while working on the face robot. Everything was far more complex than I ever imagined, and this new complexity was something I had learnt in mechanical engineering.
The Pelican

#### SOME FLYING ROBOTS.

In charge of building some flying robots, as the only roboticist in the project, I was tasked with designing and developing robots that mimicked the behavior of bees functioning in a self-organized fashion. Without human intervention, bees can navigate complex environments with a remarkable ease. They can handle changes in weather and find sources of food, returning directly to their hive. They can even communicate these scenes and weather with their friends in the hive.

Insects are extremely small compared to the robots we built, and within each fraction of a centimetre there are a number of sensory receptors and muscle units, far more than we had ever coped with as robotics engineers. All these sensors and muscles are incorporated in an extremely well-structured manner, and all these arrangements are made in a self-organized fashion, without human design, needless to say. Bees can routinely handle changes in their environment, and they can also communicate these complex navigation problems with their friends in the hive.

As the only roboticist in the project, I was in charge of building some flying robots that could simulate the movements and behaviors of bees. We tested the feasibility of the biological models by observing how the robots behaved. While our bio-robotics project contributed to our understanding and proved some of the underlying mechanisms in nature, the most important thing I learned was the overwhelming complexity and sophistication of animals’ designs. This incredible complexity was something I was looking for, and something which was missing in the face robot. It clearly needed it in order to exhibit the spontaneous behaviors I wanted.

Throughout the six years of my PhD study, I had many opportunities to think about the issue of animals’ complexity as well as to learn a broad range of subjects that I needed to know in order to create Biologically Inspired Robotics. The topic areas were not only engineering subjects, but also psychology, philosophy, artificial intelligence, physics and biology. I built a few dozen robots in this period to explore more animal-like robots. The robots I built mimicked the behavior of animals rather than machines; I built robots that are capable of walking, running, dancing, swimming, and so on. Though I didn’t know exactly where this research was going, my advisor allowed me to continue without asking too many questions – like what these robots might be useful for. Many times he encouraged me; “Think big, Fumiya!”

By studying these robots, I began to see that robotics is a truly integrated and interdisciplinary field. To build robots we need knowledge from all areas of engineering – electrical, mechanical, material, and computer engineering, in addition to maths, physics, chemistry, and biology. Robotics need all these disciplines, but at the same time, if a robot is dissected into smaller pieces for investigation, the research turns into something else but not robotics. In other words, robotics is a study of something that is more than a sum of its components. Bees’ navigation function, for example, can be deconstructed into photo receptors like the cameras on our iPhones and landmark detection similar to our ordinary computer programs, but the real challenge of robotics is to put all these components together into a severely limited space and operate them with an extremely small amount of energy. Furthermore, all of this needs to happen in a self-organizing fashion.

After my study in Switzerland, I spent a few years at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a postdoc researcher to continue my journey to learn more about robotics. Robotics at MIT was totally overwhelming in a different way. There were more than 30 groups and more than 400 students and researchers working on robotics research, tackling challenging problems in all possible disciplines and approaches. The researchers came from all over the world, and everyone was trying to make a big engineering impact; that is, make machines that are useful for humanity. Making useful machines was an objective I had completely forgotten about in the years since I was an undergraduate student, but it is of course one of the most important missions for roboticsists.

At MIT I had a chance to work with one of the most successful professors, who developed the robotic vacuum cleaner technology known as Roomba. Today there are millions of them in households around the world, and the product had a huge impact on the domestic world. For the general public, this was the first robot brought into the household for an everyday, useful task. Many people complain that the Roombas don’t work as expected, but still the Roomba is the historic product that managed to penetrate the ordinary home, unlike many other robotic products that have failed to make an impact.

Working with the professor, the most valuable lesson I learned was that even the greatest robotics research we do in the lab has very little impact on the general public. For him it took 15 years from the publication of his first academic paper on Roomba technology to bring the

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By studying these robots, I began to see that robotics is a truly integrated and interdisciplinary field. To build robots we need knowledge from all areas of engineering – electrical, mechanical, material, and computer engineering, in addition to maths, physics, chemistry, and biology. Robotics need all these disciplines, but at the same time, if a robot is dissected into smaller pieces for investigation, the research turns into something else but not robotics. In other words, robotics is a study of something that is more than a sum of its components. Bees’ navigation function, for example, can be deconstructed into photo receptors like the cameras on our iPhones and landmark detection similar to our ordinary computer programs, but the real challenge of robotics is to put all these components together into a severely limited space and operate them with an extremely small amount of energy. Furthermore, all of this needs to happen in a self-organizing fashion.

After my study in Switzerland, I spent a few years at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a postdoc researcher to continue my journey to learn more about robotics. Robotics at MIT was totally overwhelming in a different way. There were more than 30 groups and more than 400 students and researchers working on robotics research, tackling challenging problems in all possible disciplines and approaches. The researchers came from all over the world, and everyone was trying to make a big engineering impact; that is, make machines that are useful for humanity. Making useful machines was an objective I had completely forgotten about in the years since I was an undergraduate student, but it is of course one of the most important missions for roboticsists.

At MIT I had a chance to work with one of the most successful professors, who developed the robotic vacuum cleaner technology known as Roomba. Today there are millions of them in households around the world, and the product had a huge impact on the domestic world. For the general public, this was the first robot brought into the household for an everyday, useful task. Many people complain that the Roombas don’t work as expected, but still the Roomba is the historic product that managed to penetrate the ordinary home, unlike many other robotic products that have failed to make an impact.

Working with the professor, the most valuable lesson I learned was that even the greatest robotics research we do in the lab has very little impact on the general public. For him it took 15 years from the publication of his first academic paper on Roomba technology to bring the

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**BY STUDYING THESE ROBOTS, I BEGAN TO SEE THAT ROBOTICS IS A TRULY INTEGRATED AND INTERDISCIPLINARY FIELD.**

Insects are extremely small compared to the robots we built, and within each fraction of a centimetre there are a number of sensory receptors and muscle units, far more than we had ever coped with as robotics engineers. All these sensors and muscles are incorporated in an extremely well-structured manner, and all these arrangements are made in a self-organized fashion, without human design, needless to say. Bees can routinely handle changes in their environment, and they can also communicate these complex navigation problems with their friends in the hive.

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technology to households. During this period, he invested 10 times more effort in making the product available to the public than he did on research in the lab. On top of that, it took a huge amount of further work to make it successful as a business. This is the reality. Robotics is not mature enough as a market by itself, and needs a complete business development to take products invented in the lab to the production and sales stage. This professor told me to think about whether I wanted to stay in academia, or become an entrepreneur, because I could not be both. To survive as an academic, I would need to work on many innovations in the lab (and publish papers about them), whereas in business to make an impact, you work on one innovation until you get it right (and you don’t need to publish in peer review journals).

I decided to stay in academia – mainly because I was given a chance to start my own robotics research group in Switzerland, as an assistant professor. I continued my exploration of robots, but this time the situation was a bit different; I was now a supervisor and director of a research group and I needed to decide what to do with my students and co-workers. As the Principal Investigator, I could not afford the time to create many robots to see how they turned out, but needed a clear and strong research focus to tie people and projects together over an extended period of time. The focus I chose was "legged robot locomotion" – a topic that I thought the most fundamental and interesting in robotics. In nature almost all animals from very small insects to giant dinosaurs use legs to move about, whereas there are no engineered systems that use legs for mobility (except some toys). I thought this area offered many opportunities for research.

The reason legged robot locomotion is so difficult in engineering is because legs have to do so many things: they support our bodies when we stand; they push us up from the ground when we jump; they swing as part of the walking action; they detect the ground beneath us and stop us falling; they stretch and manoeuvre irregular gaps; they run, crawl, scratch, dance, hop, swim. This complex and rich list is why machines don’t have legs, because today’s engineering is not able to build a system that can do so many physical functions within one small machine at a reasonable cost. And the reason why nature is capable of building such a system is because every component in our body, bones, joints, blood, ligaments and skin, in addition to sensory motor control, is sophisticated and complex to a degree far far superior to machines. The bad news is that there are so many challenges ahead of us to make any machines behave like animals, but the good news is that I will never get bored working on the problem until when I retire.

Last year, my research team had a chance to relocate to Cambridge. The University has not been very famous for robotics so far but there were many sciences in the past related to the question I’m interested in. Darwin, Watson, Crick, Ashby, Turing, Conway, Huxley….these are all names I came across while exploring the complexity of nature. The discipline of robotics is probably as broad as the history of Cambridge. I think this is the right place to continue my journey of discovery about robots.

AMROU AL-KADHI (m2009)

A Queer Secret Agent

I graduated from Corpus Christi in 2013, after finishing a BA in History of Art, and then an MPhil in the subject the year after. I am now a filmmaker, and the lead performer of Denim, a musical comedy 5-part drag troupe that I set up whilst at Cambridge.
My first short film, which I wrote and starred in – NIGHTSTAND - was executively produced by Stephen Fry, a patron of the Corpus Christi Playroom; the film traverses a three night affair between two men, set against the disappearing queer landscape of Soho - one is gay, lost and adolescent, the other is married to a woman and middle aged.

My current career path may not seem the logical progression after my 4 years of art-history, but the work I now practise is rooted in what I studied whilst at Cambridge. It was particularly in my second year as an undergraduate that I began tying what I was studying to how I lived. The arrival of Dr Luke Skrebowski to the History of Art Department in 2010, an expert in late 20th century American modernism, catalysed my passion for critical avant-garde practice. Through Luke I was thrust into the 60s and 70s world of queer politics and anti-institutional art, a term of reading and thinking that quite literally altered my world view. I was to pursue this awakening with Dr Karolina Watras the following year, a remarkable supervisor who introduced me to repressed genealogies of queer art histories that were to profoundly affect me.

I am originally from an Iraqi Muslim background, but I have never conformed to what is expected of my gender in my culture; clothes and make-up have always been my way of articulating this. I had, until my studies with Karolina and Luke, been unable to intellectually and verbally articulate what exactly I was experiencing, and I had certainly never identified with what I studied at school. Through the alternative bibliographies I was pointed towards - Judith Butler on gender, Deleuze & Guattari on multiplicity, Lucy Irigaray’s feminist theories, Foucault’s “aesthetics” of the self, and the political works of queer modernists like Paul Thek, feminist Surrealists like Meret Oppenheim and Claude Cahun - I suddenly found a voice within the world of academia.

The feeling that I was a queer “mole”, operating within the boundaries of a traditional discipline (and as it stands, especially without Luke and Karolina, an increasingly traditional department), is how I conceive my desired career trajectory. The question of how to create work that voices alternative conceptions of gender, sexuality and social ideals whilst operating in a dominant forum is what intrigues me; this was particularly sparked by my study of Andy Warhol's Factory when I was Luke’s student. Warhol was the ultimate queer “outsider” working “inside” mass America, giving queer people a position within a previously inhospitable space (understanding this compelled me to writing about Lady Gaga for my final undergraduate dissertation, with Luke’s support). My drag troupe Denim, which began whilst I was a student at Cambridge, aims at this. I felt we achieved this internal subversion whilst students; performing in the Great Hall at the 500th anniversary of St John’s May Ball, 650 black-tied alumni as our audience, to me felt like the victory of queer secret agents. Similarly, one of my proudest achievements as an undergraduate was filling the historic Cambridge Union for a Denim event with 800 students, all of who attended in drag. Denim’s then designer, fellow graduate and dear friend Lettice Franklin had the genius idea to place acetate over the stoic painted portraits, colouring red marker over stiff upper lips to invite the past into our drag revelry.

For our current shows in London, we use the format of a mainstream pop girl group, performing music in a theatrical format that is accessible and in a sense, “consumable”. In doing this, our audiences extend far past an exclusively “queer” demographic, and we have performed to families at Port Eliot Festival, Glastonbury with Florence and the Machine, The Arts Theatre Leicester Square, The Bethnal Green Working Men’s Club, Mario Testinar’s 60th birthday, and I even just filmed a role as a drag...
version of Patsy in the latest AB FAB movie. Our belief is that drag has a political position in mainstream culture, able to undermine and critique its damaging ideals. For me, the power of drag is in its humour and parody; referencing tropes of pop culture in a way that effectively competes with that culture in quality, to then surpass it, and ultimately critique it. I have never been fond of drag that is purely gender-imitation; for me this can offensively replicate problematic ideals of femininity. It is my belief that drag queens should aesthetically reference their artificiality, so to provide a critique on conceptions of femininity, and gender more widely.

The great artist Duchamp was a great player of chess, a game of tactics that informed how he meddled with the dominant art institution; strategically in a language they understood, to ultimately unravel bourgeois morality from inside its walls. This is, I think, the best way to make social progress with creative ventures. Rather than retreat into a refuge away from mass culture, it is the goal now, more than ever, for “anti-establishment” creative work to battle “The Establishment” on its own terms. The hope is to ultimately gain a space within that “Establishment”, and to perform the necessary critique in front of its very audience. Currently, Denim my drag troupe has released a pop single with an accompanying music video entitled Denim, which is enjoying success. Our goal was to package the work in a format that is recognizably pop-cultural, and to disseminate the work within a mass cultural space whilst enacting a critique of that space.

This is why I think film is such an interesting medium to play with. It is very consumable, and it can reach a wide audience when distributed effectively. Its visual closeness to reality gives the medium an immediate believability, and that it tells stories that audiences can emotionally empathise with gives it an inherent relatability. I adore films that play with mainstream and consumable story telling tropes for alternative story lines. Recent British film, PRIDE (featuring Imelda Staunton), which told the story of the LGBT support of miners’ groups in Thatcher Britain, did exactly this; on the surface an accessible and feel good British classic for mass consumption, on the inside a critique of conservative Britain and a celebration of untold queer history. This is something I am currently exploring in my own work, NIGHTSTAND, my short film, similarly uses the structure of a mainstream rom-com between two strangers – a getting ready sequence, a serendipitous “meet-cue”, the unexpected second date “re-union”, and a “break-up” – in a hopefully accessible format to tell a story of the common but unspoken relationships between married “heterosexual” men and those identifying as gay.

So although my current career path may not seem the logical “next step” following four years of study at Corpus, it is, somewhat unexpectedly, intimately woven with what I learnt as a student. Currently, I am working on a DVD, BOYS ON FILM 15, on distribution by Peccadillo Pictures this year – please do pick up a copy (The BFI Shop/Amazon!) We will also be touring the film across 71 cinemas nationwide as part of the Peccadillo Pictures Pout Festival this year.

I hope that future students of the History of Art Department in Cambridge have the opportunity to be inspired like I was, and that the department confronts and understands why offering alternative courses and dedicated teachers like Karolina and Luke to their students is of the utmost importance.
RICHARD PHILLIPS
INTERVIEWED BY SARAH GORDON

RICHARD PHILLIPS’ RETURN TO CORPUS LAST YEAR TO COLLECT HIS MPHIL IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES WAS THE HAPPY RESULT OF A MISUNDERSTANDING SPANNING TWO DECADES. WHEN HE LEFT CAMBRIDGE IN 1993 TO ATTEND LAW SCHOOL IN GEORGETOWN, RICHARD ASSUMED THAT THE LETTER HE HAD RECEIVED CONGRATULATING HIM ON PASSING HIS COURSE MEANT THAT HE HAD BEEN AWARDED HIS DEGREE. IT WAS ONLY IN 2015, WHEN HE NEEDED A COPY OF HIS DEGREE CERTIFICATE TO PUT ON HIS OFFICE WALL, THAT HE REALISED HE DID NOT IN FACT HAVE THE MPHIL HE HAD BEEN PUTTING ON HIS CV FOR TWENTY-TWO YEARS.

This is all the more surprising as he was subjected to “the toughest security checks” while working at the US Justice Department and on Capitol Hill, including FBI agents visiting Cambridge to interview his former supervisor. Even some of the world’s greatest investigative minds did not manage to unpick this University’s often bewildering traditions and discover that Richard did not technically have a Cambridge degree.

I met Richard on a sunny afternoon in July, the day before he had planned to graduate; he had just made the decision to return to Cambridge to graduate at a later date, so that his mother can see him receive his degree. He jokes that the College must wonder that it has taken him until the age of 44 to finally attend his own graduation ceremony, but during our conversation I was struck by the great amount Richard has achieved between leaving Cambridge and graduation, despite taking more than twenty years to make it to a congregation of the Senate House. Following successful careers in the US Department of Justice and working as Counsel to Senators Kennedy and Leahy, Richard is now CEO of his family’s international freight business, Pilot.
By his own admission, Richard ended up at Corpus "by luck." While he was a Senior studying History at Yale, he "had no clue" what he wanted to do with his life, but knew he loved one topic: how the West responded to Middle Eastern politics after the Second World War. He wrote a speculative letter to the late Professor Peter Avery, an expert on the history of Iran at King's College, asking if he would supervise him, and, to Richard's surprise, some weeks later a positive response arrived from across the Atlantic. Like many people who are new to Cambridge, Richard was somewhat perplexed by the college system, and asked for Professor Avery's advice. He recommended "this great little college across the street," so Richard came to Corpus and now he "cannot imagine having been anywhere else."

Richard entered into College life wholeheartedly, perhaps a little too enthusiastically for the older research students with whom he shared a house on Trumpington Street. "They were much older graduate students, and I was only twenty-one. I'm sure I was noisy! There was only one bath, and I was always coming back very muddy from rugby practice," he recalls. "Someone must have approached the College and said 'If you could find this young man another living arrangement, we would really appreciate it'" as he received a letter from the College over Christmas saying he had been moved to a room in Leckhampton House, where he lived for the rest of his time at Cambridge "with a core group of friends, all doing different, wacky things." I ask if he found it difficult to adjust to life in the UK, but Richard "was struck by how much it was like Yale. There was this sense there that we had been given an extraordinary opportunity, and we should do something special with it." There was a very similar feeling at Corpus." In fact, the only aspect of Cambridge life that Richard found disconcertingly foreign was remembering to cycle on the left hand side of the road "especially after a couple of pints."

If good fortune played a role in Richard ending up at Corpus, his luck continued when he was at law school and sat next to Michael Robinson, the head of the US Department of Justice's internship programme, on an aeroplane. After they spent the flight discussing the importance of public service, he said "if you ever want an internship, call me." I called him the next day. Richard worked mostly for him as an intern, and "we had a terrific experience together." However, the role was not always easy. Richard was given a very unusual constitutional case, which involved search and seizure, cruel and unusual punishment and a due process claim "all bound into one." "I beat my head against this thing for weeks. Finally I wrote the brief, and he hated it." It was the end of the internship, so Richard left thinking "I guess I won't be working there!" After four weeks of silence, Michael called him to say that he had started the brief from scratch, because he had hated Richard's version so much.

He went on to admit that he had also struggled to write it, discovering that the case presented the hardest legal concept he had been faced with in his entire career at the Department of Justice. When he finally wrote the brief, he realised it was actually the brief Richard had written a month before. Michael consequently became Richard's biggest ally in the department. When Richard applied to be one of ten attorneys taken on straight from law school by the department every year, the head of the internship programme told the selection committee "and that is how I got the job." Richard loved his time at the Department of Justice, which he describes as a "treasure in the United States," full of "really good lawyers, who are charged with doing the right thing." Their Latin motto, "Qui Pro Domina Justitia Sequitur" derives from the motto of the Queen's bench, and roughly translates as 'He who comes in the name of justice.' "It was drummed into us that we were not there on behalf of the government, we were there on behalf of justice, and once you know that you have a lot of leeway to do the right thing. Twice I refused to defend what the government had done, and once this resulted in a significant change in policy. Most of the time, the government wins; when one body sets the rules, they are usually going to win," he jokes. "But every once in a while the government does something that can't withstand judicial scrutiny."
In those times, the duty of the Justice Department lawyer shifts from representing the government to supporting justice, and to confess to the court that the government got it wrong. That’s a remarkable responsibility for a young lawyer, and one to be used carefully. It also means you can do some real good.

After several years at the Department of Justice, Richard received a call at four o’clock one afternoon from Senator Edward Kennedy’s office, with the exciting news that a coveted position as counsel to the Senator had opened up. The down side was that applications closed at 9am the following morning. The Senator was being briefed on what happened to the government got it wrong. The Senator received a worried telephone call from his mother saying that his father was ill, and immediately knew that he had to go home to help his family. However, after the green card holder had died, their families were no longer able to use this route to stay in the US so long as they had a job. However, after the green card holder had died, their families were no longer able to use this route to stay in the US so long as they had a job. However, after the green card holder had died, their families were no longer able to use this route to stay in the US so long as they had a job. However, after the green card holder had died, their families were no longer able to use this route to stay in the US so long as they had a job. However, after the green card holder had died, their families were no longer able to use this route to stay in the US so long as they had a job. However, after the green card holder had died, their families were no longer able to use this route to stay in the US so long as they had a job. However, after the green card holder had died, their families were no longer able to use this route to stay in the US so long as they had a job. However, after the green card holder had died, their families were no longer able to use this route to stay in the US so long as they had a job. However, after the green card holder had died, their families were no longer able to use this route to stay in the US so long as they had a job. However, after the green card holder had died, their families were no longer able to use this route to stay in the US.

For several deliveries to arrive at once, often to an environment where every hour matters. If one link in this chain of events is broken by a job not being done properly, the whole process falls apart, so it is understandable that Richard feels strongly about managing the people who work for him. This is even more the case because Pilot is a family business, not only in the sense that it is still owned by the Phillips family, but also in the sense that Richard tries to create an ethos of mutual support, integrity and loyalty throughout the company. However, Richard is aware of the need to be clear where family ends and business begins, particularly when managing his own relations. “We don’t treat any employees differently because they are a member of the Phillips family. We are all part of the Pilot family.”

What advice would Richard give to the young people with whom he will soon be graduating? Despite having had several careers in the past twenty years, he reflects that “I’ve been happiest when I wasn’t trying to do my whole career at once. With each part of my career so far, I have been happiest when I poured heart and soul into it, not thinking about my next job, but just being fully alive in that moment, in that task.” He also offers a thought that is particularly apt for those of us who work or study in an historical institution like Corpus: “the places where I have worked were here before me, and they will be here after me.”

The complexities of a business is that it can seem an insurmountable task, but Richard believes that if we “make people our concern” we can have a positive impact on those around us. Then, through our relationships with the people that form the family business meant he spent many distressed calls from my mother about. I have worked here before me, and they will be here after me. Returning home to run the family business meant he spent a year travelling the country learning about Pilot from the bottom up, “working on the dock at night moving freight, doing data entry, going on sales calls. I was doing it to learn, but it had the added benefit of building trust within the company.” The complexities of a business that could be dismissed as simply moving things from one place to another quickly become apparent. Pilot deals with items that could not just be sent by an ordinary courier – medical devices, jet engines, military equipment – often co-ordinating
I came to Cambridge—and to Corpus—in Michaelmas 2014 as the first University Lecturer in Film in Cambridge’s history. I was appointed to the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages (MML) and affiliated myself with the Department of Italian. Happily, I was also offered a fellowship at Corpus Christi and have made my home here, where I am tucked away off B staircase.

I work as an historian and theorist of cinema, with a special emphasis on Italian filmmaking. My first book studied the cinema of Pier Paolo Pasolini—one of the great European minds of the twentieth century—in relation to history of architecture and urban space in Rome in the post-WWII period. I have written widely on European art cinema and American experimental cinema. Currently I am completing a book on the architecture of the house in cinema and at work on another on Pasolini.

Despite the inaugural-sounding nature of my appointment, it really figures only as the latest chapter in Cambridge’s long history as a place where film is taken seriously. The teaching of film at the University extends at least as far back as the 1960s when European art films began to pop up as prescribed texts on the Tragedy paper taught in the English Faculty. About this same time, film began to make itself felt across tripos subjects in MML. What was happening at Cambridge during these years, in terms of the inclusion of film as a subject worthy of intense scrutiny, was part of a larger process in Anglo-American higher education. The achievement of European cinemas in the post-World War II period had a great deal to do with this. By the 1960s it was clear that one was more likely to encounter something radically new and difficult in a cinema than in a bookstore or a theatre. Challenging films by Antonioni, Godard, Bergman and Varda imposed themselves on the imagination and critical consciousness of academics and students on both sides of the Atlantic.

And so—little by little—as films and filmmakers began to populate syllabi and course outlines and as movies came to be discussed and dissected in lectures, seminars and supervisions, a new discipline—film studies—slowly came into being. Cambridge played a significant role in this history. But the names of our degrees—English Literature, Modern and Medieval Languages—have not reflected the extent to which the study of film has occupied so many of us here for so long.

Film has long been a palpable presence at Cambridge, but not a terribly visible one.

In 2006 under the leadership of Professor David Trotter (English), Professor Andrew Webber (German) and Professor Emma Wilson (French), a group of academics from a variety of mostly humanities disciplines came together to design and launch the first named degree devoted to film studies, the MPhil in Screen Media and Cultures. This MPhil has run successfully for a decade. Its graduates have gone on to write PhD theses at Cambridge (and elsewhere) on topics in film and other screen-based media and then on to successful academic careers at universities in the UK and internationally. Other graduates now work in film and media production and the arts.

I came to Cambridge after having taught film at the University of Sussex, and before that, at the University of York. Upon arrival I worked quickly to establish a PhD in Film and Screen Studies and to establish the University’s Centre for Film and Screen, an interdisciplinary home for research, teaching and public-facing activities. It seemed strange to have an MPhil dedicated to the serious academic study of film that did not lead on to a PhD in the same discipline. In order to give both degrees the same identity, the MPhil will share the designation of Film and Screen Studies from the next academic year.

I will admit to enjoying a slight frisson of pleasure in establishing the newest PhD in the Arts and Humanities, one that focuses on the most modern of art forms, while teaching in one of the University’s most ancient colleges. In fact, Corpus is a natural home to these developments given that my valued colleague Emma Wilson has for...
two decades taught film in the College and in the French Department. Emma helped me to invent the Centre and guided me through the University’s none-too-obvious administrative structures while we were petitioning for the foundation of the PhD. We have both had tremendous support from the College and especially from Marina Frasca-Spada, our Senior Tutor, and the Master.

It’s easy to feel oneself on the defensive in describing this field of study to those to whom it seems strange, new-fangled, or unserious. Readers will have to take me at my word here—or else do their own reading and historical spadework—but when film studies was being consolidated as a discipline in the 1970s and 80s, it was not only the sexiest subject in the Arts and Humanities, but also the most intellectually daunting and daring. It was where the conversation was happening, and it was an intense conversation. Again, Cambridge intellectuals played a major role here. In the 1970s, Raymond Williams, Stephen Heath and Colin MacCabe—all teaching in the English Faculty in those days—wrote foundational film theoretical texts that have become cornerstones of the discipline. Students coming for the first time to a book like Stephen Heath’s Questions of Cinema are startled at the time to a book like Stephen Heath’s discipline. Students coming for the first time to a book like Stephen Heath’s discipline. Students coming for the first time to a book like Stephen Heath’s discipline.

Film theory—in what we might call its golden age of the 70s and 80s—was almost a foreign language of ‘male gazes’ and ‘imaginary signifiers’. Quite literally it was a foreign language insofar as it was often the first place that advanced philosophical thinking about aesthetics being developed in France made its appearance in the English language. Film theory was (and continues to be) also wildly interested in the close analysis of texts. In 1970s film theory circles, you could make or break a political alliance over the reading or misreading of a panning shot. Cambridge then, with its strong traditions in modern languages, critical thinking, and close reading (there is a lot of practical criticism in the DNA of film studies) has always provided a rich ecosystem for the articulation of what has been one of the biggest success stories of a humanist subject’s expansion at the end of the last century and the beginning of the new millennium.

What I and Emma and our colleagues at the Centre for Film and Screen hope to do is to build on Cambridge’s traditions in film and screen studies while reinvigorating and expanding our mission in an era which is increasingly audio-visual. Our MPhil attracts some of the strongest students from our own undergraduate programmes, as well as students from the finest universities in the UK, the US and the wider world. Our students throw themselves into research projects across a startlingly broad array of research topics: from space in early film comedies, to sexuality in European art films, to the consideration of the residue of Kantian aesthetic judgment in Instagram’s ‘like’ button. Film and Screen Studies is, in some ways, only a placeholder for a radically broad field of investigation. We intend the Centre not only to be place where the finest new generation of film scholars are trained, but also a home for critical thinking and practice that will have a genuinely transformative impact on the world.

We will be hosting our first filmmaker residence during the coming Easter term. Joanna Hogg, one of the most distinctively stylish and talked-about of a new generation of British filmmakers, will be at Cambridge in early May to hold a series of seminars and master classes, in addition to being in conversation at a complete retrospective screening of her feature films at the Picturehouse. Cambridge is interestingly bound up in Joanna’s work: her student thesis film stars Tilda Swinton (New Hall/Murray Edwards), and all of her feature films have starred Tom Hiddleston (Pembroke). Joanna will be putting the finishing touches on the screenplay for her next film, the protagonist of which is a Cambridge graduate who is becoming a filmmaker. Also in the works is an event that will take stock of the incredible impact that graduates of the University (including graduates of Corpus) have had on the film industry—nationally and internationally. Apart from these glitterier events, there is, behind and at the bottom of it all, the pleasure of sitting in a supervision with some of the best students in the world in order to think through the material strangeness of film itself. Film is a mode of representation, of thought, of protest, of political imagination. Film’s ability to put us at a loss for words is perhaps its greatest strength. It tests what we know or take for granted in the world; it makes strange—by making at times unbearably vivid—our image of what we hold in common. To teach and be taught by students at Corpus who join the tradition of film studies at Cambridge is an enormous privilege.
This might sound like an odd topic of research, but from a clinical viewpoint tissue acidosis develops in a variety of inflammatory conditions, as well as many cancers, and understanding how the nervous system detects acid as a noxious stimulus to produce pain might help to identify new therapeutic targets for analgesics. To give this some perspective, a recent study across Europe found that 1 in 5 of the adult population suffers from some form of chronic pain, arthritis being the most common cause, and two thirds experience inadequate pain relief, and hence our mission is to identify novel therapeutic targets.

During my PhD, I served on the MCR for two years, demonstrated my inability to dance at a ceilidh or two and generally got involved in life at Leckhampton as much as I could. One particular memory was of Sunday afternoon tea in the lounge of Leckhampton House. The ritual was that a Fellow would appear bearing cake and tea and those of us with an inability to resist the lure of all things sweet would sit and chat until all had been consumed. One afternoon, an elderly couple appeared, whom I had not seen before, but within a few minutes I found myself in deep discussion with Peter Lewis and his wife Joyce. Peter was then a Life Fellow, but in the 1970s had worked alongside my PhD supervisor, who was then a postdoctoral researcher, and it was amusing to hear stories from a different era of how physiological and pharmacological research was conducted.

After wrapping up my PhD in just shy of three years, I left Cambridge to work as a postdoctoral scientist at the Max-Delbrück Centre for Molecular Medicine in Berlin, but not quite as my family or friends envisaged. Instead of a standard 3-year contract, I was offered a month’s free accommodation on campus, followed by a 3-month contract, during which time I would apply for research fellowships and hope that one stuck! The reason for my somewhat gambling decision was two-fold: firstly, the project involved working with the naked mole-rat (Heterocephalus glaber), and secondly, my interview with my future boss Gary Lewin had essentially taken place over several pints of beer in a bar down the backstreets of Prenzlauerberg from about 21:00 until 03:00, where all technicalities of the potential project, as well as stories of Berlin life were discussed. Quite simply, even with the lack of long-term security, I was sold.
So why is the naked mole-rat so interesting? Firstly, they are eusocial, which means that like many bees, wasps and termites, in any single colony there is only one breeding female – among mammals this trait is highly unusual, but the naked mole-rat is perhaps unique in being cold blooded. Moreover, they appear resistant to cancer and live until about 30 years of age, far beyond what one would predict from their size (bigger animals tend to live longer lives). What for me was most interesting was that naked mole-rats also fail to respond to acid as a noxious stimulus, most likely an adaptation to their subterranean habitat, which is filled with lots of animals, thus resulting in high atmospheric carbon dioxide levels; carbon dioxide reacts with bodily fluids to produce acid and thus it appeared that the naked mole-rat had in some way evolved to enable it to live in this acidic atmosphere without enduring pain. My mission was to find out how.

Being insensitive to acid as a noxious stimulus might not sound particularly unusual, but throughout the animal kingdom many species including the nematode worm *Caenorhabditis elegans*, the fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster*, the medicinal leech *Hirudo medicinalis*, the rainbow trout *Oncorhyncus mykiss*, the standard laboratory mouse *Mus musculus* and indeed humans find acid noxious. What makes the naked mole-rat different?

Securing a Research Fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, for the next five-and-a-half years I worked on understanding the weirdness of the naked mole-rat, both in terms of its acid-insensitivity and other peculiarities. For example, re-wiring of the neuronal circuitry in the naked mole-rat spinal cord has left them immune to the burn of capsaicin (the substance that makes chilli peppers taste hot), and they do not experience the itching sensation evoked by histamine that drives the unpleasantness of hay fever and other allergies in humans. With regards to acid insensitivity, it turns out that naked mole-rats have the same complement of neuronal acid sensors as humans do, but genetic variation in a particular neuronal protein means that acid anaesthetises, rather than activates, naked mole-rat sensory neurones. Work by others has recently shown that this genetic variation is conserved among many other species that are exposed to high carbon dioxide concentrations, such as cave roosting bats and hibernating mammals. Working with Gary meant that one rarely worked on a project in isolation. He was a big believer in collaborative science meaning that I regularly interacted with other research groups, which was a great benefit to me in increasing my understanding of different research areas. I also believe that it is very important not to get too bogged down in one little niche area of research, but rather to keep oneself abreast of what is happening in different areas. A key collaboration established during my time in Berlin was with Professor Thom Park at the University of Illinois at Chicago, one of the first neurobiologists to recognise the potential of studying the naked mole-rat. During one stay with Thom, we wanted to investigate how unique the naked mole-rat was by examining certain physiology and behaviours in an unrelated species that also lives in an atmosphere with high carbon dioxide and low oxygen levels: the Mexican free-tailed bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*). This involved flying from Chicago to Austin, getting up at 04:00 and then disturbing bats from their roost under a highway with a soft broom.
handle and catching them in a bag below. Driving back to Chicago with the bats sharing the car with us, we then spent two weeks teaching them to eat mealworms, quite a laborious procedure, which was stimulated by discussion on the radio of the impending US election; unfortunately, I left Chicago 2 days before Barack Obama’s election victory, but new data was accumulated and that had been the principal motivation for my trip.

Alongside science, living in Berlin itself was an exciting time. A city that has experienced so much destruction and rebuilding in the last 100 years contrasted greatly with the ancient serenity of Cambridge. On every corner there is history to be told from the memorial to my institute to children victims of the Nazi era T4 euthanasia programme to the Tränenpalast, which I walked past almost every day (a palace of tears; former border crossing at Berlin Friedrichstrasse train station from where East Germans would say goodbye to visitors going back to West Germany) and Columbahalle, originally built in the 1950s as a sports hall for US soldiers based in Berlin, but now used as a venue for live music and where I saw Slayer, Motörhead, Lamb of God, Mastodon and many others; a heavy metal fan has it easy in Berlin! I also met my husband who at the time was studying fine art and who showed much patience in helping me to improve my German, whilst also showing me parts of Berlin that I surely would have never seen otherwise.

Approaching the end of my sixth year in Berlin, I decided it was time to move on and develop some new experimental skills before trying to establish my own research group. Maintaining my interest in how sensory neurones detect environmental stimuli, I moved to the Skirball Institute for Biomolecular Medicine at New York University School of Medicine to study how carbon dioxide evokes avoidance behaviour in the nematode worm C elegans. Life at NYU was a lot of fun and I worked with some great colleagues to establish that molecular carbon dioxide activates avoidance in C elegans, which contrasts to the mechanism through which carbon dioxide is thought to evoke behaviours in humans, eg increased rate of breathing, where carbon dioxide is thought to act via the proxy of acidosis. I was really pleased with the piece of work that we published from my year at NYU. However, nature nearly prevented it from happening as hurricane Sandy hit towards the end of my time there and had a major impact on living and working in Manhattan, as well as the surrounding area.

During my year at NYU, I applied for numerous faculty positions back in the UK and from the offers I had, Cambridge was the obvious choice, even though I had left my PhD I was sure that I would not come back. I returned to Cambridge in January 2013 to a Lectureship in the Department of Pharmacology. My research group focuses on how sensory neuronal function changes during inflammatory diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, as well as examining further the strange biology of naked mole rats: why don’t they develop cancer? How do they survive levels of hypercapnia and hypoxia that would threaten our ability to survive?

WHY DON’T NAKED MOLE-RATS DEVELOP CANCER? HOW DO THEY SURVIVE LEVELS OF HYPERCAPNIA AND HYPOXIA THAT WOULD THREATEN OUR ABILITY TO SURVIVE?

For the study of pain to get the ball rolling, and we recently secured a 3 year Project Grant from Arthritis Research UK, which enables us to do some really exciting science and hopefully make an exciting breakthrough or two. Alongside research, a lecturer obviously has to lecture and doing this in front of 300+ medical students was a big shift from being purely an experimentalist, but it is something that I enjoy and try my hardest to make my lectures enjoyable as well as informative. I’ll never forget one particular lecture course during my first degree where the lecturer began by stating that he was only teaching the course because he had the highest maths qualifications out of the faculty. Boredom ensued, interesting it was not.

When I had visited Cambridge for my job interview, a chance meeting with Professor Christopher Howie in Free School Lane, who had been Warden of Leckhampton during my PhD, lead me to having an interview with the Fellowship Committee and eventual admission to Corpus as a Fellow in Pharmacology for the start of the academic year 2013/14. My principal jobs during my PhD, lead me to having an interview with the Fellowship Committee and eventual admission to Corpus as a Fellow in Pharmacology for the start of the academic year 2013/14. My principal jobs during my PhD were to supervise PhD students, which mean that I get involved in all aspects of the lives of our current undergraduates, something that I really enjoy. This enjoyment is certainly aided by the view over Old Court from my office in R staircase. I also try to spend as much time at Leckhampton as possible, a place that has changed much since my days there, even though it was not that long ago. The recent addition of the Kho building is truly splendid and I look forward to seeing how the new Leckhampton hall takes shape over the coming months. I am also proud to be involved in a number of outreach activities for Corpus organised by the Admissions Tutor and Schools Liaison Officer, such as the recent Biomolecular Sciences Masterclass for prospective Medicine and Biological Natural Sciences students, which from the feedback proved a great success. As a student, I found Corpus a welcoming and supportive environment and now as a Fellow I want to be able to inspire the next generation to apply and then be part of providing the welcoming and supporting environment that I experienced.
Corpus first year undergraduate Lydia Thorn was among them, as Cambridge’s scrum half. Despite being the youngest on the Varsity team, Lydia is one of the most experienced players; she has been playing rugby nearly half her life, having taken up the sport at Oxford Rugby Club when she was just ten years old. At that age, boys and girls played together, only forming separate teams at the age of twelve or thirteen. “They didn’t have a girls’ team to carry on at that club, so because I wanted to continue to play I had to find other women’s clubs around Oxfordshire,” Lydia remembers. She was determined to persevere with the sport and continued throughout her teenage years, joining the university women’s squad as soon as she arrived in Cambridge. “At university it steps up a level, so you have to put a lot more into it. We train Tuesdays and Fridays, and there are weekly weights and fitness sessions, as well as a match on Wednesdays, so we have something on almost every day.” Matches take place across the length and breadth of the country, so can take a whole day out of an already hectic term. “You have to be quite organised to fit it all in.”

Despite the pressures of managing rugby and her first term studying Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, Lydia believes that rugby gives her a richer experience of Cambridge. She plays alongside both undergraduate and graduate students, so her social life encompasses a wide range of Cambridge student life. “I’m nineteen, and there are twenty-year-olds on the team, but also twenty-seven-year-old graduate students doing amazing things – medics, veterinary scientists and geologists.” Some of her team mates only started playing rugby when they arrived at university, and there were players on the pitch in December who had started playing rugby in the autumn. It is hard to imagine how anyone can reach such a high standard so quickly, but Lydia believes that “if you are going to be good and you’ve got the brain for it, then you’ll be good.” The idea of having a “brain” for rugby might be surprising given that size is all-important. Lydia herself is very slight, and explains that she plays scrum half, which is usually the smallest player. The importance of physical size varies according to the position you play, and is usually not as important as many people assume: “You’d be surprised. You don’t actually have to look that strong to be very strong physically.
I’ve experienced some tackles from women who really are very strong – they work hard and do weights – even if they’re not really ‘built’. It’s more about strength than muscle.” In her experience, mental strength and determination are crucial: “Being able to see spaces is a vital mental faculty, and it’s key to have the ability to run at someone who will take you down, and it might hurt, but going for it anyway. Going in for tackles yourself is something that takes a lot of bravery to start off with.” I suggest that this could be particularly counterintuitive for girls who have been discouraged from engaging in the boisterous behaviour traditionally associated with boys, but Lydia’s childhood was happily free from any such gender expectations. “I was encouraged to do whatever I wanted, which just happened to be running around a muddy field.”

2015 saw two very significant steps forward for women’s sport at Oxbridge. Lydia’s first experience of the women’s Varsity match was as a thirteen-year-old spectator at Iffley Road in Oxford. “Now that I’m here, I can see how much the game has developed in six years – the standard has just gone up and up. That’s the great thing about women’s rugby; it’s continuously improving.” Where would Lydia like to see the sport in ten years time? “Recently, England women’s rugby sevens has become professional, but in the Premiership and at international level women’s rugby is an amateur sport, so the players balance full-time jobs with training and matches. If we were paid, they wouldn’t have to juggle all these things and could put 100% into rugby, so the game would just fly.” What about women’s rugby at Cambridge? “I think it’s great that we’re having the Varsity match at Twickenham – that’s a huge, huge step, that level of equality. Next year, it would be great to have more people turning up and supporting, to see the sides full, because that really changes a game. If you hear people cheering for you, it’s really motivating.”

Alongside throwing herself in at the deep end with her rugby commitments, Lydia is settling in well to life at Corpus. “I’m really glad to be back after Christmas! Corpus is a great community – it feels like coming back to a place where you know everyone.” Lydia was already acquainted with the College, as her father is the Development Director at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and his team occasionally visits its Cambridge counterpart. Did her father’s Corpus connection influence her choice of college? “He certainly wasn’t adverse to it, but I mostly chose Corpus because I study Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic. The Parker Library is a huge asset for my academic interests, and it’s unique among the colleges.” Lydia chose ASNAC because she was torn between studying History and English at university, and when she came across the subject in the Cambridge prospectus it seemed like a perfect fit. “I’ve always been a lot more interested in medieval history than modern history. With modern history it feels like it’s been done, we’ve gone over it, and there are a hundred opinions about everything, but with medieval history there’s still so much to discover. ASNAC offers a combination of history and literature, as well as languages, which I had wanted to study at A-level but hadn’t quite had the opportunity to do.” She is embracing the challenge of learning both Old English and Old Norse from scratch, which is made a little less daunting by the similarities between the two languages. “There are a lot of crossovers because of the Germanic influence on England and on Scandinavia, and the fact that the two were in contact with one another throughout the period, but Old Norse is harder than Old English. There are some words in Old English, like ‘stan’ for ‘stone’, which are familiar and you can see where it comes from, whereas with Old Norse it’s not a language of which I have any understanding already. It’s worth it, though, as there’s an amazing range of literature, like the Icelandic sagas, that’s unique to that culture.”

As our conversation leaps from rugby to English, we ask Lydia about her study of Old Norse and Old English, and whether she’s enjoying her study of the languages. “I think it’s been fabulous, but I certainly wasn’t a massive fan of Old Norse when I was first introduced to it, but I mostly chose Corpus because I knew everyone.” This is a familiar refrain from the College’s history, as most of the students are already acquainted with the College, as Lydia was. “I know everyone.”

Lydia was taken aback by the overwhelming positivity and support of her peers at Corpus. “I’ve always been a lot more of a loner, but I think I’ve really been able to settle in here and find my own little group.” Lydia’s first experience of the women’s Varsity match was as a thirteen-year-old spectator at Iffley Road in Oxford. “Now that I’m here, I can see how much the game has developed in six years – the standard has just gone up and up. That’s the great thing about women’s rugby; it’s continuously improving.” Where would Lydia like to see the sport in ten years time? “Recently, England women’s rugby sevens has become professional, but in the Premiership and at international level women’s rugby is an amateur sport, so the players balance full-time jobs with training and matches. If we were paid, they wouldn’t have to juggle all these things and could put 100% into rugby, so the game would just fly.” What about women’s rugby at Cambridge? “I think it’s great that we’re having the Varsity match at Twickenham – that’s a huge, huge step, that level of equality. Next year, it would be great to have more people turning up and supporting, to see the sides full, because that really changes a game. If you hear people cheering for you, it’s really motivating.”

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Lord Ramsbotham – Honorary Fellow  m1954  History
The memory I particularly cherish is Oliver’s introduction to my 650th anniversary lecture on imprisonment, when he advised everyone to listen carefully so that they could learn how to behave when they were themselves imprisoned. I remember looking at the audience and noticing who was laughing and who was po-faced, which I mentioned to him afterwards. Typically he suggested that the po-faced were probably old lags who were trying to keep their secret hidden. Not very funny, but a typical Oliver exchange!

Michael Kelly – m1964  Natural Sciences
I first met Oliver when I was an undergraduate in 1964, and my wife and I have been good friends with him for over forty years. There must be hundreds of anecdotes about Oliver, but here is ours. When we moved to Bristol in 1978 we bought a property called Myrtle Cottage down by the River Avon which had a large evergreen shrub by its gate, and we wondered if this was the ‘Myrtle’. So I sent him a twig with leaves and some fruits and received back a 3-page closely argued and referenced letter that said that it was not a Myrtle but a Bay Laurel; and that the two were often confused. When some eight years later we moved permanently to Leicestershire we took a cutting with us which has thrived in our garden here. We think of Oliver every time we go past it.

Ivan Bodis-Wollner – m1968  Medical Sciences
I had the good fortune of knowing Oliver during my time at Leckhampton. He was a personable, sometimes funny and informative man. I remember when I first met him and asked what he was doing, he said ‘literature’. I then asked what literature and he replied, ‘Icelandic literature’… and after a little pause, seeing my surprise and raised eyebrows, he added in a different pitch and raising his finger: ‘medieval Icelandic literature.’

Francis Thomas – m1968  Music
Oliver was a delightful man, full of weird and wonderful anecdotes, such as of a South American tribe who, he told me over dinner, had developed a sauce specifically to accompany human flesh!

Peter Horsfield – m1969  Natural Sciences
An extract from Peter’s poem, College Re-visit, written following a visit to College in 2008.
Oliver, one-time young botany tutor,  
Now College Master, venerable,  
Fount of knowledge,  
Grizzled and white goatee beard.  
Still the same national health specs,  
Skewed on nose, mended with old elastoplast.  
The eccentric, the individual,  
The boyish enthusiasm,  
Endure throughout.

Gerard McBurney – m1973  English
Oliver was one of the most extraordinary of people! He miraculously managed to be a great scientist and at the same time carry on the old Cambridge tradition of the eccentric antiquarian. And that’s because he loved everything about the University and its traditions. In fact he loved so many things about life, including lots of funny things. I’ll never forget him sitting in my parents’ house explaining the technology of ‘Rumforising’ a fireplace (he kept needlessly repeating the ridiculous word ‘Rumforising’ and chortling with glee at its absurd sound). He loved and was deeply loyal to my parents and they in turn loved him.

Christopher Andrew – Life Fellow  m1959  History
The front cover of Oliver’s pamphlet on Madingley Wood (with David Coombe) is just as I remember it with the Luftwaffe aerial photo of the wood taken in 1940, which Oliver found in the US National Archives but there’s one wonderful phrase on the back cover which I’d forgotten:
‘The front cover shows Madingley Wood as Hitler knew it...’ Only Oliver could have written that!
The discipline of those little notebooks, the foundation of so much of his knowledge, made a deep impression on us.

John Lucas – Former Fellow
I still remember when we admitted Oliver. The science examiners told Michael McCrum and me that we must admit him—he had already compiled a flora of Norfolk. And so of course we did. It was for Corpus the best admission we ever made. Years later when I had occasion to consult Tony Wrigley, about Oliver’s suitability for the British Academy, he gave enthusiastic support, saying that on every count Oliver came up trumps. He was clearly a highly competent botanist, but he combined that with historical expertise, and would draw on the parochial records of all the parishes Corpus had to deal with, to produce a rounded picture of each one.

David Ibbetson – Former Fellow
m1973 Law
I sat with Oliver at lunchtime the day after I’d been admitted as a fellow in 2000. Oliver’s opening gambit was ‘If you wanted to kill a fellow of this college (unspeciﬁed which one), what method would you choose?’ The rest of lunchtime was spent rather uneasily on the toxic qualities of various fungi, on their own or in conjunction with alcohol.

Elizabeth Stephan – Former Teacher Fellow and Andrew Harvey – Fellow
Our ﬁrst walk with Oliver was on the Tiger Hill estate in Suffolk and, as in the experience of countless others, he transformed forever on that occasion our understanding of landscape and of the nature of a walk in woodland. As we set off, he pulled out of his pocket a tiny notebook and while we walked and looked and talked, continuously made brief notes, building on those he had made in earlier years, in other notebooks. The discipline of those little notebooks, the foundation of so much of his knowledge, made a deep impression on us.

On another walk in Madingley Wood we had come from lunch in College and were foolish enough to envisage a walk on paths or at least manageable with ordinary footwear. Soon after we entered the wood, Oliver plunged into an old quarry completely covered in waist high nettles and other weeds, and waded through it, speaking of its history, apparently oblivious to our inappropriate attire. We plunged dutifully after him, fortunately having old car rugs with us (for sitting on) that we wrapped round us from waist to foot, averting the worst of stings and scratches.

Oliver referred to himself as ‘an endangered species’. In the case of other species, the urgency of the condition has acted as a stimulus to human beings to appreciate and protect what is precious and irreplaceable in our world – in Oliver’s case, his wisdom and knowledge. It would appear from the tributes that his death has indeed accentuated what he held dear, giving us some hope. It is also comforting to know that he will always be there with us, beneath the chapel. But we would give a very great deal for another walk with him.

Mary Stiff (née Ellis)
I write as the daughter of the late Ted Ellis’ Norfolk naturalist. As a teenager, after his mother’s death, Oliver was a regular weekend visitor to our house. We children were in awe of his talent for rapidly working out the quickest way to win at board and card games, in the evening, by the light of an ill-regulated Tilley lamp. Ted recognized Oliver’s remarkable mental abilities and encouraged his passionate interest in natural history from a very young age. We were merely amazed at what he could achieve without cheating!

Ann Hollingsworth – Former Graduate Administrator
I sat next to Oliver at a graduation lunch in Hall. He looked at the menu, which was rabbit pâté followed by duck, and he said, ‘Oh good! Bunny and Quackers’.

Graham Pink – Head Porter
My favourite memory of Professor Rackham is a story related to me by David Camps (former College Buildings and Maintenance Manager). David was tasked by the College Buildings Committee (Professor Rackham being a member) to ﬁnd an architect who could give advice on the upkeep of the estate.

A respected architect was identiﬁed; Professor Rackham asked to see an example of his work. Professor Rackham, David and the architect went to Kings College and stood in the roof void of the Chapel to inspect work carried out. The architect said that he thought he knew the type of wood that had been used in the past but could Professor Rackham conﬁrm if he was right. Professor Rackham inspected the wood and not only conﬁrmed the type but the forest it had been taken from!

Jan Leaver – Tutorial Administrator
I shall miss Oliver’s visits to Tutorial to ask for the use of what he always called ‘jaws’ - a large, heavy-duty stapler. He would come with a pile of papers, arrange them carefully in said jaws, stand back and then almost jump in the air in order to exert his full force on the handle.

Bertold Kress – Former Fellow
Bertold has a whole canon of memories and anecdotes. Here are two of the best:

Oliver as Praelector on dispatching degree certiﬁcates: ‘The Tutorial Secretary should be asked to secure a supply of A4 card-backed envelopes – the most reliable are the ones where the glue is moistened with the Praelector’s saliva.’

Oliver on the history of the College: ‘As her mother’s chaplain Matthew Parker must have been familiar to young Princess Elizabeth. He was probably the one who had to inform her that today Daddy got Mummy’s head chopped off!’

It is comforting to know that he will always be there with us, beneath the chapel. But we would give a very great deal for another walk with him.
When we meet for this interview, I ask Anastasia if she can explain her research in layman’s terms, just in case Pelican readers know as little as I do about the Wiener-Hopf method, which forms the basis of Anastasia’s work. “That’s always a difficult question for maths,” she admits. “It’s perhaps easier if I answer it in terms of my motivations and the problems I’m trying to solve. My favourite application of what I do is the silent flight of an owl.

The unique thing about how owls fly is that they make almost no noise; we want to know which features are responsible for this, by investigating each single feature separately. I am looking at the elasticity of the features at the back of the wing, which is a simplified mathematical model but still quite hard to solve. It’s a plate with an elastic bit attached to it; we look at how sound is scattered from this, as opposed to a rigid plate, and then hopefully we can say what role the elastic part plays in the feathers.” Not only does her research enable us to unlock the mystery of owls’ silent flight, but it has wider applications in acoustics, such as reducing noise from wind turbines.

Although the practical nature of Anastasia’s research places it in the category of applied mathematics, as an undergraduate she considered herself a pure mathematician, and she still draws upon this background in her work. “The Cambridge Centre of Analysis facilitated the change. When I was applying for a PhD I was doing mainly pure courses, and I wanted to use what I had learnt but also do something with applications. In analysis, the pure and applied are very close together, but the gap is still there; I wanted to use both of them together. The Cambridge Centre of Analysis had the same vision, and I was lucky that it opened the year I applied.” Does she think the distinction between pure and applied mathematics is helpful? “The actual maths that pure and applied mathematicians study is not always different, but they often differ in their mind-set. Traditionally, a pure mathematician doesn’t care about the application of their work, even though in reality it will have a range of applications, while in applied mathematics you have a problem you are trying to solve.” Anastasia’s varied academic experience allows her to be a bridge between these two different approaches to mathematics. “I work on the Wiener-Hopf technique, and there is a group of mathematicians working on it from a pure perspective, and quite a separate community who use the technique for particular problems. The difficulty with pure mathematics is that it is almost impossible to read, even for someone with a mathematical degree who is not specialised in that particular area, so it is really not trivial for those two communities to communicate with one another. I’m not quite where I thought I would be when I started my PhD, but I have done some work that is interesting to both sets of mathematicians, and that makes me happy.”

Does she now consider herself a pure or an applied mathematician? “Officially, I’m applied, but some applied mathematicians consider me more pure!”

**MY FAVOURITE APPLICATION OF WHAT I DO IS THE SILENT FLIGHT OF AN OWL.**

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**Dr Anastasia Kisil**

**Interviewed by Sarah Gordon**

Anastasia has recently been appointed Corpus’ first fellow in mathematics, and it is immediately clear that her intellectual precision and infectious enthusiasm for mathematics will be a great asset to our academic community.
The Polaric 2016

WE WANT TO QUESTION WHY WOMEN ARE NOT SO INTERESTED IN PURSUING MATHEMATICS AS A CAREER.

Some of the factors that appear to deter women are more abstract, relating to the way in which society views women as mathematicians, which influences girls at the earliest stages of their education. "There is an interesting study in which girls and boys at primary school were asked to do a maths test. One mixed group was told that girls tend to do better in the test, while the other mixed group was told that boys usually do better; both groups sat the same test. The test results for the boys were the same regardless of what they were told about their expected performance compared to the girls. However, the girls performed significantly better when they were told that they were likely to be more successful than the boys. "This suggests that popular views of mathematics as a 'male' subject are not only self-fulfilling by discouraging female mathematicians, but actually prevent women and girls from achieving their true potential in maths. While it is enlightening to measure the extent to which girls are influenced by their surroundings, "that is something we can't change sitting here in Cambridge, although we can help to extend the extent by holding access events. There are a lot of interesting studies, but unfortunately not so many places offering solutions." Does Anastasia have any ideas for breaking the cycle of the underrepresentation of women in maths?

Eleven after several years of travelling the world, her family spent time in Mexico, Belgium and Cyprus. How did she find having such a nomadic childhood? "When we were living in so many different countries, in a sense maths was the only constant. Languages are different, but maths is maths; if you are good at it in one country, you are going to be good at it in another country." Does she find mathematics reassuring? "That's one thing people like about maths, that it is constant. It you do something, you can know if it is going to be true or not. Even in physics, someone can say 'that theory's not correct,' or 'I've come up with a better theory,' but if you come up with a proof that's correct, it will be correct forever; that's one of the attractions of mathematics." When I take this a step further, and suggest that there is a beauty in mathematics, Anastasia is quick to agree: "when you are doing research, sometimes you can feel that your head is spinning with ideas. You know they are connected, but you are not really sure how. Then, there comes a point when you see how they are linked and it all comes into one picture. When that happens, you do think: Wow, this is really beautiful!"

www.corpus.cam.ac.uk
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MA THEMA TICSDR ANASTASIA KISIL

When I ask her about her plans as Fellow, Anastasia’s response will be familiar to anyone who has ever embarked on academic research: “I do have plans, but they will probably turn out to be something else!” However, one area that particularly interests her is the concept of stability and how small changes can influence future outcomes. If something is stable, the initial conditions can be changed without making a great difference to the outcome. By contrast, instability can be described by the popular image of a butterfly flapping its wings: and causing a tornado on the other side of the world, something apparently small and insignificant that leads to a devastating outcome. “This kind of instability pops up in many areas of analysis when you want to understand how equations model the real world. Sometimes you do want instabilities, because in the real world many things are unstable, but when you model things mathematically generally you want them to be stable.” Anastasia would like to pursue this apparent contradiction. As with her work on the boundary between pure and applied mathematics, she is unafraid of tackling ideas or approaches that appear to be incongruous or opposed to one another.

Alongside her research, Anastasia also takes an active role in questioning the gender imbalance in mathematics as a member of the Athena SWAN Panel at the Cambridge Faculty of Mathematics. The Equality Challenge Unit’s Athena SWAN Charter was established in 2005 to encourage and recognise commitment to enhancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine. Anastasia is cautious about any immediate solutions to the underrepresentation of women in mathematics: “we don’t want suddenly to take lots more women by lowering the standard, but we want to question why women are not so interested in pursuing mathematics as a career, and if there are certain factors in how the community works that we can change to make it more friendly and attractive.” Some of the problems and possible solutions are startlingly practical. At the simplest end of the scale, having seminars and social events at lunchtime rather than in the evening can allow women – and men – with family commitments to participate more fully in their departments. However, a more complex issue to face is the way the academic careers are structured: “as an early career researcher, you are somehow expected just to go and travel the world for one year post-doctoral positions, which is something a lot of women aren’t in a position to do in their late twenties or thirties.”

I think having more role models would be a start, for instance having women as more visible conference speakers; women are less likely to present their work at conferences, perhaps because they tend to be shyer about putting their name forward. However, there is a danger that we make the twenty per cent of academics who are women work two and a half times harder than everyone else if we say that women must be represented on every committee and at every conference. I think we have to go in baby steps, but in the right direction.”

Anastasia was one of only five girls studying maths in her year at Trinity alongside thirty-five male mathematicians, one of whom later became her husband. Was she aware of the gender discrepancy at the time? “As an undergraduate I never really thought about it, but maybe that was the right thing to do. Once I started to think about gender differences, examples where gender had played a role appeared everywhere. As a student, I’m not sure that’s a good thing; one should just focus on the work. I think gender inequality needs to be flagged higher up, but I’m not sure it should be emphasised at student level.”

Another striking aspect of Anastasia’s student experience is that she was at the same college, and in the same year, as her twin brother, who is now training to be GP. “I chose Trinity first, and then my brother followed!” In Freshers’ week, when everyone was asking ‘What’s your name, where do you come from, and why did you choose Trinity?’ my brother would answer that he chose Trinity because his sister had applied! For many people, this would be a recipe for disastrous sibling rivalry, but Anastasia did not mind. “We were always in the same class, so I was used to it. Also, Trinity is a big college, and it wasn’t like we were doing the same subject.” However, she does admit that her family felt some trepidation as they waited to hear if Anastasia and her brother had been accepted to the College: “my parents were quite afraid that one of us would get in and the other wouldn’t, which might create a bit of tension.”

Anastasia is originally from the Ukraine, having moved to the UK at the age of
It is obviously very difficult to provide a short summary of any expedition, particularly one as formative, enjoyable and fascinating as the College trip to the Holy Land. Despite this, I hope that this brief report gives you a glimpse of my travels and expresses my gratitude to the College, without which I would have been unable to make this trip.

James Bunton, the Dean of Chapel, who led the trip, deliberately wove together several strands, which made this expedition so fascinating: the contemporary religious narrative, the ancient Holy Sites, the current political situation and the reality of daily life for Palestinians and an Israeli settler. By engaging with each of these strands, we were able to learn so much more than I ever imagined when embarking on this trip. I have returned home with a much deeper understanding of the Israel-Palestine conflict and of the situation of individuals living in the worst affected areas. The trip, of course, also had an invaluable spiritual and theological dimension which was richly rewarding and utterly unforgettable.

Having landed in Ben Gurion Airport, we travelled first to Bethlehem in the Palestinian territory where we would spend the first few days. On the first day, we visited the holy sites associated with the Nativity of Christ: the Basilica of the Nativity, the Shepherds’ Fields, the Chapel of the Angels and the Milk Grotto. These are sites whose history stretches back to Queen Helena and the Byzantine Empire, and we began to discuss the complex history from that time, through the Crusades and the Ottoman Empire, until the present day. On this day, we also began to see signs of the contemporary situation, as we walked along the separation wall (built in recent years to separate Israel ‘proper’ from the West Bank), with the opportunity to read the stories hanging from it and to see the artwork by Palestinian supporters from across the world. The situation was brought into sharp relief by our visit later that day to the Tent of Nations, a Palestinian NGO, working with children and volunteers to strive for peace and reconciliation, and to cultivate the farmland in the hills near Bethlehem.

The next day was another chance to witness tragic effects of the current conflict on the ground in the very tense town of Hebron. We began the day by visiting the Russian Orthodox monastery on the outskirts of the town. Ancient trees in the monastery compound mark the spot where the Oaks of Mamre are traditionally remembered to have been. After visiting the monastery church, we continued on to the historic centre of Hebron, which is dominated by an astonishing edifice of the Herodian period, known as the Tombs of the Patriarchs and regarded by Jews,

**COLLEGE TRIP TO**

**THE HOLY LAND**

**BY DOMINIC CAWDELL (m2013)**

DOMINIC CAWDELL, A THIRD YEAR THEOLOGIAN, JOINED A NINE DAY TRIP TO THE HOLY LAND IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, LED BY THE DEAN OF CHAPEL. THE GROUP CONSISTED OF 16 STUDENTS OF CORPUS, FROM A WIDE VARIETY OF TRADITIONS AND OUTLOOKS, BOTH CHRISTIAN AND NON-CHRISTIAN.
Muslims and Christians as the burial place of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah. The building incorporates a mosque, within a former Byzantine church, and a synagogue. The painful divisions within the building are magnified outside, where some thousands of Israeli troops guard a group of 500 Israeli settlers, who live in the Old City at the heart of this large Arab-majority town. Massacres of Jews (in 1929) and Muslims (in 1994) in the historic heart of Hebron haunt attempts to heal the terrible divisions which persist in this place and are of course reflected in different ways throughout the Holy Land.

On Friday, we began our stay in Jerusalem in the beautiful Ecco Homo Convent, situated on the Via Dolorosa. We began by visiting the Churches of the Visitation and John the Baptist in the beautiful village of Ein Karem. After this, we went to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. This was a deeply moving and difficult experience. The beautiful museum and memorials poignantly depicted the events of the Holocaust and it was very interesting to see how the modern political settlement was incorporated into the story of the Jewish people, who suffered so much during this time. Following this, we returned to Jerusalem to see the sites on the Mount of Olives. A particular highlight for me was the Garden of Gethsemane, where a beautiful Church designed by Italian architect Antonio Barluzzi marks the historic heart of Hebron haunt attempts to heal the terrible divisions which persist in this place and are of course reflected in different ways throughout the Holy Land.

Friday ended at the Western Wall, with the chance to observe the Jewish devotions at the start of the Sabbath. Again, it was wonderful to see this famous site and to observe the liturgy and worship at this sacred place. It raised challenging questions for the group as we witnessed a column of евреи armed soldiers joining the throng and dancing before the Wall, leaving many of us feeling uncomfortable with what we saw. There were many times set aside in the evenings for discussion and conversation about what we had seen, which were really appreciated, especially after the more tense and challenging experiences.

Saturday was the real highlight of the trip for me. We left the convent at sunrise to walk the Via Dolorosa, stopping at each station of the Cross to allow a different member of the group to offer a reflection on something we had experienced on the trip so far, or a spiritual reflection on the story of Christ on the road to Calvary. We arrived in the Holy Sepulchre to venerate the rock of Golgotha and to explore this complex and ancient building, as well as to witness the Franciscan High Mass and other liturgies of the various denominations who share the church. The rest of the day was taken up with the other sites of Jerusalem: the Church of St. Anne, which is Our Lady’s Birthplace, the Pools of Bethesda, Mount Zion and the Basilica of the Assumption of Mary.

The following day, we drove through the Judean wilderness east of Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. En route we visited an Israeli settlement close to Jericho, where we were hosted by Aviva Yoselis, the sister of Dr Barak Kushner, Corpus’s Fellow in Japanese. We had the opportunity not only to see the amazing view across the Jordan Valley from the settlement but also to discuss this controversial aspect of Israeli policy, and how it affects relationships in the West Bank. We continued on to visit Herod’s desert fortress of Masada. Here, we discussed the Jewish Revolt and the events which brought the Second Temple period to its conclusion. After a strange but enjoyable mud-splattered float in the Dead Sea, we drove through the Jordan valley to Nazareth where we would spend the remainder of the trip.

From our base at the Anglican Hostel in Nazareth, we were able to spend the next two days exploring the sites associated with Jesus’s early life and public ministry. In Nazareth itself, we saw the Basilica of the Annunciation and ascended Mount Tabot, the site of the Lord’s Transfiguration. On the second day, our focus was the area surrounding the beautiful Sea of Galilee. We read aloud the Sermon on the Mount at the site above the north shore of the lake, where tradition remembers it to have been preached. From there we walked down through grassland to Tabgha, where we celebrated Holy Communion looking out over the lake. After a visit to Capernaum, we took a boat trip across the Sea to reach a resort from which we could swim in the fresh water.

The final day saw us journey towards Tel Aviv and the airport, stopping first at the Stella Maris Monastery and the Church of the Annunciation and John the Baptist in the beautiful village of Ein Karem. After this, we were hosted by Aviva Yoselis, the sister of Dr Barak Kushner, Corpus’s Fellow in Japanese. We had the opportunity not only to see the amazing view across the Jordan Valley from the settlement but also to discuss this controversial aspect of Israeli policy, and how it affects relationships in the West Bank. We continued on to visit Herod’s desert fortress of Masada. Here, we discussed the Jewish Revolt and the events which brought the Second Temple period to its conclusion. After a strange but enjoyable mud-splattered float in the Dead Sea, we drove through the Jordan valley to Nazareth where we would spend the remainder of the trip.

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Richard’s expertise in green energy had an impact on the College beyond the purely academic. He was instrumental in helping Corpus reduce its energy consumption, and we adopted green initiatives such as fluorescent lamps long before they were commonplace. Richard’s broader interest in buildings motivated him to play various roles in the construction of the Beldam Building, the Taylor Library, the Parker Reading Room and the Kho Building, and in recent years he chaired the College’s Buildings Committee. A lasting legacy of Richard’s time at Corpus will be lower running costs for these buildings, as he advocated for the latest technologies, such as the gas-fired air-source heat pumps used in the Kho Building, to be used wherever possible to ensure that these projects are energy efficient and cost-effective in the long term.

The current Corpus Fellowship has also been shaped by Richard’s influence. Dr Keith Seffen, Fellow and Director of Studies in Engineering, had originally planned to pursue his PhD in Belfast after completing his undergraduate studies at Corpus. However, he was persuaded by an impromptu conversation with Richard in Bene’t Passage that he should stay in Cambridge as “it is only another three years of your life.” Twenty-two years later, Keith recalled before Richard left for Warwick that their conversation “has effectively defined my attachments to Cambridge and Corpus ever since; just a few insightful words from him about seizing life-changing opportunities, honest and to the point. I shall miss my colleague and friend.”

Alumni will join Corpus Fellows, staff and students in wishing Richard well in his new position at the University of Warwick, where he is Professor of Power Electronics in the Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG).

Many alumni who have attended a reunion or dined at Corpus in recent years will have come across Richard as College President, the Fellow responsible for hospitality, and experienced first-hand the geniality and dedication with which he carried out this role at the heart of Corpus’s community.

Academically, Richard’s work during his time at Corpus spanned a range of fields within electrical engineering. He started at the College as a Research Fellow supported by British Telecom working on semi-conductor materials, but after a significant decrease in the production of semi-conductor devices in the UK, Richard’s research interests as a Lecturer turned to progressively larger power electronic converters. Initially this work was applied to domestic appliances, such as washing machines, but in more recent years has been directed towards green power generation and the development of a new type of brushless generator for wind turbines. This brushless design avoids the problems caused when the brushes in conventional wind turbines wear out and need replacing, which is particularly problematic off-shore. The project has had considerable success, and there is now a spin-out company, Wind Technologies Ltd, developing a full size multi-megawatt generator for commercial wind turbines. Richard’s research interests also include linear generators for wave power, which is a less established field in green energy production, but has the potential to play a key role, particularly when less predictable green technologies such as wind power are unable to meet demand. More recently, Richard has worked on vehicle electrical systems as part of the move to electric cars and buses; this will form the focus of his work at Warwick, as well as continuing work on renewable generation and energy storage.

RICHARD McMAHON LEFT CAMBRIDGE AT THE END OF MICHAELMAS TERM 2015 AFTER THIRTY-TWO YEARS IN THE COLLEGE’S FELLOWSHIP TO TAKE UP A PROFESSORIAL POSITION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK. HE NOW BECOMES A LIFE FELLOW.

BY SARAH GORDON

DR RICHARD McMAHON

Richard McMahon Left Cambridge at the End of Michaelmas Term 2015 after Thirty-Two Years in the College’s Fellowship to Take Up a Professorial Position at the University of Warwick. He Now Becomes a Life Fellow.
TEACHER REUNION

BY ELIZABETH STEPHAN FORMER TEACHER FELLOW

A lively gathering of former Teacher Fellows at the College for a lunch on Sunday October 25th – representing forty years of the programme – drew interesting responses to the above questions. It also created a community of people from near and far who had never met each other, though they have shared the position, the gown, and the profession, and thus felt an immediate bond. As there has traditionally only been one Teacher Fellow per term, there have been few, if any, opportunities to meet. The day included tours of the wine cellar and Parker Library, a fascinating talk by the Schools’ Liaison Officer Sam Twells on the current picture of Admissions to Cambridge, and for a good number, chapel services and High Table.

Through conversations over drinks and lunch, and accounts that a number of Teacher Fellows have written of their term in College, a remarkably consistent picture emerges of the value of the programme over the past fifty years. Whatever its future – the Master explained to the guests that the nature of the post was being reconsidered – it seemed timely to celebrate and affirm its history and impact, and to give voice to some of those who have contributed to the tradition.

The programme was originally conceived as an opportunity for a schoolteacher to carry out a project or piece of research of more general aspects of education. Trevor Eaton (1977), for example, spent much of his term at Corpus reading about linguistic – his particular area of academic interest. This bore fruit, over forty years on, and after much accomplishment in the area, in Literary Semantics, a work described as ‘definitive’, exploring ‘the cognitive problems that have beset literary studies since Aristotle’. Ruth Webb (1987) came to the college to research madness in the novel, narrowing this to the relationship between a writer’s life and his or her creativity. She was subsequently commissioned by the British Library to write a biography of Virginia Woolf, and by Virago Press to research a biography of Jean Rhys.

Many Teacher Fellows have spent their term researching and writing textbooks, and often gone on to write more. Such textbooks, written by experienced teachers working in the classroom, who are well aware of what and how students need to learn and what teachers need to teach, have huge value for the profession. Peter Allan Jones (1964) completed a comprehensive book on Fieldwork in Geography for Longmans Green. John Shuttleworth (1984) records how his time at Corpus assembling materials for a new A-Level English Language syllabus not only resulted in his best-selling textbook, Living Language, but also led to his writing and editing a further thirty or so books for A-Level students of English, whilst continuing as Head of Languages and Literature at his sixth-form college.

Such opportunities to develop a research interest that simultaneously fires the researcher, contributes to the resources and standards of upper secondary school teaching, and reaches an even wider audience, seem particularly precious from today’s standpoint, with teachers leaving the profession in alarming numbers, and overwork cited as a principal factor in this.

ARGUABLY MORE PROFOND AND FAR REACHING HAS BEEN THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME ON THE BENEFICIARIES AND THE WORLDS THEY INFLUENCE.

The publications mostly fall into three categories: contributions to an academic subject; textbooks; and books or writing on more general aspects of education. Trevor Eaton (1977), for example, spent much of his term at Corpus reading about linguistic – his particular area of academic interest. This bore fruit, over forty years on, and after much accomplishment in the area, in Literary Semantics, a work described as ‘definitive’, exploring ‘the cognitive problems that have beset literary studies since Aristotle’. Ruth Webb (1987) came to the college to research madness in the novel, narrowing this to the relationship between a writer’s life and his or her creativity. She was subsequently commissioned by the British Library to write a biography of Virginia Woolf, and by Virago Press to research a biography of Jean Rhys.

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ARGUABLY MORE PROFOND AND FAR REACHING HAS BEEN THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME ON THE BENEFICIARIES AND THE WORLDS THEY INFLUENCE.
The research undertaken at Corpus quickly led to me set my questions in the context of a broader literary debate about the history of literary studies, the values enshrined in the literature curriculum, and the ways in which literary study is formulated differently in schools and universities.

Gary went on to a PhD that addressed these issues, fundamental to the teaching of English, and to ‘a complete reinvention’ of his professional life. While continuing to teach in a state school, he edited the journal of the National Association for the Teaching of English, trains literature teachers, writes textbooks, contributes to and writes about national and international debates about literature teaching, and is helping shape the future of 16-19 English teaching at an international level.

Profound personal developments experienced at Corpus have also benefited the world of education. John Caperon (1978) came to Corpus to complete an MPhil research project on the treatment of religion in the 19th century novel (which he accomplished), but during his Fellowship experienced a vocation to ordained ministry, becoming a priest six years later, a role that he combined with school leadership. His subsequent doctoral work on school chaplaincy led to a book published this May (2015), A Vital Ministry, that has important implications for schools today and the young people in their charge.

Funding the Teacher Fellow post, or more specifically the replacement of the teacher in his or her school, has often been a challenge and is increasingly so for state schools. Ruth Webb (1987) relates how her head teacher told her it was highly unlikely that the then Inner London Education Authority would pay a replacement teacher’s salary. Ruth decided that “no matter what the outcome, I’d take up the Corpus fellowship, even if I had to fund it myself. I was determined to go”. Thanks to her reputation as a highly committed teacher, who had attracted the attention of Her Majesty’s Inspectors, and her initiative in asking for their help, the ILEA agreed to pay, shortly before she was due to take up the post. Other former Teacher Fellows have recounted how, with similar determination and drive, they financed their stay by renting their houses, or were even funded through the creative initiatives of Corpus Fellows.

Weil aware of the unique and precious gift of time afforded by the post, Teacher Fellows have often lived their time even more intensely than is usual for teachers, in addition to the hours spent in research. Hilary Brash (2007) records: “I attended six series of lectures on topics close to the A Levels I teach, Classical Civilization and History… I also went to one-off lectures and seminars and watched 28 law students interviewed…I took notes on 76 books and read 53 JSTOR and EEBO items online…” and did subsequently write the book: 120,000 words on Lent in 1500 – an early Tudor Feast. In addition, she saw 7 films, 3 plays, visited art galleries, attended concerts and “unseemly evensongs” at Corpus, and of course dined at High Table.

A common note in former Teacher Fellows’ accounts of their time at Corpus is their deep affection for and “huge debt of gratitude” to the College for the life of gratitude” to the College for the life opportunities it afforded, and for the hospitality and support of Masters and individual Fellows. It was, in many cases, a bridge to a far more dynamic contribution to the world of education. It is the individual who makes a difference: to students’ lives, to schools, to colleagues, to education, to academic disciplines. One of the biggest gifts of the Teacher Fellowship at Corpus has been facilitating the commitment, vision, drive and talents of those who can make a difference in these areas. It would be encouraging to think that, at a time when university access has rightly become a priority with Oxbridge colleges, Corpus might find a way to continue to offer such opportunities.
