DOW@CAM

THE DOWNING COLLEGE MAGAZINE

VOL 23 | WINTER 2012

IN THIS ISSUE

DOW@CAM

THE DOWNING COLLEGE MAGAZINE
VOL 23 WINTER 2012

Dow@Cam is published annually by the Downing College Development Office.

Editor in Chief:
Barry Everitt

Publication Co-ordinator:
Natalie Arrowsmith

Writers:
Becky Allen
Mira Katbamna

Editorial Board:
Barry Everitt
Bill Adams
Gabrielle Bennett
Sarah Durban
Amy Goymour
Paul Millett
Jane Perks
Graham Virgo
Guy Williams

Address:
Development Office
Downing College
Cambridge CB2 1DQ
Email: development@dow.cam.ac.uk
Website: www.downingcambridge.com

Development Director
Gabrielle Bennett
gb247@cam.ac.uk

Development Officer (*Fundraising*)
Thomas Northcote
tn272@dow.cam.ac.uk

Development Officer (*Alumni Relations*)
Natalie Arrowsmith
nla28@dow.cam.ac.uk

Development Officer (*Legacies, Stewardship, Research & Data*)
Susan Luton
sal53@cam.ac.uk

Cover:
"View of the Chapel on a Snowy Morning"
Mauricio Hernandez, 2011 Downing Photographic Competition entry

Other entries for this year's Photographic Competition can be found on the back cover of this issue

Registered Charity: 1137455

?

The Master's Voice

This issue of Dow@Cam has a literary, journalistic, and international flavour, and again Downing should feel proud of the achievements of those who have studied here.

It was a privilege to welcome Howard Jacobson back to Downing to give the FR Leavis lecture earlier this year, and in this issue we learn more of his thoughts about his undergraduate years. Howard, of course, won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2010 with his outstanding novel *The Finkler Question*. But he also writes an exceptional weekly column in *The Independent* which is always compelling; today, as I write this piece, he has captured perfectly all of the awfulness of the tabloid hacking scandal.

There are also features on three eminent journalists. Washington BBC Bureau Chief and formerly Middle East Bureau Chief, Simon Wilson (whom I met recently in DC and who played such a major role in the release of kidnapped colleague Alan Johnston) reflects on the extraordinary events of the Arab Spring. Foreign correspondent, Rob Crilly, describes his dramatic experiences in Libya. Assistant Editor of *The Guardian*, Simon Tisdall, discusses his exclusive access to the Wikileaks' US State Department Diplomatic cables. Simon was President of the JCR at a time when students campaigned for the admission of women to Downing, and this issue also includes a profile of our current and excellent JCR President Georgie Erangey.

Georgie comes from the South West of England, which is the region Downing represents in the University's highly successful Area Links Scheme. This scheme plays a vital role in encouraging applications, not just to Downing, but also to universities throughout the UK from regions with traditionally low participation rates. Also on the subject of admissions, Marcus Tomalin discusses widening participation and access to Downing in a year which has seen our applications jump by 6% to a record 821 for about 124 places. It is these students who will have to pay £9000 in tuition fees when they arrive in October 2012, and we are firmly focused on not only selecting those with the greatest potential, but also trying to ensure that we have the funds to support those experiencing hardship when here.

Elsewhere in this issue, Ana Rosa Rodríguez-García describes the determination and bravery with which she has sought to preserve the cultural heritage of Afghanistan. Our distinguished professorial Fellow in Law, David Feldman reflects upon the complex legal issues in post-war Bosnia Herzegovina. Geologist Fellow Ken McNamara explains why fossil urchins fascinate him and have been the focus of his research.

It is perhaps easy to understand why, when presented with the excellence of former and present students and Fellows of Downing, there is the greatest determination here and now amongst the Fellowship and our alumni to ensure the College's future in what is a turbulent and threatening period of change in higher education.

Downing Update

May Bumps

Downing W1 went Head of the River after bumping Pembroke on the first day of this year's May Bumps, and retained their headship by rowing over on the remaining three days of the Bumps. The Downing men also performed very well, going up three places to second position. Moreover, M2 had great success, going up three places to Head of the Second Division.

All in all, it has been an excellent year for Downing College Boat Club. Congratulations to everyone involved!

Downing May Ball

The 2011 Downing May Ball was an astounding success, attracting 2300 guests, a huge increase on the 1500 who attended the previous ball. An appropriate theme, *Olympus*, was chosen to make the most of the College's beautiful neoclassical architecture, with three fountains, a few statues, and the odd fairground ride thrown in for good measure. Twenty-first century influences were not absent, with Huw Stephens from Radio One and Chase & Status headlining the evening's musical entertainment.

All images © Michael Wawro

Profile of a President

A Cambridge degree is a full-time job for most students, so what motivates undergraduates to stand for student office? We find out from Geography undergraduate, choral scholar and current JCR President **Georgie Erangey.**

What made you want to stand for JCR President?
I knew I wanted to run pretty much from the start. In my first year I ran for Head Freshers' Rep to gain some experience and loved it. I've got great respect for Downing and a genuine desire to help the student body.

So what's the main role today of the JCR President?
There are many aspects to the job. It is still a role which is a voice of representation for the student body and a useful point of call for the concerns of students, staff and Fellows alike.

What about your manifesto – what did you want to achieve as JCR President?
My four main aims were designing a new website, reforming the constitution, educating the student body a bit more about what the JCR does for them, and maintaining strong connections between the students, staff and Fellowship.

The old website was too complicated to use and wasn't updated often enough. As a result, people didn't use it and it was one of the reasons people disconnected from the JCR. We launched the new website in October 2011. It allows us to do surveys and is better integrated with the rest of Downing's communications, so it's good for the students and good for the College too.

What about the changes you're making to the constitution?
It was due for an overhaul. The JCR constitution needed amending to take into account the internet and new technology. Roles have evolved over the years, some have disappeared and others emerged, so we've amended the voting rules to take into account non-paper voting, as well as editing and updating the job descriptions.

What's the JCR like at Downing?
The Downing JCR – not only the committee but also the student body – has a huge sense of community. We have some incredibly successful societies ranging from sports to music and almost every student is involved in one society or another. This shows a real connection between the student body and the College.

What makes a good JCR President?
You have to be passionate about the role because it takes up a huge amount of time, and you need good communication skills - you're not likely to succeed unless you keep all channels of communication open. You need to be personable too – after all, you're representing everyone – and being well organised is crucial.

What helped you develop those skills?
I'm lucky to have gained a lot of experience before becoming JCR President. In my first year at Downing, as well as being Head Freshers' Rep I was the PR manager for Cambridge International Development. We re-branded the society and boosted the number of students coming to events by 300% so that was really useful experience.

I went to my local community secondary in Kingsteignton, Devon. When I was 17, I was chosen to represent sixth-form colleges and South West England on the government's National Learner Panel, a government advisory panel. That taught me a great deal. After sixth form I took a year out as I decided to give applying to Cambridge a go!

How did you spend that unplanned gap year?
I was fortunate enough to be offered a job following a six-week volunteering placement in Ghana. I worked as the community coordinator for a charity that was involved in a corporate partnership with Arup and Davis Langdon building a prototype sustainable kindergarten.

Volunteers from the firms arrived every week, and some stayed for up to five months. They ranged in age from 20 to 60. Some were administrative staff from Arup and Davis Langdon, but senior partners volunteered too. That meant it was a wonderful experience in management. And living in the community enabled me to learn the local tribal language. When I left I was able to give a two-page speech in Fante.

Why did you apply to Cambridge?
I had always wanted to go to Cambridge. When I was 16 and thinking about university I secretly ordered the prospectus online to have a look. However, not knowing very much about

© Anika Paul

The grade II listed building, once London's first licenced casino, is now home to Christopher's

Where they met

The writer met Georgie for brunch at Christopher's Restaurant in London's Covent Garden to chew over the role of Downing's JCR Presidency.

Owned by **The Honourable Ambar Paul** and managed by his daughter and Downing alumna **Anika Paul (2006)**, Christopher's niche is in modern American dining. "The brunch menu is mouth-watering," she says. "I'd recommend the pancakes, because they're done in true American style."

Later in the day, as befits a grade II listed building that was London's first licensed casino, The Martini Bar at Christopher's begins to buzz. Christopher's recently hosted a Martini Masterclass exclusively for Downing alumni. "Christopher's is infamous for its martinis," Anika explains. "One of our bestsellers is the espresso martini – with a shot of espresso and kahlua – and the Nutella martini is very popular with chocolate lovers. But I'm completely tee-total, which is a good thing in a martini bar!"

What she's most proud of, however, is launching a monthly jazz evening on Sundays when Covent Garden is otherwise very quiet. "I wanted to offer people something low-key and relaxed, and it's been really successful," she says. "It's a chance to spend an evening with friends, eat a bit and drink a bit, but still get home in time to get ready for work the next day."

Downing Event at the Martini Bar – Masterclass, January 2011

Alumni try their hand at mixing martinis

Downing alumni enjoying an evening at Christopher's

One of Christopher's infamous martinis

the university system, I had ordered the postgraduate prospectus, which confused my Mum!

When it came to UCAS, I had offers from all my choices and accepted the one from Durham. However, on results day when I saw my grades I was so upset as all I could think about was that I should have given Cambridge a try. So in a moment of rebellion and taking the biggest risk I had ever taken, I withdrew from UCAS. I then applied and took a gap year.

How do you juggle studying and being JCR President?

JCR work can take up between 35 and 50 hours a week, but I've met all my deadlines academically and am involved in a lot of sports (including rowing and hockey). I'm also a choral scholar. The elections for JCR are held in February, in the middle of the Lent term, so I'll have nearly a term to prepare for finals full-time.

Are there some perks that come with the role?

Simply being aware of everything going on in College is fascinating, and the JCR President is lucky enough to get to know the Fellows and staff better as well.

What are your plans post finals?

Last year I got a good 2:1 so the pressure is on for finals! I am loving my undergraduate dissertation and would really love to continue this research at postgraduate level, if funding allows. Eventually I'd like to work in the charitable sector. Ultimately, I know that I enjoy organising and managing, but more than that, I know I will feel like I have succeeded if I get a job where I am really able to help people.

From Kabul to Cambridge

Ardent advocate for Afghanistan's imperilled cultural heritage, **Ana Rosa Rodríguez-García (2008)** has swapped dusty and dangerous Kabul for calm and contemplative Downing College.

By the time she arrived at Downing in 2008 to begin an MPhil in Archaeological Heritage and Museums, Ana had spent much of the previous decade living, working, and starting a family in Afghanistan.

It's a country she loves – for its heritage, its natural environment, and most of all for its people. "It's a really beautiful place," Ana says. "When I first arrived in 2002 I was really struck by the purity of the landscapes – partly preserved because of poverty and war. It's a place of such natural beauty. And the people focus on the authentic things in life, like relationships, friendship, hospitality."

Working in a series of unpaid positions for the Society for the Preservation of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage (SPACH) and the Afghan Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Ana soon discovered her niche: "For me it was the challenge of working in such a poor country where culture is not at the top of any donor's agenda."

Despite neglect by governments and donors, Afghanistan's cultural heritage is astounding. "It's such an interesting and exciting place because of its richness and variety," she explains. "You can find artefacts and monuments from so many periods, from Hellenistic and Buddhist and Hindu Shai to Islamic. The cultural diversity is incredible."

Decades of war, looting and vandalism have taken their toll, on both the Afghans and their heritage. Most people remember the Buddhas of Bamiyan, dynamited by the Taliban in 2001, and the National Museum of Afghanistan, wrecked in rocket attacks and robbed of many of its treasures. But cultural vandalism has a long history in the region.

"Iconoclasm has always existed in the events of war. In the nineteenth century during the British-Afghan wars many important cultural places were vandalised by the British, then by the Soviets in the early 1980s," says Ana.

"But the one that struck me the most was during the civil war after the Soviets abandoned Afghanistan, when Afghan mujahideen vandalised the National Museum of Afghanistan. The museum was on the front line and every time it changed hands there would be more destruction."

"People assumed Afghans didn't care about their heritage."

In such a poor country in such dire need of reconstruction following so many years of war, resources for Afghanistan's cultural heritage are meagre. Yet Ana makes a powerful case for the role cultural heritage can play in peace, development and nation-building.

"Heritage can be a subject for discussion that creates democratic processes. You need this type of discussion and public debate – this active citizenship and participation – to work towards social justice and enhance democratic processes," she argues. "And there's no doubt that through heritage, with all its professions from archaeology and conservation to craftsmanship and the arts, you can create jobs and livelihoods as well."

© Grahame Hunter, 2007

Photodocumentation mission to Sassanian bas-relief of Reg-i-Bibi

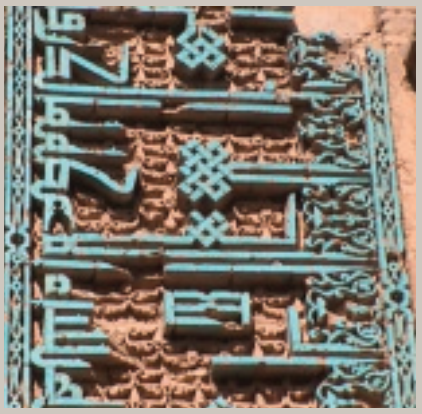
© Khairullah Khairi, 2008

Workshop with Ministry of Information and Culture Provincial Directors

© Barthy Digby, 2008

Tea party after photodocumentation mission in Bamiyan

Drawing on the work of philosopher Martha Nussbaum and economist Amartya Sen, Ana believes in the capability approach they developed. "Cultural heritage can be a source of inspiration, imagination and thought; a source of aesthetic enjoyment. This helps give our lives more meaning," she says.



© Ana Rodríguez, 2002

Ghorid Portal, Friday Mosque, Herat

© Ana Rodríguez, 2003

Buddhist artefacts confiscated by Afghan police for the Ministry of Culture near Kabul

© Ana Rodríguez, 2004

Crown from the Tyllia Tepe treasure

It's a heritage that Afghans themselves feel passionate about. "In 2002 when I arrived, the National Museum had no second storey, it had been rocketed by the mujahideen, and everyone thought most of the collections had been lost," she remembers. "People assumed Afghans didn't care about their heritage."

In fact, many of them cared so much they risked their own lives to spirit away the collections to safe havens and protect them with a vow of silence for more than a decade.

"In 1989 the ministries decided the situation was deteriorating so much that the museum's masterpieces should be hidden in safe places in Kabul. Risking their lives, over a couple of nights the curators transported the masterpieces – in tin trunks packed in toilet paper – to the presidential bank vaults. It's thanks to their sense of public good and responsibility and respect for Afghan heritage that so much of the collections survived."

Working for SPACH was hugely rewarding, Ana says: "The satisfaction of the work, the feeling that I was contributing to social justice, even if it was a very humble contribution. I was also transferring knowledge – I was lecturing at the University of Kabul and it made me happy to see a new generation of Afghans really committed to the betterment of Afghanistan, thirsty for knowledge and working really hard."

But by 2008, with the country becoming increasingly unsafe, she was forced to confront the realisation that it was time to leave. "The political situation was getting worse. Security was deteriorating rapidly and everything was really frenetic. Plus I was a working mother of three children."

"My girls are now 9, 8 and 6. The first was born in Pakistan, the second in my bedroom in Kabul, which was less brave than giving birth in an Afghan hospital, but I needed a break for my third because it was winter and my generator didn't work, so I had her in New Delhi in 2005," she explains.

Despite finding it hard to leave, leaving has, Ana believes, given her a valuable opportunity. "After six years of hectic work I really needed to stop and reflect on what's been going on, and to draw lessons from it, so I felt the time had arrived when I had to give careful and proper thought to many issues."

Downing and an MPhil are providing that time and space for reflection, on the nature of governance and cultural heritage in post-conflict situations, and the lessons to be learned from what she witnessed in Afghanistan.

In her MPhil, Ana's aims are addressing some of the international community's key failures, including why their work has failed to meet many Afghans' expectations, why local capacity in cultural heritage is still lacking, why Afghan heritage experts lack access to training, and why Afghan citizens' views are so rarely taken into account in heritage management.

"Downing has been a life-changing experience because I was given the welcome and the time I needed to adapt to my new circumstances."

"But as important as these issues are, I am also exploring methodologies that could lead to Participatory Action Research projects on cultural heritage, research which aims actively to improve the quality of performance of a community. This kind of approach could perhaps contribute to a much needed endogenous approach to institution-building and the improvement of relations between government and communities concerning Afghan cultural heritage," she says.

Ana loves the College and Cambridge, and not only for its academic excellence. "Downing has been a life-changing experience because I was given the welcome and the time I needed to adapt to my new circumstances. And I love the classical architecture. I was born near Seville so it reminds me of my European roots."

But it would not take much for Ana to uproot herself again and return to Afghanistan. "For the moment I will stay here, and my sincere hope is to get funding and support to help continue field work and establish a collaborative research programme focused on Afghan heritage. My caring responsibilities don't allow me to live there now but when they've finished their education and my chickens leave the nest, I'll pack my luggage and run back."

For more information on SPACH, visit www.spach.af

Realising Potential: Access and Admissions

Assistant Admissions Tutor and Fellow Marcus Tomalin discusses what the government's shake-up of higher education means for Downing.

School and College Liaison Officer Carl Griffiths gives prospective students a tour of Downing

Several years ago at an Admissions Open Day, a woman approached me, anxiously, with her son in tow. He was intending to apply to read Geography and he was predicted excellent A-level results. So far so good, and I was struggling to anticipate the nature of his mother's disquiet when she added, "... the problem is that he plays the electric guitar in his spare time, as a hobby. Won't that jeopardise his application?" I reassured her that this perfectly normal extra-curricular activity would not scupper his chances. At a similar event, a Downing alumnus mentioned that his academically-gifted daughter wasn't going to bother applying to the College. I was disconcerted and asked him to elaborate a little. He had been reliably informed (by someone or other) that children of alumni were automatically rejected at the pre-interview stage in the Admissions process, even if they had excellent academic potential. Thankfully

"... the problem is that he plays the electric guitar in his spare time, as a hobby. Won't that jeopardise his application?"

I was able to inform him that this belief was entirely erroneous.

Admissions Tutors spend a considerable amount of time each year speaking personally to potential applicants (and their parents or guardians), but, despite more than a decade of extensive co-ordinated Widening Participation and Access activities, many myths, legends, and fundamental misapprehensions concerning Cambridge Admissions continue to flourish. For Admissions Tutors, these persistent misconceptions are a cause of real frustration and concern, especially in the present climate. Higher Education in the UK is currently being drastically reconfigured, and in July 2011, the University finalised its Access Agreement with OFFA (The Office of Fair Access). One crucial component of this agreement concerns the ratio of Cambridge students who are admitted from particular sorts of schools. The University's proposed aim is for 61–63% of all undergraduates to be home students from the maintained sector. Crucially, this ratio concerns the final number of undergraduate places filled, and it is not simply a target for Admissions *offers*.

In recent years, Downing's maintained sector percentage has been around 61–63%, but this has not been due to self-conscious positive discrimination or other forms of blatant social engineering. On the contrary, we have always followed our usual practice of offering places to those applicants with the best academic

"... our work in this area is not a recent development hastily cobbled together in response to government pressure."

potential, irrespective of school type, social class, gender, or ethnicity. For us, the task of meeting the OFFA targets is primarily one of recruitment: if we can encourage more applications from the maintained sector, then the undergraduate ratio will increase proportionally. This is why we continue to devote a vast amount of time, effort, and money to our many Widening Participation and Access initiatives which are co-ordinated by our excellent School and College Liaison Officer, Carl Griffiths. During 2010-2011, for instance, we spent about £74,000 on such activities, and this is a large amount of money for such a poorly endowed College. Importantly, our work in this area is not a recent development hastily cobbled together in response to government pressure. On the contrary, it is something we have been doing of our own volition for well over a decade, and it has always been a high priority. To avoid reduplication of effort, each Cambridge College promotes access to Higher Education in a particular region of the country, and at Downing we focus on the South West (specifically, Cornwall, Devon, and Dorset). The events we organise encourage students from many different schools to consider applying to university. Sometimes we travel to the South West for Open Days or school visits; on other occasions we bring students to Cambridge so that they can experience what it is like to live and study at Downing as an undergraduate. This is all done in addition to our more general Open Days which are not specifically targeted at applicants from any particular geographical region. These events each attract between 300–400 people.

To some extent, we can quantify the impact of such activities. According to the official University statistics, in 2000 the success rate for applicants from the South West was 7% (the region was 9th out of the 13 specified). In 2010 the success rate was 28% (3rd out of the 13 regions). This impact can also be observed in the numbers of applications. For the current Admissions round, we have received 821 applications which is a new record for the College (in 2010 and 2009 the totals were 739 and 719 respectively). Given the current climate of apprehension and uncertainty surrounding Higher Education in the UK, we were relieved to find that we remain a popular choice for those who choose to apply to Cambridge. 45 (6%) of these applications were from the South West. By contrast, in 2000 we only had 3 (1%) applications from that region. Of course, we cannot claim sole credit for these increases. Many things have changed over the last decade. For instance, the availability of detailed web pages has made a vast difference, and such things were much rarer and less effective in 2000. Nonetheless, it is hard to believe that our sustained contact with schools in the South West has had no impact on application success rates. It is important to stress, though, that students from that particular region do not receive special treatment at Downing. We assess everyone equally, and we are simply looking for those people who have the best academic potential.

An Open Day at Downing

Visit to a school

"... this has not been due to extensive self-conscious positive discrimination or other forms of blatant social engineering."

During the next few years the processes by which leading UK universities recruit students will come under increasing scrutiny – and quite rightly so. At Downing, we are pleased with our track record so far, and our impact in the South West suggests that we are doing something right. In addition, we have ambitious plans for the future concerning our various Widening Participation and Access activities, such as expanding our work in Cornwall, raising the media profile of our events, and acquiring a base in London to facilitate interaction with the South West. However, we are far from being complacent about such matters. The task of raising awareness and aspirations is a particularly slow and painstaking one which requires patience, doggedness, resourcefulness, and resilience. Such work is, however, of fundamental importance and if we manage to encourage impressively capable individuals to apply to us, then their future successes will help to sustain and reinforce the College's reputation for academic excellence for many years to come.

Marcus Tomalin

English with Leavis

© Jenny Jacobson

Booker Prize winner **Howard Jacobson (1961)** discusses the Booker, writing, and reading English with critic FR Leavis.

"All the omens were against it," says Howard Jacobson of winning the 2010 Man Booker Prize for his eleventh novel, *The Finkler Question*. "The book was not liked by my American publisher. It was not wildly liked by my existing English publisher. Initially it didn't look as though it was going anywhere."

Settling in to the Soho café just round the corner from his apartment, Jacobson relates this story with justified glee. He had been twice longlisted (once for his 2002 novel, *Who's Sorry Now?*, and once for what many consider to be his masterpiece, *Kalooki Nights*), but never made it beyond that; many commentators had relegated Jacobson to the role of Booker bridesmaid.

"There was a little moment in the middle [of the process] when I said to my wife, 'I could win this, you know,' and she said, 'Don't give in to that.' And then in the final two weeks I thought: no, it's not going to happen, the signs are against me again." At this, Jacobson beams. "My stroke of luck was to have a panel of judges who were readers – a poet instead of a bloody politician or a television personality."

Known for his funny, filthy and deeply serious work, Jacobson is one of the literary world's natural – and perhaps most exuberant – underdogs. A shy child, he was just beginning to gain confidence ("my father's side had to come out eventually" he says) when he applied to Cambridge to study English under FR Leavis and was promptly plunged back into embarrassed timidity.

Portrait of FR Leavis by Peter Greenham, 1962

"There was a little moment in the middle [of the process] when I said to my wife, 'I could win this, you know,' and she said, 'Don't give in to that.'"

"He had left a note, 'Dear hopeful,' or something like that, 'I hope this goes well – do help yourself to drinks.' And I thought: how sophisticated."

"Partly it was the Leavisites, every one of whom was shy," he says. "We stuttered and stumbled together and banged into each other. When I saw Leavis go by on his bike I didn't know whether to wave and shout 'Hello Dr Leavis!' or look away. His eyes always seemed to be dodging recognition so I felt that if I distracted him he'd probably fall off. The business of one Leavisite saying hello to another Leavisite was fraught, I can tell you."

All of which proved something of a disappointment: the Cambridge Jacobson longed for was the one he glimpsed at the entrance exam – a Cambridge of elegant women, connections, adventure. A Cambridge that might have been more imagined than real.

"What I remember so vividly about the entrance exam was staying in somebody's room. He had left a note, 'Dear hopeful,' or something like that, 'I hope this goes well – do help yourself to drinks.' And I thought: how sophisticated. There was a photograph of him with his friends – he was a man, not a boy, because he'd done National Service. And I thought: what a wonderful world I'll be entering here, I have to get in. Never mind reading English with Dr Leavis – I wanted the social world."

"He used to 'spit chips' as the Australians say, and just get his anger out of his system."

The social whirl may not have materialised but reading English with Dr Leavis turned out to be formative. "He was a terrific talker, and we Leavisites loved listening. He used to 'spit chips' as the Australians say, and just get his anger out of his system. Personal anger, most of it about TS Eliot, whom he felt had betrayed him. We thought this was fascinating at first, a privilege to hear, but then we'd get fed up and wish he'd get on to other things. And when he did get onto other things – Leavis on a poem, or a piece of prose was just wonderful.

"The drawback was that one was so in awe of him. Personally he was very charming to us, never a cross word, very kind, considerate. But it was then very, very hard to write anything without thinking, 'What would Leavis think?' In my first novel I did think that all the time. In fact, Leavis is a character in my first novel. The hero's father, a magician, who was based very much on my own father, comes down to Cambridge, walks up to Leavis and goes, 'Bim-shala-bim' and takes an egg out of his ear. You can, I suppose, read my birth as a writer out of that."

Even without Leavis, writing that first novel was tough. "When I started to write it used to be hard to take myself away from life – I wanted to be out with friends, out in the world." And work at Downing was much the same. "I couldn't work at Cambridge. I just couldn't. It's about what you feel you're missing, and at Downing I felt I was missing the life of Cambridge, a life I couldn't find. And the other thing was that I'm not a man that's made to be alone. Had Downing given me a wife – had that been part of the arrangement – a tutor, FR Leavis, and a wife, I'd have prospered. But without one…"

Almost thirty years after the publication of that first novel, Jacobson says his writing habits are quite settled. "I get up in the morning and talk to my wife – at least an hour's talk – talk, talk, talk. If I have important work to do, we'll get up at half past six and we'll talk until half past seven or eight and then I'll go straight to my desk," he says. "People think it's discipline, but it doesn't feel like being disciplined – I'm really not alive unless I'm writing. I don't have to drag myself to the computer."

Next year, Jacobson will publish his twelfth novel, *Zoo Time*. And despite the many plaudits and prizes, Leavis still matters. "I call it a Leavisian comedy because it's a comedy – a black comedy – about all the things we cared about then: how to read, why reading is important, the importance of literature to civilisation, and the dangers the novel faces. I have not shed my Leavis stock. I talk about him all the time and sometimes I make fun of myself, sometimes I make fun of the Leavisites, but it's there – it's still in there."

"I'm not a man that's made to be alone. Had Downing given me a wife – had that been part of the arrangement – a tutor, FR Leavis, and a wife, I'd have prospered. But without one…"

Save the date

Following the success of the inaugural FR Leavis Dinner held in March 2011, Downing will be hosting the FR Leavis Conference in September 2012. For information on this and all forthcoming events, please visit our website: **http://www.downingcambridge.com/development/events**

FR Leavis
by Quentin Blake

Libya: Reporting from the Front Line

Natural Sciences graduate and reporter for The Telegraph, **Rob Crilly (1992)** shares his experience as a journalist in rebel-occupied Libya before the death of Gaddafi.

The thumping at the door was insistent. Every few seconds the frame itself shook, sending shockwaves through the room. Sleeping was impossible. It was seven o' clock in the morning at the end of a restless night.

I pulled my trousers on and stumbled to the door.

There was no one there, just an empty hotel corridor. But outside, the city was under attack.

The thump, thump, thump had not been someone banging at the door but the sound of shells exploding into the streets of Benghazi, the capital of Libya's rebel movement and now, suddenly, a city under siege.

Until then the war had been fought an hour or so up the road from the hotel where Western journalists had been staying. Day after day we had piled into cars, taxis and 4x4s and driven up to report on the front line where rebel forces were trying to stop Colonel Gaddafi's tanks and artillery advancing.

That morning it arrived on our doorstep. The view from the roof, six storeys up, made it clear that the battle for Benghazi had begun.

A warplane flew in from the sea to the north, glinting in the bright, blue sky. It circled lazily high above before disappearing slowly from sight.

Then it was back, lower and faster, bearing in a dead straight line across the city – the very definition of intent – as the sound of anti-aircraft guns rattled and roared from the streets below. The plane was headed towards the west of the city, the gateway where one of Gaddafi's armoured brigades had advanced to the outskirts. It was the sound of their tank rounds and artillery shells that had woken me that Saturday morning.

The five of us on the roof crouched as we watched the plane, unsure whether its mission was to bomb the rebel city or attack the regime forces.

"There was no one there, just an empty hotel corridor. But outside, the city was under attack."

Either way it never found its target. A flash at its tail stopped the plane dead in the air, almost as if an invisible hand had grabbed it from behind. It spiralled to the ground, exploding in a fireball as we watched.

Even from our rooftop perch we could hear the cheers from below, as rebels celebrated what they thought was a government air force casualty.

It was only later we learned the pilot was a rebel flying a plane recently repaired and made airworthy – and almost certainly killed by his own comrades on the ground.

It was that sort of war. The rebels were enthusiastic but ill-equipped, untrained and without any idea of command structure. They were teachers, students and engineers who had bought their own AK-47 rifles and joined a home-made revolution, carried forward by a sense of injustice, and invariably pushed back when they came up against Gaddafi's better drilled fighting men.

They would ride in taxis or family saloons to the edge of Ajdabiya, a non-descript town of roundabouts and little else, about 90 miles from Benghazi for a day of fighting, before heading home for tea.

It was difficult not to sympathise with their cause as I interviewed rebels who described being beaten by Gaddafi's thugs, or political prisoners whose only crime had been to attend mosque a little too frequently, or the British women who had married Libyan men and been forced to warn their teenage children not to post negative messages about the regime on Facebook. Their arguments were persuasive, but as a fighting force they were hopeless.

The view looked bleak from the top of the hotel. A colleague with binoculars could see tanks in the streets less than a mile from our vantage point. One shell had crashed into the lagoon beside the hotel; another had exploded in an empty building site to the front. This was too close for comfort. Time to leave.

My driver Tam had his own worries so I sent him home to be with his wife and children and hitched a ride with a CNN crew, one of the last teams to have stuck around as the government forces closed on the city.

Street art blossomed during the uprising all across Libya

We zigzagged through the city's old town of Italianate architecture, where a disorienting array of roadblocks had been thrown up that morning. They were manned by volunteers in balaclavas carrying clubs, baseball bats and knives. Some were filling glass bottles with petrol.

All around cars, trucks and minibuses were bumping and beeping their way out of town, crammed with families and sacks of clothes. Benghazi was emptying in the face of an expected onslaught.
Some stopped at a roadside restaurant just outside the city, where I had sat in a quaint, stone-built hut a few days earlier to tuck into a steaming plate of roast chicken, almond-studded rice and rocket salad. Now the huts were being turned into shelters as mothers made up beds for their children.

Omar Sharif pulled his car in just behind ours. His family along with his son's wife and children – nine people in all – had squashed into one vehicle, with piles of blankets and bottles of water for the journey ahead.

"We will stay here for now," said the retired aircraft engineer as his wife helped his daughter-in-law bed down her tiny baby in a folded blanket laid on a stone bench. "Maybe the fighting will finish and we can go home tonight. Maybe not. It is up to God now."

I didn't fancy his chances. It seemed to me that the people of Benghazi had picked the wrong side.

For a few heady days in February their forces – defecting army regiments and a rag-tag contingent of volunteers – had swept eastern Libya, claiming the border crossing with Egypt and advancing down the coast road to within 100 miles of Sirte, Gaddafi's hometown and the centre of much of the country's political and military establishment. Anything had seemed possible.

But they had been pushed back mile by mile. The make-do weapons and fragile bravado of the teenage revolutionaries proved little match for Gaddafi's Russian-built tanks.

A few days earlier the United Nations Security Council had passed Resolution 1973, authorising member states "to take all necessary measures" to protect civilians in general – and Benghazi in particular. That had brought another round of victory celebrations in front of the city's courts, where volleys of bullets were fired in the air to loud cries of Allahu Akbar, "God is greater."

But so far the only plane I had seen was the rebel jet shot down that morning. I wasn't the only one squinting repeatedly into the bright sky wondering when British or French war planes would come to protect Benghazi. It seemed as if the only impact of the resolution was to hasten Gaddafi's assault on the city before the Western jets could arrive.
In the end it was the rebels themselves who managed to drive Gaddafi's armour back that evening, using Molotov cocktails and nerves of steel to trap the tanks in the narrow streets.

The planes finally arrived – 24 hours late – early the next morning, pulverising Gaddafi's war machine in the fields from where they had rained artillery shells. Tank turrets lay smouldering where they had been flung by missiles fired from French planes. Trucks filled with ammunition crackled and fizzed. One exploded, sending a fireball into the air and providing one of the definitive photographs of the conflict.

The debate about the merits of military intervention has been one of the defining political issues of the past decade, whether in Iraq and Afghanistan or countries such as Zimbabwe and Sudan where thousands have died without Western forces being deployed.

Heavy artillery being moved into position ahead of the final assault in Sirte, the last major loyalist city to hold out against the Libyan uprising

Forces of the National Transitional Council guard the newly liberated oil terminal at Ras Lanuf, one of the key objectives standing between Benghazi, crucible of the revolution, and Gaddafi's home town of Sirte

But from where I was standing that Sunday morning, looking across fields of blackened and burning tank carcasses, there was no question: a slaughter of innocents had been prevented. It had been the right thing to do.

For the past seven years, working as a foreign correspondent for first *The Times* in Africa and now *The Daily Telegraph*, based in Pakistan, I find myself frequently reporting on conflict.

My colleagues – who studied history, English, politics, modern languages and so on – seem to find it an unusual career for a Natural Sciences graduate. But, as I never tire of pointing out, a good scientific grounding can be as perfectly good an entry as the usual routes into journalism, equipping me with an understanding of the way the natural world works, a healthy scepticism and a clear view of the limits of knowledge. However, persuading editors to give me my first job was a tricky business. There weren't many takers for a journalist with a solid grounding in genetics, a half-finished PhD and a distinct absence of journalism training. Ninety begging letters produced just ten replies and a single interview at *The Chester Chronicle* in 1999, which thankfully took me on as a sub-editor.

From there I became a news-feature writer at *The Aberdeen Press and Journal* and then Edinburgh Bureau Chief of *The Herald*, before heading to Africa and the life of a foreign correspondent. Since then the world's hot spots have become my regular haunt – places like the Somali capital Mogadishu, Darfur on Sudan's western border and the Democratic Republic of Congo's neverending civil war.

All are very different places but their conflicts share various characteristics that seem to be little understood in the West and too readily simplified into black and white, good and evil. In reality these are all messy conflicts, where the battle lines dissolve into shades of grey when viewed up close. The rebels are not always the good guys we want them to be.

Afghanistan and Iraq have shown what can go wrong when Western powers attempt regime change and nation-building.

I was reminded of this arriving back in Benghazi about six months into the war and a day before the rebels raced into Tripoli, sweeping Colonel Gaddafi from power. This time the gunshots were ringing out not in defence of the city but in celebration of victory. Great fireballs exploded in the air, as homemade fireworks lit up the night sky and Benghazi partied.

But already questions were starting to emerge about how the rebels would form a government, patching up differences of clan and ideology. Stories were circulating of Gaddafi loyalists being abused in rebel custody. And what of the bearded Islamists who had fought in Afghanistan and Iraq, and formed brigades in Libya's rebel army?

Only time will tell how Libya emerges from decades of Gaddafi's rule. But it is starting from a good place: a people's revolution based on concepts of justice and democracy that were drafted by Libyan leaders in a Libyan city. If it were not for Western intervention, I am convinced their dreams would have been overrun that weekend when the tanks entered Benghazi. The Libyans could not have done it alone.

As one bearded rebel told me in the early days of the conflict, the country would eventually stand on its own two feet.

"We have oil and we have water. This is a rich country," said Ahmed Youssuf, who had been unemployed before joining the uprising and had promised not to shave until Gaddafi had gone. "All that is holding us back is Gaddafi. Once he is gone we can be a new Dubai."

Where can a lead take you?

Simon Tisdall (1971) comments on his journey from JCR President to international journalist and commentator on the Wikileaks Cables.

"I decided to be a journalist a few years after I left Downing – I wanted to travel around the world and someone had to pay for it," says Simon Tisdall, the Guardian's Foreign Affairs Columnist and Assistant Editor.

Since then, Tisdall has traversed the globe for *The Guardian* and *The Observer*. In 2010, he was one of a handful of journalists to gain exclusive access to Wikileaks' US State Department Diplomatic Cables.

"Assange didn't know what to do with the stuff he had and didn't have the resources to investigate it," Tisdall says. "Our data team set up a database that we could interrogate using search teams."

Tisdall says that he started his search on areas where he thought it was likely there would have been a lot of US focus, such as North Korea and Iran. "You start searching in those areas and sometimes you find stuff and sometimes you don't," he says.

"Assange didn't know what to do with the stuff he had and didn't have the resources to investigate it."

"A lot of it was dross but every now and again you'd find a nugget. It was very labour intensive work. I personally got a few front pages out of it – one on China and North Korea, one about Osama bin Laden – and they were quite good stories."

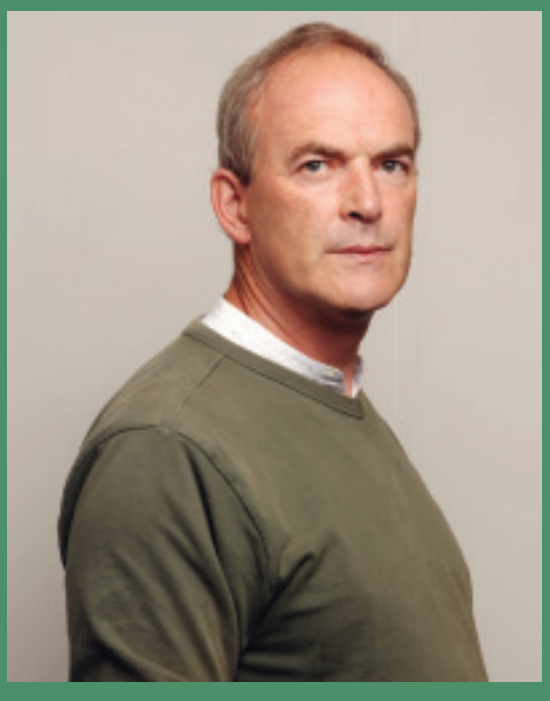
Does Tisdall believe documents changed, as one commentator has suggested, "the way people think about how the world is run"? "You can exaggerate the importance of it," he says. "It was a big thing at the time, but it was more about very interesting insights into how the Americans view the world, rather than about how the world is run."

"A lot of it was dross but every now and again you'd find a nugget."

Tisdall says that he chose Downing because a teacher recommended it. He has been back to the College a few times, to speak to the History Society and to dine at High Table. "What strikes one is how affluent the College appears now, compared to the early seventies. The first few chapters of Engleby [the novel by Sebastian Faulks] are a very good description of Cambridge at the time," he says. "Cambridge was very much part of post-war Britain, with bad plumbing, freezing bedrooms and appalling food, and a lot of that has changed now."

Indeed, in his third year, Tisdall was the JCR President. "We campaigned to let women in but only King's had done so when I left Cambridge." And did Downing have a lasting impact? "Cambridge certainly influenced my life – in confidence," he says.

ABOUT SIMON TISDALL



Courtesy of *The Guardian*

Simon Tisdall came to Downing in 1971. He is an Assistant Editor and Foreign Affairs Columnist of *The Guardian*. He was previously a foreign leader writer for the paper and has also served as its Foreign Editor and its US Editor, based in Washington DC. He was Foreign Editor for *The Observer* from 1996 to 1998.

Our man in Washington, Jerusalem, Brussels, Bonn…

© Courtesy BBC News

Simon Wilson (1983), now the BBC's Washington Bureau Chief, was in charge when Alan Johnston, the BBC's Gaza Correspondent, was kidnapped.

On 12 March 2007, Simon Wilson was sitting in his office in Jerusalem. "I got a call from one of our Palestinian producers who said, 'I think Alan's been taken'. I knew instantly what that meant."

Alan Johnston, the BBC's Gaza Correspondent, would go on to be held by a Palestinian jihadist group for almost four months – the longest and most serious kidnapping involving a Western journalist in Gaza for over a decade.

Throughout that time, it would be Simon Wilson, then the BBC's Middle East Bureau Chief, and Alan's line manager and friend, who would have to guide the campaign for his release.

In fact, Wilson initially thought that the kidnapping would be over in a few days. When it became clear it wouldn't, Wilson had to discuss a plan of action with his bosses in London. "The temptation is to say: London is on to it," he says. "But in fact the opposite was the case – they were incredibly supportive and said you are our experts, what do you recommend?"

A key early question was deciding whether or not a public campaign would be useful. After his release, Johnston described how he gained strength from listening to messages of support from across the globe on the World Service. But at the time, Wilson says the arguments for staying silent were strong.

"News blackouts on kidnappings are quite common, and some people said we should keep it quiet. For me the key judgement was whether a campaign would endanger him because we knew that while it would certainly help us and his family, the chances of [a campaign] helping Alan were small. Our view was that it wouldn't increase the danger."

"I remember lying in a hotel room in Jordan and just thinking: he might not make it."

With the campaign underway, Wilson also started to try and understand who the kidnappers might be. "Even though I had been there five years it took me four or five weeks to really identify the people who took Alan. It could have been any number of people, but it was in fact a very serious, very small jihadist group – probably the worst scenario of all."

The four months were punctuated by anniversaries – one week, two weeks, two months, Johnston's birthday, one hundred days. As his team in Jerusalem counted the days, Wilson had to keep people informed and positive.

"One of the worst moments was when a news release was put out saying Alan had been killed and buried on a beach. I knew it wasn't true. Not hoped or believed, I knew it was a game, a negotiation. I remember being totally firm and saying to the team there and in London that I couldn't prove it but I knew it wasn't true. I was very solid.

However, during Alan's captivity the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas took control of Gaza and, partly for their own political reasons, began a bitter round of infighting with the kidnap group. "A week before he came out, I knew how tough it was getting between the group and Hamas. And I remember lying in a hotel room in Jordan and just thinking: he might not make it."

On the night of 4 July 2007 – 114 days after that first terrible phone call – Wilson received a call of a quite different kind. "We hoped it was getting nearer but when the call came my first question was: Are you sure? The phone was shoved in Alan's face and I heard him saying 'Yes, yes! It's me!'"

Wilson, who read Modern Languages, says that his experiences on *Out of the Blue*, a Radio Cambridgeshire student programme, sparked his interest in broadcast journalism. "A BBC chap taught us the basics, gave us a tape recorder and then sent us out to get on with it. I did a feature about May Balls, the University Karate Society, I interviewed Tom Sharpe," he says. "It taught me that there's no magic to it – you just have to have a good idea and then get on with it. I listen back to them now and think: oh my God, they broadcast this stuff!"

After graduation, Wilson joined BBC Essex as a reporter; postings to Bonn and Brussels were followed by a return

"It taught me that there's no magic to it – you just have to have a good idea and then get on with it. I listen back to them now and think: oh my God, they broadcast this stuff!"

to London to join the launch team for Radio 5 Live and a switch from radio to television. In 2000, and newly married, he took a post in Jerusalem.

Wilson is quick to stress that all BBC postings are a choice, especially, he says, "somewhere dangerous". So does he fit the stereotype of the gung-ho war correspondent? Not really, he says. "The attraction for me is that war zones are where your journalism is tested to the full – approaching these stories as objectively as you can, doing it under extreme pressure.

"At the beginning I was working mainly as Orla Guerin's producer and it seemed that almost every day we would go to the scene of a suicide bombing. You had the day to figure it out and try and be as straight as you could about the events and put it into context for a two-minute news piece."

However, he does admit that there is a freedom that comes from being abroad that cannot be replicated at home. "It is the ultimate liberation. Whenever you cover a story in the UK you are always within reach of a phone call and control is with headquarters," he says. "As soon as you are abroad you automatically know more than your editors back in London. In a sense you have the story to yourself."

After Alan Johnston's release, Wilson did a year at Harvard before becoming the BBC's Washington Bureau Chief. Have his experiences in Jerusalem changed the way he sees the job? "Obviously, it has been by far the biggest leadership challenge so far. I think it has made me much more interested in the leadership element of the job – at Harvard I had options to do all sorts of things, but a lot of what I did was focused on leadership and managing teams."

He also says that it has coloured the way he thinks about safety. "Safety is always at the forefront of everything we do, and it's something the BBC is good at. It was a joint decision between me and Alan for him to go back and in retrospect it was the wrong decision," he says. "But it has made me realise that in any deployment there are these key moments that seem to be defining – in Libya, for example, do you get on that rebel truck? But the real question is actually whether you get on the plane at Heathrow in the first place – because at some point you will be in some godforsaken town and it will be hard not to get on the truck."

Although his new brief has seen him meeting Barack Obama and immersing himself in the world of the Beltway, these kinds of considerations are still relevant when your brief includes all points between Costa Rica and Canada. "We cover all the Americas from here – from the Whitehouse to the Haiti earthquake to the Chilean miners' rescue. It's so big there's never a dull moment.", Which is just how Simon Wilson likes it.

"As soon as you are abroad you automatically know more than your editors back in London. In a sense you have the story to yourself."

© Courtesy BBC News

Video still of Wilson at the release of Alan Johnston

The Star-Crossed Stone

In 1990, **Kenneth McNamara** (Fellow and current Dean of Downing) stumbled on a poignant illustration in an obscure book by a Victorian archaeologist. The find rekindled a childhood obsession, and after two decades of dogged research he discovered it's an obsession that has been shared by humans for 400,000 years.

Phil Mynott

The frontispiece of Worthington George Smith's 1894 book *The Primeval Savage* is as striking today as it must have appeared over 100 years ago. Lying on her back, knees bent to form a lap, the skeleton's head and torso are turned down and to the left towards the skeletal remains of the infant she seems to be cradling.

Smith – an ecclesiastical draughtsman turned botanical illustrator and amateur archaeologist – produced the image after unearthing the remains from a flattened Bronze Age burial mound on the chalky soil of Dunstable Downs in 1887.

But the extraordinary thing about Maud – the name he gave the woman he found – is not when or where she was buried, but what was buried with her. Because around the skeletons Smith discovered not one or two but more than 200 fossil sea urchins.

Dr McNamara describes fossil urchins as "balls of flint engraved with a five-pointed star". Found like other flints in layers of chalk, the fossils are all that remain of two extinct species of sea urchin known as *Micraster* and *Echinocorys* that burrowed in the mud on the sea bed some 70 million years ago.

"For 400,000 years, people have wanted to pick them up, which is an urge I've always had, and three species of hominid have done the same thing. It's absolutely astounding."

"In life they had a calcium carbonate shell and inside there wasn't much except guts and gonads," he explains."When they die the inner parts rot and there's this complicated process of flint forming in chalk."

"At particular times you get a band of flint formed by silica from the great forest of sponges that lived on the sea floor. Given the right conditions it forms a silica gel which slowly dissolves, working its way down into the sediment, and the shell of one of these urchins is a perfect space – an internal mould – for the silica to fill."

1497 woodcut depicting the myth of the fossil urchin as a snake's egg with magical powers

Like many fossil hunters, sea urchins were prize trophies for the young McNamara on weekend forays to the beaches and South Downs near his Brighton childhood home. "I scoured the downland quarries for urchins. I can't say that I was ever very successful," he admits. "But the feeling was always there that the next rock I hit with my hammer just might contain my Holy Grail."

As the adult Dr McNamara began digging into the neglected history of the star-crossed stone, he unearthed an intimate human association with these obscure objects – and echoes of his own collecting – receding back in time for almost half a million years.

"I've been working on fossil urchins since the late 1970s because they are a great tool to use in evolutionary studies – that's my main interest – and they were one of the first fossil groups used after Darwin's *Origin of Species* to back up some of his ideas," he says. "But I'm a palaeontologist, so this archaeological aspect was just a little hobby."

His little hobby, however, turned into a book, *The Star-Crossed Stone*, revealing that although Maud was buried with the largest number of fossil sea urchins ever found in a single grave, she was not unique. Humans and urchins have been interred together across thousands of miles and for thousands of years.

Fossil urchin from Jordan that about 9,000 years ago had a hole drilled through it

As well as in burials, fossil sea urchins have been found forming the centrepiece of carefully fashioned flint tools. And, most astonishing of all, this behaviour extended beyond our own species, *Homo sapiens*, to our ancestor *H. heidelbergensis* and our fellow hominid, Neanderthal man.

"You find fossil sea urchins in tools or burials in the UK, France, Belgium, Germany, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan and Niger," explains Dr McNamara. "The oldest is in the Swanscombe hand axe, around 400,000 years old, and there are others from the early Palaeolithic in France, so it's not an isolated example."

"Fossil sea urchins began to appear in burials in the Neolithic. They have been found in burials from the Bronze and Iron Ages, are common in Anglo-Saxon graves and the most recent was found in a 12th-century grave in a Jewish cemetery in London where a young boy was buried with them," he says.

Dr McNamara discovered even more recent vestiges of this shared history. At St. Peter's in the Hampshire village of Linkenholt, he found that during the church's rebuilding in the 1860s, key parts of the medieval structure were

400,000 year old flint hand axe with fossil sea urchin made by *Homo heidelbergensis*

"So many people have this collecting urge ... if you ask collectors, it's more about the excitement of the hunt."

preserved, including dozens of fossil sea urchins used to decorate two of its windows.

"I'm fascinated by the fact that people have been interested in this one obscure object, and that you can track it for this phenomenal amount of time," he says. "For 400,000 years, people have wanted to pick them up, which is an urge I've always had, and three species of hominid have done the same thing. It's absolutely astounding."

Flint fossil urchins around medieval window of St Peter's church, Linkenholt, Hampshire

So how does he explain this enduring fascination with a simple ball of flint marked with a five-pointed star? At one level, Dr McNamara believes it points to an ancient and deep-seated human trait. "So many people have this collecting urge," he says. "And if you ask collectors, it's more about the excitement of the hunt. I think for most people it's not the possessing, it's the finding of it."

Which explains part, but not all, of the story. Like our ancestors we have an urge to collect, but why did they collect this one object with such a passion?

Neolithic skeleton from Brighton, found in 1933 buried with fossil sea urchin (top left)

The answer, Dr McNamara argues, lies in the five-pointed symmetry of the star-crossed stone.

According to other academics who work on the evolution of cognitive development, the appearance of bilaterally-constructed tools is evidence of the mind beginning to think in abstract ways, and to appreciate the aesthetic. If that's the case, it's not hard to see the attraction of the five-pointed star.

Neither is it difficult to imagine these objects gradually assuming a spiritual significance, as representations in miniature of the human form, or the status of a lucky charm with powers to ward off evil.

Now that Dr McNamara's book – 20 years in the making – has been published he admits to being slightly bereft. "It was hard work, but I loved writing it, and finishing it was traumatic. What do I do next?" he asks.

Perhaps a walk down King's Parade will ease the loss, because there, as in so many city streets, echoes of the star-crossed stone are everywhere, carved into buildings, worked into flags and in consumer goods brands from beer to coffee. Maud, it seems, will never be far from Dr McNamara.

Dr Kenneth McNamara is Fellow and Dean of Downing College and Senior Lecturer in the Department of Earth Sciences, as well as Director of the Sedgwick Museum. His book, *The Star-Crossed Stone* is published by the University of Chicago Press.

The State of Bosnia

Rouse Ball Professor of English Law, **Professor David Feldman**, gives us an insight into some of his work and research since taking up his Fellowship at Downing in 2003.

Sixteen years after the end of a conflict characterised by war crimes, nationalism and 'ethnic cleansing', the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are still a long way from forging a cohesive state. Nationalisms remain significant, and political guarantees for the parties' security, needed to end the fighting, have inhibited political compromise and entrenched differences. Despite well-meaning efforts by the 'international community', it is hard to envisage BiH becoming an integrated state or part of the EU.

In the Dayton Peace Agreement of December 1995, all parties recognised BiH as an independent state existing within its pre-war borders, but divided into two Entities. Republika Srpska (RS) is dominated by Serbs, because of 'ethnic cleansing' during the war. The Federation of BiH (the Federation) consists of cantons in which the largest groups were Bosnian Muslims (now known as Bosniacs) and Croats (who are less numerous than the Bosniacs).

The Constitution, which as part of the Dayton Agreement has never been democratically approved within the state, provides for state-level structures based on power-sharing between the Entities and between Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs, the 'constituent peoples', who participate equally in a three-person Presidency and, in the Parliamentary Assembly, a House of Peoples. 'Others' are excluded. The Council of Ministers, which is in effect the government, is also based on power-sharing. Officials in state institutions must be 'generally representative of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina." Each constituent people, and representatives of each Entity, have something approaching a veto over proposed legislation and policies.

This makes it hard for state institutions to make important decisions if they adversely affect the interests of a constituent people or Entity. Indeed, the political system has been unable to produce the state-building measures required to allow BiH and its economy to recover from the war.

Such measures were urgently needed. The war destroyed much of the country's industrial, commercial and governmental infrastructure. Financial assets (including significant parts of people's private savings) disappeared. The country depended on international assistance. Poverty and homelessness were everywhere; even now, despite a constitutional guarantee of the right to return to their homes, many people displaced in the war still live in emergency dwellings.

Paralysis was avoided largely through the efforts of an international official, the High Representative (HR), whose remit under the Dayton Agreement is to facilitate its civilian implementation. Successive HRs have interpreted that as including power to impose any law to break legislative deadlock, and to dismiss elected representatives and officials who impede state-building. This allowed politicians to maintain inflexible positions and blame the HR for the impact of any change on their supporters. Whilst HRs have done a great deal of good, their unaccountability and lack of transparency undermines their perceived legitimacy. Their stock reached a nadir in 2010, when HR Valentin Insko's attempt to rein in nationalist separatism in the RS was contemptuously ignored by Milorad Dodik, Prime Minister of RS. Separatism feeds on the fact that many citizens are not fully committed to the existence of BiH as a state. Many Serbs want independence for the RS, which they feel has been treated less favourably than Montenegro and Kosovo. Many Croats resent not having a Croat Entity. Even some Bosniacs remain unhappy that the Dayton Agreement, by leaving the Serbs with a largely self-governing Entity, seemed to legitimise 'ethnic cleansing'.

A further problem is the effect of power-sharing by constituent peoples on Others. The European Court of Human Rights held in December 2009 that this discrimination against Others in the constitution violates their human rights. However, the Presidency and Legislative Assembly, dominated by the interests of constituent peoples, have been unable to agree a constitutional amendment, despite threats to expel BiH from the Council of Europe.

Politically, BiH now seems as a result to be going backwards. In the general election of October 2010, nationalists failed to secure control of the House of Representatives, but have made it impossible to construct a government which can command the confidence of the House. With the HR an increasingly marginal figure, nobody can force political leaders to compromise, so 14 months after the election there is still no effective state-level government.

The country has experienced a sort of peace for 16 years, but the conflict continues through confrontational politics and, where that fails, constitutional litigation. Despite the efforts of many courageous, idealistic and indefatigable people, there is little sign that an effective state, capable of tackling the country's many problems, is developing.

Sir Herbert Baker and Downing College

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Sir Herbert Baker was responsible for completing much of Downing's iconic building structures, and yet his work has often been overshadowed by that of his more renowned predecessor, William Wilkins. College Archivist **Kate Thompson** has decided to rectify this by putting on an exhibition in the library about Baker's work. Here she gives us the history behind this man's lasting contribution to Downing.

In a nice example of serendipity, I 'bumped into' Baker when I went to South Africa last year. Who is Sir Herbert Baker, I hear you ask! Read on.

Much of the biographical detail comes from an article by Daniel Abramson in the online *Dictionary of National Biography* to which acknowledgment is made. Baker was born in 1862 in Kent, the fourth of eleven children. He trained in London but spent the earlier part of his working life in South Africa, India, Rhodesia and Kenya. A chance meeting with Cecil Rhodes in 1892 gave him his first job (although he had not intended to work as an architect): to restore the prime minister's house in Cape Town, Groote Schuur. It was considered a triumph and Baker was credited with creating a new style of architecture, South African vernacular. He designed about 300 houses in South Africa, including homes for Rudyard Kipling and the Duke of Westminster. The Union Buildings in Pretoria (1910–13) are arguably his greatest public work but he was also responsible for cathedrals in Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town and the railway station in Pretoria.

He returned to England in 1904 and married a distant cousin. In 1912 he collaborated with Edwin Lutyens, whom he had first met while training; together they designed the new government complex at New Delhi. Eventually they went their separate ways after a series of disagreements, and Baker set up a practice in London with Alexander T Scott.

© Governor and Company of the Bank of England

Portrait of Sir Herbert Baker by AK Lawrence

© Kate Thompson

Blocks M and N, North Range

© Kate Thompson

Union Buildings, Pretoria

His British buildings include India House, South Africa House, Rhodes House in Oxford and, controversially, the Bank of England; this involved destroying most of the work of Sir John Soane, something that would not be acceptable today. He was one of the architects of the Imperial War Graves Commission from 1917 to 1928, and personally designed the memorials to the South African men lost at Delville Wood and the Indians at Neuve Chapelle.

In 1929 the Master and Bursar of Downing were authorised to consult Baker about working for the College and an appeal was launched for funding. The Quadrangle was to be extended to the north with two blocks of rooms in line with the East and West ranges, and closed by continuous building on the north side containing a library and chapel. By 1931 there was enough money for the residential blocks, mainly from the sale to the University of about 12 acres of land in the north part of the domus and of land for leasehold houses in Lensfield Road. The remainder of the work was not done until 1950, by which time Baker had died; Scott modified the design and completed the North range.

Baker gave his family home, Owletts, to the National Trust in 1937. Among his other accomplishments was a biography of Rhodes, published in 1934. He was knighted in 1926.

Kate Thompson

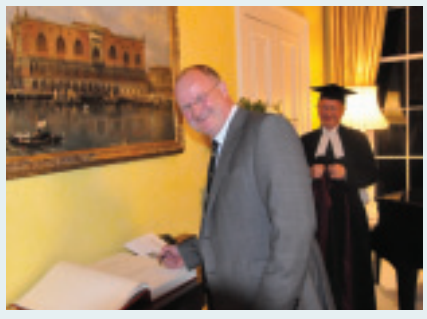
Development Office

Wilkins Fellows Elected

On 26 October 2011, the College admitted its most recent Wilkins Fellows in recognition of their generous benefactions to the College. With the Wilkins Fellowship comes admission to the University's Vice-Chancellor's Circle.

HUMPHREY BATTCOCK

Humphrey gained an exhibition to Downing in 1973 to read Natural Sciences, following his father, Alan, who came up in 1945. He was then followed by two of his brothers: Mike who came up in 1980 to read Natural Sciences and Ben who came up in 1982 to read Classics and then Law. After graduating in Physics, Humphrey joined Coopers & Lybrand and worked in London and New York. After taking an MBA at London Business School, he entered the private equity industry and is now Managing Partner of Advent International in London, one of the largest global private equity firms.



Humphrey lives in Oxford and teaches an elective at the Said Business School. He is an ambassador for the Woodland Trust and works with Emmaus, a charity for the homeless.

Humphrey serves on the Downing Investment Committee and the Downing Campaign Board as well as the Cambridge University Campaign Council. He is also a member of the Vice-Chancellor's Circle.

The Wilkins Fellowship recognises his contribution to the College's endowment, the Catalysis Conference and also his commitment to bringing the Parker's House project to fruition.

MARIA WILLETTS

Maria read Modern Languages at St Anne's College, Oxford. After graduating, she joined The Chase Manhattan Bank in London, specialising in ship finance. She then transferred to New York, eventually being promoted to Executive Vice President and President of Chase Capital Partners, which was responsible for investing in equity positions for Chase's own account. She retired from Chase in 1995, moving back to Europe.

Maria has recently become a Member of the Advisory Board of the The Rothermere American Institute, an international centre of excellence dedicated to the interdisciplinary and comparative study of the United States. Maria is a Johnson Honorary Fellow at St Anne's College and is Chairman of their Development Board. Together with her husband, David, and nearly grown-up children, she runs the Ferreras Willetts Foundation, which funds projects principally in higher education. She is a member of the Oxford Vice-Chancellor's Circle.

This Wilkins Fellowship recognises the donation of the Ferreras Willetts Foundation to establish the Ferreras Willetts Science Fund to endow, in perpetuity, a Fellowship in Neuroscience or support a Research Fellowship in neuroscience or biomedical sciences.

LONDON EVENT

This year's London Event was held on 20th October at The Academy of Medical Sciences, following a recent major redevelopment at the venue. The Master, Professor Barry Everitt, a Fellow of the Academy, addressed the guests in the former eighteenth-century private residence.

DOWNING COLLEGE BOAT CLUB HAS A NEW SPONSOR

Downing College Boat Club is now sponsored by recommendations service LoveThis. Sponsorship support is crucial to the running of the Club and success on the River.

LoveThis is the place, on your phone and online, where you can store all your recommendations on anything and share them with friends. Anything from a great restaurant or hotel, to a brilliant book, website or builder. So, wherever you are, you'll always have access to the collection of things your friends love. Friends' opinions are better than anonymous reviews, or fancy algorithms, because we know their tastes and we trust them. LoveThis are launching an iPhone app in February and you can register interest at

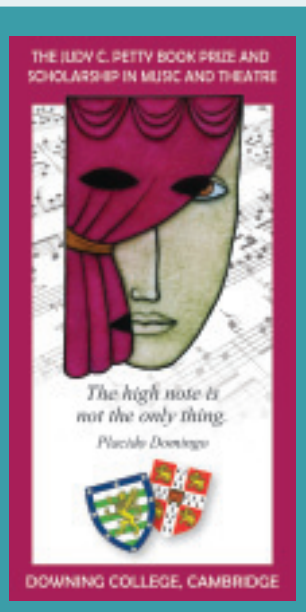
https://lovethis.com

THE COLLEGE IS DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE THE JUDY C. PETTY BOOK PRIZE AND SCHOLARSHIP IN MUSIC AND THEATRE.

As a member of the Executive Committee of The League of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association and Friend of Downing College for many years, Judy Petty's devotion to music and theatre is well known in artistic circles. The Judy C. Petty Award was established by Gary Blankenship (Architecture 1968) in Judy's honour to support music and theatre at Downing College.

This is the fourth prize founded by Gary to recognise academic excellence at Downing. Each year, students achieving first-class results within their subjects are eligible for the respective Blankenship Awards. These awards are particularly special to Downing because they can be used flexibly. In years when there are no eligible candidates in a particular subject, the funds can be used to provide travel grants, support for vacation study, course materials, textbooks and hardship relief. The Blankenship Awards truly celebrate achievement and open up fresh opportunities for Downing students.

Gary Blankenship, Judy Petty and Barry Everitt at the Chicago Boat Race Dinner, April 2011



Legacy News

Seton on graduation day

From the story of the College's founding, all alumni know that the execution of a Will can take time. Certainly this was the case for Sir George Downing. Thankfully a time lapse of many decades is not always for the same reason.

John Archibald Seton came up to Downing in 1926 to read History. Downing College was a family tradition for the Setons as both his brother William and his father had preceded him. He originally wrote a Will in 1945 upon marriage in which there was a provision for Downing. In 1979, after the death of all his siblings and only months before he died, John Seton wrote a new one to "set afresh his earlier Wills." In his final Will, he left £10,000 to Downing College in memory of his brother William and himself to be used to offer financial assistance to Downing students.

Furthermore he left his residuary estate upon his wife's death to the College. He named it the Seton Cavendish Bequest and, as stated in his Will, it will be "in memory of my parents and their four children. The income to be used to further the educational standards of the College by grants for research study."

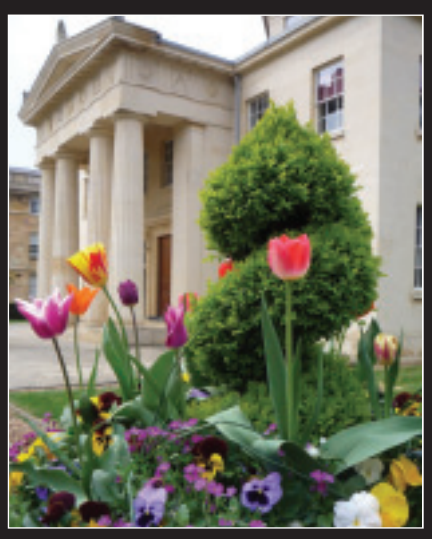
In 2011, almost 70 years after his original Will, the generosity of John Archibald Seton and his determination over many years to remember Downing in his Will have resulted in a bequest worth just over £1.5 million. It has made an invaluable and lasting impact on the future of the College as, no doubt, Mr Seton had hoped it would.

Downing From a New Perspective

The aim of this year's photography competition was to show the College in a different light, perhaps hidden or rarely seen details, unusual views, something abstract, impressionistic or memorable. In coming to a decision, the judging panel considered both how well the image matched the brief and also the technical quality of the image in terms of composition, sharpness and exposure.

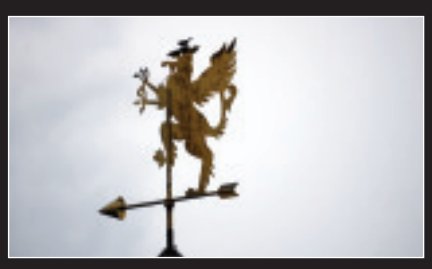
Panoramic view of Downing after snowfall *Mauricio Hernandez, 1st Place*

Tree and bike *Stephanie Kocura, 2nd place*

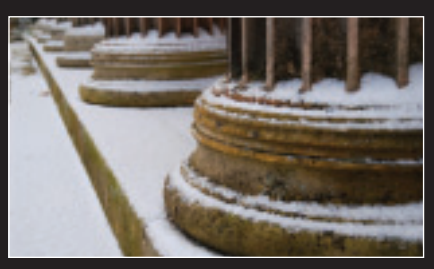


Spring at the Library *Nicola Stead*

Towards the Paddock *Lucy Chambers*



My friend Griff
Robert Sparkes, Highly Commended



Dining hall columns after a light snowfall
Mauricio Hernandez, 3rd Place

EVENTS CALENDAR 2012

25 JANUARY
Year Representatives' Meeting & Dinner

4 FEBRUARY
Griffin Club Dinner

31 MARCH
Annual Reunion Dinner
pre-1952, 1952, 1962, 1972, 1982, 1992, 2002

28 APRIL
Segreant Club Dinner

19 MAY
MA Awards Dinner

MAY (TBC)
Cambridge Reception

16 JUNE
Donors' Garden Party

21 JULY
1749 Society Reception

21–23 SEPTEMBER
Alumni Weekend

DECEMBER
Varsity Rugby

Please note that the information above may be subject to change and you are advised to contact the Development Office for confirmation.

For further details on any of the events listed, or to find out what else is happening throughout the year, please visit the Development Office website
www.downingcambridge.com
or contact Natalie Arrowsmith,
Development Officer (Alumni Relations)
Email: nla28@dow.cam.ac.uk
Tel: 01223 334850

Join the Downing Conversation Online

LinkedIn www.linkedin.com

www.facebook.com/downingcollege

www.twitter.com/downingcollege

www.flickr.com/photos/downingcollege

Have you completed your Alumni Questionnaire?

You will soon receive our questionnaire. Please return your form to us soon so that we can keep you updated with news and events.