



Bin Brook

Robinson College Newsletter

Lent Term 2004

THE NEW MARIA BJÖRNSON THEATRE

Work is nearing completion on the construction of an Outdoor Theatre in the grounds of 3 Adams Road. The Theatre is dedicated to celebrated stage designer Maria Björnson who died tragically in 2002 at the age of 53. Designing both sets and costumes, Maria was at the centre of revelatory transformations in opera production, eclectic Shakespeare and the globe-trotting musical.

Her work on Phantom of the Opera won her several awards worldwide, including two Tony Awards, as did her work on Aspects of Love and Follies. She also contributed to productions for the Royal National Theatre, The Royal Shakespeare Company, the Old Vic and a great many productions for the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Glyndebourne and La Scala to mention but a few.

Due to the generous benefaction of a Robinson alumnus who worked closely with Maria, our new Theatre in the College grounds will prove a fitting and lasting tribute to an exceptional visionary, providing an opportunity for many to appreciate and contribute to the world of theatre.

The Maria Björnson Theatre, designed by Robinson Architecture student, Andrew Wright and Head Gardener, Desmond O'Grady together with a support team of College thespians and musicians, and



constructed under the supervision of Dick Bacon, our Maintenance Superintendent and the Domestic Bursar, Peter Milloy will be officially

opened at a reception on Friday 18th June, supported by many of Maria's colleagues and friends. All alumni and friends of the College will be welcome.



IN THIS ISSUE

ALUMNI EVENTS & NEWS 2-3

Dinners
College Annual Reception
Guest of Honour

ALUMNI FEATURES 4-5

Letter from America
"So How Was Iran?"



COLLEGE NEWS & EVENTS 6-7



Mr Basil Shone
Mrs Flo Coupe
Sports News

THE BACK PAGE 8

Arrivals
Departures
Births
Bring And Buy Sale
Dates For Your Diary

NEW YORK DINNER 18th December 2003



Our globe-trotting Warden, David Yates, met with a small group of our alumni in New York before Christmas. Thanks to James Rieger we were able to dine in the Morgan Stanley building and enjoy a panoramic view of New York.

HONG KONG DINNER 24th March 2004

The Warden and Mrs Yates were delighted to meet alumni, Honorary Fellows and friends of the College on their recent visit to Hong Kong. Thanks to the sterling efforts of Andrew MacGeoch and Duncan Abate we dined at the Hong Kong Club. As ever, we are particularly grateful for the help of several alumni in organising this event. We are sure that 2004 will lead the way to annual gatherings of our alumni in the Far East.



LINGUISTS' DINNER 18th February 2004

In a new departure for Robinson, we held our first subject dinner in London on the 18th February. 40 alumni joined Dr. Mary Stewart and Dr. Liz Guild at the Cru Restaurant, London, where the two of them were delighted to be able to spend an evening catching up with their former students.

COMEDY STORE 8th March 2004

In March, we organised a Robinson trip to London's Comedy Store where alumni enjoyed the talents of Neil Mullarkey (1980), alias L. Vaughan Spencer. Neil is performing in the College Auditorium on the 24th September, as part of the University Alumni Weekend.

Tickets will be available through both the Robinson and University alumni offices. Check websites for details.

LAWYERS' DINNER 6th April 2004

Robinson's legal connections and reputation are increasingly strong and, in April, we were pleased to welcome the Right Honourable The Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers, the Master of the Rolls as our guest of honour at a dinner for alumni lawyers. 35 alumni dined at The Atlantic in the West End. Our thanks go to Anil Raval who helped organise the event.

We plan to repeat this gathering again in 2005.

COLLEGE ANNUAL RECEPTION

**THE GOLDSMITHS' HALL
IN THE CITY OF LONDON
22nd June 2004**



Following the first reception held at Brooks's in St James's in London, we are hosting our second annual reception at the Goldsmiths' Hall, Foster Lane, London EC2V 6BN

We are very fortunate in obtaining the use of this prestigious venue, and do hope alumni will take the opportunity to visit a historic Livery Hall. In 1339 nineteen goldsmiths bought a property in Foster Lane for the use of the Goldsmiths' Company. Though extended in area, this is the identical site on which Goldsmiths' Hall stands today, and no other company can claim a longer or earlier tenure. We will also have the opportunity to view an exhibition of modern British silversmiths which will be on display this June. (See inset)

The reception also gives our alumni the chance to catch up with the College's news and with contemporaries, as well as meeting other alumni for the first time. Champagne and canapés will be served from 6.30 p.m.

Our honoured guest and speaker this year is Lord Pearson of Rannoch, (see inset) a politician and entrepreneur, whose daughter was at Robinson in the 1980's.

Please do make every effort to come and to encourage any other alumni that you know to do so too. Your personal invitation will reach you shortly. Don't miss this opportunity!!

GUEST OF HONOUR



**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE LORD PEARSON OF
RANNOCH**

Lord Pearson founded the Pearson Webb Springbett (PWS) group of reinsurance brokers in 1964, and is currently the Chairman. He was a Member of the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Community 91-96.

CREATION An insight into the mind of the modern British silversmith

This is a revelatory and exciting exhibition which explores and questions the concept of creativity by focusing on a group of leading contemporary British silversmiths and their work. The individual silversmiths included in the exhibition represent a wide range of personalities, styles and working techniques.

LETTER FROM AMERICA

Mid way through my year in Chicago, I found myself in the audience of the Jerry Springer Show on the day war broke out with Iraq. It was an unsettling experience, listening to the highly vocal enthusiasm for the impending conflict.

the American legislators assembled before the prime minister restrained themselves from shouting 'Tony, Tony, Tony'

I had travelled to the United States for a journalism Masters, and my time there was dominated by the debate about Iraq. I arrived in September 2002, just before the publication of the now infamous dossier on weapons of mass destruction, and left a year later, with the war's moral, political and military convulsions still ongoing.

In the summer, I spent three months living in Washington DC and happened to be there when Tony Blair dropped in to address the wildly enthusiastic members of Congress in July. Watching from the press gallery, I got the feeling that I had experienced an atmosphere like that somewhere before, but it was disconcerting to realise a few moments later that it had been in Jerry Springer's TV studio.

What could be witnessed was the Springerisation of politics – the drive towards sensation and the cult of personality

Although the American legislators assembled before the prime minister restrained themselves from shouting 'Tony, Tony, Tony' they did leap to their feet for seventeen ovations, and with much less stage management than the Springer audience. Not all were so enthusiastic at first, but gradually they were caught up in the frenzy of it all, until a growing number were competing to be first on their feet.

What could be witnessed was the Springerisation of politics – the drive

towards sensation and the cult of personality that has infected reporters too (and it is worth remembering that Springer has been both journalist and politician).

Last year was not an easy year for journalism, and not a year from which it emerged with a great deal of distinction. But from the detached position of the Capitol press gallery, it seemed clear that for reporters to salvage some self-respect they must

stand back from the clamour of politics and the media.

Reporting is not an easy thing to do well, but it is not too hard to take a moment's thought, resisting the urge to join the predictable chants of the Springer audience and the unexpected hysteria of the Tony Blair Show.

Holden Frith, 1999 – English Editor of the Undergraduate Yearbook (2002)



'SO, HOW WAS IRAN?'



Since returning to the UK, I have found it virtually impossible to explain what a fascinating, frustrating and fabulous place Iran is. No-one quite believes me when I say I learnt to ski in Iran, or that we camped near rice paddies and drove through jungle en route to the Caspian. It is equally difficult to describe the generosity of the Iranians we met and the warmth with which we were welcomed into their homes.

I was initially slightly anxious about spending a year in one third of the 'Axis of Evil'.

I quickly learnt that Iranians have a distinct sense of identity. They are not Arabs and speak Farsi (Persian), an Indo-European language, not Arabic. Unlike the majority of Muslims in the Middle East, Iranians adhere to the Shia branch of Islam and are very proud of their unique culture, literary tradition and rich history.

Iran is an incredibly beautiful country. Although Tehran itself is a fume-filled and grid-locked city, it is only a short drive up into stunning mountain ranges. We explored much of the country – the beautiful city of Esfahan, the fabulous market in Shiraz, and mud-built Yazd, one of the oldest cities in the world. Iranian hospitality is legendary and the only real danger one runs when travelling through Iran is being plied with too much food.

I was initially slightly anxious about spending a year in one third of the 'Axis of Evil'. Most of my insecurities stemmed from the fact that I would be a Western woman



living in an Islamic Republic. I assumed I would have to drape myself in a black chador, cover my face and socialise separately from my husband. I was totally unprepared for the first party I attended at an Iranian house, held on the eve of the Persian New Year. Loud music greeted us and, once inside, the Iranian women removed their hejab (usually a headscarf and a long coat known as a *manteau*) to reveal black miniskirts and more sequins than I'd seen since the Oscars. Men and women danced freely – and alcohol was liberally served.

One woman I knew had been whipped for being alone with a man to whom she was not related.

It was easy to forget that our Iranian friends faced fear and intimidation on a regular basis. Any of these parties might be raided and the guests arrested. One woman I knew had been whipped for being alone with a man to whom she was not related. Another friend of mine, a young colleague at the British Council, was beaten so hard that her arm was broken and her hip fractured – simply because her *manteau* was above the knee. When she returned to work, I asked her if she would wear longer hejab in future to avoid the attention of baseej (morals police). She replied that she had already had her *manteau* re-hemmed: she had shortened it by another inch.



Iran is a country of mind-baffling inconsistencies. Men and women ride in separate compartments in public buses, but are often unceremoniously squashed together in shared taxis. Driving in Iran ranks amongst the worst in the world, yet I have seen three Iranian men take five minutes to leave a room as none of them wanted to appear impolite and pass through the door first. During the war in Iraq, there was a series of demonstrations in Tehran. One afternoon after Friday prayers, a large crowd headed to the British Embassy. An American friend of ours, a journalist, was amongst the mob and became increasingly worried as the chants of 'Death to America' became louder. A particularly vocal Iranian turned to him and asked where he was from. Our friend reluctantly admitted he was American. 'Oh, wonderful country' replied the Iranian, 'my brother lives in Los Angeles; any idea how I can get a visa?'

Emma Shercliffe, 1993 – Modern Languages
 emmashercliff@hotmail.com

NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF FINANCE, FEES AND FUND-RAISERS.....

Since our last issue, the national debate about top-up fees has continued to dominate news about Cambridge and the future of the university sector as a whole.

under-funding of undergraduate teaching at Cambridge now amounts to at least £24 million per year

Whilst Robinson itself has not entered the limelight in the fees debate, it is of course party to the discussions and announcements made by the University's authorities in response to the Government's Higher Education Bill.

As part of the University's response to the Bill, the Vice Chancellor has announced that under-funding of undergraduate teaching at Cambridge now amounts to at least £24 million

per year – approximately £2,000 per student. Robinson's position typifies this University-wide statistic, particularly since, in the absence of University funding for them, we now have to employ a significant number of supervisors and Directors of Studies, particularly in humanities subjects.

The Government's fee proposals would increase Cambridge income by £20 million but the University has been very clear that the higher fees should only be implemented in conjunction with an effective bursary scheme to ensure continued widening of access to Cambridge. To this end, plans have been unveiled to provide bursaries of up to £4,000 per year to help attract and support able students irrespective of their financial circumstances.

So... the University and Robinson are both faced with massive fund-raising challenges. In Robinson's case, we have identified a need for funds to support new endowments to fund teaching posts and student bursaries

and grants. And we are expanding our fund-raising operations to achieve this target from sources such as trusts, foundations, legacies and private donations.

Most importantly, we are delighted to be able to announce the appointment of Helen Cornish as our new Director of Development. With effect from July, Helen will be bringing

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to bear her outstanding fund-raising credentials from organisations such as Queen Charlotte Hospital and the University of London's Institute of Historical Research which have achieved multi-million pound fund-raising targets.

Robinson College May Ball Friday 11th June 2004

Meeting

Tickets £78 non-dining, £103 dining

www.robinsonmayball.co.uk

MR BASIL SHONE 1917 – 2004



It is with sadness that we have to announce the death of **Mr. Basil Shone**, Emeritus Fellow of the College.

Mr Shone served as Deputy Warden from June 1981 to September 1992, and as Financial Tutor from 1993 to 1999.

Mr Shone was associated with the College from the early days and was closely involved in the setting up of our College. He was a member of the Governing Body, College Council and Finance Committees. He served on the main Building Committee and numerous sub-committees. He helped to devise the Joint Liaison Committee system, to draft the College Statutes, to launch the RCSA and to organise the formal opening of the College by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1981.

We extend our condolences to his family. A memorial service will be held in the College Chapel on Thursday 24th June at 2.00p.m. All are welcome.

MRS FLO COUPE

All members of the College will be saddened to hear that **Commander George Coupe's wife, Flo**, has died after a long period of illness.

Mrs Coupe was often in College supporting College life either formally at official functions or informally by providing hand knitted jumpers for the annual Bring and Buy sale.

A memorial service was held in the Chapel in December, 2003. In memory of Mrs Coupe, a silver birch tree has been planted in 5 Adams Road garden – one of her favourite spots for enjoying the spring flowers.

SPORTS NEWS

Congratulations to **Ali Carter** who has been appointed Captain of the University Ladies Cricket Team, and also to the Robinson rugby team for winning the Cuppers plate in March this year. **Andy Williamson** (Captain) reports as follows:

"Robinson College Rugby club won its first piece of silverware by claiming the Cuppers plate in a thrilling final at grange road.

Robinson entered the plate by losing to Girton in Cuppers, and reached the final following victories over Trinity, Trinity Hall and Emmanuel. The final was played against Churchill College.

Against a much larger pack, the Robinson forwards, lead by **Phil Elliot**, produced a massive effort in the early stages and this saw Robinson take an early lead, with tries from **James Lockwood** and **Gareth Collins**. At 10-0 up Robinson looked comfortable but a Churchill fight back saw them score to make it 10-5 at half time.

In the second half Churchill took the initiative and scored 2 quick tries to make the score 17-10.

With only 20 minutes remaining, it was a brilliant individual try started by the backs in their own 22, that saw **Simon Ringshall** race 70m to make it 17-15, the try was converted under pressure by captain Andy Williamson to make the score 17-17 with only 10 minutes remaining.

Following a period of sustained pressure, it was James Lockwood who crashed over from short range to give Robinson the lead. This try was again converted by Williamson and Robinson held on after a Churchill surge in the dying minutes to run out winners 24-17.

The captain and team would like to thank everyone who came to watch and cheer us on."

SING FOR THE MORNING'S JOY The Choir of Robinson College Cambridge

Your opportunity to purchase the latest recording by the Choir of Robinson College.

20 new tracks featuring works by William Harris, John Ireland, Thomas Tallis and many others.

Each CD is £10 plus £1 postage and packing.

To place your order contact the Development Office
Robinson College
Tel: 01223 339036
E.mail: cm252@cam.ac.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

June

11	May Ball
14-18	May Week
18	Maria Björnson Theatre Grand Opening
19	Steinway Concert
20	Annual Reception, Goldsmiths' Hall, London
26	General Admissions

September

24	Friday Night live comedy: Don't be Needy: Be Succeedy L.Vaughan-Spencer – the Gangsta Motivator a one-man show by Neil Mullarkey
25	Reunion in College for Matriculation Years 1994 and 1995

October

November

tba	Commemoration of Benefactors
tba	Carol Service

December

tba	Varsity Match Freshers' Parents Lunch
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BIRTHS



Isabel Peart daughter of **Karen** (1989) and **Darren Peart** (1989). She was born on the 13th January 2003 and looks as if she could become quite an entertainer.

FROM THE CHEF'S TABLE ECCLEFECHAN TART

Ingredients

1x 8 inch blind baked pastry case
2 eggs
100g melted butter
160g soft brown sugar
1 tbsp vinegar
200g mixed dried fruit soaked in whisky for 30 minutes
50g chopped walnuts

Method

1. Lightly beat the eggs then add the butter, sugar and vinegar.
2. Then fold in the fruit
3. Place in the pastry case and bake in the oven for 20/25 minutes at temperature 350f
4. Simply serve with cream

ARRIVALS

Robinson College welcomed **Nick Milne** in November to head up the Conference and Catering team following the retirement of **Bob Wickett**.

With a long career in hotels, his arrival in Cambridge is something of a sea change for Nick. Having previously managed and operated hotels in London and Hereford, for the last 10 years, Nick was General Manager of a conference hotel in Essex. Being involved in the continuing development of the conference and function business at Robinson fits well with his experience. The diversity of life in a Cambridge College and the balancing of academic goals with commercial activity, offer him just the right challenge. Asked if he was enjoying his appointment recently, the response was "I'm revelling in it!"

Nick is married with two teenage children and lives a short haul down the M11 near Stansted Airport.

DEPARTURES

Janet Morgan, Library Assistant
Georgina Stephens, Accounts Clerk
Pam Whittaker, Seamstress
Bob Cunningham, Porter
Irene Metcalf, Bedmaker
John Shipp, Housekeeping Porter
Vanessa Monk, Bedmaker
Esther Bramley, Gardening Department

Several of our staff are retiring. We wish Pam, Georgina, Irene and John an enjoyable retirement. They will be joined before the end of the summer by **Norma Turner** and **Janet Davies**. Both Norma and Pam joined the College in 1980, followed by Janet in 1982 and Irene in 1984. John came to us in 1992, so between them this accounts for more than 100 years of service to the College. We are sorry to see them go and wish them all well. It seems that Janet's family is still represented here. Her daughter **Sarah-Anne Wood** is following in mother's footsteps.

Esther has just finished her apprenticeship with our Gardening Department and has secured a permanent post with the Botanic Gardens, so congratulations to her.

ANNUAL BRING AND BUY SALE

The Housekeeping section of the college organise an annual bring and buy sale. In December 2003 they raised £700.90 for the Neonatal Intensive Care Service at Addenbrooke's Hospital. As many of you will know the maternity hospital based at Addenbrooke's was funded by Sir David Robinson.

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