

DOW@CAM

THE DOWNING COLLEGE MAGAZINE / VOLUME 26 / WINTER 2014-2015





From the Master 2015

There was a gothic moment outside the Master's Lodge recently, as we marked the bicentenary of the death of Sir Busick Harwood with a graveside reading of Byron's "Churchill's Grave". The candles flickered as we dwelt in the darkness upon his passing. Harwood was elected Downing Professor of Medicine in 1800, and lived in the East Lodge from its completion until his death in 1814. By all accounts, he was a merry soul who brought life and society into the early College. His request to be buried in the as yet unbuilt Chapel proved in a sense premature, but instead he lies close to the football and frisbee.

Last academic year was grand in every respect. The first-year students were notably successful in their examinations, and the number of new scholars exceeded by 25% last year's total of 42. Our position in the famous "tables" rose

to 10th, and we boasted the very top first in no fewer than nine of the degree classifications of the University. Perhaps most prominent was the achievement of Yang Li, a China Scholar of the Jardine Foundation, who became the Senior Wrangler in the Mathematical Tripos, probably the first in Downing's history since the first Senior Wrangler of 1748. I say "probably" since the rank disappeared from the formal records of the University in 1910, and is now maintained in unofficial records only.

We have gained two musical instruments of significance. Our new organ is now in its proper place within the renovated Chapel. This is a splendid and flexible instrument which will bring pleasure to future generations of players, listeners, and worshippers, and is the swansong of its maker, Kenneth Tickell. In addition, the Music Room in West Lodge is now

equipped with a new Kawai grand piano, of which the inaugural recital was given recently by a number of virtuosic Downing undergraduates.

This year is the centenary of the onset of hostilities in the Great War of 1914–1918. We are grateful to the College Archivist for her display of extracts from past editions of the Griffin magazine of relevance to the war, and to the donor of the historic and poignant freshmen photograph of 1914. Do please visit the Library during the time of the exhibition. Our Dramatic Society has commemorated the loss of so many young lives in its November production in the Howard Theatre of "The Accrington Pals".

Sport blooms in Downing, as always, and we boast exceptional performances in a number of events. Hearty congratulations to our rugby players on winning last year's college league and to our rowers on numerous successes including the men's headship in the Lent Bumps and the women's in the May Bumps. Keep it up!

Finally, a big thank-you to all of you who have welcomed Rosine and me to the Downing community over the last year. We are privileged to be here, and to have met so many wonderful people across the generations.

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Dr Adriana Pesci with Serenydd Everden, Bruce Head June 2014



The Officer Training Corps outside the Hall, 1916 (Archive ref: DCPH/2/4/7)

From the Archives

The College Archivist, Jenny Ulph, writes about several significant anniversaries in the history of the College this year: the centenary of the First World War and the anniversaries of the deaths of Sir Jacob Downing, 4th Baronet, and Downing's first Professor of Medicine, Sir Busick Harwood.

As is well-known, this summer marked the centenary of the start of WWI, and a piece on 'Downing and the outbreak of the war' was the first in a new 'From the Archives' section on the College website. A new exhibition on 'Downing and the War: Through The Griffin's Eyes' is currently on display in the Maitland Robinson Library and features extracts from the College magazine, including letters from the Front, a war list of serving members and obituaries for those who never made it home. An online Roll of Honour, commemorating those who died in the First World War, is currently in progress and will feature biographies of all those listed.

College Notes.

There are sixteen in residence this term: we shudder when we contemplate the next.

Extract from The Griffin, Easter 1917

February this year marked the 250th anniversary of the death of the last surviving Downing heir, Sir Jacob Garrard Downing, 4th Baronet, on 6 February 1764. This was the point that, according to the 1717 will of his predecessor, Sir George Downing, the vast Downing wealth should have been used to found a Cambridge college in his name. However, after Sir Jacob



Portrait of Sir Jacob Garrard Downing, 4th Bt, with kind permission of Mr Peter Fullerton

left his estate to his widow, Lady Margaret Downing, the University entered a lengthy and costly legal battle with Lady Downing and her heirs, which was not settled until after 1800 when the College's charter was eventually granted. The death of Sir Jacob Downing 250 years ago, and the subsequent litigation which

significantly depleted the value of the estate, has had lasting implications on the finances of the College.

As the Master has written, an unusual and perhaps lesser-known event in the College's history was commemorated on Friday 14 November, when a small group, including the Master and Senior Bursar, gathered at the grave of Sir Busick Harwood, Downing's first Professor of Medicine (who is buried in a vault between the Master's Lodge and Hall). He had wished to be buried in the chapel at Downing but, as neither this nor the vault underneath had been built at the time of his death, the College secured an emergency licence on 12 November 1814 to inter him in a hastily-built vault under the proposed site of the College chapel, in Wilkins' South Range (which, of course, was never built). Fascinating letters from Wilkins relating to the vault still survive in the archive. Interestingly, at the time, it was proposed that it might also be home to the body of Downing's first elected Fellow, Charles Skinner Matthews, a personal friend of Lord Byron, who drowned in 1811 in Byron's Pool and was buried in St Bene't's. There is no evidence that his body was ever moved. In 1987, a memorial stone was finally laid to mark Sir Busick's resting place. Much has been written in Dow@Cam recently about Harwood's collection of Sylvester Harding miniatures, but this aspect of the College's – and his – history is perhaps less well-known.

From the Archives pieces on WWI, Sir Jacob Downing and Sir Busick Harwood are now online at www.dow.cam.ac.uk/index.php/about/archive/archives. Hard copies are available from the College Archivist, Jenny Ulph, (ju213@dow.cam.ac.uk), who is also happy to take in any old photographs or memorabilia relating to the College's history and its members.



Follow the College Archives on facebook
www.facebook.com/downingcollegearchives



Beyond bricks and mortar

Simon Nelson read Classics at Downing from 1988 to 1991. He is now the CEO of FutureLearn, the UK's leading provider of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). Continuing our series of articles highlighting the topical work done by our alumni, Anthea Milnes asks him about his work and about the excitement generated by the MOOCs revolution.

Q What does "massive" mean? What sort of scale are we talking about?

A The term "MOOC" was coined in America. These courses were initially offered in areas such as computer science by institutions such as Stanford and MIT. They were expected to attract a few hundred people, but some ended up attracting over 100,000 participants.

We have just delivered a course on Exploring English: Language and Culture, developed with the British Council, that attracted over 120,000 learners. But we also offer niche courses to much smaller audiences – we've run a course in dental photography, for example.

Q So who are MOOCs for? Are they mainly for maths and science geeks?

A The early adopters of MOOCs certainly included many highly educated men. But at FutureLearn, we are attracting people of all ages, from 16 to 96. We are attracting more women than men – there's a 60:40 split in favour of women – and 60 per cent of our learners are from outside the UK. Seventy per cent have a degree already, but 30 per cent haven't. You need a reasonable level of education and good spoken English as we offer demanding undergraduate level courses but, apart from that, the courses are for anyone, and cover many subject areas.

Q Former universities minister David Willetts said that FutureLearn has the potential "to revolutionise conventional models of formal education". But is revolution desirable?

A The Internet is hitting higher education the way it has hit many other industries already. There are enormous benefits; for consumers, it opens up opportunities for free, flexible, on-demand learning they can take advantage of at any age, anywhere in the world; for universities, it gives them the opportunity to reach new audiences, to create new commercial models, and to showcase their research strengths. It also offers them a powerful way to attract and recruit new students.

Q Quality in online learning embraces content, design and instruction. How do you ensure quality at FutureLearn?

A We are wholly owned by The Open University, which is a world leader in distance learning and online learning.

We have carefully developed a social learning platform, with pedagogy built in to help people learn by having conversations around each piece of course material. Storytelling is a really important part of our course design; each course has a beginning, middle and an end to keep learners engaged and take them on a really compelling journey.

Our Content Producers come from backgrounds in media and consumer tech, and work with our university partners to create courses that are clear and easy to follow. The producers make sure the academic content is right for the medium of the internet. We also help our university partners to develop skills in managing social communities or developing effective videos, for example.

Q MOOCs are generally free or very low cost. But if students aren't paying for these courses, where is the cash coming from? And how will MOOCs be monetised in the longer term?

A All our courses are free to do and will remain so, but we are a commercial subsidiary of The Open University and need to make the business sustainable. We currently charge a small amount for Statements of Participation for people who want additional proof of their learning, for workplace learning, for instance. We also charge for exams in specific courses, for people who want that further test of their knowledge. Right now we're taking a 'freemium' approach, and we have more business models in development. We want to stay open but encourage people to pay for added-value content.

Q How about the intellectual property issues? Aren't universities and academics just giving away their content for free?

A Universities and academics have a good understanding of the benefits of offering free online courses. My view is that you need to find the right balance between free and paid-for content. Giving away free content creates a funnel into paid services, and we're trying to help academics and institutions navigate that. For instance, early adopter academics are becoming far more widely known and having a wider impact, and the same might be said for the universities reaching new overseas markets through MOOCs. You don't have to give everything away, but you can use MOOCs to pull people in.

Q One of your competitors is called MOOC2Degree. Is this the way things are going? Will you offer MOOCs for credit?

A We won't offer MOOCs for credit. We're not in the business of becoming a university. But our partner universities may choose to do this and we'd work with them to help make this viable. Universities tend to look at their existing user base and established business models. What people forget is that MOOCs offer a myriad of options to create new commercial opportunities with new partners of all kinds. It's a creative and exciting moment for higher education.

Q Do MOOCs threaten the survival of universities? Will universities close? And will academics lose their jobs?!

A I doubt that universities will close or academics will lose their jobs. There's been a lot of such talk about whether MOOCs will drive the closure of universities. What is happening is that the digitisation of this sector is creating opportunities for incumbent institutions to re-position and transform themselves. If those institutions are wedded to their existing business models and aren't prepared to be flexible or move fast enough to meet the challenges, then their existence might be threatened.

Q You studied Classics at Downing. Do you think that Cambridge should be offering Classics MOOCs?

A Cambridge has decided not to join for now. But I believe Classics is crying out for the kind of treatment that MOOCs can provide, to bring the subject to a wider audience. Even if Cambridge doesn't join FutureLearn, I hope that we can create some great online Classics courses! Plus I remain in conversation with my former tutors at Cambridge, including Paul Millett at Downing and Mary Beard, whom I hope to convince one day to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity.

A After leaving Manchester Grammar School Simon Nelson arrived at Downing in 1988 to read Classics. He left in 1991 and took a part-time MBA at Manchester Business School while working for a family friend in a wholesale wig and toupée business. He later worked as Brand Development Manager at The Independent newspaper before joining the BBC in 1997.

Simon spent nearly 15 years at the BBC, rising to a senior management position in charge of all digital content and operations for BBC Television. Starting as Head of Strategy for BBC Radio and & Music, his projects included launching the BBC's first on-demand services – the Radio Player and world-leading podcasting service – and developing new stations such as Radio 6 Music. His subsequent move to BBC Television saw him join the launch team for the BBC iPlayer, and create an online presence for all of the BBC's programmes, from Drama and Children's to Science and Learning. After leaving the BBC in 2010, Simon led a number of digital strategy and product development projects in the TV, radio and publishing sectors.

In December 2012 Simon took on the role as Chief Executive of FutureLearn, building a team almost 50 and overseeing the development of the website which went live in September 2013. Over 40 leading international universities and cultural institutions have now partnered with FutureLearn, with more than one million learners signed up from more than 190 countries.



Long Vacation Group – July 1890 – including two students from Calcutta University, Ali Syed Kazim and Khan Bahadur Syed Aulad Hossein (Archive reference: DCPH/8/1)

Downing College and India

Teresa Segura-Garcia

Frederick Howard Marsh is not one of Downing's best-remembered Masters. However, he played a significant role in maintaining a historical feature that set Downing apart from all other colleges in Cambridge.

On 19 March 1909, Marsh received a letter from Lord Morley, the Liberal Secretary of State for India. As head of the India Office, Lord Morley was in charge of regulating all affairs of the relationship between Britain and India, the British Empire's largest possession. Lord Morley was writing to Marsh about what he coyly called "the situation". There was, Morley reminded him, an agreement among the Heads of all the other colleges in Cambridge about what was to be done. It was now for Marsh to decide if Downing was going to fall into line.

Morley's "situation" was the increasing involvement of young Indian men enrolled in British universities in anticolonial activities. In 1905 Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, had effected the Partition of Bengal – a strategy

of 'divide and rule' that was expected to quell the growing efforts of the Indian National Congress to secure independence for India. In fact, Curzon's move had the opposite effect, galvanising large numbers of Indians into bolder and occasionally violent protests. This unrest soon spread to Indian expatriates in Britain – particularly in London, which had the largest concentration of Indian students in the country. Lord Morley now hoped to stop the student agitation from reaching Cambridge by convincing the Heads of colleges to cap the admission of Indian students.

If the Secretary of State for India was particularly anxious to obtain the co-operation of the Master of Downing, it was because since the mid-1870s the college had an unusually high intake of Indian students. Of roughly ninety

Indian students at the University in the early 1900s, over thirty were at Downing. The Master admitted that Downing held "a peculiar position" with regard to Indian applicants, which he attributed to the college's particular strength in Law. This subject was particularly attractive to Indians, as the Bar in Bombay and Calcutta was confined to barristers trained in England. In his letter, Lord Morley asked Marsh to limit the intake of Indian students from six or seven to one or two per year, a number that all other Heads of Colleges had thought appropriate. After putting the matter before the college's Governing Body, Marsh replied to Morley explaining that Downing would not be making any changes to its admissions process. Doing so would be, as he put it, "a rebuff to Indian students".

Marsh's decision strengthened some long-standing ties between India and Downing College. The backgrounds of Indian students at Downing were intimately linked with the history of British expansion in India. Many of them came from the commercial elites of western India and Bengal – communities with strong ties to the British since the early days of the East India Company in the seventeenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century, with developments in transportation and communications making international travel easier, these elites sent their sons to Britain – and to Downing – in search of employment. They came in search of entry to the Bar, but also to the colonial administration: appointments to the Indian Civil Service could be obtained only after a period of study in Britain.

One of the earliest Indian students at Downing was Bomanjee Ardeseer Wadia (1886), a scion of the Wadia family, the dynasty of Parsi shipbuilders who had turned Bombay into one of Asia's busiest ports. He was followed by other students from wealthy commercial backgrounds, such as Dhirojlal Panachund Shroff (1893), whose father was a Gujarati

cloth merchant based in Ahmedabad. The political elites who had forged alliances with the British were also well-represented, with students such as Pyare Lal Roy (1875), from a prominent landowning family of Bengal; Prince Fatehsinhrao (1905), heir of the Maharaja of Baroda, the leading princely state of western India; and Dharam Narain Kak (1906), an upper-caste Kashmiri whose father was the minister of the Maharaja of Jodhpur.

Many of these students had been educated in Indian institutions that resembled the elite boarding schools of Britain, so they would have been no strangers to the traditions and customs of Downing. They lived cheek by jowl with British students who were no strangers to India themselves: some had been born in India to families in the colonial administration and many others would join the ranks of the Indian Civil Service after their time at Downing. In the late nineteenth century, imperial expansion was making elites around the world more alike in what they knew, thought and did. Downing College played a not unimportant role

in that transformation, equipping its students with an imperial education of a formal and an informal kind.

Indian students at Downing read Law, but also Economics and Classics. In lectures and supervisions, they learnt about the teachings of the Church of England, parliamentary oratory and the plight of Macbeth. In the College's Literary Society, they listened to British students reading papers on Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott, and presented their own. Dharam Narain Kak, for instance, gave a paper on the *Mahabharata*, the great Sanskrit epic. In the debating society, Mansurat Das Jaini (1905) spoke up in a debate on the decline of the British Empire, although there is no record of his stance. Indian students also participated in the College's sports clubs. Jatindra Mohan Sengupta (1905) rowed as bow for the Downing College Boat Club, whose membership also included coxes Batuk Prabhashanker Pattani (1905) and Mohamed Gianullah Ghatala (1907). Pattani also played cricket for the DCCC.

By taking a stance against the Secretary of State for India, the Master of Downing ensured that the college continued to provide an education for some of the elite of the Empire. This would not eventually benefit British designs in India: if what Indian students learnt at Downing gave them a new sense of what it meant to be imperial subjects, it also made them aware of the limitations of being imperial subjects. Upon their return to India, some of them would make significant contributions to the push for Independence. Jatindra Mohan Sengupta went from rowing for the DCBC to opposing British rule as a leader of the Indian National Congress in Bengal. Many other Downing alumni played key roles in the lead-up to Independence in 1947, but also in independent India, Pakistan and eventually Bangladesh, in fields as diverse as law, politics, medicine, education and religion. Downing's little-known but special relationship with India has no epilogue – the next chapter is to be written with the comings and goings of future Indian alumni.



TERESA SEGURA GARCIA arrived at Downing in 2009 for the MPhil in Modern South Asian Studies and stayed on to complete a PhD in History. She was MCR President in 2013.

"My dissertation is in the fields of Modern South Asian and Global History. It's entitled 'Baroda, the British empire and the world, c. 1875–1939'. It focuses on

Baroda, the leading princely state of western India. The Indian princely states are usually thought to be very isolated areas. This is something that my research challenges, as I trace the far-ranging networks of people, ideas and resources that linked them with the rest of the British Empire and the world. I developed an interest in the topic of Indian students in Cambridge because many Indian princes sent their sons to study here. As an historian of India and a Downing member, it has been fascinating to discover the very special connection between the two. It was while doing research for this piece that I found out that the eldest son and heir of the main protagonist of my PhD, the Maharaja of Baroda, matriculated at Downing in 1905 – quite a coincidence!"



Room for Improvement

The Room for Improvement project began in early 2014 with an appeal to alumni to help us to complete our records by letting us know where they had lived during their time at Downing, who had lived near them and what were their memories of living in College. We received an excellent response, especially from alumni from the 1950s and 1960s, including the comments and photographs shown here. We would still like to hear from you, though, about your time at Downing – and someone must have some photographs of the College taken since 1970? We look forward to hearing from you at development@dow.cam.ac.uk!

C1 1957, courtesy of Peter Thrower



C1 1957, courtesy of Peter Thrower



1973

'To go to the toilet or have a wash I had to cross the yard at the back to an unheated ablution block – it was not great in the winter.'



1955

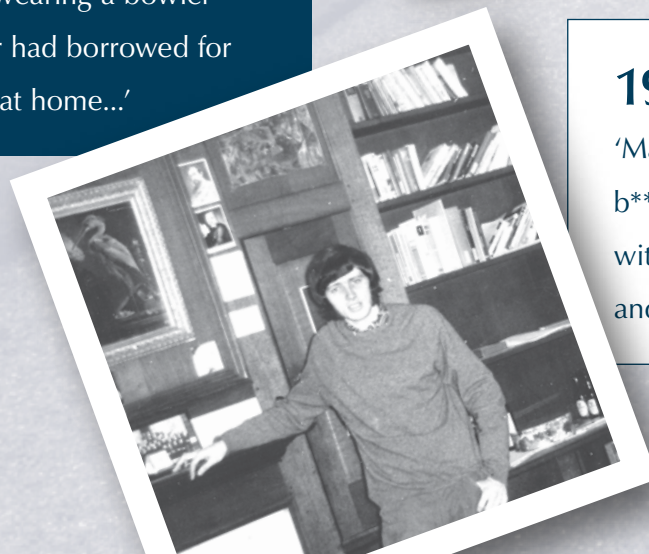
'On one side of me lived the late Joe Melia, who became a well-known actor on stage and screen. He spent Poppy Day (Rag Day) performing a very good Charlie Chaplin act around the streets of Cambridge wearing a bowler hat, which my mother had borrowed for me from a neighbour at home...'



Lensfield Road 1965, courtesy of Roger Haines

1960

'Main memory is that it was b****y cold – NE corner, with nothing between you and Siberia!'



1967, courtesy of Mike McCarthy



View From L2 1965,
courtesy of Roger Haines



Between 1969 and 1972,
courtesy of Mervyn Parry

1983

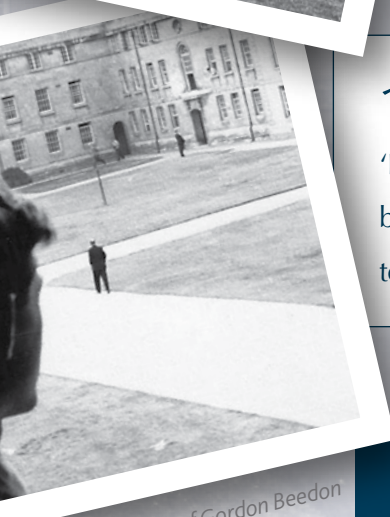
'I remember a fellow student, now a QC, playing his bagpipes in our gardens in the early April morning mists!'



Between 1969 and 1972,
courtesy of Mervyn Parry



1967, courtesy of Mike McCarthy



1957, courtesy of Gordon Beedon

1992

'Howard Lodge ... was a real treat because they were the first rooms to have ensuite bathrooms!'

2000

'Much dissent among the K stair dwellers that year ... the College started doing up the rooms to turn them into ensembles. We were paying low rent for rooms that were big with wonderfully high ceilings and some superbly grotty carpets (you could spill a pint on it and it was absorbed instantly), but we all felt it was a bit much when we came back after Christmas to find our rooms all had a section taken out of them with unfinished stud walls for the bathrooms...'

Living in "L"

For seven days now, I've been "Living in L" –
Though the chapel's not far away!
In many ways, now, I know it as well
As the back of my hand, as they say.

On every story
There is Purgatory
In the room where we make our brew
Because of the stink
Of sour milk – you would think
There would be a cool cupboard or two.

Musicians abound,
And the ceilings resound
To the various sounds of: a trumpet,
Tenor sax, and recorder,
And, to add to disorder,
Two pianos – the rest must just lump it!

If that's not enough
To make our ears tough,
There's the organ behind the west wall,
Whose notes are as clear
As if 'twas in here –
There's just no sound-proofing at all!

By Roger Haines (1965)



Between 1969 and 1972,
courtesy of Mervyn Parry



Maths at Downing

Rachel Helen Smith

What is the probability that, within a single year, Downing's first-year students in Mathematics would receive exceptional results, the College would see the arrival of a Master who specialises in Mathematical Statistics and, for the first time in recorded history, a Downing student would earn the title of Senior Wrangler?

When talking about probability, the Master is the right person to ask. In a career extending across four decades, Professor Geoffrey Grimmett has studied the science of uncertainty, approaching issues of chance and likelihood as mathematical puzzles. He has authored numerous articles and three books on topics in mathematical research, co-authored three textbooks on probability theory, and in October 2013 he was installed as the 17th Master of Downing College.

Behind the imposing Ionic columns of the Master's Lodge he works in a study that is furnished with few books and even fewer pretensions. When I ask him to explain his life's work, he answers: "In a sense, the theory of probability is exactly what you think it is. It is just the theory of the flips of a coin. You flip a coin once and it comes up heads or tails. You flip a coin twice and it comes up heads or tails again. You do it 10 times, 100 times, you carry on doing it and it is this elementary experiment that forms the only foundation of the whole theory of probability."

So does he spend much time sitting at his desk flipping coins? He laughs. "Yes, I do sometimes flip coins. However, the coins I

flip are in the computer. I would write a programme to flip them thousands of times and the computer would then model the processes or systems that I am trying to understand as a shape, a graph or a curve. Most of my work is concerned with disordered systems involving large numbers of particles that move or interact at random. Yet, order emerges on the large scale out of microscopic randomness. This is my area of probability theory: how do you understand large systems of interacting objects which behave randomly?"

The number of equations that would be required to describe the movement of the particles even within a single room is so large as to be beyond imagination. This is perhaps why, Grimmett claims, "Mathematics humbles everybody. However clever and well informed and ingenious we are as mathematicians, we are continually confronted with difficulties that are beyond our understanding."

He continues: "This is as true for the students at the beginning of their careers as it is for researchers at the very top end. We all spend a lot of time scratching our heads, wondering, guessing

and often failing. It might sound like a depressing experience but it isn't at all. Once you come to know what you can do and have confidence, it is extraordinarily exciting and beautiful to witness mathematical structures as they come into focus."

Professor Grimmer's colleague at Downing, Dr Sophia Demoulini, agrees: "With many subjects, if you put in a certain amount of work then you are guaranteed to walk out knowing a certain amount more than when you walked in. Mathematics is different. You might put in hours, days, or even years and there is no guarantee that you'll get anywhere. Sometimes you truly just don't have an answer to the problem that you are thinking about."

For these reasons, Mathematics contains a number of open questions that have existed for decades. Demoulini explains: "Many of these questions have had their 'victims' – people who devoted their lives to finding an answer to the problem and failed, or found the wrong answer. Even when you do have a 'eureka moment', the answer that you think you have found has to go through the scrutiny of colleagues before it is considered to be a genuine 'proof', and even then someone might later discover an error in one of your steps. It is certainly a discipline that requires a lot of persistence."

Demoulini herself works on the analysis of certain partial differential equations that are related to classical field theories ("solitons") and others which are distantly related to materials. Completing the team of Mathematics Fellows at Downing is Dr Adriana Pesci. Pesci is the Darley Fellow, a position generously supported by Julian Darley (1956, Engineering). Her work focuses on fluid mechanics and the ways in which theories about jets of fluid might be related to physical processes such as ice formation or the flows produced by swimming organisms.

Grimmett, Demoulini, and Pesci, together with Paul Linden until his retirement earlier this year, interview, admit, teach and mentor Downing's Mathematics students throughout the three or more years that they spend at the College. Downing undergraduates have performed exceptionally well recently. Over the summer, this year's nine freshers achieved very good results in their entrance examinations, and both of our second year students achieved first class for their end of first year exams. In addition, third-year student Yang Li achieved the highest Tripos results of the whole year.

Have the Fellows noticed any patterns in the characteristics of their most successful students? There is a persistence, calmness, focus, intuition, clarity of thought and good results in the STEP examinations that are used as part of the admissions process for Cambridge. "Even after 40 years of marking essentially the same questions, the really bright undergraduates write a solution that has you looking at it in amazement, thinking 'I've never seen that before,'" says Grimmer. "They use a fresh chain of thought to find a totally new way through the mathematics."

Grimmett was once a keen rock climber and he likens this pastime to the pursuit of mathematical truth: "You're on a cliff and you have to find a way to move your hands and feet into a position from which you are able to make the next move. It is a great feeling of achievement when you do it, and you may feel you have found the only solution. Afterwards, someone else comes along and does it in a completely different way and you realise that there are multiple methods for overcoming the difficulties." It is certainly an apt metaphor to consider as Downing's mathematicians continue to scale new heights.

RACHEL HELEN SMITH is a freelance writer.
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In 2014, Downing undergraduate Yang Li earned the title of Senior Wrangler.

Yang is from China and was the recipient of a scholarship from the Jardine Foundation. To win the prestigious title of Senior Wrangler he had to surpass the achievements of the other 211 candidates that sat their final exams alongside him last summer.

The historic honour of being named Senior Wrangler is one of the great traditions of the University of Cambridge, dating from the 18th century. Even today, third-year students of the Mathematics Tripos gather in Senate House after their final exams to hear the results read aloud. The Chair of the Board of

Examiners stands in the balcony in full academic dress and reads the class lists in alphabetical order. On reaching the name of the student who has received the highest score of all, the Chair tips his or her hat. This person is referred to as the Senior Wrangler and is considered to have attained a significant intellectual achievement.

To mark Yang's success the College minted a special medal that was engraved with his name in both English and Chinese. He says: "There were also some Latin mottos which I spent some curious time trying to decode with the help of the College Chaplain." The medal was presented as the culmination of the annual Scholars' Dinner.



Yang is continuing with his studies at Downing, saying: "I appreciate the encouragement of everyone who shares my joy and I am especially thankful for the goodwill of my College. Acknowledgement for hard work is a good incentive, but the highest reward in Mathematics still comes from the inward satisfaction of attaining genuine understanding."



Clockwise from top left: © William Scott Foundation 2015; © Allen Jones; © Estate of Roger Hilton. All rights reserved. DACS 2015

Clockwise from top left: William Scott *Cornish Landscape*, 1951–2; Allen Jones *Parachutist*, 1963; Roger Hilton *April*, 1956.

Sir Alan Bowness

Caroline Fitton

The long and distinguished career of Sir Alan Bowness (1950), alumnus and Honorary Fellow of Downing College, has included being a conscientious objector working with Quakers to studying history of art with Anthony Blunt and lecturing at The Courtauld Institute, finally becoming Professor of the History of Art at the University of London.

He was a member of the Arts Council and chairman of its art panel, then with a change of career became Director of the Tate, founder of the Turner Prize and then Director of the Henry Moore Foundation. He is also the author of many books on art: a colourfully illustrious life.

In recent years, he has donated works of art to the Fitzwilliam Museum, some of which will be exhibited when the new Downing College art gallery opens in 2016 in the converted Edwardian stable block that forms part of the First Court and Parker's House development.

Having, between 1950 and 1953, been a student at Downing College reading Modern Languages (French and German), he inevitably crossed paths with literary critic F. R. Leavis, who taught English at Downing for 30 years.

"Once or twice a week, when I could, I went to Dr Leavis's practical criticism classes. It was a very lively group. My friends were all reading English and I became secretary of the English Society (the Doughty Society), which had three to five meetings a term, with a variety of speakers, usually Leavisites. Dr Leavis had many followers who had gone on to teach at other places. I especially remember a talk by Wilfred Mellers, a distinguished musicologist."

Sir Alan grew up in Finchley. His father was a schoolteacher and he gained a scholarship to University College School in Hampstead, where he was, "Encouraged to take an interest in arts and theatre and music. I was very free to go to concerts, theatre, ballet and opera and art exhibitions from a very early age; I was lucky in that respect. I vividly remember an outstanding Picasso and Matisse exhibition at the V&A, with Picasso's war pictures; museums were slowly opening up again after the war."

In 1946, he took the English Scholarship examination at Downing and was offered a place, but in those days all humanities students had to do National Service and wait several years before going up to university. From 1946 to 1950 he was away from London.

"I didn't do National Service, I was a conscientious objector. I thought the bombing of Germany in the last year of the war was immoral, and the dropping of the atom bomb was immoral. I wasn't prepared to accept it and thought I should make a stand. I worked instead with Quaker groups, although I'm not a Quaker. I worked in Germany, putting up prefabricated houses for German refugees – there were a lot of refugees in the 1946–1949 period – and then I spent a year in Lebanon at a Quaker School. I came back to England in 1950 and went up to Downing."

He was involved in the University's Film and Arts Societies and ran a picture lending library, the Cambridge Contemporary Art Trust. He also wrote literary criticism in *Varsity* and edited *Cambridge Today* magazine with Thom Gunn, the poet, who had also been a school friend.

"I went to exhibitions regularly in London, mainly of very modern art. In Cambridge, I visited the Fitzwilliam frequently and got to know Carl Winter, the Director. When I cheekily asked how I could get his job, he told me that to get a museum job I should go to The Courtauld Institute, a very obscure institution in those days, I'd never heard of it. It was being built up after the war by Anthony Blunt, its young director."

Sir Alan's keen interest was in 19th- and 20th-century French and English art, "Art history was quite a new subject and it was exciting to be in at the beginning of the study."

He then worked for the Arts Council, as regional art officer, "This was how I first came to St Ives in May 1956. For someone interested in contemporary art, St Ives was the most exciting place after London. I got to know Patrick Heron, Peter Lanyon, Terry Frost, Roger Hilton, William Scott and, of course, Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson, whose daughter Sarah, a musician, I married."

After a year, he was invited back to The Courtauld by Anthony Blunt to teach 19th-century French and English art. "It was an offer I couldn't refuse; he was reducing his teaching and wanted someone to take on the modern period. The number of students doing history of art quickly escalated, so I asked Anthony to appoint Anita Brookner to teach 18th-century French art, and later John Golding for 20th-century art."

Having taught there until 1979, writing books on art and art criticism for the Observer and creating many exhibitions (one at the Tate in 1964, *Painting and Sculpture of a Decade 54–64*, funded by the Gulbenkian), he was appointed Director of the Tate. "I had very clear ideas of the things that I could do; I thought the Tate was a rather isolated institution, rather inward looking, and I wanted to open it up geographically, socially and personally."



Sir Alan Bowness with his daughter Sophie, September 2014

To encourage critics, dealers and collectors to take part in Tate activities, I set up new Friends' groups and introduced The Turner Prize, based on the success of the Booker Prize. The idea was to attract a much bigger audience. I had always thought that the audience for modern art could be much greater and in the last 30 years this has proved correct."

As Tate Director until his retirement in 1988, Sir Alan accomplished much, making many acquisitions of surrealist and American artworks. He oversaw the expansion of the Millbank site with the opening of the Clore Gallery for the work of J. M. W. Turner, plus the creation of Tate Liverpool, both projects being funded through gifts from charitable trusts. At a time when the public grant to the Tate had been capped – "I had the misfortune to be Director of the Tate in Margaret Thatcher's day" – the establishment of two supporters' groups helped fund the purchase of new work. With such close links to St Ives, he promoted Tate St Ives, having already set up the Barbara Hepworth Museum in 1976. Knighted in 1988, he was succeeded at the Tate by Nicholas Serota, and became Director of The Henry Moore Foundation, establishing the Henry Moore Institute in Yorkshire.

He will leave a collection to the Fitzwilliam of British art from 1955 to 1965, when he was most closely involved with contemporary art. It includes works by Ivon Hitchens, Patrick Heron, Roger Hilton, William Scott, Allen Jones, Peter Lanyon, Richard Smith, Robyn Denny, RB Kitaj and David Hockney. Many were gifts from the artists. Sir Alan says: "I owe a debt to the Fitzwilliam from my early days, when I spent such a great deal of time just looking at paintings there; it gave me much. Anyone interested in pursuing art history has to be prepared to spend a lot of time looking at paintings."

The inaugural exhibition currently entitled *Ten Good Years: British Painting 1955–65* is scheduled to be on display at Downing College's new art gallery from February 2016. Works will be selected from those that Sir Alan Bowness has donated to the Fitzwilliam Museum, as well as from his personal collection. Further information will be forthcoming.



From the Development Office

First Court and Parker's House

As Members will have read in the last edition of DOW@CAM, First Court and Parker's House represent an exciting opportunity to house all students, undergraduate and graduate, together on the Domus as well as to enhance the cultural life of the College and all of Cambridge with a new art gallery.



FIRST COURT

Building work has already begun and on Alumni Day in September Members had the opportunity to visit the site, see what progress had been made and take in some of the magnificent views from the top floor of Parker's House. A similar opportunity will be offered during the afternoon of Annual Reunion in March.

"This is a fabulous project which will advance enormously the educational and cultural ambitions of the College. The renovation of Parker's House will enable nearly 80 new graduate rooms, and will bring all resident students onto the Domus for the first time in the modern era. Our art gallery will complete the new First Court, and will reposition Downing at the centre of the visual arts in Cambridge. I am very excited to be able to contribute as new Master to a project that will change the shape of the College while retaining its classical heart."

**PROFESSOR GEOFFREY GRIMMETT,
MASTER DOWNING COLLEGE**

"The prospect of a larger active graduate group, thanks to the Parker's House and First Court project, will build a stronger graduate community within Downing for the benefit of both graduate students and Downing College."

CINDY VALREAU, MCR PRESIDENT

"This project demonstrates the imagination of Downing in putting older buildings to modern uses, and a dedication to broaden the experience which the College offers. It shows Downing at its best, in both creativity and vision."

**CHRIS BARTRAM (1968), PROJECT CHAMPION
AND CAMPAIGN BOARD CHAIRMAN**



There are many ways to support First Court. Naming a brick for inclusion in the walls of the new art gallery, for example, will allow alumni to be part of the permanent fabric of the College. Naming one brick costs £1000.00, whilst naming two bricks costs £1800.00, the payment of which may be spread over three years. For more information and a donation form please visit our website www.downingcambridge.com/buy-a-brick or contact the Development Office development@dow.cam.ac.uk

JCR Careers Event

The first Downing careers event jointly organised by the JCR and the Alumni and Development office was held on Monday 28 April 2014.



Three alumni, Jamie Pollard (2004), Cheryl Jones (1997) and Sarah Clay (1992), kindly agreed to give up their time to return to Downing for the event. Representing finance, the Civil Service and not-for-profit organisations respectively they introduced their areas of expertise, spoke about their careers and met with students.

In addition, Gordon Chesterman, Director of the Cambridge Careers Service, attended giving students an outline of what the University service has to offer.

A second successful evening, this time focusing on careers in the media, journalism and publishing was held at the beginning of the Lent Term, this time featuring Ben Bland (2002), Gabriella Jozwiak (2002), Dora Coventry (2008) and John Woolf (2008).

We would like to host similar events in the future so if any alumnus is interested in returning to Downing to speak to current students about their own careers experience please get in contact with the Alumni & Development Office development@dow.cam.ac.uk

Giving Back

It has been said that there aren't enough words in the dictionary to describe the significance of "Giving Back" and that's true.



Gary Blankenship in his beloved 1948 Triumph Roadster

Whether you donate money or time, or host fund-raising events, giving back is beneficial to the recipients as well as to the giver. But you don't have to be rich to make a difference. Millions of ordinary people make the world a better place, one pound at a time.

It will soon be fifty (50) years since I matriculated at Downing College and my years at Downing (1968–71) were among the happiest in my life. Although, as an American graduate student reading Architecture (Alma Mater was Columbia) I was a bit of an outsider, Downing provided a relationship that was very personal and the strength of that familial relationship has deepened through the years. I am and always will be very proud of Downing College and, to this day, I'm still amazed that I "got in" way back in 1968!

This year, it is an extraordinary honour to have reached the Wilkins Fellowship level of giving back to Downing. It's a blessing to know that you've had an opportunity to make a positive difference in life and I can't imagine anything that would mean more to me than giving back to Downing College.

To quote Anthony Robbins "Life is a gift, and it offers us the privilege, opportunity, and responsibility to give something back by becoming more".

EDWARD G BLANKENSHIP AIA (1968)
Newport Beach, California

Events Calendar 2015

7 FEBRUARY

Griffins' Club Dinner

21 MARCH

Annual Reunion Dinner

25 APRIL

Segreants' Club Dinner

16 MAY

MA Congregation & Dinner

13 JUNE

Donors' Garden Party
May Bumps

25 JUNE

Graduands' Reception

18 JULY

1749 Society Garden Party

25 SEPTEMBER

Year Representatives
Meeting & Dinner

26 SEPTEMBER

Alumni Day &
Association Dinner

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

London Alumni Reception TBC

DECEMBER

Varsity Rugby

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Wilkins Fellows

We are delighted to announce new admissions to the Wilkins Fellowship in 2014 in recognition of generous benefactions to the College.

ROBERT MARKWICK 1979, History

After Downing, Robert earned an MBA from Manchester University before entering a career in banking, first at Foreign & Colonial where his team managed the College's and University's investments, and then at Goldman Sachs where he remains on the Advisory Board. He also advises Venrex, an early-stage investment company. He is a trustee of Medicinema, a charity enriching the lives of patients many of whom are critically ill by the provision of permanent cinemas in hospitals and places of care.



Robert is actively engaged in Downing: he recently stood down from the Boat Club Committee, and he is currently Chairman of Downing Enterprise and a member of the Catalysis Campaign Board. His ongoing support has included a substantial recent gift to Parker's House.

GIFFORD COMBS, QUEENS' COLLEGE, 1983, Politics and Economics

A fifth-generation Californian, Gifford Combs is a former Commodore of the smallest yacht club in the state of Maine and a keen collector of palaeographical fragments from before the Norman Conquest. He is actively involved with numerous libraries and art museums in Britain and in America.

He received his first degree from Harvard before coming as a graduate student to Cambridge and he now serves on the

board of Cambridge in America. Whilst he has aided Collegiate Cambridge in projects ranging from the esoterica of the Greek Play in the Classics Faculty to



*Walking on the grass
as a new Wilkins Fellow*

the mundane of display cabinets at the Fitzwilliam, Downing recognises his support of the Boat Club, the Catalysis Conference and, most recently, First Court.

JAMES ARNELL 1988, Law

After many years with management consultants Bain & Company, Jamie joined Charterhouse Development Capital in 1998 where he has worked extensively in the UK and France. He also is on the boards of Saga in the UK and Bartec in Germany, and is Chairman of Elixir, a



large listed French catering company. Jamie is an Almoner of Christ's Hospital and together with his wife, Louise, he is a trustee of a family charitable trust, The Pebble Trust. He is qualified as a barrister.

Jamie and Louise have both been admitted to Wilkins Fellowships in recognition of their generous support of Access at Downing, Louise in 2013. Jamie is delighted to set the precedent of 'his 'n' her's' alumni Wilkins Fellowships and hopes other alumni couples will follow the example so that they too can wear such fetching matching gowns.