EASTER 2018





Diversifying Robinson Bringing the brightest and best to Cambridge

Focus on Medicine From bats to herpes with Robinson's medics

Travels with our students India and Iraq with Zhuan and Molly **Remembering Robinson** Dr Mary Stewart's living legacy



Contents

- **03** News in brief
- 04 Diversifying Robinson
- 05 Access to Robinson Eleanor Humphrey
- 06 My Robinson Dr Ben Guy
- **07** The Cancer Problem *Dr Gary Doherty*
- 08 Must all that lives die? Dr Anke Timmerman
- **09** Fighting flu Professor Wendy Barclay
- **10** Bats in the limelight *Dr Oliver Restif*
- 11 Learning about memory Dr Brian McCabe
- **12** Brain Training *Dr Duncan Astle*
- **13** The Medic's Tale *Oliver Fox*
- 14 Herpes by *Dr Colin Crump*
- 15 Alumni Events
- 16 Remembering Robinson
- 18 Telephone Campaign 2018
- 20 Alumni News
- 22 News
 - Fellows' news
 - Staff news
 - Welcome to new College Members
 - Obituaries
- 24 Robinson College Open Art Exhibition Dr Steve Trudgill
- 25 Travel Diaries
 Some reflections on my time in Iraq Zhuan Faraj
- 26 Travel DiariesAcross India in a rickshaw *Molly Cook*
- **28** Save the date!

WELCOME

Bin Brook is Robinson's flagship publication, keeping our alumni and friends in touch with the College and with each other. In view of its importance we felt it was owed a facelift, and we hope you like the new look.



Easter 2018 is the first in a series of themed issues, focusing this time on the groundbreaking work of our Fellows in Medicine. There can be few of us whose lives have been untouched by illnesses such as cancer, viral disease or dementia, and it's exciting to see that the research that may change the direction of our approaches to these modern-day plagues may come out of Robinson.

Oxbridge admissions have been in the media spotlight recently and we are pleased to offer an insight into our outreach work, answering some of our readers' questions on this most important subject that is so close to Robinson's heart and heritage.

This issue includes a new focus on the impact of our donors, including features on those who have remembered the College in their will and on our telephone fundraising campaign, which is about to begin as Bin Brook goes to press. Thank you to all of you who have answered our students' call in the past, and to those who will do so this time. We are enormously grateful.

Some elements of Bin Brook remain unchanged, including the section our readers probably turn to first. 'Alumni News' provides a wonderful insight into the lives of Robinsonians the world over – please keep your news coming, and let us know what you think of Bin Brook as it continues to evolve.

Sarah Westwood Development Director and Fellow Sw344@cam.ac.uk

FRONT COVER Tracts in a child Image courtesy

FRONT COVER: Tracts in a child's brain. Image courtesy of Dr Dun<u>can Astle</u>

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The Editor and the Members of the Editorial Committee would like to offer their gratitude to all the contributors for the materials submitted for publication. Photographs provided by contributors with additional images by Nic Marchant and Angus Parker

NEWS in brief

A WOMAN'S PLACE IS AT ROBINSON

In November Robinson celebrated the passing of The Representation of the People Act of 1918, which granted the vote to women who were householders over the age of 30.

Robinson was the first college in Cambridge to be founded for both men and women, on equal terms. As we celebrate the centenary of women getting the vote, two of our Founding Fellows reflect on that legacy:

Professor Morna Hooker: "The College can be proud that almost 60 years after the 1918 Act and almost 30 after women were first allowed to graduate, in 1948 - it was the first to write 'equality' into its constitution from the very beginning."

Dr Mary Stewart: "My mother grew up in a world where women were still not allowed to vote, so to celebrate the acquiring of that right matters a lot to me, and I am particularly proud to be part of the first undergraduate college in Cambridge to be founded on the assumption that gender equality is the norm. Times do change, thankfully!"



Dr Mary Stewart (L) & Professor Morna Hooker (R)

SPORTING SUCCESS

"For the first time in the history of Robinson College, our rugby team have come in first place in Division 1", reports RCRUFC team captain Rowan Saada (Natural Sciences, 2016).

"It is a great achievement for us. We beat St. Johns for the second time this year to secure our position at the top of the division, after playing numerous other intercollege games. Despite the fact that we did not always have fifteen men on the pitch, we still pulled together as a team to place ourselves at the top. We are looking forward to what next year will bring us and hoping for success!"



THE VICTORIOUS TEAM, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: TOP: Milo Smith, Nick Monioudis, Will Birch, Angus Aughterson, Joe Collins, Max Kotz, Hay-Yeung Tang, Alfred Jacquemot, Rhys Thompson, Dan O'Riordan BOTTOM: Max Orviss, Ed Butler-Caddlle, Andrius Grabauskas, James Galliver, Rowan Saada (Captain), Henry Constable, Piers Crowther, Nick Calvert

HUMANS OF ROBINSON

Angus Parker (Geography, 2016) has begun "Humans of Robinson", a project born of Angus's desire to bring the College a little closer together, create a greater sense of community and reveal the stories and people that otherwise might remain hidden. He hopes his work will contribute to a more familial atmosphere in the College because he believes that sometimes the real 'people' of Robinson - whether they be students, staff, porters, cooks, cleaners or alumni - and their stories are not fully represented or appreciated. Angus publishes his short interviews and accompanying photos on Facebook: www.facebook.com/beyondtheredbricks

CONGRATULATIONS

Professor Peter Hutchinson,

Fellow of Robinson College and Director of Studies in Clinical Medicine, has been elected to a Fellowship of the Academy of Medical Sciences.

Dr Gary Doherty,

Fellow and Director of Studies in Medicine, has been appointed Consultant Medical Oncologist, specialising in Lung Oncology and Neuro-oncology. This is only the second appointment in the UK for a Medical Oncologist specialising in central nervous system tumours.

Dr Rosalind C Love,

Fellow of Robinson College and Reader in Insular Latin at the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, is one of only twelve academics at the University of Cambridge who have been awarded the 2018 Pilkington Prize for outstanding teaching.

Congratulations also to **Dr Rachel Oliver**, Fellow in Materials Science, who has been awarded a Personal Chair in Materials Science and Metallurgy; and to **Dr David Fairen-Jiménez**, Fellow in Chemical Engineering, **Dr Ying Jin**, Fellow and Director of Studies in Architecture and **Dr Julie Smith**, Baroness Smith of Newnham, Fellow in Politics and International Studies, who have all been awarded Readerships.

Diversifying Robinson

Diversity at Oxbridge has been much in the news over the past few months, and it's an issue close to Robinson's heart. Our founding ethos is egalitarian and we strive to bring young people with the greatest potential to Cambridge regardless of their circumstances.



We run a series of events designed to tackle both of these challenges by introducing school students and their teachers to Robinson, and to Cambridge

Challenges

In fulfilling this ambition we face two challenges: to increase both the number of applications from students from underrepresented backgrounds and to the College more generally, because we do not receive as many as the more 'traditional' Cambridge colleges do. We run a series of events designed to tackle both of these challenges by introducing school students and their teachers to Robinson, and to Cambridge more broadly. Each Cambridge college is assigned a 'link area' in the country and ours is the south-west and the London Borough of Wandsworth. Within this zone we engage with students from many different year groups, even before their GCSE years, at schools that do not have a history of sending students to higher education. As a result we have seen numbers of students increasing from schools who have not previously sent students to Oxbridge. Our Schools' Liaison Officer, Eleanor Humphrey, writes in more detail about this work below.

A further challenge is effectively monitoring the impact of our outreach work: sometimes we may have encouraged a student to consider university (and not necessarily Cambridge) without our knowledge, or indeed vice versa. What has been gratifying in recent years is that we have seen a steady growth in the numbers of people applying to Robinson, increasing in the last two years from 100 to 135 direct applicants. Of this total, we usually see about 35-42% applying from the state sector, with varying numbers of offers made: two years ago we took 63% from the state sector, and this year that has fallen to around 50%. This variation reflects the fact that because of our lack of direct applications we depend to a large extent on using the Winter Pool, this year taking some 31% from it. This is one reason why it is important to view our admissions figures on a University level rather than just from a local College perspective.

Contextualised admissions

One fundamental aspect of Cambridge's approach to selecting students is to try to gain as much contextual information about everyone who applies as possible, so that each interviewer is fully aware of every applicant's school and background. Such factors need to be borne in mind when comparing applicants in each subject. Each year we receive just this kind of information based on details from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and from other national bodies. We also take careful note of how each applicant's school is performing on a national level.

Financial support

In addition to attracting the brightest students from every background, we support them financially once they are here, both through means-tested bursary schemes and hardship funding for those who encounter an unexpected financial demand. It is our ambition that no student should be unable to take up a place, or give up their studies at Robinson for reason of financial need.

Investing in potential

Robinson invests a significant amount of its resources in outreach work, and we are beginning to see some successes. Impact will inevitably be slow, and we recognise that we have some way to go. In all our efforts we are grateful for the support of our alumni and friends, who have brought their students to our outreach events, and in some cases funded them: The Women in Science Festival, the Dr C P Hughes Teachers Conference, and many of the financial awards we are able to offer our students are funded by our alumni and other members and friends of the College. We are moved and delighted to be working in partnership with these supporters – our very best ambassadors. "we want to raise the aspirations of talented students who may wrongly believe they do not have the right background for Oxbridge by demonstrating that opportunities are here for all those with the academic potential, regardless of their origins."

Access to Robinson



Eleanor Humphrey Schools' Liaison Officer

School visits

Robinson regularly hosts schools from all over our link areas of Gloucestershire, Swindon, Wiltshire and the London Borough of Wandsworth, amongst other areas of the country. Some schools from areas that have little progression to higher education have brought cohorts of students identified as gifted and talented to experience a Cambridge college. These trips have a dual purpose: ultimately, we want to raise the aspirations of talented students who may wrongly believe they do not have the right background for Oxbridge by demonstrating that opportunities are here for all those with the academic potential, regardless of their origins. The second aim is to show off Robinson's beautiful gardens, delicious food and excellent accommodation to those students from the link areas with little or no history of sending students to Cambridge.

Teacher Engagement

As part of our commitment to our link areas we ran, in collaboration with Trinity Hall, a Regional Teacher Briefing at the STEAM – The Great Western Railway Museum in Swindon. In March we hosted the Dr C P Hughes Teachers' Conference, a two-day event focussing this year on Arts and Humanities applications. We offered a full programme of talks and sessions from our Directors of Studies and Fellows giving an insight into the nuances of various courses at Cambridge, the application process, interviews, and how to make a competitive application.

Essay Prize Competition

Our essay prize competition offers Sixth-form students the opportunity to write an essay on literature, science or social issues topics of their choice. This year 13 prizes were awarded, with three highly commended winners. Four of the commended essayists received conditional offers for 2019 entry to Robinson. All the recipients were invited to the College to celebrate their essays and prizes over lunch with Fellows. This has always proved to be a popular event and it was encouraging to see that, in only its fourth year of running, we received over eighty entries.

Women in Science Festival

In September we held our third Women in Science Festival, an event that aims to encourage more female applications to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects by introducing them to the vibrant community of female scientists and engineers thriving at the University and at Robinson. Over 120 female students from Years 12 and 13 came from all over the country to take part in talks, departmental visits, and a Science Fair in the College Dining Hall. Professor Valerie Gibson, our plenary speaker, gave an inspirational talk about diversity in science, her achievements in the context of her pathway into science and experiences as a woman in the field. There were presentations from some of Robinson's female science Fellows, and other university scientists about elements of their own research and how they got to where they are now.

Outreach events in College

In the past year we have worked with charities, Cambridge University Students Union (CUSU), and student societies on events aiming to dispel the myths around so-called elite universities. We hosted several 'Launch' and 'Graduation' events for The Brilliant Club, an educational charity working on wider admissions to highly selective universities amongst under-represented groups. In March 2018, Kingsgen Foundation brought 54 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students (ages 14-17) to Robinson for an Oxbridge Awareness Day. The Access Day for the Islamic Society of Cambridge, in which thirty Year 12 Muslim students participated in several sessions that provided insight into the admissions process, also offered guidance on being Muslim at the university.









Alumni Involvement in Outreach

Those of our Alumni who are teachers are always very well placed to dispel the usual myths about Cambridge and other elite universities, and it is always fantastic to meet alumni who return with their own students to visit Robinson. If you would like to bring a group up to the College, please contact me on: slo@robinson.cam.ac.uk



ABOVE: The Pillar of Eliseg, the earliest Welsh genealogical monument (ninth century)

My Robinson

It's extraordinary that one of Cambridge's newest colleges should have so quickly become renowned as a centre of excellence for the study of the Middle Ages. Robinson has no stash of medieval manuscripts to tempt in prospective researchers, such as might be found in the magnificent Parker Library in Corpus Christi College. There is not even a possibility of finding oneself lodging in medieval accommodation, as may be experienced in other Cambridge colleges (though not necessarily to the occupant's benefit). But through the appointment of Fellows in a variety of subjects, Robinson has positioned itself as a leading hub of intellectual engagement with the medieval past. It was for this reason that I was so thrilled to accept my new position as Robinson's first internally funded Junior Research Fellow.

Since October, I've been happily ensconced in my new office in Herschel Court, pursuing a busy research agenda. The College provides a marvellous environment for focussing the mind. The food is consistently delicious, the company is stimulating, and just over Grange Road lies the University Library, one of the UK's premier academic resources. As the months have gone by, I've slowly come to appreciate the real engines that keep the College running: the espresso machine and the friendly staff in the Red Brick Café, the regular rounds of dinners and formal halls, and of course the indefatigable Glenys Denton, who seems to be everywhere at all times.

I sometimes struggle to explain exactly what I do as a Research Fellow studying the Middle Ages. I certainly spend a lot of time reading and writing, but to my mind that doesn't quite constitute research. In fact, much of my approach to research stems ultimately from my time spent training as an early medievalist in Cambridge's department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic (ASNC). What makes the ASNC department so highly regarded among specialists in the field is its fine-tuned expertise in primary source criticism. Nowhere else is it possible to receive such expert instruction in a range of medieval languages, in manuscript palaeography and codicology, in historical linguistics, and in textual and literary criticism. I find it particularly rewarding to apply such skills to some of the medieval period's most inscrutable texts, especially texts which appear superficially strange to modern sensibilities but which were conceived and written by people who were not so different from you or me.

Falling squarely into this category are the genealogical texts of medieval and early modern Wales, which have hitherto formed one of my primary objects of study. The writing of genealogy was extremely popular in pre-modern Wales, as indeed it was elsewhere. I've studied hundreds of Welsh genealogical manuscripts scattered through the institutional repositories of England and Wales, including here in Cambridge. These range in date from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, and yet they preserve linguistic forms proving that some of the texts are as old as the ninth century. These texts contain no dates, and make no attempt to explain themselves; rather, they consist almost solely of personal names and intricate descriptions of familial relationships. But despite their apparent dryness, within them lie the keys to understanding the social structure of a bygone era, a time when power relations were most effectively expressed by emphasising the alleged connections between people, places, and genealogical time. Biology had very little to do with the matter.

Medieval writers were acutely aware that connections between people form the essential fabric of society. I'm very pleased to have discovered that the same principle underlies collegiate life here in Robinson.



Dr Benjamin Guy is Robinson's new Junior Research Fellow in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic. He is a specialist in the early history of the Celtic-speaking peoples, and especially in history of medieval Wales. He took his first degree in Selwyn College in Cambridge and his MA degree in Brown University in the USA.

He returned to Cambridge to undertake a PhD in Pembroke College. His PhD thesis was entitled 'Medieval Welsh Genealogy: Texts, Contexts and Transmission'. From January 2017, he spent nine months as a Research Associate for the AHRC-funded collaborative project Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae: The Latin Lives of the Welsh Saints, based in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic in Cambridge. He joined Robinson College as a Junior Research Fellow in October 2017.



A pedigree roll in the Parker Library of Corpus Christi College





The cancer problem

As I write this, I am also editing the

"Principles of Cancer Management" chapter of the 6th edition of *Essential Surgery (Elsevier)*. The 5th edition was published in 2013, and it seems incredible to me how our understanding and treatment of cancer has been transformed in such a short period.

Dr Gary Doherty

The genomic revolution has laid bare the scale of the cancer problem. Not only is every cancer type different (e.g. breast versus lung), but each individual tumour has a distinct constellation of genetic changes - these have been acquired during the tumour cells' remarkable evolutionary paths to becoming automata that continue to divide unchecked by our numerous inbuilt (and usually very effective) anti-cancer mechanisms. The genetic make-up of a cancer cell in a metastasis (a tumour found beyond the site from which the cancer originated) can be dramatically different both from other cells in the same metastasis and (even more so) from the primary tumour that the cells' ancestors originally came from. The secret to much of modern cancer drug discovery has come from figuring out which of these mutations cancer cells continue to depend on for their growth and survival (driver mutations). These have to be distinguished from those changes that were required at some point during the path to cancer (but are no longer required for cancer cells to thrive), and those that are just there as a consequence of a general increase in the mutation rate within cancer cells. However, this is no mean feat, requiring extensive laboratory research to determine the effect of driver mutations in cellular and animal models, discover molecules that inhibit the consequences of the aberrantly active proteins that the mutant genes produce, and test the efficacy and toxicity of these drugs in laboratory animals. This all happens well before these putative drugs ever see a

patient with the relevant tumour mutation. Then they must be tested for safety in patients in escalating doses, before determining their potential efficacy in later stage clinical trials, often involving thousands of patients. Each new drug is the result of a mammoth effort of chemists, many flavours of biologists, clinicians, industrial partners, and specialists that help navigate the intense (but necessary) regulatory framework that surrounds drug development. We also rely on our generous patients, as well as the friends and relatives that accompany them to burdensome clinic and scan appointments. This whole process can take decades, but thankfully these timescales are narrowing. Even then, resistance to these targeted therapies is inevitable, owing to further tumour evolution that circumvents the need for the aberrant proteins or signalling pathways that we inhibit. The discovery process then begins anew.

I often get asked if we will ever "cure" cancer. Sadly, the answer is probably no for many cancer patients. However, I'm sure that we will eventually get to the point that people will tend to die with advanced cancer (using well tolerated treatments), rather than because of it. Until then, there is much to do! As I've tried to highlight above, nothing exists in a vacuum. In addition to my many colleagues and collaborators at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and beyond, the broader community at Robinson (students, Fellows and others) provides an ideal environment for interesting discussions and helps inspire new ideas and forge collaborations. The wonderful College staff makes it so easy for us to do so by maintaining a wonderful academic environment and I extend my gratitude to them all.



Dr Gary Doherty is an academically focused Medical Oncologist based at Addenbrooke's Hospital. He studied Medicine at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was a junior, senior and research scholar. He completed his PhD in Molecular Biology at the Laboratory of Molecular Biology (LMB) in Cambridge, and his specialty training in Medical Oncology in

Cambridge as an Academic Clinical Lecturer. His academic distinctions include a Henry Fellowship at Harvard University (where he studied English Literature and History of Art), and a 2017 American Society of Clinical Oncology Merit Award. His current clinical and research interests focus on lung cancer, immunotherapy and clinical trials. He has been a Fellow (since 2013) and Director of Studies in Medicine (since 2014) at Robinson. He chairs the College's Visual Arts Committee.

An extended version of this article will be available in the 2018 edition of the Robinson College Record.



Must all that lives die?

Alchemical approaches to medicine and the eternal quest for health

Anke Timmermann

In the early modern period the world of science was very different from today's. The cosmos seemed vast, and largely unexplored; matter was made up of the four Aristotelian elements, and the human body of humours, muscle and bone. Nevertheless, the questions faced by medical practitioners – who responded to wars, the plague, and other epidemics with due urgency – will be familiar to medical doctors of any period: what is this condition? Can it be cured? Is it better to use established but not entirely effective cures, or to try promising but potentially unsafe treatments? But unlike today, in the early modern period, potential answers for these questions involved the use of alchemy.

From the 12th century onwards, alchemy was practised across the Holy Roman Empire by anyone curious about the material composition of the world, and especially those with access to a furnace (e.g. smiths, or assayers of ores in mines), literacy skills (monks, scholars), or the monetary resources to establish a laboratory. Its fundamental principles were simple: if the elements were the building blocks of everything, they could be taken apart and reconstituted into different substances. Contrary to what later perceptions might imply, the theory of alchemy was entirely aligned with the Christian world view: if God had created the world with an inherent drive towards growth and perfection - making plants grow, and metals develop in the earth from the coarsest (lead) into the rarest and most valuable (gold) - then it should be possible to accelerate this process. If man was born innocent - without sin or illness - then it should be possible to expand his life to a biblical age. And without divine good will the philosophers' stone (which could transform lead into gold) and the elixir of life (the ultimate universal medicine) simply could not be produced.

Alchemy and pharmacy were natural cousins not only because of their joint interest in restoring health, or through the Paracelsian 'chymical' remedies produced from the 16th century onwards, but also since the production of medicines used methods (grinding, cutting, heating, melting, evaporating and distilling), materials, and tools that would not be out of place in the alchemical workshop. The production of the elixir of life, however, proved difficult, not least because alchemical terminology (derived from Arabic and ancient Greek roots and mostly metaphorical in nature) was not precise: one word might indicate different substances in different contexts, and one substance might be referred to by several interchangeable names. Yet, interestingly, the metaphorical language of alchemy would often describe what the practitioner saw in the workshop. A fiery dragon consuming an egg, for example, might signify an acidic substance dissolving another while producing heat and flames; a king and queen in a passionate embrace and melting together into a hermaphrodite might similarly indicate the successful combination of two essentially different substances.

Alchemy continued to be practised well into the 18th century, with Isaac Newton as one of its most prominent later practitioners. Cambridge University Library holds one of the notebooks in which Newton recorded his experiments on optics, but also thoughts on 'the medical virtues of salts', alchemy, and related topics. The notebook was assessed as 'Not fit to be printed' on behalf of Newton's executors by one Thomas Pellet on 25 September 1727, barely half a year after Newton's death, and at a time when the Royal Society promoted the modern discipline of chemistry as a science based on a clear, new nomenclature and the reproducibility of experiments. Proponents of the new sciences now denounced the validity of alchemy in spite of the fact that Newton, who had been president of the Royal

Society since 1703, had shown such a keen interest in it. With the establishment of modern chemistry the history of alchemy found its untimely end.

But this was not the end of the story of alchemy, medicine, and the dream of a healthy life. Alchemy's most ancient goal of turning base metals into gold was achieved in our present century with the help of the most modern equipment of our times, the particle accelerator. As for the eradication of illness, the successes of the past and the current efforts of scientists are cause for some optimism. Nature may continue to produce ever new epidemics as the centuries progress. But they will continue to be met with all the weapons available to humankind.



Dr Anke Timmermann (History/ Philosophy of Science, 2003) is an antiquarian bookseller and historian of science based in Grantham, where the young Isaac Newton received his school education, and is working in the UK

book trade and internationally. While a PhD student at Robinson (2003-2007), supported by a Gates Cambridge scholarship and living in rooms overlooking the gardens at Thorney Creek, she researched alchemical manuscripts and the role of alchemy and medicine in the early modern world. After an international career in academia and beyond, and following a return to Cambridge in 2013/14 as the Munby Fellow in Bibliography, Anke joined the antiquarian book trade at Bernard Quaritch Ltd, one of the oldest book firms in London. She is now an independent antiquarian bookseller specialising in books and manuscripts on science, food, travel and exploration, and recently founded the antiquarian book company 'Type & Forme' with her partner, Mark James. Twitter, Instagram and Facebook: @TypeAndForme Email: anke@typeandforme.com



A. 'Fermentation': 'The Crowning of Nature', in Cambridge University Library MS Gg.1.8 (17th century), f. 128r.

By kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

B. 'Not fit to be printed': Thomas Pellet in Isaac Newton's notebook, Cambridge University Library MS Add. 3975 (ca 1669 – ca 1693), p. 341. By kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.



Fighting flu

2018 marks the centenary of the worst infectious disease outbreak to have affected modern man, the Spanish influenza pandemic.



Professor Wendy Barclay (Natural Sciences Biological, 1982) holds the Action Medical Research Chair in Virology at Imperial College London. After graduating from Cambridge University, Wendy's postgraduate study took her to the Common Cold Unit in Salisbury. She had the honour to work alongside two esteemed scientists, Dr David Tyrell FRS and Dr Fred Brown FRS. During her two postdoctoral appointments, at the University of Reading with Professor Jeff Almond and then Mount

Sinai Medical Centre in New York with Professor Peter Palese, Wendy learned the molecular virology skills that would form the technological basis of her research career. In 1995 she set up her research group in Reading to study influenza viruses. She is particularly interested in the mechanisms by which viruses can cross from animal sources into humans to cause new pandemics.

Professor Wendy Barclay

2018 marks the centenary of the worst infectious disease outbreak to have affected modern man, the Spanish influenza pandemic. More than 50 million people around the world died as a result of infection by that deadly pathogen. Influenza pandemics arise every few decades from an alleoteric event of nature that gives opportunity for an animal virus to adapt to man. Meanwhile, in the interpandemic periods, seasonal influenza claims half a million lives every year and poses challenges for vaccination that are only too often spelled out in damning media headlines.

When I arrived at Robinson College in 1982 I had no intention to study a biological subject. I begrudged that fact that the Natural Science tripos required that I top up my Part 1a module choice with other subjects that tugged me from my beloved chemistry and maths. I chose biochemistry and physiology, choices that lumped me in with unruly medics who threw paper planes across the back rows of the large lecture theatre on the New Museums site. However, these new opportunities offered a more exciting and stimulating challenge than the O level biology I had rejected three years previously and by Christmas I was hooked.

Immersed in the final year Part II Pharmacology, the laboratory based project began, and the more days I spent in the lab, the more my heart realized this was where I might thrive. I turned to the University career service, from where each week a printed list of opportunities could be collected. Somewhere hidden amongst the pages I found a PhD project that was collaboration between Burroughs Wellcome and a unique research institute called The Common Cold Unit. The idea was to study the virus that caused the common cold, human rhinovirus, to decipher whether it would be possible to make a vaccine to protect against it.

I have been a virologist ever since, enthralled by these tiny self-perpetuating entities that are so small and simple that they can be created to order in the lab. Postdoctoral training fellowships at the University of Reading and then at Mount Sinai Medical Centre, New York honed my interest in small RNA viruses.

Now I head a small research team at Imperial College London that studies the mechanisms by which influenza viruses evolve to continue to cause human disease. We are 'wet' biologists working at the bench with contagious viruses that we genetically manipulate to dissect how each feature of the genome determines the outcome of infection. Over the past two decades we have contributed to discoveries that reveal how avian strains of the virus, the notorious 'bird flu', must mutate to transform into airborne transmissible human pathogens. The explanation lies in the physiological and environmental differences between humans and birds, the natural influenza virus hosts. All viruses are obligate parasites, relying absolutely on factors inside the cells they infect to support their replication. One such factor we recently discovered is a small nuclear protein named ANP32A that is subtly different between mammals and birds; the factor in birds being slightly longer than its mammalian counterpart. Avian influenza viruses rely on co-opting this factor, but upon entering human cells are mismatched with the shorter orthologue. In most cases of human exposure to bird flus, this incompatibility between virus and host stops the infection short. However, some avian viruses mutate to gain the ability to utilize the shorter version of ANP32A offered within human cells, thus overcoming the host range barrier. This results in uncontrolled infection in the exposed individual and accounts for the high case fatality rates associated with human cases of H5N1 bird flu and perhaps also explains why the 1918 influenza virus was so deadly.

To fully transform into a pandemic virus, we and others have shown that influenza must further mutate both to bind avidly to receptors that enable its entry into cells lining the human nose and throat, and to stabilize the virus particles so they survive in exhaled breath enabling airborne transmission. Avian influenza viruses transmit through water or in air to animals in very close proximity, so transmission properties of the bird viruses are quite different from those required for contagiousness between humans. Understanding why some strains of avian influenza virus can manage this evolutionary trick but others do not will eventually allow us to better predict the human pandemic threat posed by each new animal virus as it emerges. What is more, unravelling the virus's evolutionary strategies helps us to better understand how to design new antiviral drugs and vaccines to counter those adapted viruses that go on to become endemic in humans.



Bats in the limelight

Balancing public health and ecosystem conservation

In September 1994, a mysterious illness struck 19 race horses in a stable in Hendra, Queensland. Within two weeks, 13 mares had died as well as the trainer. Although poisoning was initially suspected, Australian scientists eventually isolated a new virus from the post-mortem samples.

Dr Olivier Restif

It became known as the Hendra virus. A huge search for the source of the virus began, focusing on rodents, insects and birds found in the area. For months the virus could not be found, until someone mentioned bats. Indeed before the outbreak, one of the mares had been kept in a paddock in the countryside, enjoying the shade of large trees which happened to be occupied by a colony of flying foxes-the common name for the big fruiteating bats found across Australia. Sure enough, urine samples collected from various bat roosts tested positive for the deadly Hendra virus. Although impossible to prove, the most likely explanation was that the grass or the water trough used by the mare had been contaminated by virus-laden bat urine.

Finding the source of the virus was not enough to solve the problem. Since 1994, nearly a hundred cases have been reported in Australian horses, mostly fatal, and three more people have died. Most cases have been sporadic, with self-contained transmission from horse to horse or horse to human. This has led to a massive backlash against bats, already perceived by many residents as noisy and smelly pests. Some people have taken the matter into their own hands, attempting to disperse bat roosts with noise, smoke, chainsaw or guns.

Yet, far from being pests, fruit bats make vital contributions to the fragile ecosystems they

inhabit. Found across Australia, Asia and Africa, fruit bats are unique in their ability to pollinate trees and disperse seeds across hundreds of miles. Already threatened by the destruction of their natural habitat, global warming and, in some countries, hunting, bats now face culling campaigns fuelled by the fear of deadly viruses. While Hendra virus has only been found in Australia, other emerging viruses have since been linked to fruit bats in Asia (Nipah and SARS viruses) and Africa (Ebola and Marburg viruses). How can we guard people and domestic animals from zoonotic disease while protecting bats and the forests they sustain?

For over ten years, our group at the vet school has been studying African fruit bats and the viruses they carry. Surprisingly, bats can tolerate viruses that cause rapid death in other animals. Understanding what makes the bat immune system so efficient could guide drug development to treat viral infections in people and animals. Furthermore, by mapping the geographic range of bats and their viruses, we can help minimise the risk of spillover. It takes years to build detailed knowledge of the biology and ecology of these nocturnal mammals that migrate across whole continents, and this calls for scientists to collaborate across borders and disciplines. Understanding the science is only the first step: solving conflicts between local communities and wildlife requires expertise from social scientists. Only through multidisciplinary

initiatives can we work out effective proposals that can be embraced by horse owners, policymakers and conservationists. The aim of our research is to show that bats are drawn to inhabited regions when their natural resources dwindle: if we preserve pristine forests away from urban centres, we can hopefully protect the bats while reducing the risk of virus spillover. Whether you find bats fascinating or scary, remember that they are an essential part of the natural world we live in.



Dr Olivier Restif is a Fellow and Director of Studies for Natural Sciences, Robinson College and Alborada Lecturer in Epidemiology, Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge. After graduating from the École

Polytechnique (Paris), he obtained a master's degree and a PhD in Ecology from the University of Paris – Pierre et Marie Curie. He has been a researcher at the University of Cambridge since 2003, and a fellow of Robinson College since 2008.



A grey-headed flying fox (Pteropuspoliocephalus) roosting in a forest in New South Wales



11

Learning about memory

Memory is so important that the need to understand it scarcely needs explicit justification.



Dr Brian McCabe has been a Fellow of Robinson since 1984 and has served as Director of Studies in Veterinary Medicine and Natural Sciences. He retired from a University Lectureship in Zoology in 2014 and is now a Tutor to postgraduate students. From 2010 – 2014 he was Director of the Sub-department of Animal Behaviour at Madingley.

Dr Brian McCabe

Suffice to say that effective treatment of mental disorders requires a deep understanding of how memory works, and that the pursuit of this understanding remains a major scientific challenge in its own right. The governments of many countries recognised 1990-1999 as the 'Decade of the Brain' and international support for memory research has not noticeably diminished since.

Like many scientific endeavours, memory research has depended on certain fundamental discoveries. Arguably the most basic of these is that the nervous system comprises a large population of discrete nerve cells or neurons, rather than a single continuous cytoplasmic network. This is common knowledge today but was vigorously disputed by Camillo Golgi in his Nobel Lecture of 1906. Once the 'Neuron Theory' had been established there arose the question of how neurons communicate with one another and it became clear that most do so by the passage of chemical neurotransmitters at specialised junctions termed synapses. It was suggested in the 19th century that memory might depend on the long-lasting modification of synaptic strength, controlled by the level of correlation between the activities of a synapse's constituent neurons. Such modification can be induced experimentally in synapses an example of so-called synaptic plasticity - and artificial neural networks can be built in which junctions between model neurons are strengthened or weakened by this correlation process to store information in a way that can readily be retrieved. But does biological memory work like this? Experiments to test the idea have been conducted on animals such as nematode worms, insects and molluscs, which possess relatively simple nervous systems. Neural circuits in these animals, which contribute to behaviours modified by memory, have been studied to determine whether synaptic plasticity in the circuits effectively models the animals' memory-dependent behaviour. Several types of synaptic plasticity, including the one mentioned above, have been identified in these simple neural circuits.

What about memory in more complex animals? My own research has mainly been on imprinting, whereby a young animal learns about a parent. Imprinting was chosen because it gives rise to memory characteristic of recognition in many vertebrate species, including our own. Such memory is indispensable for normal life - human subjects who can no longer use it are devastatingly disabled. The domestic chick turned out to be virtually ideal for studying the neural processes underlying the recognition memory of imprinting because a chick's previous experience in the egg is minimal. Against this low baseline, we were able to identify changes in the brain that were specific to memory - something that was not possible in other vertebrate experimental systems. Having localised the memory system, it was possible to characterise it in terms of type of synaptic plasticity, timecourse, neurotransmitters, biochemical mechanisms, electrical responsiveness, interaction with other brain regions, the importance of sleep ... and so on; the review below gives details for those who would like to know more. Our recent research has shown that the activity of neurons in the chick memory system shows remarkable variability in the neurons' newly-acquired responsiveness to an imprinting stimulus. We have also found that this responsiveness can be stabilised by sleep. Since sleep improves memory in both human subjects and chicks, our results from the chick offer an additional opportunity to identify aspects of memory that are common to both species.



Neurons in a chick brain region responsible for the memory of imprinting. The nuclei of neurons that were active 1 - 2 hours previously, while the chick was being imprinted on a visual stimulus, have been labelled with an activity marker and appear as black dots, which are in the process of being detected (light encirclement) and counted by a computer. The more strongly imprinted the chick, the more active are the neurons. Over 90% of those labelled are inhibitory to other neurons.



Brain training

Over the past decade the young field of cognitive training – sometimes referred to as 'brain training' – has expanded rapidly. The basic approach is to give someone lots of practice on a set of cognitive exercises (e.g. memory games), see whether they get better at other things too, and in some cases see whether there are significant brain changes following the training.



Tracts in a child's brain. Image courtesy of Dr Duncan Astle

Dr Duncan Astle

The appeal is obvious: the potential to slow age-related cognitive decline, remediate cognitive deficits following brain injury, boost learning and reduce symptoms associated with neurodevelopmental disorders. But these strong claims require compelling evidence and the findings in this area have been notoriously inconsistent.

In our lab we have explored how children's developing physiology can be altered by these training programmes. We use a technique call magnetoencephalography which measures tiny magnetic fields generated by active brain cells. We have shown that following intensive training neural synchrony within particular networks is enhanced, and that these alterations in neural synchrony mirror the specific improvements that individual children show.

This is all very interesting, but there are some big problems with our field. Lots of groups have shown that you can get big training gains on some tasks, but the best designed studies show that these gains are very specific. To give an extreme example, learning to remember very long lists of letters does not necessarily transfer to learning long lists of words, even though those two tasks are so similar.

Some studies do buck that trend, and show substantial 'transfer' – i.e. people get better not just at what they trained on, but the benefits transfer to even very different tasks. Why this inconsistency? Well some studies don't have control groups at all, and many that do don't have active control groups (i.e. the controls don't actually do

anything, so it is pretty obvious that they are controls). This means that these studies can't properly control for the placebo effect. Coincidentally, if a study doesn't have an active control group then it is more likely to show a wide transfer effect. Also, the smaller the study (i.e. the fewer the participants) the more likely it is to show wider training benefits. If studies include lots of participants then they are more likely to accurately estimate the true size of the benefit, which is very small. Finally, it is important to remember that this field almost certainly suffers from a publication bias - it is difficult to publish non-significant or small effects, and easier to publish positive results. Meaning that there are probably quite a few studies showing no benefits to training sitting in researchers' drawers, unpublished. As a result, we are overestimating the size of the training effect. The true training transfer effect is probably close to zero.

Where does brain training go from here? Future studies need active control groups, and enough participants to show the effects we are looking for. But we also need theory. There is very little work that explicitly generates and then tests a theory. Theory is incredibly important for scientific progress. When research is theoretically grounded it is far easier for a field to make meaningful progress, because it gives a collective focus, creates a shared set of critical questions, and provides a framework that can be tested, falsified and revised.



Dr Duncan Astle is a neuroscientist and Programme Leader at the Medical Research Council's Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit, University of Cambridge. His lab explores cognition and the brain in typically and atypically developing children, using different

imaging techniques, including magnetoencephalography (MEG), a tool for non-invasively measuring magnetics fields generated by active brain cells. Their work has been supported by the MRC, the Royal Society, the British Academy and multiple charity foundations, and in 2016 Duncan received the Early Career Award from the British Association of Cognitive Neuroscience.



The medic's tale

Oliver Fox



I am a Third Year medic, originally from Somerset (near Cheddar) and by coincidence live in the same village as John O'Brien, a medic who graduated from Robinson in its earlier days. Even more

coincidentally, we both ran in the Varsity race as part of the University team. As President of Robinson Medical Society, and in light of recent international political events, it's probably worth mentioning that my rise to power was not wholly democratic, although fortunately absent from the manipulations of other presidents. However, the society is building momentum and this year we have organised a series of talks, e.g. from a Lister Prize Fellow, the 2017 Brain Prize winner, as well as a couple of clinicians. Our society is a wonderfully cohesive network of medics across the year groups, and I hope has inspired our younger medics and clinical students alike. I hope this sense of community and support has given younger years the motivation to power on through MVST (Medical and Veterinary Science Tripos) and that they'll be enthused to organise swaps, talks and perhaps even our own jumpers. Next year, assuming I scrape that sought-after BA, I'm excited to head to clinical school and see some of the diagrams and drugs lists of Part 1 brought to life in a clinical setting.

As a fresher I was in room L6 which had lovely views into the gardens and across the lake. I loved watching the Bambi-like deer wandering about each morning, and even once bumped into one of them. Obviously, there was more to Fresher's week than that and following a day of getting to know each other in the unorthodox manner of going through a pre-written essay, I could appreciate that the Robinson medics were an excellent bunch. There were a number of Bops held in the 'Bassment'. We can remember bits of them and unfortunately Facebook remembers all of them... Luckily our first-year lectures were on the Sidgwick site, only a short walk away, and for the best part we all struggled to keep up with MIMS (Molecules in Medical Science). One of the most fascinating parts of the course was human anatomy, taught through dissection. Walking into the dissection room for the first time was a strange experience, but as the year went on, we felt that we came to deeply know our 'first patient', a far better teacher than any textbook could be. At the end of the year we attended a moving committal service for the donors and their families, and I believe every one of us was truly touched by the privilege of this opportunity and the belief of our donors in our ability to become doctors. The service occurred a few weeks before our anatomy exam, and this thought-provoking experience drove me to push myself to do justice to the extraordinary gift which had been donated for the sake of my learning.

In similar vein to most subjects, our supervisions were held in a variety of colleges. I distinctly remember Pharmacology in our second year. It was great to be supervised by a finalist who had just been through the system, and towards the end of the year he started to make educational videos which we were honoured to take part in. This simply meant filming our supervision, but one of our number had the smart idea of turning up in fancy dress (see picture). Following an altercation with my immune system and excellent support from Dr Doherty (our DOS) I scraped my way through second year, despite an abysmal mark in Human Reproduction (I wonder if that says anything...).

Before now, I hadn't thought about my career apart from the woefully ill-informed interview spiel. I've had to justify my choice as friends get internships, job offers and more money over their summers than the interest on my debt. I've always felt comfortable having a specific target at the end of my degree, but given the number of strikes and political changes, it's important to question what it'll be like in the future. I get the impression that work in the NHS has an altruistic component with numerous examples of people doing more than is contracted. I wonder whether it's sustainable for a significant proportion of the NHS to run on people giving more than they're paid for. The private sector suggests not, yet I sometimes feel that it undermines social care by promoting health as a commodity. Perhaps a synergistic relationship between the NHS and the private system is necessary, but I hope it doesn't swing political opinion toward a government willing to underfund the public sector. Such instability perhaps reflects my own uncertainty, but as I sit here in Addenbrooke's receiving an infusion of some expensive biologic, it's clear from those around me that illness permeates all sectors of society. My sincere hope for the future is that your capacity to pay does not influence the quality of vour treatment.

When I was doing a Q&A session with medical applicants and was asked if I would have preferred to apply to a different university I had to think for a moment, but now I've had time to mull it over and it's easy to answer. Without sounding too clichéd, the past couple of years have been hard work, but definitely some of the best I've had, and it has undoubtedly been made so by the number of like-minded, accepting people I've met here. We have also been exceptionally lucky with our Directors of Studies, Drs Doherty and Sharkey; it's often easy to overlook and forget in the rush of term time, but they've both been phenomenally helpful and kind when we've most needed it and for that we are all so grateful.





HERPES!

HERPES! There, I've said it. Maybe not your normal opening to an article, or indeed a popular choice of dinner table conversation but it is frequently a topic that I find myself discussing.

Dr Colin Crump

Let me explain: when sitting next to a new acquaintance, after initial pleasantries the conversation more often than not will naturally turn to enquiring about each other's professional pursuits. It commonly goes something like this:

> "So, what do you do?" "I am a research scientist" "What do you study?" "Viruses" "That's sounds interesting. What virus do you work on? "Herpes viruses... "Oh... Why?"



A. Electron microscopy image of the edge of an infected cell. Three virus particles can be seen, the two lower particles are outside the cell, and the top left hand particle is contained within a vesicle inside the cell.

B. Fluorescence microscopy image of an infected cell. Blue, green and red show the location of three different virus proteins. viruses are fascinating to study in their own right. As you probably know viruses are a unique sort of lifeform (a term I use slightly loosely because of the circular argument that can be had about whether viruses are alive - it depends on your definition of life). They are essentially inert particles until they infect a host cell, after which they rapidly take control of the cell to turn it into a factory that efficiently produces and distributes new viruses. Viruses have had millions of years of evolution to perfect the best strategies to do this, although these strategies can vary enormously between different viruses. Therefore viruses 'know' much more about how cells work than we do, and so studying them is an excellent way to learn about the inner workings of our cells. Many fundamental discoveries in research areas such as genetics, cancer, and immunology, to name just a few, have been made because of scientists studying viruses. Secondly as everyone knows, viruses can cause a range of disease, from the mildly irritating (e.g. verrucas and the common cold) to the frequently fatal (e.g. haemorrhagic fever, encephalitis and cancer). The more we understand about how viruses work, the better able we are to design new and improved medicines to treat the diseases caused by them.

The why is easy to answer for two reasons. Firstly,

Why herpes? Actually, we don't just study herpesviruses; my laboratory also works on polyomaviruses, although I imagine fewer of you will have heard of these, so I usually talk about herpes first for a better reaction. These two types of virus are very different in many ways but do have a few things in common; they both use DNA as their genetic code (many viruses use RNA) and they both live within their infected host forever, establishing what is known as latent or persistent infections (so it is true what they say - herpes is for life). Both these families of viruses are also very well adapted to their hosts, having been coevolving with us since before we were even mammals. This actually means that these viruses rarely cause much disease. In fact, I guarantee we are all wandering around with many of these viruses living inside us right now but we will never realise it. However, serious medical problems caused by these viruses can happen in people with a suppressed immune system, for example after an organ transplant. All this makes these types of viruses both fascinating to study and important to understand. In my laboratory we are mainly interested in the molecular details of how these viruses interact with various systems and processes within our cells to successfully make new virus particles and spread them to new uninfected cells or hosts. Mostly this is 'blue-skies' research, where we are just trying to learn new and interesting things about the inner workings of these viruses and the cells they infect, although we always hope that one day our research will make a real difference to how diseases caused by viruses such as these can be treated.



Following a B.Sc. in Biochemistry from the University of Bristol, Dr Colin Crump conducted his PhD research into how proteins are transported around cells (membrane traffic) in George Banting's laboratory, also at the University of Bristol. Then he went to

Portland, Oregon in the US on a Wellcome Trust postdoctoral research fellowship, where he continued to work on membrane traffic in Gary Thomas' laboratory and first started dabbling in virus research. This led him to Cambridge where he joined Tony Minson's laboratory in the Division of Virology, Department of Pathology. In 2005 Dr Crump was awarded a Research Fellowship from the Royal Society to set up his own research group in the Department of Pathology, where he is currently a Senior Lecturer. Dr Crump joined Robinson College as a Fellow in 2010, where he is a Director of Studies for Biological Natural Sciences.

NEWS: Alumni events

The 2018 Alumni Open Weekend 24/25 March



In the last weekend of March Robinson opened its welcoming doors to alumni of any matriculation year to celebrate their special relationship with their Alma Mater. The programme began with a discussion and Q&A on Life in Journalism: Fake news and alternative facts. Three distinguished alumni: **Jonathan Fowler (1987)** Chief of Communications, Information and



Q&A on Life in Journalism: Fake news and alternative facts. Three distinguished alumni: Jonathan Fowler (1987) Chief of Communications, Information and Outreach at the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Rebecca John (1989) BBC television news journalist, and Professor Timothy Luckhurst (1908) Head of Centre for Journalism University of

Kent and Director of KM television, discussed the challenges facing journalism in today's world and shared their memories of life at Robinson. The forum was followed by an opportunity to watch a live screening of the Oxford v Cambridge Boat Race in the College Bar, where the audience enjoyed the welcome return of former Barman Malcolm Trotter and seeing the Light Blues sweep the board! In the evening the gathered alumni, the Fellows and other members of College enjoyed the dinner in Hall, before retiring once again to the College Bar.

Alumni Get-together: Manchester 5 May

A select group of six: Anthony Toole (Management Studies/Mathematics, 1984), Gregory Lane-Serff (Mathematics, 1981), Katherine Lane-Serff (Mathematics, 1981), Matthew Grant (Geography, 1983), Mike MacDonald (Social and Political Sciences, 1984) and Paul Evans (Modern Languages, 1982) enjoyed fine food, excellent conversation and pleasant company at The 2nd Annual Robinson College Alumni Association



(Pegasus) Manchester Dinner on Saturday, 5 May at Sam's Chop House. We are grateful to Anthony Toole for his help in organising this most enjoyable event.

Alumni Get-together: Edinburgh 15 May



Robinsonians met at Contini in George Street in Edinburgh on 15 May. It was an excellent opportunity to catch up with our alumni in the pleasant atmosphere over a few drinks.

Robinson College in Asia April

Robinson Alumni in Singapore enjoyed hearing the latest College news over dinner at the Imperial Treasure Fine Teochew Cuisine in Singapore on 10 April 2018. The gathering included Dato Paul Supramaniam, President of The Oxford and Cambridge Society of Singapore, whose son Matthew is coming up to Robinson in October. We are enormously grateful to Ming San Lee (Economics, 1983) for hosting the evening at this superb venue.





Robinson alumni in Hong Kong met at the World Trade Centre Club for good conversation and delicious food. We are grateful to Dr KK Chan (Electrical and Information Sciences, 1986) for his help in organising another most enjoyable event in Hong Kong.





REMEMBERING ROBINSON

Making a gift in a will is one of the most meaningful ways to support Robinson, and represents an investment in the future of the College and all that it aims to achieve. Bequests contribute to our long-term financial security and help the College continue to offer young people the kind of education our alumni were so happy to receive. We are delighted to say thank you for the generosity of alumni and friends who have remembered Robinson in their wills by welcoming them to membership of the Crausaz Wordsworth Society, and report on its most recent gathering below.

Call the Midwife for the Crausaz Wordsworth Society!



Many Society members joined Robinson's Fellows and students in April for a delicious celebratory lunch and an afternoon of entertainment hosted by the Warden, Professor David Yates, and the newly appointed President of the Society, Dr Mary Stewart.

After lunch Thomas Moy (Music, 2017) was joined by colleagues Michael Ng and Ashley Chow in a spellbinding performance of song and piano, and after a short break Dame Philippa 'Pippa' Harris (English, 1986) was interviewed by Anastasia Raymond (Education with English and Drama, 2015). Dame Pippa is co-founder of Neal Street Productions, the producer of acclaimed films



such as Revolutionary Road for the big screen and Call the Midwife for television. After a dazzling showreel of clips of some of the Company's productions Dame Pippa talked about her life and work after Robinson, and shared her memories of being at the College, including a bruising encounter with Head Porter Fred Boyne in her first few days in Cambridge!

We are enormously grateful to all those who gave up their time to make this event so enjoyable, and most of all to those who have made provision for Robinson in their wills.

We look forward to seeing you all next year.



Membership of the Crausaz Wordsworth Society is open to anyone who has remembered Robinson in their will. To discuss your legacy plans please contact the Development Director, Sarah Westwood, on: sw344@cam.ac.uk.

In conversation with ... Dr Mary Stewart

Dr Mary Stewart is a Life Fellow and one of the founding members of Robinson. Over her time at the College she has served as a Tutor, Director of Studies in German and Deputy Warden. **Henry Normanton** interviewed her as she took up another new role as the first President of the Crausaz Wordsworth Society.

Henry Normanton

What was it like founding Robinson?

Tremendously exciting - I don't think any of us quite realised what we were getting into! We talked and thought about everything, not just what the building was going to be like and what we wanted in it, but what sort of society we wanted to be, what sort of possibilities there were to be different to other Cambridge colleges, and how far we wanted to be the same. It just seemed an extraordinary opportunity to be able to plan things in a way that we felt was modern.

Which decision was most important to you?

Above all that Robinson should be mixed from the start. [That it was able to happen] had a lot to do with the first Warden, Lord Lewis. He was very clever in making sure that right from the start the fellows were a good mix of men and women. There was never the sense that women were in any way outnumbered, as they were in most other colleges. I think three or four had gone mixed [by the time Robinson was founded], but they were still heavily male. We were different, so that the women never felt embattled. I think that mattered to me more than anything, that we had that balance, and tried to keep it.

If you could go back and change something, would you?

I don't think so. We all wished we had had more money to start off with! Mr Robinson gave us a finite amount, which seemed a lot then, but it wasn't as inflation took over. That's partly what the Crausaz Wordsworth Society is about, making sure we have got financial security so that we can offer students what they need.

How has Robinson changed most in your time here?

It has not so much changed as developed, I would



say. It is lovely to see that it takes itself for granted like any other college now, it is not self-consciously new in the way it was right at the beginning.

Why have you taken on the role of President of the Crausaz Wordsworth Society?

Maybe it is a question of age, but I have started thinking more about things like making wills, and I have realised how much it matters to the college to be able to plan ahead. Especially given the uncertainty of government funding, the more people who make a commitment, the more certainty the College has that they will have some money which they can use to build for the future.

You have chosen to include a gift to Robinson in your will. Is there anything in particular you would like it to support?

I must admit, I have a particular bias towards languages because I have spent my entire career teaching German, and it is sliding down the scale of popularity these days. I think, not just for German, but for other modern European languages, it is hugely important that people go on studying them. Schools have moved in the opposite direction, languages are no longer as important as they were, and there is this strange view that English will cover everything. But we are just about the only country in Europe where most people are monolingual. And it does make a difference if you are trying to do work commercially or academically in another country, if you speak their language, you will do a lot better. So that's what I would like to support, particularly.



Henry Normanton (2014) is in his fourth year at Robinson, studying for an MPhil in Modern British History.



'A fast-paced and exciting fortnight' - our 14th Annual Telephone Campaign

Robinson calling

Our 14th Annual Telephone Campaign is already underway. From 26th June, current Robinson students have been contacting our alumni and friends around the world to share college memories, chat about their experiences after leaving Robinson and thanking them for their support. Student callers have also been seeking support for the College.

"I believe in the pursuit of excellence and investing in institutions which enable this pursuit. Robinson College is such an institution and one to which I have a lifelong debt of gratitude. The College has a good financial footing but it has a modest endowment fund compared to other Cambridge colleges and there is a great deal more that needs to be done to assure its security into the future. It is my pleasure therefore to do what I can to support the College, and I encourage others to do the same".



Donations made during the Telephone Campaign, which runs until 9th July this year, support a range of projects. Every gift makes a difference, but this year there is an additional incentive to make a

gift to Robinson. Our alumnus Ben Habib (Natural Sciences, 1984) has pledged to donate £200 for every new regular gift and £75 for every one-off gift received during the telephone campaign.

Ben Habib (Natural Science, 1984)

Two of our student callers explain why they wanted to get involved in this key activity in our fundraising calendar:



'This summer, twelve Robinson students have come together to take part in the 14th Annual Telephone Campaign; it's an excellent way for students like myself to reconnect with alumni while simultaneously

raising funds for the College. I am a second-year English student and it's my first time participating in the campaign. I'm anticipating a fast-paced and exciting fortnight — it is a fantastic opportunity and I'm really looking forward to it!

All the money we raise benefits Robinson and its students in a range of ways; as well as supporting the supervision system, maintaining the gardens, and providing funding for student societies, the College is playing an ever-increasing role in provision of bursaries, which are crucial to ensure that students who are in difficult financial circumstances receive the support they need'.

Lizzy Shaw (Law, 2016)



Tm a final year Law student and was a caller in the 2016 campaign. I've got fond memories of last time: I really enjoyed getting to know alumni, and it felt good to do something positive for the College

so I'm delighted to be involved again.

This year, for the first time, a donor is encouraging new donors. We at Robinson College are extremely grateful to Ben Habib for his commitment to the College and this Telephone Campaign. We are very hopeful such an opportunity will encourage alumni to donate what they can – but whatever their circumstances, we hope they will enjoy talking to us.'

Zhuan Faraj (Law, 2014) 📕

Join in! For more information on the Telephone Campaign or to make a donation please see www.robinson.cam.ac.uk/alumni/annual-appeal-2018

TELEPHONE CAMPAIGN 2018

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84

NEWS: Alumni

1980

Jo Bacon (Architecture) has now been 30 years with Allies and Morrison Architects, and continues to love her job. Son Tom 21, Robinson graduate (2017), is now on a Part 1 Architecture year out, working with Ash Sakula Architects in London. Eliza, 19, is enjoying Second year English, Magdalene, studying in the English Faculty designed by Allies and Morrison in 1995. Husband Gavin is now studying for an MA in History at UCL and enjoying life after a career in law.

Commander Jack Douglas Poole II (Social and Political Science) retired from the US Navy on 1st April 2018. Jack and his family are now living in Jacksonville Florida with their youngest headed to university this year. Time for a second career!

1981

Mr Jeremy Godfrey (Mathematics) has been elected as the 2019 chair of BEREC, the umbrella body for EU telecoms regulators. He is serving as vice chair in 2018. This is in addition to his role as Commissioner for Communications Regulation in Ireland. He and **Julie McShane (Medicine)** continue to live in Dublin with their two children.

A short film by **Philip Lowe (English)**, The Driving Seat, which he wrote and directed, has recently finished a festival run in which it was selected for 40 film festivals worldwide and won six awards. It is now available free to view on Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/179555598.

Peter Thompson (Mathematics) has taken up an additional position as a System Performance Scientist with IOHK, working on the Cardano proof-of-stake blockchain system.

1985

Brian Skeet (English) last year celebrated a wonderful ten years of marriage to his husband Terry Cummings. They now run a film company together called Joanproductions45.

1986

After returning to corporate law in Australia following completion of her Masters at Cambridge, **Professor Lisa Young** (Law) moved to the academy, and is now Professor of Law at Murdoch University in her home town of Perth, Western Australia. She specialises in family law and in addition to her academic work she hears child support cases for the government. Her two adult children study and work in other parts of Australia while she enjoys the travel associated with an academic career (which includes occasional trips back to Cambridge).

1987

Dr Mike Poltorak (Engineering, Archaeology and Anthropology) turned 50 last year. He is the proud father of a 3-year-old son called Louie who speaks Swiss German to his mother and English to his father. Aside from teaching visual anthropology at the University of Kent, Mike is a part of a group planning an ecovillage/ecosomatic centre near Olot in Catalonia. The aim is to integrate practice from somatics, anthropology, permaculture and activism and create a vibrant community and research centre to address climate change. They are called LAB or Living Arts Base.

1988

Dr Daniel S. Helman (Natural Sciences) had a PhD degree conferred (Sustainability Education, Prescott College) in the past year and was appointed to a teaching and research position at Ton Duc Thang University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

1990

Justinian Clifford Bowles (History) married Sarah Leigh-Bramwell in September 2017. They live in London.

1991

After joining the Army in 1995 and gaining her commission in the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) in 1996, **Clare Phillips (Computer Science)** was promoted to Colonel in 2016 and took up an appointment as the REME Regimental Colonel. In 2017 she was a finalist in the Women in Defence Awards in the Inspirational category. Clare continues to play hockey and has thoroughly enjoyed her 22 years of military service to date.

1994

Dr Alex Alexander (Part III Mathematics) was appointed Head of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Lancaster University on 1st August 2017.

Rebecca Kane Burton (History) and Sagi were delighted to welcome Millicent Isla Kane Burton to the family in September 2017. Rebecca write: "Finally, some female company to join older brothers Joseph and Luca."

André du Plessis (Law) has been recently appointed as Executive Director of ILGA, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Trans and Intersex Association – the world federation of 1300 NGOs working for LGBTI equality in 140 countries worldwide, and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. https://ilga.org/. After nine years working at the University of Oxford, **Catherine Whalley (Music)** moved to St Peter's College, Oxford to become the College Registrar in September 2017. She is enjoying her return to a college, 20 years after leaving Robinson.

1995

Lydia Heilmann (née Breen) (Languages/Management Studies) has joined an international accounting software startup in Denmark, called Uniconta ApS. Lydia is located in Copenhagen and works in an international support and business development capacity. She is happy to be combining skills from her last 19 years of work experience in the international accounting, business, and translation industries.

After being awarded an engineering doctorate from UCL, **Dr John Hindmarch (Philosophy)** is currently a research associate in the field of Cultural Heritage Preservation Technologies at the University of Bamberg, a beautiful UNESCO World Heritage Site in Germany

1996

Rinske Hillen (Law) has published her first book. Her debut novel "Houtrod" ("Rotting wood") is inspired by the true history of two houses on an Amsterdam canal. The work is a philosophical novel about guilt, betrayal and family loyalty. Rinske joined Robinson from the University of Utrecht in 1996 and graduated in 1997.

1997

Dr Alice Machlachlan (Philosophy), Amy, and Emmylou are delighted to announce the arrival of a beloved daughter and sister, Martha Robin Noseworthy. Martha was born on 1 November, and quickly decided that while the world was an interesting place, the most fascinating thing in it was her big sister (with avocado as a distant second). The four of us are happily getting to know each other and discovering life as a family of four.

Dr Athina Markaki (Materials Science & Metallurgy /Research Fellow) along with her PhD student Mr Alexander Justin, Prof. Ludovic Vallier, Dr Fotios Sampaziotis, and Mr Kourosh Saeb-Parsy has been awarded a Rosetrees Trust Award for Interdisciplinary Research between the Departments of Engineering and Medicine. The interdisciplinary research aims to generate the first fully-functional bioengineered bile duct to replace the native bile duct in small and large animal models.

1998

Preeti Capildeo (Law) has changed career to Compliance and now works as an Ethics & Compliance Manager at Centrica.

NEWS: Alumni

1999

Gary Lowe (Classics) has been promoted to Managing Director & Global Head, Corporate Finance Credit Insurance in Standard Chartered Bank's Capital Structuring and Distribution Group, based in London, and would welcome contact from alumni in similar fields.

2000



Leo Beckham (Natural Sciences Biological) and his wife, Jemima, are pleased to announce the arrival of their daughter Amelia Celeste on Friday 23 February 2018 at 9:02am.

2001

Fergus McKewan (Engineering) and his wife Wendy are overjoyed at the arrival of their daughter Jia in January this year.



In February 2017, Mark Plane (Natural Sciences Physical) and his wife Liz welcomed Ezra James into their family to join Serena and Rosa.

Chun Ning Yuen (Land Economy, 2001) has been CEO of WWPKG Holdings Company Limited (HKEX: 8069, stock code) since 2017.

2002

Dr Adam Collins (Natural Sciences) and Scheherazade Collins are happy to announce the birth of their daughter Zenobia Rupina Collins, born on 22 December 2017 in Santa Monica, California.

Rachel Zani (née Lafferty) (Law) and her husband Nick are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter, Isabella Emilia Francesca Zani, on 10 November 2017.

2003



On 23 December 2017 **Christopher Coomber** married Rachel Tappenden at St Giles' Church, Cambridge. **Aashish Pattani** and **Thomas Dyson** were ushers, while fellow Robinson

alumni Andrew Cockbill (1996), Adam and Claire Taylor (both 1999), Robert Cork (2000) and Kate Hillman (Newnham) were also in attendance.

Dr Jacob Levy (Geography) and Celia (Sidney Sussex) are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter, Lyra, who was born on the 29 December 2017.

Richard Pygott (Geography) and his wife are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter Hermione Frances Branwen Pygott. She was born in the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford on the 12th January 2018 and is proving a popular sister to Edward (2).

2004

Panos Demopoulos (MPhil Music Composition) has held the office of the Vice Mayorship (Culture) in Kozani, Greece since 2017. His term in office will last until 2019.

2005

Dr Ben Dennis-Smither and Lydia Bridgland (both Natural Sciences) were married on 24 March 2018 in East Yorkshire. Will Clayton (2004), Louise Heron, Dave Wood, Mark Hunting and Aniko Adam (Homerton 2006) were amongst the guests and helped make it a fantastic day.



Dr James Mott (Natural Sciences Physical) and Jackie Soo were married in Orange County, California on 19 August 2017. A crowd of 10 'Binson alumni braved them for a memorphic weekend

the sun, sea and sand to join them for a memorable weekend. Photograph: L-R: Anna Brydges, Lucy Clements, Mimi Willcock, Jonny Young, Sheena Regan, Peter Thompson, John Manning, TJ Craig, Adam Jones and Russ Tannahill.

2006

Peter Cary (History & Management Studies) and Katie Ellis are delighted to announce the birth of their first child, James Cary, on 8th April 2018.

Dr Thomas Stoker (Medicine) and Caroline Stoker were delighted to welcome baby Conor on 29th December 2017.

2007

Ji Pattison - Smith (Computer Science) married Hannah Brown on 7 April 2018 at Talbot Lane Church in Rotherham. Several 'Binsonites made the journey to the north to join in the celebrations.

2010

Heather Holland (Natural Sciences Physical) is due to marry Selywnite Arthur Kissin, on 11 August 2018, in Langstone, Hampshire. The pair met at Cambridge when completing their masters.

2011

Alexander Cakkos (Land Economy) qualified as a Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (MRICS), specialising in Commercial Property.

2017

Andreas Georgiades (Law) is currently undergoing his six-month legal qualification course (LPC) in London after which he will be joining Allen & Overy LLP for his two-year training contract.













NEWS: Fellows



José Adolfo de Azcárraga (Bye-Fellow, 1988-89), currently Emeritus Professor at Valencia University, was re-elected President of the Spanish Royal Physics Society last July, on the occasion of the Biennial Conference of the Society.



Dr Colin Crump (Fellow) and Rachel Crump are delighted to announce the birth of their son Thomas Benjamin on 18th November 2017, at a healthy 4 kg (8lb 13oz). Mum, Dad and big sister Abigail are very happy.

Dr Vreneli Farber (By-Fellow 1988-89, Russian Literature) continues to enjoy retirement, occupying herself with directing plays in Russian, acting in theatrical productions, babysitting for grandchildren on both east and west coasts of the USA, traveling, reading, going to theatre shows and concerts, gardening and socializing with friends.

Michael Hadley (Former Bye-fellow and Senior Member), PhD, FRSC Professor Emeritus, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC Canada writes: "My wife Anita (retired faculty member of Royal Roads Military College) and I have published our book Spindrift: A Canadian Book of the Sea. It has been short-listed for the Bill Duthie Booksellers' Choice Award. Our book focuses on the relationships of Canadians to their oceanic environments: Pacific, Arctic and Atlantic. Importantly for us as well, our book reflects our relationship with Robinson College, for it was in the College Library and our College flat that we undertook much of the editorial work.



Dr Colin Huehns (Senior Member) and his wife Chen Cong are delighted to announce the birth of their first child, a daughter Helen on 17 January 2018 in Dongguan, China.Her Chinese name is Chen Luxi.



In January 2018 OUP published **Professor Peter Kornicki's (Fellow)** new book, *Languages, Scripts and Chinese Texts in East Asia*, which he had been working on for ten years. He says: "I am now working on a book on the

codebreakers and eavesdroppers at Bletchley Park who learnt Japanese. In autumn 2017 the Japanese government awarded me the Order of the Rising Sun with Gold Rays and Neck Ribbon and this was conferred on me at the Japanese Embassy on 6 March 2018."

Professor John Morrow (Former Bye Fellow), who has been Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), University of Auckland since 2009, has just made his first venture into naval history. His book *British Flag Officers in the French Wars, 1793-1815: Admirals' Lives* was published by Bloomsbury in February. While undertaking research on this project at the UL and the Cambridge County Records Office, John again enjoyed the benefit of the College's hospitality. He is most grateful to the Warden for welcoming him back and to the Head Porter for facilitating the arrangements.

Professor Jürg Schwyter (Bye Fellow) taught two courses on stroke and aphasia in Lausanne last academic year, and one in Geneva to speech and language therapists. His BBC book, Dictating to the Mob, received some favourable reviews, including one by Oxford's Lynda Mugglestone in the Journal of Sociolinguistics. His main theme was raising awareness of people with invisible handicaps. The Swiss TV health program "gesundheit heute" ran a special on people's re-integration into the workplace after a stroke and featured journey back to joining the workforce. Professor Schwyter's former student Raphaël Meyer made the documentary film Jürg about Professor Schwyter's "stroke experience", which now has been shown at over half a dozen international short film festivals, from London to New York, and even won the Audience Prize and the Jury Prize at the Schweizer Jugendfilmtage in Zürich.

Dr Steve Trudgill (Fellow) has been elected an Honorary Vice President of the Field Studies Council in recognition of the way in which he has worked on behalf of this charity for much of his life. He was a member of the FSC Executive Committee from 1976 to 2003, helping to run all the UK Field Centres, and concurrently also a member of its Science and Education Sub-Committee, which he chaired for two years. He undertook many years of ecological and environmental field work at Slapton Ley Field Centre in Devon and was a member of Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve Management Committee 1990 - 2005. He ran University Field Classes at Slapton, Rhyd-Y-Creuau (North Wales) and Blencathra (Lake District) Field Centres. He has run courses at Slapton Ley Field Centre on Geography Field Techniques for Teachers, Natural History for Families and, jointly with St Ives School of Painting artists Hilary Gibson, Art and Landscape History; they have also run Art and the Limestone Landscape courses at Malham Tarn Field Centre in Yorkshire. Steve very much espouses the aims of helping young people to learn about ecology and environment and to experience nature first hand through residential field work. In a recent art exhibition in the College he raised money to help disadvantaged young people from inner cities to enjoy and benefit from the experience of residential field week. He has just completed a chapter on Pioneers of Biological Fieldwork for a book on nature with a foreward by David Attenborough to be published by Cambridge University Press.

Herbert and Judith Weil (both Bye Fellows, first in 1988) have most recently published the articles on Henry IV, Parts One and Two for the Stanford Global Shakespeare Encyclopedia, which is scheduled to be published online and free in several months. They also edited Part One for The Cambridge New Shakespeare.

Professor Joachim Whaley (History, 1976, Former Fellow, Senior Member) has written another book about the Holy Roman Empire! This time it's a very brief survey of the entire history of the empire from the emergence of the Frankish kingdoms and Charlemagne to its dissolution in 1806. The Holy Roman Empire: A Very Short Introduction is published by Oxford University Press on 1st July 2018. Jo says that he wrote the book to provide an answer to the questions that so many students, colleagues and friends have asked him about the Empire over the last forty years. Many will know Voltaire's quip that it was 'neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire: this book explains why it was indeed 'Holy' and Roman' and an 'empire'!

Staff



Malcolm Trotter

(Former Bar Manager) is happy to inform us that: "June the 16 2017 was a very special day

was a very special day for two reasons. After 25 years together Linda (known as Lynnie) and I celebrated our marriage at Peterborough Registry Office followed by a celebration at the Bull Hotel in Peterborough. It was attended by immediate family who helped to make our day an amazing occasion. The second event of "THE BIG DAY" was that it coincided with my 70th birthday. Family thought they were getting a birthday invitation and were completely surprised to find a wedding invitation. Mind you it only took 25 years to arrange!".

Welcome

Obituaries and tributes

Dr Scott Annett is our new teaching Fellow in English and will already be known to many of you as he has been our College Lecturer without Fellowship in Italian since 2013 and his teaching experience (since 2008) focused primarily upon Medieval and Early Modern literature within the Faculty of English and the Department of Italian. Alongside this teaching, he completed a part-time Master of Education (MEd) in 2015 and was awarded a distinction.

Dr Duncan Astle is our new Fellow in Biological Sciences. He is a neuroscientist at the Medical Research Council's Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit (MRC CBU), studying cognition and the brain in typically and atypically developing children. He is now a Principal Research Associate within the University of Cambridge.

Dr Benjamin Guy is our new Research Fellow in Anglo Saxon Norse and Celtic. He graduated from Cambridge with a First Class BA Hons from Selwyn and then completed a one-year MA degree in History at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, USA.

Dr Holly Hedgeland has been both a former Fellow of Robinson College and, more recently, a Senior Member. She left Robinson in 2012 to take up a teaching post at Winchester College, followed by a stint at the Perse. She then spent a year as a Post-doctoral Research Associate at the London Centre for Nanotechnology at UCL. Since 2016, she been a Staff Tutor (Lecturer) in the School of Physical Sciences at the Open University and has been supervising research students at both PhD and Masters level.

Ms Sarah Westwood is our new Director of Development. She joined the Fellowship in September 2017 after two years leading the Development programme at Lucy Cavendish College. Before joining Lucy Cavendish, Sarah was at St John's College for eight years throughout its successful £50 million fundraising campaign, so she has a broad experience of the Cambridge context. She is very much enjoying getting to know Robinson and its diverse membership.

Professor Alison Young is the new Sir David Williams Professor of Public Law. Before joining the University of Cambridge she studied for a Law (with French) degree at the University of Birmingham, spending a year at the Université de Limoges as part of her degree. She then completed the BCL and DPhil at Hertford College, Oxford. She spent three years as a Tutorial Fellow at Balliol College, before returning to Hertford as a Fellow in Law and later Professor of Public Law at the University of Oxford. At Oxford she completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and received awards for Teaching Excellence and Innovation from the University of Oxford.

We are delighted to welcome to Robinson College Ms Leah Cook, Ms Magdalena Kochanowska, Ms Elia Martinez, Ms Dzintra Kilbloka, Ms Anita Nagyne Elo, Ms Roxana Sabo, Mr James Riches, and Ms Malisha Warnakulasuriya Perera, Housekeeping, Ms Ursula Schell, Gardens, Ms Saskia Burton, Catering, Mr Howard Jones, Porters, and Mr Paul Coleman, Conference.

Mrs Grace Finn (née Keegan) (Social and Political Sciences, 1993). By Katie Martin (née Astbury) (MML, 1994)

Grace Finn (née Keegan) (Social and Political Sciences, 1993), who graduated in social and political sciences at Robinson College in 1996, passed away in June 2017, bringing to an end years of suffering with cancer. Gracie faced her illness in the same way as she led the rest of her life: with privacy and dignity and focusing on what really mattered, chiefly her family towards the end. The last time I saw her, Grace seemed to be in improving health and was laughing about the bossy German physiotherapist who was trying to build up her strength. She doubted she would be able to get back to work because of the toll her treatment had taken on her concentration, but she had lost none of her caustic sense of humour and warmth for her friends. As an old school friend noted at her funeral, Grace was a woman of strong opinions, including frequent unsolicited opinions about other people's life choices. If she did not approve of an outfit, career choice or boyfriend, you'd soon know about it, for good or ill. Those of us who were lucky enough to know Grace at college know that she was straight-talking and loyal (and an impossibly fussy eater). She loved a gossip over a drink in the bar or a coffee in her room and stayed close to her family and friends at home in south London. She organised the May Ball in 1995 and used that after she graduated as a basis for getting into the insurance industry, where she eventually met her husband, whom she married in 2006. Grace was proud of her time at Robinson. Her family was proud of her too. Losing her at such a young age is a reminder to all of us that life is short and that bonds made in college years last. We miss her. She is survived by her devoted husband Tony and a young son who gave her enormous joy.

Dr Michael R W King (1990) MA (Cantab) MSc (Imp) MBBS MRCP FRCR 1972-2018. By Joseph Sivell and Jeff Butt (both 1990).



It is with great sadness that we have to announce the death of Mike King (1990) aged 45. Mike was a well-liked member of his year and many will remember him for being witty, always fun to be with and a thoroughly decent man. He represented that rare combination of having a wide circle of friends across college but also friendships with a closer group to whom he was unfailingly a really good friend.

He was active in many sporting teams, especially hockey, where he was captain of the 2nd XI, but he will be remembered amongst his closest friends for being a founder member of the informal dining society which became known as the Bertie club. This specialised in not-quite-so-fine dining but what it may have lacked in culinary standards was more than made up for with laughter. Now spread out across the world its surviving members still meet to remember these happy days at Robinson.

Although Mike studied Natural Sciences, and specialised in physics, he had also always had an interest in life sciences. In his third year he announced, quite seriously, to his friends that one day he would become a medical doctor. After leaving Robinson he studied Medical Physics at Imperial College and a short while later he began the long training to become a medical doctor at King's college London. Several years later, as promised, members of the Bertie club attended his final graduation with great pride.

At the time of his death from cancer he was a Consultant Radiologist at Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth, near where he grew up, where he was Clinical Director for Radiology and Director of the Breast Cancer Screening Unit - combining the knowledge of two disciplines in his work.

He will be greatly missed by his wife Zephy, his two daughters Madeleine and Annabelle, his parents Sally and Peter, and sister Elizabeth. Even though his life was far shorter than he deserved, in that time he helped a great many people and achieved wonderful things.

OPEN ART exhibition

We held our first 'Open Art' Exhibition in College this February, curated by Dr Gary Doherty, Chair of the Visual Arts Committee (VAC) and organised by Dr Steve Trudgill of the VAC. This took place in the Chapel with support from Chaplain Simon Perry and Choirmaster Simon Brown, together with Molly Cook and Anthony Gray of Robinson College Music Society, as well as College staff who made all the exhibition space and catering arrangements happen.

We displayed works by eleven staff members, seven students, eight Fellows and Senior Members and two friends of College. At the Exhibition Reception for artists and College members, Warden David Yates said he was delighted with the contributions from such a wide range of College members. As one visitor commented: "I never knew we had so much talent in College - and especially amongst the staff." Given the success of the endeavour, we plan to repeat this event in a few years' time.

We asked a panel of judges if they could pick out some prize winners - a task which they found genuinely difficult. The panel included two professional artists: Diane Firth, whose portraits of College Fellows hang in the SCR, and Paul Ashurst, whose works hang in the Crausaz Wordsworth Building. Susanna West Yates of the VAC was Chair of the jury.

There were three equal prizes, kindly donated by Mrs Sue West Yates and Dr Gary Doherty. The prizes were presented by the Warden, David Yates and were awarded to Isabel Mathers for Still Life (oil), Olesya Razuvayevskaya for Through the Vintage Mirror (graphite on rag paper), and Donald Richards for Chapel, Robinson College (platinum/palladium print). Highly Commended were Linda Hunns for Snow at Robinson (chalk pastel), Kerry Dawkins (née Howley) for Attraction/Aversion # 3 (hair jewellery) and Helen Grattidge with Evan Grattidge (age 8) for Going up Garrowby Hill (paper quilting).

The prize-winners wrote about their art and works:

Isabel Mathers (Architecture, 2017):



"I am a first year architect who has always enjoyed painting, especially acrylic landscapes and still lifes. This is one of my first attempts with oil paint and although it

is much more challenging it is still a rewarding process. Within my degree I mainly use watercolour paint and I am hoping to find some time to use it to depict the architecture of Robinson, which I find particularly inspirational."

Olesya Razuvayevskaya (Computer Science, 2015): "I am in the third year of my PhD in



Language and Information Processing research group, Department of Computer Science and Technology). Prior to coming

Cambridge, I did my MSc at The University of Edinburgh, and my BSc at Azerbaijan State University of Oil and Industry. I never specifically studied fine arts, but drawing and architecture have always been among my main non-professional interests. I normally work with graphite, ink, or charcoal on canvas using hatching and crosshatching techniques, and my main subjects are urban and countryside landscapes. Despite being aesthetically more into figurative genres (baroque and expressionism), I draw most of my emotional inspiration from abstract forms (in particular, from surrealistic art)".

Donald Richards: "For several years now, I have



enjoyed the hospitality of Friday Formal Halls as a guest of my wife, who is a Senior Member. There I have met many people, of varied interests and skills, and some

have become good friends. In parallel with my scientific career, I developed a serious interest in photography. I make traditional photographic prints, developing and printing them in the darkroom at home in Norfolk. The image honoured in the College's Open Art Competition is a platinum/palladium print, and I also make silver-gelatine prints. I have had several solo exhibitions of my images, one held in the Chapel in October 2015. I have also made a book of photographs of the College, and have donated the publication rights to Robinson."



We also exhibited the 1981 painting of the Oueen opening Robinson College by Anna Colquhoun (then

aged 8) from St John's School, alongside a note from her friend Karen Yik thanking the then Warden Lord Lewis for allowing them to attend and watch. Through the school we have managed to trace Anna and Karen and they plan to visit College to see the picture again; it now hangs in the Linnett Room.



Donald Richard's book of photographs "Robinson College Views" can be purchased from the Development Office

or Robinson College Porters' Lodge at £15.00 plus p&p. 📒

TRAVEL: Reflections on Iraq

On September 25th 2017, 73% of Iraqi Kurds cast their votes in a long-awaited independence referendum. A staggering 93% of them opted for independence from the Federal Republic of Iraq. It was little reported by the British press, and practically eclipsed by almost identical events happening in Catalonia at the same time.



Zhuan Faraj

As it happens, many people do not seem particularly interested in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The layman sees it as, if anything, just another piece of Middle Eastern territory under threat from ISIS; the international community deems it a lowly, unrecognised non-State; and locally, the Kurds have found themselves in a longrunning sectarian conflict with the neighbouring Arabs. This peculiar little quasi-State has had more ambivalent-to-negative press than some might say it deserves.

During the 2017 long vacation, I had the pleasure of travelling there for an internship in the midst of the referendum campaign, which gave me the opportunity of watching events unfold on the ground. I was based in Erbil, the Kurdish capital, and on some weekends I visited Sulaymaniyah, another major city a couple of hours away where many of my friends and relatives live. This was exciting in itself because of the stark political divide between the two. On the one hand, Erbil is home to the Kurdistan Democratic Party, dominated by the Barzani tribe - these were the biggest proponents of the referendum. Sulaymaniyah, by contrast, is home to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and people there would tend to be far more ambivalent.

One thing that they all seemed to have in common, though, was a feeling of discontent with the state of affairs in the KRI, and a sense that something needed to change. Within this short space I aim to introduce you to the region on the levels of both the political and the everyday - albeit with the caveat that there is always much more to say.

Perhaps the most striking thing about day-to-day life is the shortage of things like electricity and water. Both resources are ineffectively managed at the central level, and the latter is hardly helped by a lack of rainfall. There is certainly not much by way of free reliance on tap water, and drinking water largely comes in bottles imported from Turkey. Here in Cambridge we take for granted that we can walk or cycle along any of the big roads with relative ease. Not so in Erbil, where you'd be well advised against breathing in the pollution for too long.

There is a lack of concrete research into the issue, but any public health problems that might exist are certainly not helped by the heavily underdeveloped status of the health care system. There's not much by way of national health provision or social insurance, and like other public services, there are insufficient management, IT, and data skills to operate an efficient system. Indeed, I was told that collecting data for research purposes in the KRI is a chaotic endeavour - I suppose when one is constantly dealing with power cuts it might be hard to think, in a calm and considered manner, to collect records for posterity. A lot of the research on the area comes from international organisations, but even then many major worldwide studies seem not to focus on countries which have less information to offer. And from there it is difficult to work out how exactly to move forward.

It is worth remembering that this all exists in the context of deep socio-political misfortunes endured by the region over the last century or so, which

some say were exemplified by the response to events last September. Following the release of referendum results, Federal Iraq, with neighbours Iran and Turkey, kicked up quite the fuss, so to speak.

First, Iran cut off airspace access from Kurdistan. Then, rumours circulated that Baghdad would be closing all KRI airports. From my point of view, the real source of worry was that I had a start-of-year Director of Studies meeting to get to the next week: of the many excuses students come up with it had not previously occurred to me that "stuck in the midst of regional political conflict" might be one.

It is that rather lighter note which reminds me to look on the bright side of things. It is true that the KRI faces many difficulties, and my fairly isolated snapshot of events only reinforces that image. But, much progress has been made in the region: in one of history's more charming silver linings, many Kurds are becoming not only increasingly skilled and educated, but also more conscious of issues like physical and mental health. As went the catchphrase of one American jazz composer, "ever on and upwards".



Zhuan Faraj (Law, 2014) is a final year Law student. Born and raised in London by Iraqi-Kurdish parents, she retains a personal interest in Middle Eastern affairs and is currently applying for training contracts at commercial law firms. Outside of her studies,

Zhuan is a keen guitarist and jazz music enthusiast.



TRAVEL: Across India in a rickshaw

I haven't written a report about my summer holidays since I graduated from primary school ten years ago, and even then, I didn't write about anything overly exciting. Oh, how times have changed! In the summer of 2017 I boarded a flight to Cochin, a city in southwest India's coastal Kerala state, with two of my best friends from school.

Molly Cook

We spent two and a half weeks driving a rickshaw up the west coast of India. This experience was like no other I had ever had. In the month I spent in India, I learnt to drive and fix what is basically a fortified lawnmower, while navigating the truly treacherous Indian roads. We would wake at 05:30 every morning, to make the most of daylight hours and quiet roads. Our rickshaw never much liked starting in the mornings, and on a number of occasions we had to hail a commercial rickshaw down to help us crank the rusty lever that breathed life into the machine. We soon learnt that blowing into an oil covered tube in the engine of the rickshaw would solve almost all of our problems.

Our route took us predominantly along the coast of India. We took as many opportunities to leave the bigger roads as possible, which is when we had our biggest adventures. On one particular day, as we headed towards Mumbai from Gokarna, we found ourselves down a farm track turned bridleway. With incredibly unreliable breaks we tentatively chugged down what at the time seemed like a never-ending hill until we entered a very, very rural settlement, which didn't even seem to be attached to the main grid. The locals looked at us in complete bafflement as three white girls processed through their village in a brightly decorated rickshaw. Delilah, as we came to call our noble steed, struggled on our 3500km journey to say the least. We burnt through two head gaskets and two spark plugs, as we battled on through horrendous flooding around Mumbai, up Mount Abu and into the deserts of Rajasthan. Hills really were our nemesis, and the two passengers often had to "abandon ship" and run alongside Delilah as she struggled onwards and upwards.

The locals made our trip. We had to stop driving every two hours to let the engine cool down, and we were often invited for breakfast or given bananas by many curious locals. Towards the end of our trip we nearly joined a Hindu pilgrimage and were invited back to a wedding next summer. Travelling in India independently in this way was a life-changing experience. It was totally humbling to see snapshots of Indian life as we drove through what is an incredibly rich and happy country. We do plan to go back and purchase a Delilah No. 2 in order to explore the Northern territory and the Himalayas,



but for anyone who is planning a similar trip in the meantime, bear these things in mind...

- Roundabouts do not function as roundabouts. Other vehicles will very happily pull out in front of you, and we learnt that it was just easier to give way in the middle of the roundabout than try and get all the way round.
- **2.** Beware of buses! They will try and kill you, and they have deafening horns.
- 3. Waterproof trousers are the key to happiness. We experienced five days of non-stop rain around Mumbai, and were absolutely soaked through. Our windscreen wiper broke on Day 2, and we soon found out that our canvas roof was littered with tiny holes. Water comes in from every angle, and everyone is just as keen to get out of the rain as you are. This led to many hours sitting in

gridlocked traffic, simply because when the oncoming traffic got bored of sitting in a jam on their side of the road, they decided it would be quicker to drive the wrong way down our lane!

- Potholes! You will get lost in them. Have someone on pothole duty, and avoid at all costs.
- Learn how to play your petrol funnel. It sounds a lot like a trumpet and provides many hours of entertainment.

To sum up:

four breakdowns, three-near death experiences (your rickshaw won't like you if you mount a bollard), two scrapes (one with a cow) and we made it to the golden city of Jaisalmer. I will never stop being proud of our adventure, and it is safe to say that we miss Delilah greatly!



Molly Cook (Geography, 2016) is a second year undergraduate. Within the discipline, she has a particular interest in geographies of work,

gender studies and homelessness. Outside her academic work, Molly is a keen musician and actress. She has been President of the Robinson College Music Society for the years 2017 to 2018, and is taking over presidency of the Brickhouse Theatre Company in her final year, following two years on the committee. Molly was lucky enough to write and direct her own original show, A Very Brexit Musical, alongside fellow student, Anthony Gray, in 2017. They will be taking A Very Brexit Musical to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August 2018.

- A. Delilah
- B. Our helper
- C. Plotting our route

Dates for the diary

22/09/18 Reunion Dinner (1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2008)

04/10/18 Architects Reception at Allies & Morrison, London

04/11/18 Commemoration of Benefactors Service

08/11/18 City Drinks, London

25/11/18 Advent Carol Service

01/12/18 Freshers' Parents' Lunch

01/12/18 Christmas Concert

12/01/19 Graduands' Parents' Lunch

For further information on events and bookings, please visit: robinson.cam.ac.uk/alumni/alumni-events

Keeping in touch

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www.linkedin.com/groups/2906475

Merchandise

Souvenirs of Robinson College can be purchased from the Porters' Lodge.



