

# BIN BROOK

The Magazine of Robinson College, Cambridge



Alumni vs Students  
Saturday 7 February



L E N T 2 0 1 5

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## Upcoming Events for Members and Friends

- 16/3/15 - Robinson in Asia Dinner
- 21/3/15 - Pegasus Seminar and Dinner
- 6/7/15 - Annual Reception at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, London
- 26/9/15 - Reunion Dinner  
(80/85/90/95/00/05)
- 27/9/15 - Pegasus Brunch
- 5/12/15 - Christmas Concert and Freshers' Parents' Lunch

For further information and booking, please see: <http://www.robinson.cam.ac.uk/alumni/development-news>

Editor: Dr Nicola Jones  
Editorial Committee: Ms Helen Cornish, Dr Rosalind Love,  
Dr Steve Trudgill, Dr Judy Weiss and Mrs Helen Winter



Cover image was taken by Helen Cornish at the Alumni vs Students rugby match, during the Alumni Activities Weekend (7-8 February 2015)



# My Robinson

Lotte Reinbold (2010) studied English at Robinson and, after a year completing her Masters at UCL, she has returned to write her PhD. Lotte is the first holder of the Judy and Nigel Weiss PhD scholarship.



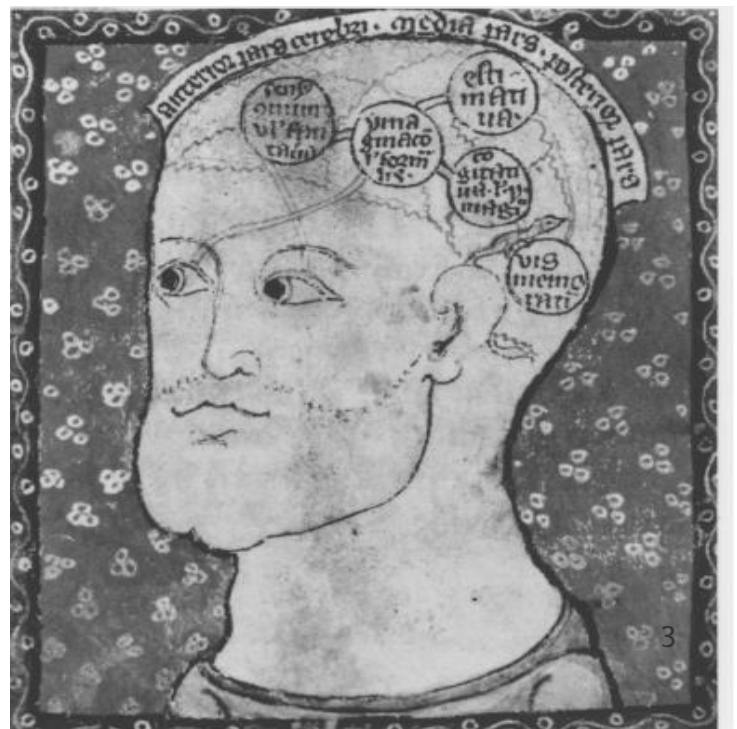
One of the things that my PhD research concerns is a technique of memorisation, discovered in antiquity and repopularised in the Middle Ages. The idea is simple: the best way to memorise a complex series of events or images is to imagine walking around a familiar place, encountering the objects as you go. By associating the things to

be remembered with a place you remember every inch of, they become indelibly fixed within your memory, part of your mental landscape. This is my fourth year at Robinson, and the first year of my PhD. Perhaps it is just because I am an English student and therefore given to pretension, but it sometimes feels as though a walk around the College is like a walk around my memory, a college which is home to hundreds of students and fellows somehow seeming personal, unique to me.

When I was eighteen, I found myself working in a bookshop and taking an unplanned gap year after missing my offer. One of my regular customers was a local vicar, and it emerged in conversation that she had been one of the first students at Robinson. She remembered her time at the College very fondly, and encouraged me to re-apply. When I did, and was successful, she sent me a postcard in my first week welcoming me to the College, which I still have. It was a similar experience when I worked for the Telephone Campaign. Most, if not all, of the people I spoke to were eager to talk about their time at the College, to hear what had changed and what remained the same, and to share their experiences and memories with me. It's what I like most about Robinson: a wide community of people, all with different experiences and separate lives, but united by the College. Everyone remembers Robinson slightly differently, and it means something unique to everyone who has studied, worked and lived here, but simultaneously there's a feeling of being part of something bigger - that 'My Robinson' is your Robinson, and also our Robinson, for perpetuity.

To walk around my Robinson is to walk up the ramp and through the portcullis. As a Fresher, I always imagined that they drew the portcullis down at night, completing the image of Robinson as a red brick castle, the fortress of Grange Road. Double back through the Porter's Lodge, where there's always someone who says hello, and you can ask them for (nearly) anything - I have in my time asked the porters for everything from a tape-measure to bread for the ducks. Then onto Front Court, which is

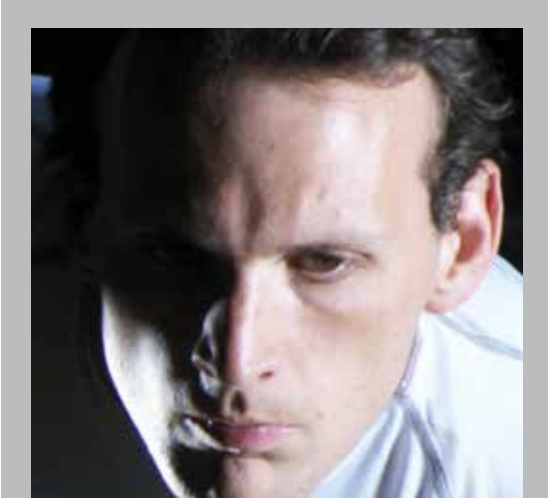
dominated by the statue Finback, apart from during the May Ball when there's dodgems and students in black tie instead. From here there are several options. You can continue straight ahead, through G staircase and into the gardens. In the summer time, the lawn fills up with sunbathers, but if you press on and cross the bridge, you can sit by the brook, or carry on going until you reach the croquet lawn (though remember, the croquet mallets must be returned to the porters by dusk). There are deer living in the garden, and sometimes if you get up early one will cross your path, though they bolt before you get too close. Or from Front Court, you can walk down Long Court, and pop into the Red Brick Café for a cup of coffee and somehow stay there the whole morning. If you do manage to escape the café, you might hear the choir singing in the Chapel: creep in through the ante-chapel or return to Front Court and push open the ornate doors. The sun falls through the stained glass window, and onto the faces of the singing choir, and everything is blue and green and yellow in the light. But there is work to be done, so if I were you, I'd leave before you interrupt the rehearsal, and go into the library. It's still early in the year so it's relatively quiet; you can afford to linger, to chat with the librarians and to go and inspect the architectural models proposed for the College in their glass cases, to imagine how different the College might have looked (and be glad they went with Gillespie, Kidd and Coia after all). But there's still work to be done, so you can walk up the stairs, past the chairs in the sunny window to the study carrels, set slightly apart from the rest of the library and hotly contested in Lent Term when the library is full of anxious students and the only sound is of pages turning. The first carrel has a coat hanging on the door and a stack of books - too many books to be reserved at once, really, but the librarians are indulgent. And here I am, writing this to you.





# PARKOUR





Dan Edwards (1994) studied Japanese and History, finishing his time at Cambridge with an MPhil in Historical Studies at Wolfson. Following graduation he pursued a lifelong interest in martial arts and physical training which lead him to discover the then-embryonic discipline of parkour.

Dan has since become a pioneering figure in the global development of parkour, helping communities to grow on every continent, and has established the first and largest professional parkour organisation and teaching framework in the world at Parkour Generations. Dan has performed for major movies and commercials, consults on a range of international projects and coaches regularly at all levels both in the UK and internationally, and has published two books on parkour worldwide, the second being the acclaimed 'Handbook of Parkour and Freerunning'.

### **What is parkour?**

The activity originally termed 'art du déplacement', now also often referred to as Parkour or Freerunning, was founded in France in the 1980s by a group of young men living in the Parisien suburbs. The term 'Parkour' was first introduced by David Belle in 1998. Parkour derives from the French word *parcours* meaning 'route' or 'course'. The term 'Freerunning' was the creation of Guillaume Pelletier, a representative of a group of French practitioners involved in the production of a Channel 4 documentary, *Jump London*, in 2003. This term was used in order to communicate this amazing new sport to an English-speaking audience.

Parkour/Freerunning/Art du déplacement is the non-competitive physical discipline of training to move freely over and through any terrain using only the abilities of the body, principally through running, jumping, climbing and quadrupedal movement. It is an explosive art of movement and is now said to be the world's fastest growing 'free sport'. Parkour focuses on developing the fundamental attributes required for movement, including balance, strength, dynamism, endurance, precision, spatial awareness and creative vision. Beyond this simple explanation, however, parkour is a discipline of self-improvement on all levels, and art that reveals to the practitioner his or her own physical and mental limits and simultaneously offers a method to surpass them.

Currently about 800 people a week pass through the doors of Parkour Generations' London Academy Classes, ranging from toddlers and parents in the Family Class to expert athletes in the Advanced Class. Parkour is accessible to everyone, being the refinement of movement and self-improvement from wherever one begins.

Often wrongly perceived as dangerous, parkour is statistically far safer to engage in than sports like horse-riding or rugby and in fact, Dan argues, the practise of movement skills like parkour make an individual safer overall as they improve their cardiovascular fitness, muscle development, coordination, balance, spatial awareness and risk management abilities.

To get involved in parkour or find a class or event near you see the website at [www.parkourgenerations.com](http://www.parkourgenerations.com) for more information. Good guidance when starting out is vital and the website has a wealth of articles, videos and class details to help the beginner get underway.



# A chance meeting

**Two Robinson alumni, Mike Bearpark (1989), pictured below left, and Peter Chilvers (1989), below right, look back over twenty five years of friendship and their creative collaborations.**

*What do you remember about your first meeting?*

**Mike:** I first met Peter Chilvers (who was Peter Hayball then) after a concert in one of Robinson's music rooms. We later agreed we both wondered why we were there! Hearing Peter improvise at the piano, I sensed something special, and that there was some way we could fit together musically. Peter talked about pianist Keith Jarrett as a major influence. I'd been listening to Keith among many others who recorded for Manfred Eicher's ECM record label, and I loved the music, but making it seemed remote. I knew that Peter was a far better improviser on piano than I was on guitar at the time, but he agreed to meet up, and we began recording on cassettes in the ground floor of Thornycreek House. The duo album *Thin Air* we later recorded in Peter's flat in Cambridge captures the spirit of what we were aiming for, along with other 70s influences including minimalist composers such as Steve Reich and the pioneering ambient/tape loop music of Brian Eno (who Peter now collaborates with). The shifting balance between acoustic and electric instruments was also central to Samuel Smiles, the group we started in parallel based on Cambridge's connections to folk music. Thornycreek, rehearsal rooms, and a studio in the remote Norfolk countryside became our Fairport, and - without too much thought - a way of avoiding the music of the time! Digital recording was just becoming accessible: in my case, through spending all of 2 months' money on an early DAT recorder (the now-obsolete Digital Audio Tape). Just as with meeting Peter, the possibilities seemed endless, if far from clear. Editing these recordings was difficult in a way that's hard to imagine now, but this forced us to develop as musicians to go for complete live performances. Studio recordings in collaboration with singer Tim Bowness (who I knew before Cambridge) led directly to a BBC Radio session recorded live in Norwich, where Tim and Peter subsequently moved and set up the Burning Shed label and online store. The name came partly from another house I memorably

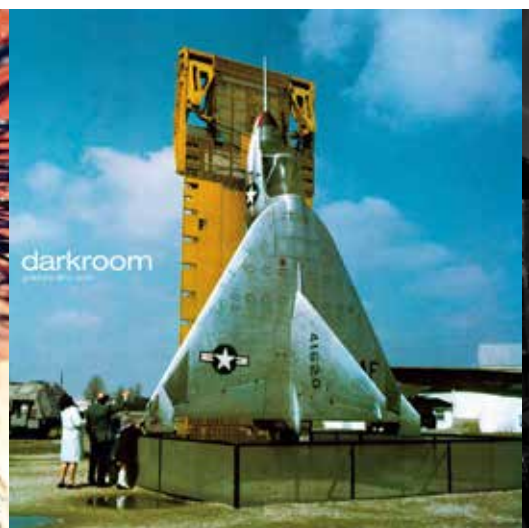
shared with Robinson vets, which was so cold one evening we ended up burning some chairs! (Much as in my favourite film *Withnail And I*). It's difficult to overstate how important that single post-concert meeting became for me: how it changed my approach to music, and what it led to.

*How did Robinson and Cambridge help you develop as a musician?*

**Peter:** I owe a lot to that Freshers' Concert in my first week of College. During my spare time at school I used to improvise at the piano, but there had never been an outlet for it; the only real options were to play at Classical recitals or in swing bands. I wasn't very good at either! I went to the concert as an audience member, assuming it would be the same. When I heard Mike playing a guitar instrumental I realised there was more of an open brief, tapped the organiser on the shoulder and asked if there was room for me. The person playing before me had performed a late 20th Century piece, so I introduced mine as very late 20th Century, and improvised in public for the first time.

*What happened after College? What have the musical highlights been?*

**Peter:** My degree was in computing, and I went through various programming jobs while keeping music as a hobby until my early thirties. Working on the Creatures series of games from Cambridge-based Cyberlife Technology gave me my first opportunity to combine music and computing, in the form of a self-generating soundtrack. Through a chance meeting, that came to the attention of U2 producer/ambient legend Brian Eno, and a short six years later he asked me to work with him on the soundtrack to *Spore*, an ambitious game following the path of life from a single cell amoeba to a multi-celled creature, to a tribe, all the way up to an intergalactic civilisation. I've since continued to work with him on many projects, mostly in some sort of technological capacity. That's ranged from "Digital archeology" (finding ways to play tracks recorded on ancient computers), working on the soundtrack to Peter Jackson's *Lovely Bones*, engineering recording sessions, and helping set up installations in Turin, Stockholm, Barcelona



and Sydney. One of the highlights of work with Brian has been our generative music apps. Our first was *Bloom*, which was released for the iPhone in the first few months of the App Store's existence. A meditative experience, it seemed to be the right app at the right time, and paved the way for our future apps. *Trope* and *Air*, also for the iPhone, came a year later, followed by *Bloom HD* and then *Scape* for the iPad. In 2013 I had the opportunity to play keyboards live with Underworld vocalist Karl Hyde, a regular collaborator of Brian's. My first serious tour was something of a baptism of fire and included playing at the Sydney Opera House and to an audience of 60,000 at Fuji Rock in Japan.

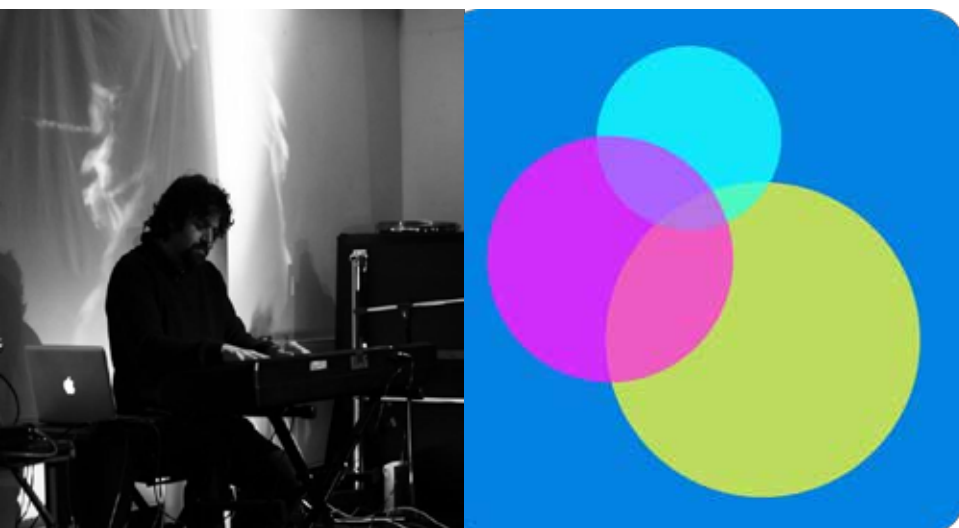
**Mike:** At Robinson I was a graduate student in Computational Chemistry. That's a major part of what I work on now at Imperial College London. I'm interested in what changes in molecules after they absorb light, whether they're in distant interstellar clouds or closer living cells, on timescales from the slowest to the fastest we can currently measure. Ted Greene's *Chord Chemistry* had some lasting influence! I met mathematician Andrew Ostler (Os) in Clare College's Cellars. We later formed Darkroom to create a live soundtrack for a film festival in Nevers, France, mixing Os's developing studio creativity and synthesiser expertise with guitars and found sounds. Through live loop sampling and audio processing, using software that Os developed as Expert Sleepers, we've probed the edges of ambient and progressive rock, while updating some of the melodic blueprints I started to develop with Peter (who guested on our first album playing 'subliminal space bass'). Highlights? The final track from our 2013 album *Gravity's Dirty Work*: a virtual echoey jazz quintet created through studio re-composition and editing over many months, starting from a single live improvisation. Seeing Carl Glover's cover and hearing the final album on double vinyl. Soundtracks for a BBC documentary on the Tonbridge robbery and Chris Marsh's dystopian *Rhombus* film. Features in *Guitar Player* magazine by Anil Prasad (innerviews.org) and - coming full circle - in *Prog* magazine, with Peter, Brian Eno and the equally legendary Laraaji, whose *Day of Radiance* album produced by Brian was another major inspiration for us starting out. Continuing to work with Tim Bowness, I've guested on albums including No-Man's *Together We're Stranger* (with Steven Wilson) and his recent solo *My Abandoned Dancehall Dreams*, as well as European tours. Controlled dynamics and space from a seven-piece band is always a challenge, but it's impossible to describe the feeling when it all takes off, from whisper quiet to amplifiers on 11 loud.

*What are you working on now? Any projects together?*

**Peter:** I'm still working on assorted projects with Brian - I rarely know what's going to happen more than a week in advance - but spend the majority of my time on app development. I'm near to completing an unusual project with Karl Hyde which has yet to be announced. I'm also in the final stages of developing *Quarta*, an app with Brett Gilbert (1989), who I met in my first couple of days at Robinson, and who has been a close friend ever since. Brett has lent his expert eye for detail to all of my apps, and has recently made a name for himself designing the board games *Divinare*, *Karnickel* and *Elysium*. We've been planning for years to create a board game specifically tailored to the iPad. I'm hoping it will be available by the time this article is in print! In tandem with those - and parallel to the album Mike is working on - I'm recording a new album with Tim Bowness. As yet untitled, it's a collection of generally downbeat and atmospheric songs, and a rather late sequel to *California, Norfolk*, which we released in 2001 (and re-released, remastered by Mike, in 2013).

**Mike:** In 2014 Darkroom started the Tuesdays Post 'live progressive ambient' music night in London with singer Georgina Brett. The idea came partly from Sid Smith's article on ambient music in *Prog* magazine, and also because we wanted to showcase experimental music that's performed and doesn't lose sight of melody and structure, however it's created. New EP *Once Proud Eyes* samples the way our music's evolved through Tuesdays Post, which is currently (and potentially confusingly) held on the first Sunday of the month. We've also new recordings with singer Viv Corringham and other soundtracks in progress. Charles Fernyhough, once of Samuel Smiles, is now a Professor of Psychology and a director of the Hubbub project hosted for a year by the Wellcome Trust. He wants to connect improvising musicians to brain scanners and broadcast the results as part of the project's brief to explore rest and creativity. Naturally we've volunteered. Tim's new solo album *Stupid Things That Mean The World* will be released in Summer 2015. With two days to record guitars this time, we captured delicate acoustics, electric mayhem and much in between. Getting the balance is an ongoing process. We've worked together for almost 30 years, but are still excited about the new discoveries we're making. And still open to another chance meeting.

peterchilvers.com  
darkroomtheband.bandcamp.com  
tuesdayspost.com



From left to right: Mike; Darkroom EP (2015) and album (2013) covers; Peter; the logo for Peter's app, *Bloom*, with Brian Eno (Image © Opal Limited 2008)



Construction work is well underway on our new teaching and seminar facility, which will be named The Crausaz Wordsworth Building. Plans were originally drawn up in 2008, for fundraising and planning purposes, and the building will be open in September this year.

### Why do we need a new building?

For some time, we have been aware that there is no medium-sized meeting space in College, to cater for groups of 40-80 people. Such a space is vital for improving College life: it will enable the Fellowship to meet *en masse*; it will open up new opportunities for students and alumni to hold events; provide additional teaching space; and it will play an important role in bringing new conference business to College.

The Crausaz Wordsworth Building is designed around a room of sufficient size to hold Governing Body meetings, plenary sessions and lectures for around 90 people and will also be used for dining for the medium-sized groups which are not easily served elsewhere in College. Both this space and the main foyer lend themselves to be exhibition and display spaces, both for College and for conference use, such as on alumni weekends and for Open Days to encourage potential applicants to apply to and make Robinson College their first choice at which to study for an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. There is a fully equipped 'prep' kitchen, which will allow us to use the venue for dining. Upstairs, there are three smaller rooms which can be used individually as teaching rooms or revision areas, or as two medium-sized rooms, or a single larger room for teaching, College Committee, student, or conference use.

We are very grateful to the donors who have helped to make it possible to add these new facilities to Robinson. If you would like to make a gift please do so at <https://www.robinson.cam.ac.uk/alumni/general-donation>, or contact the Development Office.

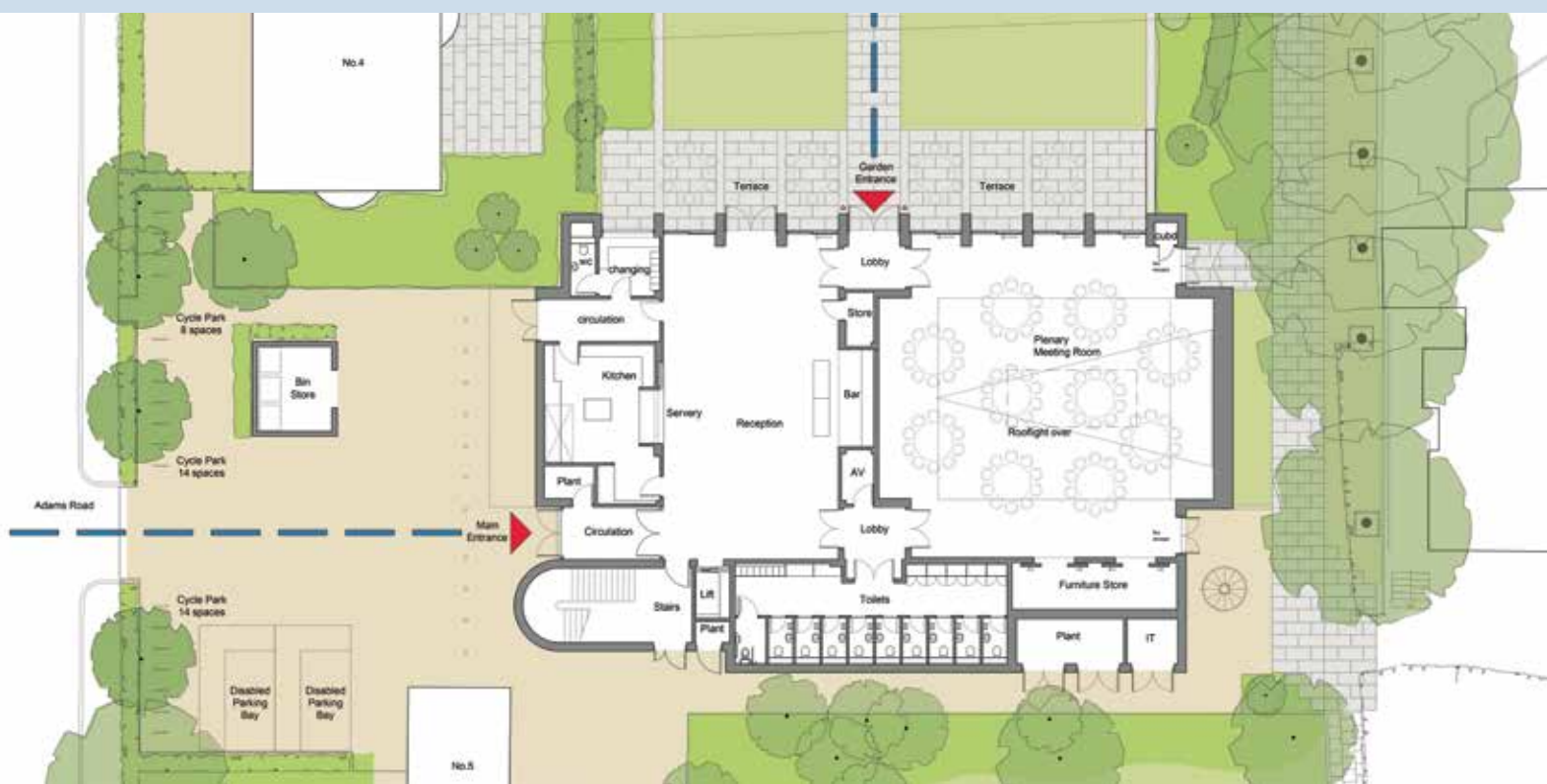
If you would like to find out more about the new building, the Conference Department have a webpage which is regularly updated with details of the construction. There is a webcam, so if you'd like to see how far we've got, please check here:

<http://www.robinson.cam.ac.uk/conferences/crausaz-wordsworth-building>



Above: The Warden, the Finance Bursar and a representative from Barnes Construction at the topping out; Preparing the site.

Below: Final plans of the ground floor. Right: Two artist's projections of the finished building.





# The Crausaz Wordsworth Building



# ACTIVITIES WEEKEND

On the weekend of 7-8 February Robinson hosted its first Alumni Activities Weekend. The event was organised by Rob Lancaster (1998) and we were pleased to welcome over 150 alumni and their families back to College. Rob arranged a whole host of activities: rugby, football, netball, hockey; running; yoga; a Robinson Bake Off and, of course, an evening in the bar and a night on the town. On Sunday morning, we were pleased to welcome back Mark Sydenham (2000) and his family for the naming ceremony of the new Robinson VIII. Many thanks to all those who helped with the organisation and running of the day: it was a great success, and one that we hope to repeat in future years.

Top to bottom, l-r: Fran Perrin and Thea Sherer (both 1998) judging the Bake Off; tea at the Boathouse; Watching the rugby; Playing rugby; Mark and the new boat; More rugby; Dr Steve Trudgill with Ben Garner, Josh Lomax and Aakash Patel (all 2010) ; One of the quieter moments in the bar.











# Lord Lewis Memorial and Symposium

Robinson hosted the University of Cambridge Chemistry Department's Lord Lewis Memorial Symposium on Friday 27 February. The programme was organised by Dr Melinda Duer (Robinson Fellow) with support from Special Projects Co-ordinator Mrs Diane Harris. Over 150 attended. The convenor was Professor Brian Johnson, and the speakers (pictured top-bottom, l-r) were: Dr J. Nicola Nicholls, Professor Lutz H. Gade, Professor Tony Manning, Professor Edwin Constable (Senior Member), Professor Robin Clark, Professor Brian Johnson, Professor Sir Ronald Mason, Professor Clare Grey, Nobel laureate Professor Richard Schrock. The following day College held a memorial service attended by over 420 people in person, and watched on a live webstream by members across the UK and around the world.



Professor Christopher Forsyth, Dr Saskia Murk Jansen (Senior Member), Dr John Barker



Mr Martin Reavley and Dr Steve Trudgill

Photographs by  
Gabiella Bocchetti (Symposium, above left)  
and Carl White (Memorial, right)





Mr Jimmy Bell, Mrs Jan Vaugon, Mrs Christine James, The Warden



Dr Falko Neininger (1985 , Senior Member), Rev. John Grice



Mr Colin Greenhalgh and the Warden



Signing the book of condolence



Professor Christopher Forsyth, Mr Kevin Parry (1980) and Mr Ross Reason



Canon Hugh Shilson-Thomas



Dr Mary Stewart



Professor Peter Kornicki and Professor Joan Booth

# The Lewis Research



Research students are an essential part of our academic community at Cambridge, both in the colleges and the departments. PhD students use their undergraduate training and over 3 years develop their skills to address some of the latest problems and thinking in their discipline by examining a particular challenge or anomaly. In doing so, PhD students are a key component in advancing our understanding and often in helping to pass on the latest thinking and developments to our undergraduate students through the unique Cambridge supervision system. Their fresh approach to problems can completely change the direction of a research project.

Chemistry underpins the modern world. Healthcare, contemporary industry, energy production and agriculture have all made enormous steps forward thanks to the huge increase in understanding of chemical science in the last 150 years. Today it is an exemplar of an interdisciplinary subject. There have been a number of key figures in this process, but one of the most significant in recent years was Jack Lewis, later known as Professor Lord Lewis, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Cambridge and Founding Warden of Robinson. In the 1960s the second revolution of inorganic chemistry occurred with the development of transition metal organometallic chemistry. Today, almost no household product, from a polyethylene container to the display of a mobile phone would be possible without transition metal catalysis. Jack was one of those who recognised this potential very early and this led to the field of research, transition metal clusters, which characterised his time in Cambridge. The scientific discipline that emerged was one of the key drivers that led to the building of the bridges between chemistry and physics, resulting in the modern area of nanotechnology. His contribution to Chemistry went well beyond this. As a mentor, colleague, confidante and friend he was unequalled and supported many distinguished scientists in launching and furthering their careers. He was President of the Royal Society of Chemistry and is honoured with an annual prize for 'distinctive and distinguished chemical or scientific achievements, together with significant contributions to the development of science policy'. Jack used his chemical background, knowledge and esteem for the benefit of the academic and scientific community as the Chair of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, a Commission whose reports still have substantial impact in the UK.

Our students in Cambridge and Robinson today follow in the footsteps of great scientists such as Aston, Rutherford and Lewis and their work has the potential to have as great an impact on how humans interact with the world around them. Cambridge's PhD students are the best in the world. At undergraduate level, most will have been used to finding neat solutions to their weekly lab and supervision problems and to seeing science work relatively easily. Research is different. It is common for experiments to fail and a researcher's goal is to find solutions by working out why this happened. This significant change of



# ch Studentship in Chemistry

focus can be a challenge and test of character, but skills honed in the process, using one's initiative, lateral thinking and paying attention to detail, are needed for progress in science and highly transferable to other roles. As a result, PhD study helps to develop tomorrow's leaders, in academia, industrial research and other professions.

The Department of Chemistry in the University of Cambridge currently receives funding for 10 studentships for Chemistry via the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) each year (UK students only). However, the funding mechanisms are changing and it is expected that these will cease to exist within the next 5 – 10 years. In addition, there are studentships (UK and EU) funded by doctoral training programmes within the wider University of Cambridge, 3 – 5 of which are generally held by students based in the Department of Chemistry because of the inter-disciplinary nature of the subject. These are most often in Nanoscience, Materials Science, Biology and, more recently, Scientific Computing. In a department ranked in the top three in the world in terms of research and with around 60 research-active staff in a subject area that has traditionally made a significant contribution to the UK economy, this level of PhD student funding is very small. This has arisen from changes in funding for PhD students in the UK, which used to be distributed via research councils and charities through specific project grants and is now mostly only available through larger doctoral training programmes, generally with fairly narrow scientific remits. The nature of these doctoral training programmes is such that many of the most exciting developments in Chemistry that have been identified in Cambridge would be highly unlikely, or impossible, to work on at the PhD level if these became the only source of research student funding.

This significant reduction in PhD funding has an impact on the Cambridge colleges. PhD students are a valued part of our academic community, they are the future of the academic profession, they begin their teaching careers whilst still PhD students and so support the undergraduate community in better understanding the detail behind lectures and laboratory sessions. The loss of PhD funding described above has a wide-reaching impact, with loss of many talented individuals from scientific discovery and teaching and the wider economic and social impacts that this will have in industry and education.

Robinson and the University of Cambridge's Department of Chemistry are therefore fundraising for a PhD studentship in Chemistry to be held at Robinson. This studentship would be awarded to an outstanding PhD candidate in need of funding to research for his or her PhD. The studentship would be named the Lewis Research Studentship in Chemistry in honour of Lord Lewis of Newnham, FRS. Funding for each individual would be for a maximum of 3 years and scholars would be members of Robinson.

The cost of endowing the Lewis Research Studentship would be at least £697,000 (more if it is to fully fund overseas students). This is based on a three-year PhD programme at the home rate with the cost per year estimated to be: University fee £7,362; maintenance fee £14,140; travel and consumables £5,000. The costs are illustrative, and based on 2015/16 fees and the endowment need of £697,000 is based on a draw-down rate of 3.8%, estimated to generate interest of £26,502 p.a.. It may take some time to raise the £697,000 endowment required to make full studentship awards. During the accumulation period, partial awards may be made when funds allow. These will be used in conjunction with grants from other sources in order to help a young researcher conduct her or his work. For overseas students, the Studentship could also be used in conjunction with other grants to meet additional costs.

We are pleased that discussions are underway regarding gifts from the Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre and Cambridge Malaysian Education and Development Trust to help launch the fundraising. More funds are needed, and if you would like to make a gift towards the Lewis Research Studentship in Chemistry, you may do so using the donation form on the back page of this magazine, or online at <https://www.robinson.cam.ac.uk/alumni/general-donation>.

## Other PhD Funding at Robinson

In the last 16 months, a number of significant gifts have been made and pledged towards PhD studentships at Robinson, particularly in the Arts and Humanities. As a result, the Lewis Research Scholarship in the Humanities is now fully endowed, as is the first Judy and Nigel Weiss Scholarship for the Arts and Humanities. Lotte Reinbold took up the first Judy and Nigel Weiss Scholarship (see 'My Robinson' on page 2) in Michaelmas 2014 and Duncan Stibbard Hawkes (see *Bin Brook* Lent 2014) is the current Lewis Research Scholar and writing up his PhD thesis. A further Judy and Nigel Weiss Scholarship fund is accruing with the intention of fully funding a second Weiss Scholarship in the Arts and Humanities and the Laura Ashley Holdings Cambridge Scholarship is being endowed by Laura Ashley Holdings with a series of gifts between June 2014 and June 2018. This year, we have been fortunate to secure matched funding from an AHRC postdoctoral training programme with the University of Cambridge and this is allowing us to award two Lewis AHRC Research Scholarships in the Humanities instead of one Lewis Scholarship and to award a full Laura Ashley Holdings AHRC scholarship whilst the full endowment sum accrues. The three joint College/AHRC awards will be taken up by the scholars in Michaelmas 2015 and more news about them and their work will appear in future editions of *Bin Brook*.

# Announcements

Pictures are displayed below the text.

## Births

**John and Kirsty Dodds** (both 2001) are delighted to share the news of the arrival of their second child, Samuel Joseph Dodds, born 15 April 2014, a baby brother for Emily. Samuel was baptised last Autumn and Claire Hallissey (2001) and Matthew Hallissey (St John's, 2001) were named Godparents along with Samuel's Aunty and Uncle. All are well and this happy, cheeky, little lad and his big sister make us feel truly blessed!



**Edward Goodwin** (1995) and Giulia Ricci are delighted to announce the birth of their beautiful little baby Pia, who was born on 14 October 2014.



**Ed Furness** (1989) is pleased to announce: Amber Isabelle Furness was born 6 Feb 2014, a third bundle of joy for Mum Lisa and me, and a cheeky little sister for Daniel (9) and Billy (6).



**Gary** (1999) and Grace **Lowe** happily announce Maximilian George Lowe, born on 21 July 2014 at the Portland Hospital, Westminster.



**Natasha Rosen** (2000), Michael and Sophia are delighted to announce the birth of a son and baby brother, Harry Felix, on 7 January 2015. He is looking forward to his first visit to Cambridge, hopefully in the spring!



**Lynda Skipper** (née **Sharp**, 1998) and Philip are delighted to announce the birth of Benjamin, a little brother to Elliot. He was born on 10 September 2014, weighing 7lb 11oz.





# Marriages

**Christopher Hodge** (2006) married Danielle Steele in Hampshire on 15 November 2014.



**Jen Rolfe** (2003) married Ed Toll in August 2014 in France. Lots of Robinson alumni were there to celebrate with us. Special mention to gorgeous bridesmaids, **Charlotte Williams (née Whitaker)** and **Esme Harwood** (both 2003), amazing photographer **Ben Cole** (2005), and Robinson's best band The Blues Experiment, fronted by the wonderful **Cian O'Luanaigh** (2003).



**Adam Scott** (2003) is very pleased to announce his engagement to his Swedish fiancée, Sara Ehsani Zonoz. They are to be married in Copenhagen in August.

## Updates

**Helen Birkbeck** (1981) writes: I've finally realized my dream of moving to North Yorkshire (Thirsk to be exact), so if anyone is visiting the area and would like a cup of tea or similar, do please get in touch!

**Jonathan Fowler** (1987) has joined the communications team of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. In contrast with post-disaster aid, risk reduction is devoted to ensuring that communities become as resilient as possible, for example through the proper application of building codes, and that all members of society are included in emergency planning. You can find out more

at [unisdr.org](http://unisdr.org). Jonathan crossed over the fence after more than a decade in the media, almost 10 years of which he spent working for the French newswire Agence France-Presse in Geneva and Warsaw. Previously, he was with the US-based newswire The Associated Press in Geneva, Swiss Radio International in Bern, and Radio Polonia in Warsaw. Prior to his media career, he worked in the British and Polish academic sectors, lecturing and researching in history and political science, before moving into the international recruitment, student welfare and communications department of the University of Warwick.

**William Gilpin** (1985) is now working at Google.

**Tom Goodman** (1997) is currently posted to Nigeria (Abuja) with the Foreign Office, with his wife Vera and their two little boys, Joseph and Alex.

**David Gullette** (2001) writes: We continue to live in Kyrgyzstan where I work as a consultant for international development organizations. We are expecting change though. We are excitedly awaiting the arrival of our second child. We plan to return to South Korea for the birth and spend a bit of time there.

**James Howe** (1984) writes: we are settling into our new life in Geneva, where I am now working for the UN. I lead a team that helps the private sector in least developed countries to improve marketing and branding and access to e commerce. I spend a lot of time in Africa and occasionally Asia.

**Anton Lokhmotov** (2006) is leaving ARM (where he worked for the last 5 years) to build communities around performance analysis and optimisation for heterogeneous computing systems. (See [dividiti.com](http://dividiti.com))

**Barnaby Mollett** (2007) writes: November 2014 saw the reunion of the Robinson Class of '07 Economists, **Ronke Fadipe**, **Medha Gupta**, **Barnaby Mollett**, and **Ying Tao** (all 2007). It was a fine occasion and everybody enjoyed catching up and finding out where each other was in the free market, after spending 3 years studying it! **Joel Grossman** (English, 2007) was also present.



**Mike Napper** (1989), wife Claire and little Jack (born February 2014) are taking some time out. We are spending the winter in Fernie, a ski resort in British Columbia, chasing the powder and training as Ski Instructors.

**Brian Skeet** (1985) writes: Good news. I am currently in prep on two movies. *Disorientated* with James Duval and Deborah Kara Unger and *White Lillies* with Beth Broderick and Juliet Mills. I have my own film company [www.joanproductions.com](http://www.joanproductions.com). I am currently directing *The Life And Death Of Martin Lazlo*, which I originally wrote when I was eight years old!

**Tuuli Sutinen** (2009) writes: Really enjoying my new role as a Sales Solution Consultant at Cherwell Software!

## Robinson in New York

In 2014, a group of US-based alumni launched a "Robinson College in New York" alumni group. The group organized three events during 2014. In July they held a summer drinks and networking event at Cambridge in America on Madison Avenue. In November they co-ordinated with an event at the French Embassy on Fifth Avenue featuring Robinson Senior Member **Sandra Smith** and her world-reknowned translations of Irène Némirovsky and Albert Camus. In December, they organised a holiday event at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP's offices in Times Square, kindly hosted by Robinson alumnus **Tony Mechcatie** (1986). Both the Warden, David Yates, and the Fellow Development Director, Helen Cornish, attended. Alumni in the Greater New York Tristate area are encouraged to join the LinkedIn group "Robinson College, Cambridge in New York".

## Mississippi Million

We are really pleased to report that **John Pritchard** (1983) has successfully completed his epic challenge of rowing the Mississippi - all 2,320 miles of it - and has raised a million dollars for the charity Right to Play! Several Robinson alumni helped him out along the way: from top to bottom: **Jerry Rees** (1983) **Simon Hotchin** (1982) and **Matt Brittin** (1986). If you'd like to catch up on John's journey, he blogged the whole experience here: <http://www.mississippimillion.com/>



## Brickhouse Theatre

This year has seen Brickhouse undergo a much needed reinvigoration, with more productions occurring in College than in the past 3 years combined. There has been increased interest from students in College theatre beyond the annual pantomime. This has been matched by renewed interest from Fellows, with help from our new patron, **Martin Reavley** (Fellow and Finance Tutor), being invaluable; his knowledge of student theatre has helped the committee tremendously in looking at long-term aims. This year has been a steep learning curve, but our achievements have made it well worthwhile.

In Michaelmas, we were very pleased to host and co-produce the Cambridge University Gilbert and Sullivan Society's production of *The Mikado*. In addition to this and our annual pantomime, we experimented with an adaptation of the Pearl Poet's *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (written and directed by Max Maher [2013] and Thomas Folley [2013]), which taught us much that



had been forgotten in our prior period of inactivity and proved to us that a bona-fide Brickhouse production was entirely possible!

In Lent, we pushed forward further, producing an original play written by a second year English student here at Robinson, Thomas Folley (2013): *The Lesters Play* (picture below). A success critically and commercially, it further

set us on the path of investment in home-grown talent in addition to hosting the productions of other societies. At the time of writing, we are in the middle of *The Marriage of Figaro*, a production with MML staff from across Cambridge which is enjoying huge commercial success, and more importantly, has been praised by critics and audiences with aplomb thus far!

The productions so far have also encountered several hurdles, including building on technical expertise, but **Douglas Robinson** (2012) and **Amy Wilson** (2013) have



been invaluable in the AV support provided for all the shows. We hope to nurture this new knowledge in future years. Stage management, front of house and publicity have also been areas of development for the committee as a whole. Our experiences have put us in a good position moving forward, with the success of the past two terms an excellent platform to build upon.

Looking ahead, we are planning a production for the Maria Björnson outdoor theatre during May Week, which we are very excited about. And we have, for the first time in undergraduate memory, long-term plans for the future, including a potential, inaugural Brickhouse Theatre Festival in Lent 2016, not to mention a packed Michaelmas 2015 programme! I don't wish to put words (or indeed productions!) into the mouth of my successor, but our emphasis throughout this year has been on winning the 'hearts and minds' of Robinson students (and Cambridge at large), raising the Brickhouse profile, and building associations with quality theatre.

The future looks bright for Brickhouse and it is all thanks to the wonderful responses and support from College staff, Fellows and students. We are all proud and hope students past, present and future will help support the current regrowth of Brickhouse.

Luke Main  
Brickhouse President, 2014-15

## Obituaries

The Warden, Fellow and Staff were saddened to hear of the deaths of Robinson alumni Emily Bliss (1986) and Phil Michaels (1991).



**Emily Bliss**  
1967-2014, matriculation 1986

First and enduring impressions of Emily are of someone who laughed easily, was gregarious, warm hearted and ambitious. She arrived at Robinson to read French and Italian from Cheltenham Ladies College, having spent a year off in Italy honing her already-fluent Italian and her tremendous sartorial style. Compared to the rest of us she was immensely glamorous, her red hair, beaming smile and unique style, coupled with her love of animal prints and fringed clothing (a trademark look that endured well beyond the 80's) made her really stand out.

Not obviously academic (you sensed she loved *Hello* magazine and *Vogue* as much as Petrarch and Dante)

she was diligent and hard working, and always looking forward to the next challenge. She was determined to enter the world of advertising, and in her third year undertook a forensic quest to land a job at the very best agency after graduating. This she did with a job at CDP, where she remained as an account handler for many years. Early on, however, she realised her real desire was to get closer to the creative heart of the industry and aged just 27 she set up, with a partner, her own commercial production company, aptly named Brave Films. It was very successful, attracting top directors and the admiration of this competitive, male-dominated industry and business press. Those who worked with her recall how dedicated she was to nurturing the young talent in the teams she built around her and she possessed real vision and leadership. Later, she established another production company, Home, but around 2 years ago this was wound up, triggering a real decline in Emily's mental health and her ability to function. Despite the efforts of her family and friends, and spells in rehab, she turned increasingly to alcohol, and tragically on 6 October 2014 Emily took her own life.

At the humanist memorial service held at Richmond Park, her family, friends and colleagues gathered to celebrate the good times shared with Emily. Many recalled the happiness of her time at Robinson, her open, warm nature and willingness to get involved in such things as organising a fashion show for the 1989 May Ball. She never settled into a relationship, but had a wealth of good friends and 6 godchildren. Her real adoration was reserved for her Andalusian stallion Farina and her other horses - equine love affairs dating back to her childhood partly spent in Ireland and a deep interest in the horse racing world. We all took comfort from tales of happiness, adventure and laughter. Emily's life was all too short, but was lived to the full and with great passion. If anyone would like to make a donation in memory of Emily, the family have set up a fund at: [www.justgiving.com/emilybliss](http://www.justgiving.com/emilybliss)

Annabel Agace (née King) and Pippa Harris, both  
Robinson 1986

**Phil Michaels**  
1972-2014, matriculation 1991

Phil suffered from cancer for a year before his death, aged 42, near our home in Hertfordshire. He had been a well respected environmental lawyer, with obituaries published in the *Independent*, the *Times* and the *Guardian*. He loved his time at Robinson, where he made many excellent friends, including me, his wife (also 1991.) He is survived by his parents, two brothers, myself and our three sons Isaac, Aaron and Seth.

Abi Allanson, 1991

Name and Address

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