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Dow@Cam is a magazine, which is published bi-annually by the Downing College Development Office.

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Dow@Cam is intended to give an informative view of College related events and people.

### Cover:

Dr Amy Milton, Downing College Research Fellow in Experimental Psychology. Research & Discovery is just one of the areas that you can support through Catalysis, the Downing College Endowment Campaign.



Anyone in or remotely connected with Cambridge cannot have failed to notice the University's 800th anniversary year. Here at Downing, we are quietly proud of the fact that the illustrations of Quentin Blake, an alumnus and Honorary Fellow, featured so prominently, first in the spectacular lightshow that marked the start of the year and also at the Royal College of Art, where his magnificent mural history of the University adorned the walls at a reception for the Cambridge Prom.

Amongst our own celebrations, a key event was the topping out of the Howard Theatre, in this the 800th year, on the 80th birthday of Dr Alan Howard. The theatre will be finished several months ahead of schedule and in use by Christmas. We were very pleased that Alan Howard himself was one of a small number of benefactors to be honoured with the Chancellor's 800th Anniversary Medal for Outstanding Philanthropy, which he received from the Duke of Edinburgh at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace in August.

In the last issue, we were able to give you news of the reopening of our splendidly restored hall. It had been our intention not to hang portraits in the Hall because the decorative scheme is so beautiful. However, the two very dark and gloomy portraits of the founder and his wife – which old members will undoubtedly remember behind glass on the north wall – were, following restoration, revealed to be two very fine, eighteenth-century works containing detail that was previously impossible to see. Following much discussion, these two portraits are now hanging on either side of the columns at the east end of the Hall and serve as constant reminders of the historical context in which Downing was founded, most especially the marriage of George Downing and Mary Forrester at the ages of 15 and 13, respectively.

# The Master's Voice

Celebrations aside, 2009 was of course a difficult year, and Downing has been hit especially hard because of our reliance on income from our endowment. Our conference business, has also suffered both because of building works to the Hall and kitchens and because of the economic downturn. Nevertheless, we are working extremely hard to make economies wherever possible and to increase our business activities. We remain determined to rise to the challenge, to ensure that anybody who wishes to study at Downing and has the ability to do so will gain a place, regardless of financial need.

Since their foundation, both the University and Downing have been outward looking, and our international connections continue to flourish and strengthen; they are a vital part of our activities. This issue includes articles on Downing medics undertaking electives in China, on our Thomas Jefferson Fellow and Pomona exchange scheme, and on our Fellow in Japanese Studies, Brigitte Steger. Brigitte and also Bill O'Neill (Fellow in Engineering) will be Downing's visiting Fellows at Keio University in 2010 and 2011. We have a special link with Keio in Tokyo and I was fortunate to visit during its 150th anniversary celebrations. Also in this issue, we feature Downing Fellow, Jonathan Trevor, former management consultant turned academic; Lord Collins of Mapesbury, Downing lawyer and the first solicitor to take silk and now to be appointed Lord of Appeal in Ordinary; and Derek Robinson, novelist and broadcaster.

Finally, at the end of the 2009 academic year our research Fellow in History, Simon Lacqua-O'Donnell left to take up a lectureship at Birmingham University and at the start of the new year, we were delighted to welcome Dr Subha Mukherji, Fellow in English; Dr Sophie Harrington, Research Fellow in Materials Science; and Dr Adam Ramadan, Fellow in Geography.



# Revaluing Leavis

REPORT OF A CONFERENCE HELD AT DOWNING COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE ~ SEPTEMBER 28TH–29TH 2009

Some seventy delegates attended a two-day conference on 28th & 29th September 2009 in the Howard Building (and the West Lodge garden) devoted to the distinguished critic and former Fellow of the College, F.R. Leavis (1895–1978). The initiative came from Dr Chris Joyce of the University of Surrey and is a development from the one-day meeting held in 2003. The reappraisal of Leavis' work and influence attracted eminent scholars from the UK and beyond.

In his welcome, the Master alluded to Leavis' notorious Richmond Lecture of 1962, in which he attacked C.P. Snow's concept of the Two Cultures. Re-reading this (and other Leavis writings), he had been struck by the vociferous and apparently very personal nature of Leavis' attack (unfamiliar in scientific debate) but recognised too the force and originality of Leavis' work which had made him so pre-eminent as a critic in his long career at Downing. Among the sessions at the conference was one given by Professor Michael Yudkin from Oxford whose own critique of Snow, written as a scientist, had been published with the Leavis lecture. Professor Yudkin reaffirmed his criticisms of Snow but felt that the nature of Leavis' attack had distracted attention from the positive and valuable qualities of his lecture, which had marked the beginning of an important new phase in his thinking.

Though a controversial, even embattled, figure in his lifetime, the quarrels seemed increasingly irrelevant to the continuing legacy of Leavis the Critic and Thinker who was such a major influence in the study of English literature. While many of those attending had been either taught by Leavis at Downing or elsewhere, such as York, or by the next generation of Leavis' pupils in Cambridge or elsewhere, others had been influenced by his books written between 1930 and 1975 and in *Scrutiny* 1932–53. There was a very great age range among

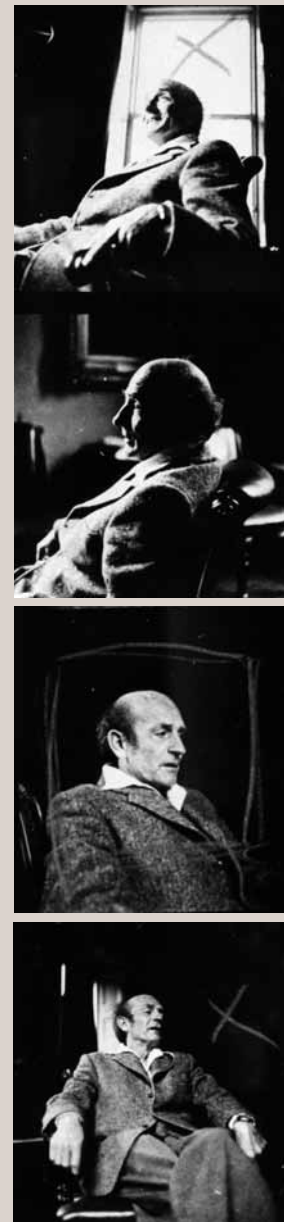
those present from the earlier generations of Leavis' pupils to young academics from a number of universities. One of the latter, Dr Richard Storer, is the author of a new study, F.R. Leavis, published in 2009 in the Routledge Critical Thinkers series. Other publications on display included Professor Michael Bell's studies and recent reprints of Leavis' works by CUP and Faber.

Topics addressed included Leavis and the Reading Public (the opening paper from Professor Stefan Collini), the Nature of Criticism, Leavis and Philosophy (to which Professor Simon Blackburn contributed notably), the Idea of the Aesthetic, the Poetry of the 1950s, the Concept of Enactment, Memories of Leavis the Teacher, and finally a session on Leavis' Letters and the Downing Archive at which Dr David Pratt, College Fellow and Archivist, was present.

It is clear that Leavis' importance remains very much alive as testified by all the speakers at the conference and experienced in numerous discussions within and outside the formal sessions. Plans for a Centre for Leavis Studies are under discussion.

The Conference facilities were admirable and for those of us who stayed in College the service and accommodation were excellent.

David Matthews  
Downing 1948





# Surfing the Victorian Internet

In this age of lightening quick communications and unforgiving deadlines, quiet contemplation has become something of an indulgence, even in the realms of academia. When, after 34 years lecturing at the University of Virginia, the 2009 Thomas Jefferson Visiting Fellow, Chuck McCurdy, found himself liberated from the demands of institutional life, he abandoned himself to the simple pleasure of strolling Cambridge's historic streets, absorbed in his own thoughts. He didn't anticipate the extent to which his musings would rekindle an old passion.

Professor of History and Law, Chuck McCurdy knew exactly what he wanted to do as Downing's latest Thomas Jefferson Visiting Fellow. Following the success of his book, *The Anti-Rent Era in New York Law and Politics*, which was awarded the Order of the Coif Triennial Book Award from the Association of American Law Schools in 2003, he was set to pen a new one about federalism and American legal thought in the 20th century. Sure enough, he arrived in Cambridge and promptly wrote and delivered two papers: one for the Rothermere American Institute, Oxford, and another for the seminar of American history, run by Clare College's Tony Badger. Then, without warning, his best laid plans ground to an abrupt halt. *"I knew what I wanted to say, sat down and cranked it out, but as I finished those two papers, my interest kind of flagged,"* said Chuck.

## Freedom to wander

Unflustered by the unexpected pause in production, Chuck took to walking. He tramped the city streets, rambled riverbanks in Granchester, visited the American cemetery, hiked through Haverhill, Ely and Bury St. Edmunds, just walking and thinking. Originally from San Diego and every inch the genial Californian, Chuck enthused about his new found freedom, *"I read novels in February – almost a couple a week! I haven't done that in a long time. As a leader in a department, there's just so much day to day*

*management of the institution. It's one of the great benefits of academic life, that every so often there's an opportunity for teachers to get away."*

The more time Chuck spent recalibrating his tempo giusto, the more his thoughts returned to research he'd undertaken years before into a Supreme Court Justice called Stephen Field. Field was one of four eminent brothers, one of whom happened to be Cyrus Field, the businessman responsible for conceiving and laying the first transatlantic cable. Chuck says, *"As it turns out, the world's richest archive about the cable is in Porthcurno in Cornwall. So I decided to spend the rest of my time at Downing working on the Atlantic cable on the theory that I will write a big book about all of the brothers."*

## A new era of communication

As Chuck delved more deeply into his new topic, it transpired that Cyrus was very well connected. His intrepid band of colleagues comprised a veritable who's who on both sides of the Atlantic. Funded for a large part by bankers George Peabody and his partner, Junius Morgan (father of JP Morgan), it boasted Charles Bright and Lord Kelvin as the electrical brains behind the operation, with American, Samuel Morse, devising the code, the dots and dashes. *"Lord Kelvin was the guy who framed the second law of thermo dynamics,"* remarks Chuck, *"His work was wholly indispensable on the science side."*

Naturally, an undertaking of this magnitude wasn't going to succeed without the odd hiccup here and there. Sure enough, one week after it was laid, the cable broke. Further electrical problems extended the project by another five years, by which time the American civil war had begun. *"The UK and the US were not in their special relationship era at this time,"* grinned Chuck.

The cable was finally laid in 1866. By 1880, there were half a dozen cables coming out of Porthcurno going all around the world. Both governments enjoyed priority usage, mainly to communicate military manoeuvres, and for the first time, investors in New York and London could access information about money markets, commodities and stock in an instant. This eliminated the advantages that certain established houses had enjoyed, and provided all sorts of opportunities for new entrants. *"There was very little, 'Hi Mum, it's me,' for about a generation because of the expense. The cable was for Victorian communication and was aptly named 'The Victorian Internet'."*

## Inspirational surroundings

His foray into Lord Cable's exploits aside, what else will this Visiting Fellow take with him from his time at Downing? *"I came mainly because of the attraction of a new place. My children are grown and out of the house, so the idea of spending a*



*semester in Cambridge and getting to know England appealed. In many ways, the experience has been so much more. All the Fellows at Downing are so friendly, welcoming and interesting. I'll go back fired up about my work, which I wasn't when I got here. I didn't worry about academic management for the first time in a decade. I didn't try to figure out how law or history is done here and compare them to the US. I've made friends with mathematicians, historians, classicists, and geologists. I've dined at high table at least once a week, sometimes twice, and met an awful lot of wonderful people. Then there are these May balls! There's simply nothing like it in the US!"*

If you're thinking that Professor McCurdy arrived at Downing only to abandon his legal history research and have a jolly good time of it, you're missing the point. In essence, perhaps the most precious thing that Chuck's experience at Downing has given him was the opportunity to reacquire himself with his muse. To release the curious mind that led him to academia in the first place. To remember that while discipline has its place in ensuring the academic assembly line keeps producing the goods, there's also a time for winding down. After all, you can bet your last dollar that just as you're trying to think of nothing at all, the next great idea will come knocking.



Chuck McCurdy

## Biography in Brief

Chuck McCurdy read History and Law at the University of California, San Diego, in 1970, staying on to complete his PhD in 1976.

Interested in the sources and effects of legal change in United States history, he is currently studying federalism and the transformation of American legal thought since the New Deal.

Chair of the Corcoran Department of History department from 2001 to 2007, his awards include a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, the Arthur H. Cole Award from the Economic History Association and the Louis Pelzer Award from the Organization of American Historians. He was also a Russell Sage Fellow in Law & Social Science at Yale Law School between 1973 and 1975. In 2003, he received the Order of the Coif Triennial Book Award from the Association of American Law Schools for his book, *'The Anti-Rent Era in New York Law and Politics, 1839–1865.'*



### Dr Christopher M. Chinn

Another American visitor to the College was Professor Chris Chinn, Assistant Professor of Classics, who was the Pomona Visiting Fellow at Downing between May and June 2009. Downing has a student and faculty exchange scheme with Pomona, a liberal arts college based in Claremont, California.

Professor Chinn specialises in Augustan and Imperial Roman Poetry; Greek and Roman Epic Poetry; Ancient and Modern Literary Criticism; and Art and Text in the Ancient World.

He said, "I had a wonderful and productive time at Downing. Although my visit came at a very busy time in the Cambridge academic year, everyone was extremely accommodating and helpful. In terms of my research, I accomplished all I set out to do during my stay. More gratifying, however, was the time I was able to spend in informal conversation with the fellows at Downing and in the Classics faculty at large. These "human resources" are infinitely more valuable than libraries and archives, and indeed such human interaction is what gives a faculty exchange program its vitality."

"The relationship between Downing and Pomona is a special one, and I look forward to welcoming both a student *and* a faculty member this September. I can only hope that we can be as hospitable at this end!"

# Warning: incentives at work

Downing Fellow Dr Jonathan Trevor is a University Lecturer at the Judge Business School and a leading academic in the field of human resources and organisations. But he began his career as a management consultant. In an interview for Dow@Cam, he talks about his experience in both worlds, and how an economic downturn brought him to a turning point in his career.

I worked for three years for Mercer Human Resource Consulting, a major US-based multinational firm, and loved it. I was pretty much the young Turk in the flash suit going in to tell people older than me what they should be doing with their business.

#### **And what were you telling them?**

It really revolved around one key issue: how do you get the most out of your employees? That translates into a range of complex issues from how an organisation is structured, how work is best defined, to whom you recruit, and so on. And if you're interested in the subject of management, then consultancy lets you see very quickly how things work across a number of different organisations. But the project stops when the budget stops, so often the interesting questions don't get answered.

#### **What sort of questions?**

One fundamental question was, do incentives work? Of course, as a consultant advising companies on the design and implementation of incentive schemes, you'd better believe they work! But when you're responding to client need, you don't ever get to say, this is a really interesting issue – let's devote time to producing some research on it.

In the last economic downturn in 2001, the consultancy sector was hit hard and there simply wasn't much work to do. The firm's partners expressed concern that I was getting bored, and I expressed an interest in using the time profitably to review academic research,

looking at how we as a firm could apply it for the benefit of our clients. And they said fine.

In the process I read a paper by somebody at the then Judge Institute of Management Studies. I wrote to the director, Professor Dame Sandra Dawson, on behalf of the firm saying, 'Read your paper. This is what's interesting about it; this is what's wrong with it from our perspective'. After further correspondence, I was invited to meet Professor Dawson and a colleague, Dr Philip Stiles, for lunch. I turned up, all power-suited, full-on consultant ra-ra! And they said, that's a really interesting insight; why don't you do a PhD to take that further? So I came to Cambridge in 2002, really to

address many of the issues I was dealing with in consultancy work from an academic perspective.

#### **So do financial incentives work?**

There's an assumption within the economics and management literature that financial pay systems can be used to direct employee behaviours profitably. My argument, based on my research in high-performing multinational firms, is that we seem not to be able to manage those systems in ways that are wholly effective. I'm not saying financial incentives don't have an effect. They do. I'm saying that management techniques are not sophisticated enough to guarantee the desired effect. So even if incentives work notionally, in reality very few





organisations manage them in ways that are effective. And if you have an incentive system that's ineffective, not only does it not produce the behaviours you want, but it might actually produce quite the opposite.

So the problem is that organisations try to use pay systems strategically to drive the behaviours necessary for organisational success. But more often than not, those systems fail. The organisation might still be successful, but frequently it's despite those systems, not because of them.

### **OK, if that's the problem, what's the answer?**

The question is, are these systems really worth it? Should we instead be trying to secure commitment, motivation and performance through other things – such as an inspiring manager? It's certainly not a plea for more stick, but equally it's a plea not to place too much emphasis on the carrot. It's a plea to invest in leadership rather than in a bonus culture.

### **So were the carrots at the root of the financial crisis?**

I almost don't want to say it, but back in 2004 I was saying that we need to be really careful about the kinds of pay systems that we use in our most important commercial organisations, because often they drive very dysfunctional behaviours. And that has implications for governance and risk management. This isn't vindication at all. In a sense I see the financial crisis not as a financial crisis at all; it's a human capital crisis.

### **Now you're in academia, how do you get your message out there?**

I think it's always a challenge. Executive education is very much part of the business school mission, and we run lots of short courses that expose practitioners to research. We like to think of ourselves as a marketplace for ideas – which sounds corny, but we take pride in attracting people from all over the world to engage in debate on both topical and enduring issues of management, business and society.

If you're a decision maker in an organisation, you've never had a more

challenging environment. Whereas structures and institutions used to change over two or three years, now it's every two to three days, and forecasting appropriate strategies is really hard. So practitioners need to be educated in the right questions to ask and the right ways to think about their situation. But academics also need to learn how to engage with and help practitioners, and equally how to learn from them. Really, the core definition of success for an academic is producing work that's rigorous by the standards of one's peers in the scholarly world, but equally relevant by the standards of practitioners.

### **Coming into the University wearing your consultant hat, what's your assessment?**

Advocates of human resource management emphasise the value of employers involving their employees in decisions – of being participative and consultative. Consensus is the watchword for the modern organisation. But actually, Cambridge has been doing that for 800 years. So at the College Governing Body, 50 Fellows sit down and participate in decisions about how things should be. This has the effect of ensuring that everybody is bought in, and actually it's pretty efficient. Having said that, the University is also very bureaucratic, and the consensus style of management can sometimes gets in the way of quick decisions. It's a known phenomenon that large groups are typically risk averse when making decisions – or in the opposite extreme, wholly risk prone as no one individual is accountable. So the question for Cambridge is, can it move at the speed of the environment in which it's operating?

### **And how's the Cambridge environment for you?**

In terms of the physical environment, I feel really at home, especially within College.

I bought a house last year, having been a student for eight or nine years. To have a property with a garden is wonderful. Stuff that I planted last year has suddenly sprouted, so there are flowers and colours... It shouldn't be surprising, but it's a wholly novel

experience for me! It feels like putting down roots, literally. It's very nice to have something to call your own – a garden where I reign supreme.

### **Really? Aren't gardens somewhat unpredictable, what with the soil and the weather and the pests. A bit like the business world perhaps?**

Actually that's very true. But, if there's a weed that needs weeding, well ...

## **Biography in brief**

Dr Jonathan Trevor is a University Lecturer in the Human Resources & Organisations subject group at Judge Business School, University of Cambridge.

Jonathan was a lead researcher at Cambridge on the recently completed Global Human Resource Research Alliance project, the single largest HR-related study of the past decade, reviewing leading and innovative human capital management practices in high performing global organisations in collaboration with the Rotterdam School of Management, Cornell University and INSEAD.

Previously he spent three years as a consultant with Mercer Human Resource Consulting in their London-based Performance and Rewards practice, advising Fortune 500 and FTSE 100 companies on issues of reward strategy, performance management, mergers and acquisitions and human capital management.

In 2009 Jonathan was appointed as Academic Advisor to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the UK professional body for human resources and the largest management association in Europe with over 130,000 members. He also sits on the Vice President's Panel on Rewards, advising the CIPD on public policy, professional standards, research, and their publication, *People Management*.



# A novel approach

Broadcaster, rugby commentator, and author of an acclaimed military fiction series as well as a shelf-full of other books, Derek Robinson talked to Dow@Cam about a career as varied as it is successful.



DOWNING COLLEGE 5TH MAY BOAT 1956 Derek (in dark suit, bowler, and the only genuine moustache; second from the left in the seated row) decided a spoof Victorian tableau would make a more interesting shot for the boat photo.

*“Nobody puts you in the cockpit like Robinson,”* said one enthusiastic reviewer writing about *Goshawk Squadron*, Derek Robinson’s story of the Royal Flying Corps in the First World War. This, his first published novel, flew straight onto the 1971 Booker shortlist and by all accounts put up a jolly good fight against the eventual winner by V. S. Naipaul.

## In the air

Still in print, the book was thoroughly researched from first-hand sources such as letters, diaries, and memoirs. So as Derek says, “it’s pretty good history. It’s not the whole story, but there’s no deception in it. Which is the

way I think military fiction should be.” As such, the book conveys the brutal realities of life for the young fighter pilots – not war-film heroes, but real men trying to cope with some desperate situations. It’s often grim, sometimes shocking – and unexpectedly funny. But humour was not Derek’s original intention. “I set out to write a book that was as serious as can be,” he says, “but if you’re going to write about pilots, you find they have an innate sense of humour which you can’t suppress. They don’t take anything terribly seriously apart from the warfare itself.” Thus began the chronicles of the Royal Flying Corps, which developed into a World

War One trilogy, a World War Two quartet about the RAF and a popular television drama, *Piece of Cake*, based on the novel of the same name.

Derek had cherished an ambition to be a writer since boyhood when, as an evacuee living in a caravan in Scotland, he spent his evenings writing short stories. He also had a strong interest in history, and that was the subject he decided to pursue at Downing. Here he acquired the skills of the historian, but not, he says, of the writer: “Cambridge taught me to write boringly. The idea of a good sentence was one that began at the beginning of the paragraph and ended at the end of





the paragraph, with lots of semicolons in between. Rrrgggh!” He shudders at the memory.

After graduating, he spent twelve years working in advertising, first in London, then New York. And it was here, he believes, that he learned his craft. “What I learned on Madison Avenue was how to use language to make the most of what little you’ve got. You’ve got small amounts of space and time, so you can’t afford to waste a word. You can’t afford the luxury of puns and wordplay; your job is to tell the story and sell the product.” Eventually, having saved two years’ salary, he went to Portugal to write some novels. “Looking back on them, they were totally unpublishable,” he says. “They were a mish-mash of every author that I admired. But every novelist has to go through this process.”

Having gone through the Portugal process, Derek returned to England and wrote a novel of just twelve chapters, each with a heading taken from the Beaufort Scale. This time, he says, it was “not for publishers; I was writing for myself”. The title of the book was *Goshawk Squadron*, and the rest is, literally, history.

#### On the ground

It is not all military history. Other subjects have cropped up, such as the oral history of Southern Kentucky in the Civil War that became *Kentucky Blues*. “I stumbled across it in Bristol University’s Library,” says Derek, “When the war ended, the slaves were liberated – but what did they do? It’s the story of the predicament you face if you’re liberated but have no experience of liberation. Another time I stumbled over the true story of probably the best double agent in World War Two. Working for the Allies, he deceived German Intelligence so brilliantly that he simultaneously won the Iron Cross and the M.B.E. I kid you not. Just a few paragraphs of fact became *The Eldorado Network*. And that’s how it seems to work out: I write a flying story and then a non-flying story. It’s as if I have to cleanse the palate, so to speak.”

By way of complete contrast, in the same year that *Goshawk Squadron* was up for the Booker, Derek published a



humorous glossary of Bristolian phrases – *Krek Waite’s Peak Bristle* (say it aloud) – the first in a series for which he is probably best known in his home town of Bristol. Like the flying books, ‘Bristle’ has run and run.

One of the hazards of writing a successful novel is the pressure to let publishing history repeat itself. But Derek believes it’s vital to resist: “If publishers know anything, they know what worked last year; writing novels is about writing something fresh and different every time.” That’s why he has a strict policy of refusing advances and not signing a contract until a book is finished. It’s about keeping free of expectations. “I never discuss what I’m writing with anyone. Not my wife, not my friends, not my agent, not my publishers. Discussion would spoil the story, and it is a surprise – even to me! Writing novels isn’t anything you can predict and plan, you just do it.”

That might sound wonderfully spontaneous, but Derek describes a writing process which is anything but. Usually, it involves staring at a piece of blank paper for several hours a day for a week or so, while he thinks about his characters and settings. “It takes me a long time to get the flywheel turning over. I have to think and think, and the thinking is hard work,” he says. Only when he’s got it all straight in his head does the first line hit the page. From there on, the words are there to stay: this is more or less the final version.

#### Air time

It’s a highly solitary business, and Derek quickly found that after a long morning in front of the paper, he was

ready to go out and meet people. Which is where the broadcasting came in. As a former rugby player and now referee, he began by commentating on rugby matches. But producers at the newly arrived local radio station quickly discovered that Derek could talk on just about anything, and he was given opportunities to branch out into other programmes and onto Radio 4 – where he was something of a pioneer. As well as chairing the first-ever BBC Radio 4 phone-in featuring studio guest Robert Mugabe in a live-link-up from Harare to Pebble Mill, Derek presented the forerunner of Radio 4’s *Feedback*, then titled *Disgusted, Tunbridge Wells*. “The BBC had never done anything like this before,” he explains. “I wrote the whole thing, had an internal BBC telephone directory and I could call anybody I liked and ask them any question I liked – and I had a great time! I had the full co-operation of the BBC, so that if I said I’ve got a whole load of letters about such and such and I’d like to do an interview, they would call the person concerned and we’d have a line and do it. So it was liberty hall. I listen to *Feedback* occasionally, and they’re still arguing about the same kind of stuff.” He also devised and presented Radio Two’s *Hit List*, an “inverted Desert Island Discs” on which celebrities talked about six records they’d gladly never hear again – chosen not for the quality of the music, but for their associations. He fondly remembers Alan Coren’s tale of a high-speed departure from the motorway, brought about because he was conducting *The Ride of the Valkyries* on the car radio. It’s all a far cry from military fiction. But here again was Derek’s talent for taking the serious things in life and seeing the quirky side – in a way that does not diminish the seriousness but, rather, enhances it.

*Derek Robinson continues to write: last year saw the publication of Red Rag Blues, a third book about double agent Luis Cabrillo, and Hullo Russia, Goodbye England, set in the Cold War. For more on Derek Robinson’s books, see: [www.derekrobinson.info](http://www.derekrobinson.info)*

# The 111th law lord

The opening of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom in October was a legal landmark. One of the twelve law lords who took up a position in the court was Downing Lawyer, Lord Collins of Mapesbury, who has himself made legal history. Debbie Pullinger paid a visit to the House of Lords, just before the move.



Corbis Images

Justices of the Supreme Court in front of the new Supreme Court of the United Kingdom before being sworn in at the Middlesex Guildhall, London October 1, 2009. (Lord Collins, back row, second from right).

Becoming one of the country's leading judges was not something that Lord Collins ever considered when he graduated from Downing, not least because he had decided to pursue a career as a solicitor at a time when only barristers could become High Court judges. But in 1990, solicitors won the right to appear in the High Court and to sit on the High Court bench, and that cleared the way for Lawrence Collins eventually to become only the second solicitor appointed as a Judge of the High Court and the first to be appointed direct from practice. In due course he became the first solicitor ever to join the Court of Appeal, as Lord Justice Lawrence

Collins, and then a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, generally referred to as a 'law lord'.

When he was created the 111th Lord of Appeal in April this year, he was invited to choose a title. This was to comply with the rule that a lord with the same surname as any other lord, past or present, must distinguish themselves by appending an 'of [somewhere]'. For there had indeed been a Lord Richard Henn Collins, who, oddly enough, was also a lawyer from Downing – graduating in 1865. Having given the matter due consideration, Lord Justice Lawrence Collins decided to favour the north London suburb where he grew

up. He was advised, however, that 'Baron Collins of Cricklewood' would not be suitable, owing to its comic association with the district's other prominent son, the 'sage' of Cricklewood, Alan Coren. Undeterred, Lord Collins consulted a map: "I found that the area where I was brought up is in Mapesbury ward, which is part of Cricklewood. So I thought that would be the thing to do, and the Garter King of Arms approved it."

Being a Lord of Appeal involved not only sitting in the House of Lords but also in the Privy Council, which hears appeals from more than twenty jurisdictions around the world. So it's



a heavy workload. Moreover, says Lawrence Collins, “not only are the cases usually more difficult, but there is no higher court to correct the decisions. So we’ve got to get it right.”

As a solicitor, Lawrence Collins specialised in international law, having been “very much inspired by Professor Clive Parry” during his time at Downing. And it was on Clive Parry’s advice that he applied for articles at Herbert Smith & Co. He recalls how, on his first day at the firm, he was summoned to meet a senior partner and celebrated international lawyer, Dr Mann: “I was called to Dr Mann’s office where he asked me to work with him on a case in the International Court of Justice called the Barcelona Traction Case.”

Thus began a personal and professional friendship of 25 years and a practice that would continue to be built on high-profile international cases, culminating in Lawrence Collins QC (as he then was) appearing for the government of Chile in the case to extradite General Pinochet to Spain. “It was a fascinating case,” he says, “The government of Chile wasn’t supporting Pinochet, because many of them had been tortured or exiled under his regime, but they still felt it was a matter for Chile and not for Spain. But the House of Lords decided that he should go to Spain.” In the end, however, Pinochet was sent back to Chile when Jack Straw, the then Home Secretary, ruled that he was too ill to go to Spain.

Alongside building up his solicitor’s practice, eventually as a partner in Herbert Smith & Co, Lawrence Collins was publishing articles on international law. These led to invitations to lecture and to join the editorial team of a classic law text, Dicey & Morris’ *The Conflict of Laws*. “It’s the body of law that tells a lawyer or a court in England which law applies when a case has a foreign element,” he explains. “So, for example, if there’s an accident in France, does the French law of damages apply, or the English law? Or in divorce cases, where one spouse is in England and one abroad, which court has jurisdiction



to deal with money questions?” Sir Lawrence indicates the magnificent enlargement of a sepia photograph that hangs behind his desk. “The original author, A. V. Dicey, was the first cousin of Virginia Woolf, and at that time he looked very much like her.” Family resemblance does indeed make it easy to pick him out from the group of bewhiskered Victorian gentlemen. In the 1940s, Dr John Morris (a famous Oxford academic) became general editor of the work; he in turn was succeeded by Lawrence Collins, and the volume is now published as ‘Dicey, Morris & Collins’.

Since joining the judiciary, Lord Collins has continued to write academic papers, mostly within, though not restricted to, his field of private

international law. “I write on whatever grabs me, really,” he says. His latest paper, ‘Reflections on Holocaust Claims in International Law’, draws on public international law to review the legal and ethical issues of Holocaust claims that are still being made more than 60 years after the end of the war. Also a Fellow of Wolfson, Cambridge, where he was previously Director of Research in European Law, he maintains contact with the College and visits several times a year to talk to students.

In just a few days, the sepia portraits, along with a professional lifetime of legal volumes, files and papers, will all have to be moved from this stately office overlooking the Thames to the Middlesex Guildhall, across Parliament Square. This is the building that will become the home of the new Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, which replaces the House of Lords in its judicial capacity. Sir Lawrence is quite unruffled, pointing out that for him it’s the third move in six years, and that the newly refurbished Guildhall “looks terrific”. And for tonight, at least, he is looking forward to indulging his other great interest: listening to jazz. A keen concert-goer, his eyes light up at the prospect of pianist Barry Harris at the Pizza Express.

## Biography in brief

1960	Came up to Downing
1963	BA in Law
1964	LLB in Law
1965	Took LLM at Columbia Law School in New York
1968	Admitted as a solicitor at Herbert Smith & Co
1971	Became partner in Herbert Smith & Co
1975	Made a Fellow of Wolfson College
1987	Became General Editor of Dicey & Morris
1997	Made a Queen’s Counsel and Deputy High Court Judge in the Chancery Division
1994	Made Fellow of British Academy
1997	Made a Deputy High Court Judge
2000	Appointed Judge of High Court (Chancery Division)
2001	Made a Bencher of Inner Temple
2007	Appointed Lord Justice of Appeal
2009	Appointed to the House of Lords and created Baron Collins of Mapesbury



# Development Office

## Catalysis officially launched

CREATING THE ENERGY FOR CHANGE





**THE MASTER OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED THE LAUNCH OF THE CATALYSIS CAMPAIGN ON 2ND NOVEMBER 2009 TO AN AUDIENCE OF ABOUT 200 ALUMNI AT THE RAF CLUB IN PICCADILLY, LONDON.**

Many of you will already know about Catalysis and some of you will have received a leaflet about the Catalysis Annual Fund. The aim is to raise £20m by 2015 for the College endowment.

The endowment is the College's investments in cash, securities, and property that generates the income that underpins a great part of expenditure. In recent years the value of the endowment has been around £30m.

An extra £20m will provide the College with financial stability and security. This will enable us to focus instead on the real business of Downing: enhancing teaching, learning and research, preserving a beautiful environment, providing a supportive community, and offering a financial safety net for our students. At the present level of endowment, we are dominated by financial difficulty and our ability to provide a stable and excellent educational environment for our students is constrained.

£20m is an ambitious target but only 26% of our income now comes from academic fees; therefore, we must do everything that we can to enhance our other sources of income, including donations, the conference and function business, and endowment income.



# Development Office

Many of you are already donors and the College is extremely grateful to you for the commitment that you've shown to future generations of students. At some stage most of you will be asked to give to Catalysis and this might be through the Annual Fund, through celebrations of landmark reunions, by personal appeal from the Master or the Development Director, or simply by clicking on the donation button on the website ([www.downingcambridge.com](http://www.downingcambridge.com)) where you can also find the full Catalysis brochure.

We are offering many opportunities, including endowing Fellowships and bursaries, to meet the College's many needs. If you would like us to send you a copy of the brochure or if you want us to contact you about this please get in touch with Tariq Sadiq, Director of Development, [ts364@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ts364@cam.ac.uk), 01223 334828 or at the College address.

*Join us on this exciting journey.*



## THE CATALYSIS CONFERENCE | 16–18 July 2010

Through the generosity of philanthropists David and Maria Willetts and Humphrey Battcock (1973) the College will be able to hold its first annual Catalysis Conference during the weekend of 16–18 July 2010.

This conference is for those who have given or have pledged to give £50,000 or more to the College and will offer an opportunity to engage with Downing Fellows and university academics in an emerging area of research. We are planning the first conference around the theme of Neuroscience and its clinical application. The Conference will involve

presentations and interactive seminars giving donors a chance to really explore what's happening in the neuroscience of psychiatric disorders and decision making and to discover the role that Downing and Cambridge are playing in the field.

The event will include a dinner and invitees will be able to bring guests to the Conference. If you are interested in receiving an invitation and would like to discuss making a donation please do get in touch with the Development Director.





### **DOW@CAM**

This issue of Dow@Cam is later than usual because we wished to publish it after the launch of Catalysis. There are also further changes on the horizon: from autumn next year, Dow@Cam will be published just once a year rather than twice and will have more pages. We are also looking at other ways of producing Magenta News in the future and will be discussing this with Year Representatives and the Downing Association.

These changes are partly motivated by the need to reduce costs and also to make room for new initiatives such as the e-newsletter which we plan to send to all alumni at least twice a year.

### **DOWNING CHOIR USA TOUR**

Between 30th June and 14 July 2010, the Downing Choir will be visiting New York and Vermont and will be giving performances to Downing alumni and at a music festival in Vermont. Camilla Godlee, Senior Organ Scholar, said "The planning is well under way and

we are all really excited about the trip. We are hoping to be in contact with Downing alumni during our stay in New York!"

If you can help with potential venues for performances please do contact Camilla through the Development Office.

### **MAYS WILD FUND FOR THE NATURAL SCIENCES**

We give our warmest thanks to all those who donated to the Mays Wild Fund which has now exceeded its £500,000 target. We pay tribute to John Hawkins (1952) Chair of the Mays Wild Committee who sadly died in 2008 before the completion of the Appeal.

The Fund has made it possible for the College to appoint a Mays Wild Fellow; the second holder of the Fellowship is Sophie Harrington, Research Fellow in Materials Science. The fund also provides undergraduates with small grants to enable them to carry out vacation research.



**Serita Rana**

### **DEVELOPMENT STAFF NEWS**

We are delighted to welcome Serita Rana to the Development Office as the new Deputy Director of Development. She has already made major improvements to the website and launched the e-newsletter. The College now has a presence on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Serita joined us from Fitzwilliam College and is also an alumna of Queens' College where she did an MPhil in English Literature.

We are also very pleased to welcome back Sara Brinkley, Events Coordinator, after the birth of her daughter Phoebe. Helen Machin continues on maternity leave having also given birth to a daughter, Ruby, and we offer both our congratulations. Natalie De Biasi has joined the Development team to provide maternity cover.



# Elective perspective



For students heading for the end of their medical training, an overseas elective offers the opportunity to see practice in a very different context. Downing medics Rachel Sagar and Catherine John enjoyed a very varied and valuable placement arranged and funded by alumna Lucy Lord. They told us about their experience.



Catherine John (left) and Rachel Sagar (right) with Lucy Lord and her son, James.

We met Lucy for the first time when we turned up on her doorstep after a twelve-hour flight and no sleep. She gave us tea and toast as we collapsed on her sofa. Spending the first two weeks at her private health clinic in Hong Kong was especially valuable because it specialises in obstetrics and paediatrics, the fields we're both interested in. After two whirlwind weeks in this cosmopolitan, 24-hour city we travelled north to work in the medical wing of an orphanage in rural China.

We arrived just days after the orphanage had moved into a new building with six storeys and an operating theatre. There was room for 200 children, but as there weren't yet

enough staff, only 40 had moved in. Some had long-term disabilities such as Down's syndrome or cerebral palsy; others were acutely unwell, like the very underweight babies who were unlikely to survive. Some were potentially treatable with surgery, and if possible would be sent for surgery in Beijing or overseas.

Of course everything was new, so all the teething problems happened while we were there. The Internet and phone hadn't been put in yet, so it was difficult to get in touch with the medical director in Beijing. Then one day there was a big storm and the windows all leaked. Several of the rooms were flooded and the electricity

went off. We spent that night trying to find our way round with our tiny pen torches that you use for looking into people's eyes.

Language was a major hurdle. We learned some Chinese by the end, but we went out there not knowing a single word. We'd both intended to learn some before we went, but inevitably exams got in the way. We were really lucky that there was another student there from the US who could speak Chinese, but after five weeks it gets frustrating when there's only a handful of people you can really communicate with. Communication with the children was much easier. "Peek-a-boo" and tickles seem to be universal!





Every morning we would go round checking on the kids, the sickest first, to see if there were any new problems. We made sure they'd had their medication, fed well and produced enough dirty nappies during the night. We spent lots of time doing "non-medical" things too. Normally there are three children to one nanny, so we were able to spend more time playing with them, just having fun and trying to help their overall development, which for many of them has been delayed by sickness. One of our favourite projects was trying to get a little boy to sit up by himself. He nearly got there by the time we left.

Some days were really hard. One day we found out in the morning that a baby had died during the night, then later the same day we went to hospital with another child who also died despite all efforts to save him. On the other hand, there was also the day we heard that some of the children were going to be adopted. We were so excited to know

that some of them were going to have families of their own. There were other rewards too. Just walking into a room and seeing a child smile back at you was a great feeling, and it was even better when one of the little girls started walking just a few months after a major heart operation.

Talking to other medical students, you get the impression that most people come home from their elective feeling a bit older and wiser, having gained an experience of the world that you don't get in Cambridge. It's not so much about learning a particular medical skill. When resources are scarce, you learn the value of simple things, like having a carer to love each child, cuddle them and give constant comfort in the last few hours of their life. There was a big emphasis on that.

The thing that struck us in China was that medicine's not perfect. As doctors, we won't be able to go out there and save everybody, and there aren't enough resources to try and do that. But there are still a lot of things in the world that we can do something about. We're glad we had the opportunity to do that, even just for a short time. Once we're qualified and have more experience, we'd love to go back to the orphanage and be able to contribute more.



A selection from Rachel and Catherine's Chinese photo album

## Biography in brief

### DR LUCY LORD (1981, *Medicine*)

Lucy Lord came to Downing to study clinical medicine in 1981 after training at King's College, London. She met and married fellow postgraduate Ashley Alder (1982) and both now live in Hong Kong with their two children, Katie and James. Ashley is a partner at Herbert Smith and she runs a highly successful gynaecology and obstetrics practice.

In 2006, Lucy Lord established an annual elective placement for two Cambridge medical students of which one place is available to a Downing student and the other is open to competition. The elective offer is for three weeks in Hong Kong at Lucy Lord's practice then three weeks in China at a children's orphanage.

Lucy and Ashley very kindly hosted a reception at their home for Downing alumni in Hong Kong in March 2009, attended by the Master and the Development Director, and are playing an important part in keeping the Downing community there together.





# The peaceful art of inemuri

Cambridge student life is notoriously full-on, with many a long day and short night. Whilst catching up on sleep during lectures might be a tempting idea, few consider it a serious option. But drop in on a lecture at any top Japanese university, and you'd catch up to half of the students dropping off. And it's not just in lectures. On trains, at work, even in meetings, you're just as likely to find people having a quick snooze. This napping behaviour – or *inemuri*, as it is known in Japan – is the subject of an exhaustive study by Downing Fellow and Japanologist, Brigitte Steger.



Brigitte first became interested in the subject in the late 1980s, when Japan was still in the bubble economy. “I noticed several things,” she says. “People would say it was hard that they had only four or five hours sleep a night, but then they seemed proud of that. And then they were napping, but that did not seem to count as sleep. So I wondered what was going on.” When she was disturbed in the middle of the night by some noisy roadworks right outside her Tokyo lodgings, she was forcibly woken up to the fact that this was a society with a rather different perspective on sleep and patterns of daily life.

## Sleep strategies

At the time, the only sleep research came from physiological and medical perspectives, so Brigitte had to start more or less from scratch, using a combination of literature and empirical research to investigate her subject. “Physiologically *inemuri* is sleep, but socially it is not,” she explains. “Literally *i-* means to be present, while *nemuri* means sleep. So *inemuri* refers to the kind of sleep you do while you are present and participate in a situation that is not sleep. Borrowing from Erving Goffman I regard it as a ‘subordinate involvement’ to a social situation. There are rules, so you can sleep provided you don’t disturb the

situation at hand. And your social position affects whether you are allowed to sleep and how it is interpreted. But the important thing is that you must be able to reconnect to the situation.” Moreover, she finds that *inemuri* is sometimes used strategically for particular effects. So a manager might pretend to nap in a meeting so as to leave space for junior colleagues to contribute, or a ‘sleeping’ girl might rest her head on the shoulder of a man she fancies on a train.

In a society renowned for its work ethic, the idea of being able to sleep on the job might seem a little odd. But Brigitte says it has a logic; just not the logic that



we have in Europe. It is not, she insists, the same thing as the fashionable ‘power-nap’. For whereas power-napping has a clear and direct purpose – to boost mental function and efficiency – *inemuri* plays a more subtle and complex role: “because to be successful, you have to show that you can overcome hardship and deal with difficult situations. You show your effort by being exhausted, so falling asleep in class can be a subtle way to ‘prove’ how hard you have been working. Moreover, by doing *inemuri*, you can stick to the demand of cutting down your sleep – and still get your sleep. It’s efficient, but in a certain way.”

It’s tempting to conclude that *inemuri* is simply the product of an overworked, overwrought society, but when Brigitte began to delve into Japanese history, she found the behaviour was deeply embedded in the culture, completely independent of a busy lifestyle. “In the Samurai boarding schools,” she says, “students were deliberately woken up at night because it’s harder to study at night than during the day. So, again, this is not about efficiency at work, it’s about overcoming hardship.”

Brigitte is eager to stress, however, that this is a complex phenomenon, and only by approaching it from various angles has she been able to build up a full picture. So, for example, she has examined the way the Japanese government’s policy of encouraging leisure activities affected patterns of daily life. As the work-hard culture became the work-hard–play-hard culture, sleep was inevitably affected. “Not only did people have even less time to sleep, but as people got more stressed, their sleep got disturbed. So then they started to pay in order to get sleep – for better mattresses and all these kind of things.” The idea of sleep as a commodity is perhaps epitomised in the ‘sleep concert’, where people would pay to sit in a two-hour concert with special synthesised music, just to go to sleep. It seems, as Brigitte says, “the peak of this irony.”

By making international comparisons, Brigitte has found that societies vary in their sleep patterns and has proposed a typology: monophasic sleep culture (a single, night-time sleep), siesta culture and napping culture. She believes that monophasic sleep and siesta cultures

have emerged under the influence of industrialisation and bourgeois values, while napping cultures were not only prevalent in premodern times, but will also become more common with increasingly flexible working and diversification of lifestyles in postindustrial societies.

### Bedding in

Japanese studies are becoming more popular, probably, Brigitte thinks, as a result of the spread of Japanese popular culture. It’s all very different from when she started as an undergraduate at the University of Vienna. “When I first thought of reading Japanese studies, people said, oh you’re crazy – and what do you do with Japanese?” And there was little opportunity during the course to visit the country itself. But Brigitte was determined to have some experience of Japan, and worked for the Austrian Trade Commission for six months in order to fund herself for an eight-month study trip. Having spent two years at Kyoto University during her PhD and a further two research stays in Tokyo, she says she now feels very much at home in the country.

She now aims to spend some part of each year there, not least in order to keep up with changes in the language. As well as being difficult to learn, Japanese is a highly volatile language. “There are lots of idioms and abbreviations and it’s very playful. They invent new words all the time,” says Brigitte. Similarly, she points out, keeping abreast of changes in society is vital for teaching. “Friends in Japan are an important source of knowledge, so I see and talk with them a lot. Of course this is fun, but they are also my most

important sources of information. I like the work I do, so I don’t think of a work–leisure distinction – rather like the Japanese really.”

“As a Japanologist, you really have to be at home with different worlds,” says Brigitte. It’s a facility which could be useful when it comes to entering the esoteric world of Cambridge University. Brigitte says while there are many aspects she really appreciates, there’s a lot of adjustment needed. But she thinks that throwing herself into College life has helped. “I’m on several committees, but there are also rather peculiar jobs like being Silver Auditor, where you check once a year whether the College silver is still all there. I’m also on the wine committee, which means I *should* go to wine tastings three times a week for lunch – or instead of lunch – but that’s just not sustainable!” One can see how it might create problems in the afternoon. Perhaps a spot of *inemuri* would be the answer?



## Biography in brief

Brigitte Steger was born in Austria and completed an MPhil and PhD at the University of Vienna. During her doctorate research, she spent two years at the University of Kyoto, and subsequently returned to Japan to do research at Tokyo universities. She taught at the Universities of Vienna, Pennsylvania and Karoli Gaspar in Budapest before becoming a University Lecturer in Modern Japanese Studies at Cambridge and a Fellow at Downing.

Her latest book, *Worlds of Sleep* (2008) which she edited with Lodewijk Brunt, explores continuities and divergences in sleep behaviour across history and culture. Brigitte is currently writing a history of the timing of day and night.

# Royal connections



DR ALAN HOWARD IS  
RECOGNISED FOR HIS  
OUTSTANDING  
PHILANTHROPY

22, JULY 2009



Dr Alan Howard, Wilkins and Honorary Fellow, was honoured with The Chancellor's 800th Anniversary Medal for Outstanding Philanthropy for his many years of support to the College including his most recent gift to construct the Howard Theatre. The medal was presented to him by His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh at Buckingham Palace on 22 July 2009.

The Master, Professor Barry Everitt, and Dr Howard's wife, Lydia and daughter, Julie were guests at this special event.



HER MAJESTY THE  
QUEEN VISITS  
UNIVERSITY TO MARK  
800TH ANNIVERSARY

19 NOVEMBER 2009

The University of Cambridge welcomed Her Majesty the Queen as part of the University's 800th Anniversary Celebrations on 19 November 2009.

The Master, along with Katie Marshall (JCR President) and Brett Kennedy (MCR President) were among the lucky few who had the opportunity to meet Her Majesty.

## EVENTS CALENDAR 2010

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY IN 2010

**Wednesday 27 January 2010**  
Year Reps Meeting and Dinner

**Saturday 30 January 2010**  
Griffins' Annual Dinner

**March 2010**  
Master visits Hong Kong

**Saturday 27 March 2010**  
1965 Reunion dinner

**Saturday 27 March 2010**  
Annual Reunion Dinner  
for years pre-1951  
and 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000

**Saturday 24 April 2010**  
Segreants Dinner

**Saturday 15 May 2010**  
2003 MA Awards Dinner

**Saturday 12 June 2010**  
Donors' Garden Party

**Saturday 24 July 2010**  
1749 Society Reception

**Saturday 25 September 2010**  
Alumni Day and Association Dinner

**Friday 24– Sunday 26 September 2010**  
Cambridge University Alumni Weekend

University programme of lectures and tours. For further details or to receive a booking form please contact Cambridge University Alumni Office on 01223 332288, [alumni@foundation.cam.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@foundation.cam.ac.uk) or visit [www.foundation.cam.ac.uk](http://www.foundation.cam.ac.uk)

**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](http://www.downingcambridge.com) or contact Sara Brinkley in the Development Office on 01223 334850 or email [sjb244@cam.ac.uk](mailto:sjb244@cam.ac.uk)

### JOIN THE DOWNING CONVERSATION ONLINE

Get the latest College news as it happens by joining our online channels.

#### Facebook

[www.facebook.com/downingcollege](http://www.facebook.com/downingcollege)  
The official Downing College Facebook fanpage is a thriving community of hundreds of Downing students and alumni.

#### Twitter

Receive regular updates on the College in 140 characters or less.  
[www.twitter.com/downingcollege](http://www.twitter.com/downingcollege)