I first came to Robinson College by chance – a very fortunate chance, I now think. It was 1992/1993 and I was teaching in the English Department of Belgrade University. When the British Council awarded me a six-month visiting fellowship they asked me where I wanted to go, but I had no idea. So they made the decision for me and I found myself at Robinson, where the College offered me the warmest of welcomes. The Warden, Lord Lewis, went out of his way to make me feel at home – and I certainly did, so much so that I came back for a few months in 1993/94. Four years later Judy Weiss, with whom I had stayed in touch and whose friendship and academic support I feel privileged to have enjoyed ever since my first visit, organised a conference on medieval romance (a scholarly interest we share) and invited me to attend. Needless to say, I was delighted to be back at Robinson, if only for a few days. By then I had left Belgrade for Canada, where I was working on a doctorate at McGill University in Montreal. When, in the autumn of 2002, I applied to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for a postdoctoral fellowship, I knew exactly where I wanted to go: to Robinson – if Robinson would have me. The College welcomed me once again, and when I arrived here a few weeks ago it felt almost like coming back home. Robinson may have changed in the past ten years, and I do miss some familiar faces from the early 1990s, but the warm hospitality and friendly collegiality remain the same. I look forward to a very happy year here.

Dr. Ivana Djordjevic

Iorwerth (Iori) Prothero is a Bye-Fellow in Robinson for the academic year 2003-4, and comes from the History Department at the University of Manchester. His family is Welsh, and he lived in South Wales, Surrey and Kent before going to Manchester as an undergraduate. His research is on popular protest, radicalism and labour movements in mid-nineteenth-century Britain and France, and he also works on popular culture and religion, and urban culture more generally, in the two countries. He has had two spells at the Australian National University, been a visiting fellow in Japan, and had extended periods of research in Paris and Lyon. He has just finished a book on dissident religion in France in the 1830s and 1840s, and his research topic for this fellowship is the leading figure in the Chartist movement, the Irishman James “Bronterre” O’Brien, a noted radical journalist and theorist, and writer on Robespierre.

Iori is living in a Thorneycreek flat with his wife, Leena, who comes from Finland. They are no strangers to Cambridge, as Iori was a postgraduate student at King’s College, and the two met here and were married at Great St. Mary’s in 1964. They will therefore be celebrating their ruby wedding here next year. They have been active for many years in a Finnish School in Manchester. Iori rowed and played rugby and basketball in Cambridge, and now runs and plays in a Finnish baseball team in Manchester (Finnish baseball being somewhat different from American baseball).

Dr. Iori Prothero

Sarah Major
SARS
THE ANNUAL ROBINSON RECEPTION


The feeling we have, and the comments which have been fed back to us, indicate that it was a resounding success, so much so that we have already booked a bigger venue for next year; the 2004 Robinson Reception will be held at the Goldsmiths’ Hall on the 22 June 2004.

For 2003, we thank Lord Woolf for taking time out of his busy schedule to join us, Hughes Fowler Carruthers, the family law specialists, for sponsoring the evening, and Sebastian Leslie for hosting us at Brooks’s.

Most importantly, it was so good to see so many Robinsonians under the same roof. Thank you for your support – here’s to an even bigger event next year.

This event was made possible through the generous support of family law specialists Hughes Fowler Carruthers in London. If your company would be interested in sponsoring a future event please contact the Development Office and they will be happy to discuss details with you.

ROBINSON COLLEGE
FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Plans are in place to introduce a programme of events which, we hope, will appeal to most alumni.

DISCIPLINE DINNERS

Law
This year we are planning a dinner in London for Robinson lawyers due to take place Tuesday 6th April 2004. Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers, master of the rolls, has agreed to join us as our honoured guest. We will be inviting all Robinson alumni who read Law and will confirm date and time in the near future.

Linguists
Again we will be travelling to London, this time on the 18th February, to meet as many Robinson linguists as possible. The venue is yet to be decided, but we hope to notify you all soon.

Going International
New York is the place on the 18th December. David Yates, Warden, is hosting a dinner for alumni living and working (or just visiting) in the United States.

Annual Reception
Another opportunity to go one bigger and better. Following the success of the summer reception held at Brooks’s in London, we are going to the Goldsmiths Hall in 2004. Make a date in your diary for the 22nd June and keep checking the college web pages for up to date information.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2003

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2004

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The Robinson College Choir and Music Society has a full and varied programme for this academic year. Alumni are warmly invited to attend services in the Chapel.

ROBINSON COLLEGE
CHAPEL CHOIR

Friday 21 November 2003
6.30 p.m.
Ceciliatide Concert
Conductor – Ryan Hepburn
Harp – Rhian Daniel
A concert of choral and string music by Purcell and Britten to celebrate Saint Cecilia’s Day. Including Britten’s choral masterpiece, Hymn to Saint Cecilia.

Sunday 30 November 2003
3.30 p.m.
Advent Carol Service
A service of seasonal music and readings with performances by the Chapel Choir of music including Britten’s Hymn to the Virgin, Tavener’s The Lamb and Walton’s All this time.

Sunday 7 December 2003
8.00 p.m.
Christmas Concert:
‘Hymn to the Virgin’
Conductor – Ryan Hepburn
Harp – Rhian Daniel
The Chapel Choir’s annual Christmas concert promises to be a highlight of the year with performances of works by Britten, Howells, Ord, Tavener and Walton.

Friday 6 February 2003
6.30 p.m.
‘Organ Fireworks’
Ryan Hepburn (Organ)
Widor – Symphonie VI
Preceding this year’s annual Choir Dinner, Ryan Hepburn performs one of the greatest organ symphonies ever written.

Thursday 12 February 2004
7.30 p.m.
Haileybury Chapel, Hertford
Conductor – Ryan Hepburn
Organ – Peter Davis
(Director of Music, Haileybury) and Ryan Hepburn
Motets by Duruflé, Leighton and Stanford stand alongside Tippett’s Five Negro Spirituals in the Chapel Choir’s concert in the magnificent St. Paul’s Cathedral-like Chapel of Haileybury. Also including organ works by Duruflé and Leighton.

Wednesday 3 March and 21 April 2004
7.30 p.m.
Robinson College Champagne Concerts
Following the runaway success of the previous two years’ concerts the Robinson College Champagne Concerts return. With the Chapel Choir performing Bob Chilcott’s evocative The Making of the Drum, Ernst Toch’s Geographical Fugue and songs by Gershwin and the like, these concerts should not be missed!
*Tickets required

Friday 16 April 2004
5.00 p.m.
Westminster Abbey, London
Conductor – Ryan Hepburn
Organ – Andrew Reid
Robinson College Chapel Choir has the wonderful opportunity to lead the worship of Choral Evensong in Westminster Abbey. Conducted by Ryan Hepburn and accompanied by one of Westminster Abbey’s resident organists the Choir will sing some of the finest music in the English liturgical tradition.

Service to Include –
Radcliffe – Responses and Leighton – Magdalene Service
I’ve wanted to work in radio since I was about fourteen years old. Back then, my dream was to be a Radio One DJ, but that phase soon passed when I realised that Bruno Brookes would be long gone by the time I was old enough to earn a living. So, I got myself some experience in hospital radio, did a stint as a presenter on what used to be CUR 945 (Cambridge University Radio) and then finally, after leaving Robinson, got myself a ‘proper’ job with Auntie Beeb.

These days, as a Broadcast Journalist with BBC Radio Sheffield, I could be doing anything from presenting Breakfast or interviewing celebs on the Lunchtime show, to standing in for the head of programmes - or, just occasionally, doing my normal job (if there is such a thing) as producer of our morning phone-in programme.

There’s not really any such thing as a typical day in radio. Take today, for instance. I walked through the door at half past seven, had a look through the papers, surfed the net, looked through the bulletin running orders and then picked a topic for our daily phone poll. My presenter arrived fashionably late, and I spent the next three hours directing the programme and talking to listeners on the phone about everything from world politics, to what to do if their bin hasn’t been collected. A short lunchbreak later, and I spend the afternoon setting up guests and using the power of the BBC to get listeners refunds on their faulty washing machines and dodgy double glazing.

Another week though, and it’ll be a different story. I presented the lunchtime show recently and interviewed everyone from Nigel Kennedy, to a man whose only claim to fame is that he cuts the hair of half the cast of ‘Coronation Street’. Or I could be presenting the Breakfast Show. The alarm will go off at half past four - that’s morning, not afternoon. I’ll drive to work while every other sane person is still asleep, and by six o’clock I’m on air, sounding bright and cheerful, safe in the knowledge that three frantic hours of news and speech later it’ll all be over. It’s only the wireless, after all.

If anyone wants to contact me my e-mail addresses are as follows:
sarah.major@bbc.co.uk (work)
sarah.major@virgin.net (home)
It was a shock each day to wake and throw back the curtains, revealing nothing. Gone were the Tai-Chi dancers taking their early morning exercises under the trees, gracefully unwinding their arms and dancing with their ornamental swords. Gone were the elderly men strolling through the park, swinging their bamboo birdcages at arms length beside them, or squatting on their haunches in clusters around a rude chessboard spread out on the dry earth. Gone were the small children, school bags on their backs. Gone were the peasants arriving after their dawn ride from the countryside, heaving on the pedals of their Iron Dragon tricycle laden with wilting green vegetables, their drab blue flannel suits standing out from the more modern dress of the urbane city workers around them. The road was eerily empty, and as I rubbed my eyes I remembered we faced SARS.

There were few outward signs of crisis. No explosions, craters or damaged buildings. There was silence, stillness and facemasks. And in China, silence is as alarming as it is unfamiliar.

Beijing had stopped. As rumour mounted and panic spread, workers from other provinces made for the bus and railway stations, taking their belongings with them in bulging sacks, queuing and sleeping on the concrete until they secured a way out. Even before the order to shut down restaurants, sports clubs, tea-shops and parks, many of the staff had fled. And some venues just closed down on the spot. With no labourers the road construction, building sites and earth works halted. Though five years remains before the 2008 Olympics, the skyline and road system of Beijing has long been a mass of construction work. Now the tower cranes and heavy equipment stood still, as though enjoying an indefinite tea break.

When we decided to stay in Beijing, we planned how to minimise the risks of SARS. Shopping had to be done early in the morning when few others visited. We sought to avoid crowds at restaurants or bars, but found that there were none. On going out we donned a fresh face mask, and returning we washed carefully. It was no great problem for me to cycle to work – I often do that anyway, and the roads were emptier, the air fresher, and the likelihood of accident much reduced. We considered the overall risk to be little more than, say, being shot in the US, mugged in London or bitten by snakes in Thailand. But this was an invisible, unrelenting and insidious risk, which made it emotionally wearing. The main concern was being one of the thousands swept up in “the system” – being quarantined as a suspect case. SARS hospitals were fully isolated, there could be no contact or communication, no consular visits, no overseas doctors and no option to evacuate, and probably no choice over treatment. I remembered reading that 292,000 people died in 2001 from being given fake medical products, not to mention the cases of HIV infection from tainted blood. To cope with the rising numbers, entire hospitals one after another had been converted to SARS. People say that the AIDS hospital was taken over, and the inmates turned out to make way for SARS patients.

The shops displayed rather bare shelves. There was an early run on vinegar, Chinese herbs and thermometers. Soon people were hoarding staple foods, and some farmers had stopped delivering produce. Indeed some of the villages had isolated themselves with earth road-blocks. Many of the routes in and out of Beijing were closed.

For me, wearing masks was the most disconcerting aspect of SARS. It wasn’t the discomfort, or the way that they direct my humid breath straight up onto my glasses, or their patent ineffectiveness, it was the dehumanising effect. With the mouth covered, few gestures can be conveyed. I found myself gazing at people’s eyes trying to recognise them, searching for expression. Dark glasses have long been used to conceal emotion and to intimidate, but a mouth mask would be equally effective. But when you can’t smile, wince, scowl or grimace, you learn to communicate with the eyes. The masks themselves became almost a fashion statement. Cumbersome padded masks with rubber bands for the workers, pin-striped clinical masks for office staff, masks with cartoons, smiles or bright patterns for the style conscious.

Revealing the tip of the nose was as tantalisising as a slender qi-pau. And a polythene head mask for the really cautious, or was it a plastic carrier bag?

To enter the office, I pass the security cordon, the thermal scanner, show ID to the masked security guard with dark glasses, probably scowling. Wash, disinfect and de-mask at reception. It is all standard procedure. The place reeks of chemicals. Thrice daily the air-conditioning is cleansed with anti-viral disinfectant. I am greeted by a rumour that the driver of one of the residents in my apartment block has a relative with SARS. People ask why I came in to work, why I am risking infecting them. Meetings are boycotted. Do I put my mask back on? Do I try to explain again that the risks are less than those of being shot on the streets of Boston? I report my alleged risk to the SARS duty manager. He laughs, “you know, you are the seventh person this week who says they are three unconfirmed links away from a potential case.” By lunch time the excitement has focused on another suspect.

Amid rumour, we search for hard facts. Headlines of the major newspapers scream in excitement at the worsening situation in Beijing, while WHO.int dryly reports the latest official figures. Journalist friends have expressed frustration both at their own inability to gather information, and at the way that their reports get exaggerated. “Sexed up” we would say these days. I pinch myself. The truth must be somewhere in the large gap between the China Daily and CNN.

In the evening the gentle flows of traffic, and solitary pedestrians dry up all together. It would have been a great time to explore the city. In the last concert before closure of public venues, we sang Faure Requiem and Poulenc Gloria in the Forbidden City. Despite the rising wave of SARS most seats were filled, and we looked out over a sea of white masks. We had expected to be upstaged by The Rolling Stones, but after mass cancellations we were the only show in town.

I think it was not the risk but the reaction that had the most impact. While hundreds died, and thousands were infected, millions gave in to fear and panic. This was a crisis, created in large part through the secrecy of a system which suppresses unwanted news so as to maintain confidence and control. The true heroes were the doctors and nurses who manned the SARS hospitals, many of them drafted in from outside Beijing. They faced the greatest risks and suffered the highest fatalities. One can only hope that, behind the subsequent rhetoric, some positive lessons have been learned.

Dr Peter Alsop (1984)
BISON’S LADY ROWER

Jo Hammond has achieved quite a lot in the rowing field since she first came up to Robinson in 1998.

A novice during her first Michaelmas term rising to a member of the blades-winning ladies 1st VIII in the Lent bumps. 1999/2000 saw Jo as Robinson’s lady captain, achieving the College’s highest ever position in the May Bumps, 2000 to 2002 produced more success in National Ergo Championships and the lightweight single sculls. But 2003 has proved the most successful year yet. In February Jo achieved third place in the GB Long distance trial and fourth in the lightweight single sculls. She set a new GB record and a new world record for 19-29 age group in the 2k ergo test. In April she finished third in the GB final trial lightweight single scull. In May she won the gold medal in lightweight single scull at the World Cup Regatta in Milan.

Jo is now taking time off from her Veterinary Studies to concentrate on her rowing. She is currently a member of the Great Britain Lightweight Women’s squad, which has raced at the 3rd World Cup Regatta in Lucerne and the World Championships in Milan this summer. Training is all consuming, Tuesday to Sunday each week at Dorney Rowing Lake near Windsor.

2004 could prove to be a greater challenge to Jo as she is hoping to gain selection for the Olympic squad. There is only a lightweight women’s double scull at the Olympics and there will be a 3-person squad selected to compete. The trial process for this squad will take place from October this year to April 2004. Currently Jo is ranked third in the current squad so she is hoping for selection. We all wish her well and look forward to cheering her on in Athens in 2004.

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

The Edinburgh Fringe is part of the Edinburgh International Festival and runs for three weeks at the beginning of August every year. This year it was host to 21,594 performances of 1541 shows by 668 companies in 207 venues. It would take you 4 years and 143 days to see everything back to back!

Naturally I was thrilled to be chosen to be the Lighting Designer (LD) for Bloody Poetry by Howard Brenton, one of the ADC Edinburgh Fringe shows. However, by the time I went to Edinburgh in July along with 12,940 other performers from around the world, I was also the LD for Trojan Women, another ADC show, and co-LD for Tails You Lose, a new play by John Finnemore. Whilst at the Fringe I occasionally operated the lighting for the third ADC show, An Evening With Joe: Stalin The Musical, and I’m designing the lighting for this when it returns to the ADC theatre this term. You can see it on 15th – 18th October at 11pm, and there’s a matinee at 2pm on 18th October.

The run-up to the festival was frantic. We had just four hours for the technical rehearsal of Bloody Poetry, and then we were straight into the previews. There were about 10 shows every day in the same studio as Bloody Poetry so we only had 5 minutes to build our set and focus our lights for each performance. In order to get through all the technical rehearsals in time our venue, ‘C’, ran a 24-hour schedule for the first few days. We were lucky to get a 7am slot!

Audience numbers for Bloody Poetry averaged 25 a day, which wasn’t great, but we weren’t there to make money! Fortunately for the ADC, Trojan Women broke even and Stalin made a huge profit.

Overall Edinburgh was a fantastic experience and a thoroughly action-packed four weeks!

Simon Hicks
The May Bumps of 2003 was one of the most successful ever for Robinson. The men’s lower boats both did well in going up three places and the ladies put in some brave performances.

However, the major success of the week was the 1st men. We started the week 7th in the 1st Division in front of a St Catherine’s crew full of university oarsmen. Everyone was therefore expecting a very hard 1st day. However, off the start we pulled away from Catz and quickly got whistles on Jesus and despite a fairly average row we ground them down and bumped them half way down the reach. The next day saw a better performance to bump Emmanuel and to leave us chasing the LMBC crew that we have shared a boathouse with all year! Yet again, we showed our superior fitness and strength and gradually ground them down and bumped them just after the railway bridge. The final day we were chasing Downing for our blades. We got very close and crossed the line 2 feet behind them. We may not have won blades but we have taken the boat club to 4th place on the river with a crew where everyone noviced at Robinson. We have shown that Robinson is now one of the major rowing colleges in Cambridge.

As captain, I would like to thank the crew for training so hard all year and Bill Nolan and the Old Blades Society for providing us with such excellent coaching. Next year we will be looking to challenge Caius for the headship.

Mark Sydenham, Men’s Captain,
Robinson College Boat Club

The Rev’d Dr Maggi Dawn took up the post of Chaplain in September 2003. Maggi has lived in the Cambridge area since 1993, and most recently was Chaplain of King’s College. She holds an MA and PhD in theology, both from Cambridge, and undertakes some supervising and teaching in the Divinity Faculty. Her research interest is in the relationship between form and content in the creation of theological meaning, and she is currently applying this to the theology of new forms of worship. She was one of eight Cambridge Deans and Chaplains to contribute to a book published earlier this year. Anglicanism: the answer to Modernity? (eds. Dormor, Caddick and MacDonald) is a collection of essays exploring the viability of the Christian faith in the 21st Century.

Maggi was a professional musician and singer before she became a priest, and has published a number of contemporary worship songs. She brings to Robinson considerable expertise in ‘Alternative’ and contemporary forms of worship, and is adding a regular ‘Alternative’ service to the existing Chapel programme. ‘Thursday evenings in Chapel will be dedicated to trying out new forms of worship,’ she says. ‘Worship and liturgy become nothing more than museum pieces unless their forms are constantly rethought. But it’s in the nature of worship that, like the performing arts, you can never be absolutely certain how something will work ‘off the page’ until it goes live. A ‘safe’ space outside the main programme of services is ideal for engaging in this kind of experimental worship, and it would be hard to find a more conducive environment for this than the beautiful, contemporary setting of Robinson Chapel.’

Maggi lives close to the college with her family, and they are all delighted to be joining the Robinson Community. Maggi says, ‘We’re discovering that Robinson’s reputation as one of the friendliest colleges in Cambridge is well-deserved! I’m so glad to have the chance to join such a vibrant and exciting college.’

CHOIR CD
‘SING FOR THE MORNING’S JOY’

19 tracks
Available late 2003

Up to date availability contact
Ryan Hepburn – Organ Scholar
www-stud.robinson.cam.ac.uk/choir
Or Development Office
Tel: 01223 339036
NOTICES

WELCOME TO

Sarah Matley (Bar Manager), Colin Barnes (Head Porter), Anna Debicka (Food Services Assistant), Sylvain Aprea (Chef), Joseph Teijido (Electrician), Paul Tippett (Temporary Lodge Porter), The Reverend Dr Maggi Dawn

GOODBYES

The Reverend Annabel Shilson-Thomas (Chaplain), Richard Taylor (Electrician), John Wiseman (Head Porter), Anita Hudson (Development Office), Malcolm Trotter (Bar Manager), David Summerlee (Chef), Bob Wickett (Catering and Conference Manager)

WEDDINGS

Two weddings to report this edition
Marie Eeles (Admissions Office) married Kevin Dixon in June 2003, and Helen Stroud (Food Services) married Paul Grattidge in July 2003. Helen and Paul held their reception in College.

PHIL FIRMAN

Many of you will know Phil Firman, Porter, not least because he was included in the publicity material for the 2003 May Ball. Unfortunately Phil was very badly injured in a traffic accident in March of this year. His situation was grave, but through his own grit and determination (and the help of many caring people) he has beaten the odds and returned to his home. The future holds continuing physiotherapy and operations. We wish you all the best Phil, and continued improvement.

FROM THE CHEF’S TABLE

PORK BALTI

Ingredients (serves 4)
1 crushed clove garlic
1 large onion sliced
2 tbsp tomato puree
1 tbsp oil
4 tbsp white stock
small tin chopped tomatoes
2 tsp grated root ginger
2 tsp ground coriander
2 tsp garam masala
2 tsp ground cumin
1/2 tsp chilli powder
1 chopped green chilli
500g diced pork salt

Method
1 Heat oil in a pan brown the pork and set aside.
2 Fry spices, onion and garlic in oil for two minutes. Add tomato puree and fry for a further minute.
3 Add stock and tomatoes and bring to boil.
4 Add pork and season to taste. Simmer for 1 hour or until the meat is tender.
5 Serve with naan bread, rice and any condiments of your choice.

Steven Parr

HEAD PORTER – COLIN BARNES

The College is pleased to welcome Colin Barnes, our new Head Porter, who joined the College in August this year. Colin is used to College life having spent some time at Peterhouse as Head Porter, thus moving from the longest established College in Cambridge to the most recent. Colin’s earlier career spanned 31 years’ service with the Cambridgeshire Police service, where he reached the position of Chief Inspector. He also spent time working for the Royal British Legion, and continues to help on a voluntary basis as a Poppy Appeal Organiser.

Colin lives in Cambridge with his wife and daughter. Although his daughter has left home she has returned to Cambridge University to continue postgraduate studies. Our Head Porter’s interests include water sports, veteran aircraft and classic cars. Anyone with a Triumph roadster or a TR4 will find an enthusiast here at Robinson.

TRAVELS WITH “WAYFARER”

“VEDI NAPOLI E POI MORI” (SEE NAPLES AND THEN DIE)

A little extreme perhaps, and certainly not recommended; but a visit to Naples is definitely worthwhile.

It is a bustling cosmopolitan city, basking in Mediterranean sunshine for most of the year and with lots to see and do. A ride on a vintage tram alongside the harbour eventually reaching (via a tunnel) a wide panoramic bay is a cheap excursion. There is an aquarium and several parks, where a short stroll or a short rest is most relaxing.

Ferries and hydrofoils leave from the harbour quayside to Capri, Ischia and Sorrento if you fancy a trip to a more exotic destination.

For the archaeologists among you, a 35 minute train journey from the city passing around Mount Vesuvius will take you to the famous ruins of Pompeii; devastated in 79AD when the volcano erupted and covered the city in pumice and ash, but remarkably preserved and on a vast scale which must be seen to be believed.

ROBINSON COLLEGE CHRISTMAS CARD

The Mystery of Communion 2002
S. Edwards-McKie

The oil painting The Mystery of Communion by Susan Edwards-McKie is offered as the Robinson College Christmas card for 2003. Cards are available at £4 per pack of five different designs. Individual cards are also available at £1 each. Payment can be made by cheque or credit card.

To order contact the Development Office, Robinson College, Cambridge CB3 9AN.
Telephone: 01223 339036. Email: development-office@robinson.cam.ac.uk

Bin Brook, Robinson College, Cambridge CB3 9AN
Edited by the Development Office
T. 01223 339 036, F. 01223 464 806, E. development-office@robinson.cam.ac.uk