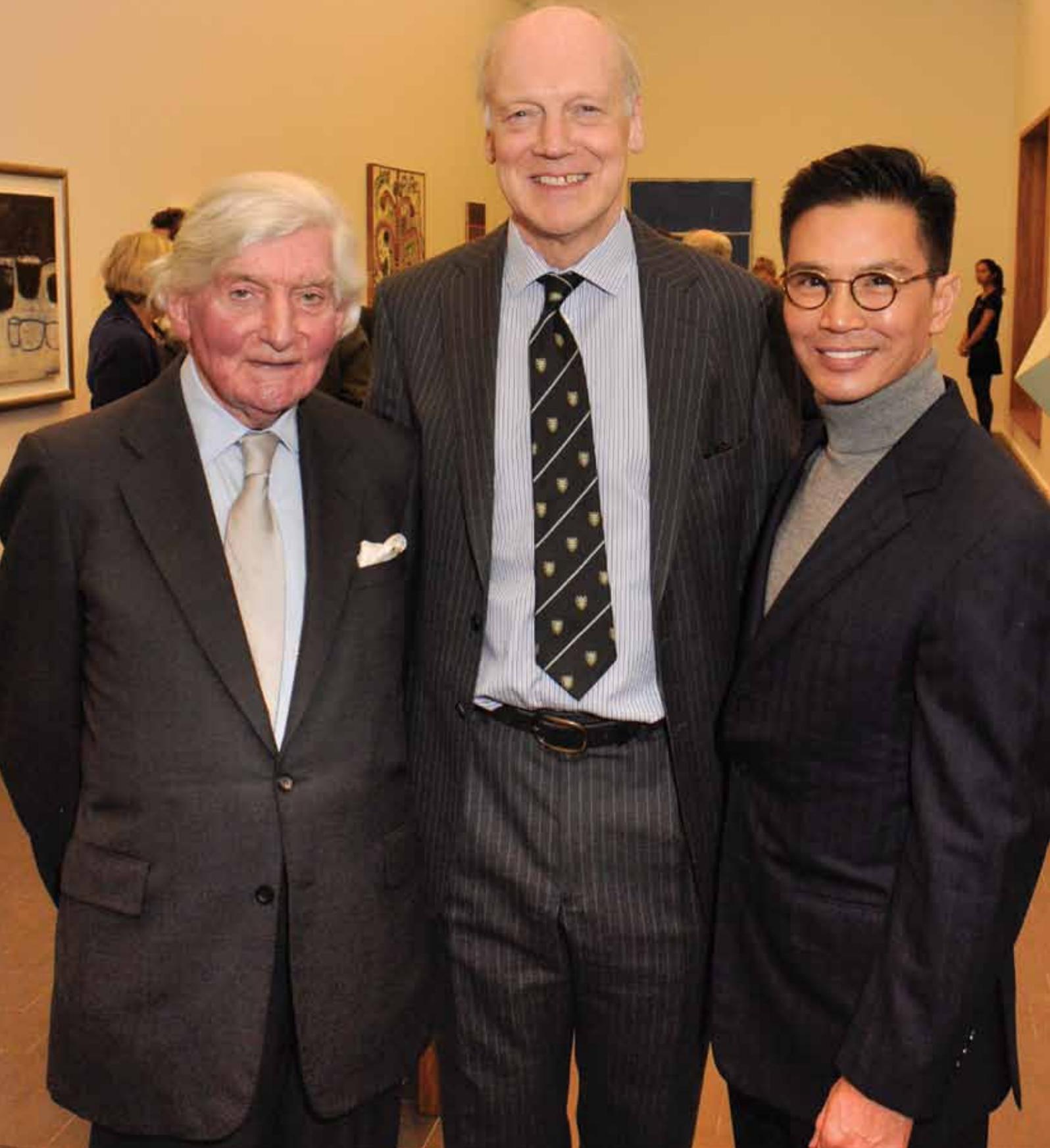


DOW@CAM

THE DOWNING COLLEGE MAGAZINE / VOLUME 27 / WINTER 2015-2016





From the Master 2016

The crane (which was actually more of a praying mantis) has gone. It departed the College without notice, stealthily, a few weeks ago, followed shortly afterwards by the nest of scaffolding, and leaving behind a Parker's House kissed by a prince and transformed into the astonishingly lovely Battcock Lodge. In January, the corridors of the last were busy with the footfall of nearly 80 graduate students, and our new First Court became a hive of activity.

With the completion of Howard Court in 2010, Downing will have celebrated two new courts in less than ten years. This is a very great achievement for the College, made possible only with the support of its members and friends.

The development of First Court advances not only our plans for student accommodation, but also for art and culture in College. Our new Heong Art Gallery will join with The Fitzwilliam Museum and Kettle's Yard in bringing visual art to the residents of Cambridge and beyond. It is especially apposite that the inaugural exhibition features works by British artists from the personal collection of our alumnus Sir Alan Bowness (1950).



Photograph by Bruce Head ©

Art and culture are themes that permeate this issue of DOW@CAM. Poetry, drama, writing, visual art are all represented in the articles included here. Especially 'Downing' is the account by the College Archivist of the recent dedication of the Leavis Room, in honour of F. R. (Frank) Leavis, renowned supervisor and literary scholar. We are proud to house the Leavis Collection in our Library, and we welcome its progressive enlargement through donations. John Tancock has shared his Leavis memories later in this magazine, in an interview devoted to his life from Downing to Ai Weiwei and back.

Downing is firmly committed to artistic endeavour, whether on the stage, the

studio, in the concert hall, or elsewhere. I hope some readers were able to attend last term's production of *As You Like It* in the Howard Theatre. Numerous alumnae/i are leading lights of the arts, and we celebrate a number of these individuals in this issue. Three of our writers have a common interest with Shakespeare in what might be viewed as the seamier side of life, and I shall soon be off to Heffers for copies of their work. Rather different emphasis is placed on the use of language by our Fellow, Sarah Kennedy, in her musings on the poetry of Eliot, Bishop, and Wright.

The world is a very wonderful place, but not invariably so. I have been very moved by Emilie Venables' account of her work as a jobbing anthropologist for *Médecins Sans Frontières*. That Emilie was educated at Downing and Cambridge is surely something of which we must be very proud, and yet, incredibly perhaps, the Government's vision of Higher Education and wealth creation sometimes risks appearing unsupportive of such activity.

I hope you enjoy this 27th issue of DOW@CAM. Our new Arts Fund has been established to underpin our activities and ambitions, and I am optimistic that some of you will feel able to support it. Thank you.

DOW@CAM

THE DOWNING COLLEGE MAGAZINE

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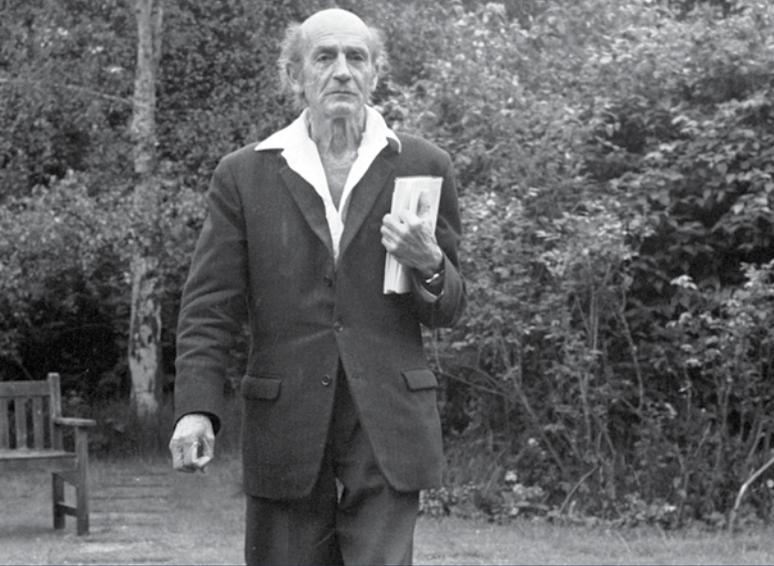
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From the left: Sir Alan Bowness, Professor Geoffrey Grimmett and Dr Alwyn Heong in The Heong Gallery at Downing College.

Photograph by Perry Hastings
February 2016 ©



Leavis in the gardens of his home in Bulstrode Gardens C1975 ©Dr Chris Joyce

The Master with Howard Jacobson (1961) at the opening of the Leavis Room

From the Archives

College Archivist **JENNY ULPH** reflects on the recent opening of the College’s new Leavis Room (on B Staircase) in honour of the renowned literary critic and former Downing Fellow, F. R. Leavis (1895–1978). He was one of the most influential, if sometimes controversial, literary critics of the 20th century. The new Leavis Room features a framed display of items from the archive.

F R Leavis remembered at Downing College

Leavis began supervising students at Downing in 1931 and was a Fellow of the College from 1936 and Honorary Fellow from 1962 to 1964. In 1938, when Downing students were awarded 4 of the 8 Firsts in Part I of the English Tripos, *The Observer* reported ‘a triumph for what may be called the Downing School of Literature’.

Friday 25 September 2015 saw the formal opening of the new Leavis Room in honour of his outstanding intellectual distinction. The room, next to the Tutorial Office and Peter Greenham’s portrait of Leavis, has been installed with a small permanent archive display. Included are copies of a selection of letters from Leavis to various people, and other items from the archive illustrating different aspects of his career. The room was opened by the novelist and Honorary Fellow, Howard Jacobson (1961), after an introduction by the Master on the final day of a conference being held in College by the Leavis Society. In his speech, Mr Jacobson highlighted the centrality of Downing in Leavis’ career and the enduring importance of his intellectual legacy.

The Leavis Collection at Downing

The growing Leavis collection held by the College Archive has become an internationally important resource for academics studying the history of literary criticism, Leavis himself and his significant contribution in this field.

The Archive now holds over 600 original letters from F. R. Leavis to a variety of correspondents, including many former students at Downing and regular contributors to *Scrutiny*, the critical journal he founded in 1932. Leavis was a prolific letter-writer and the letters, which span the whole of his academic life, provide an invaluable insight into his personality, changing relationships and all aspects of his career and literary work. The collection also includes letters from his wife, Queenie, transcripts of letters to various correspondents, memoirs of former students and collections of secondary sources relating to his life and career.

Much of the collection is open to consultation by researchers, although some more sensitive letters are closed for longer periods of time. Over the past year, the Archive has received several exciting new accessions of letters from Leavis to former Downing students including a significant collection belonging to the late John Tasker. The College is very grateful to Dr Chris Joyce of the Leavis Society for his assistance with this collection, which is currently being catalogued.

The number of former students attending the recent Leavis Conference and the opening of the Leavis Room highlights the extent of F. R. Leavis’s personal and lasting impact on those he taught at Downing. The College Archivist would be very interested to hear from anyone with items – or memories – relating to F. R. Leavis and his time at Downing. (ju213@dow.cam.ac.uk)

 Follow the College Archive on Facebook: www.facebook.com/downingcollegearchives

For those of you who haven’t seen it yet, the film of life in Downing and Cambridge between 1928 –1930 filmed by Downing Student Henry Iliffe Cozens (1928) is now available online. Please visit www.sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1918417



KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

Anthropology and humanitarian aid: experiences from the field

Emilie Venables

I graduated from Downing in 2003 after studying Social Anthropology (and a year of what was then Social and Political Sciences). I always loved the slightly alternative feel to anthropology lectures, where we sat around a table listening to tales from Papua New Guinea and Ghana before dragging dusty tomes of long forgotten ethnographies down from hard-to-reach shelves in the library.



I continued studying and travelling after leaving Cambridge, completing an MSc in Development Studies at SOAS and then an MSc and PhD in African Studies at the University of Edinburgh, during which time I spent two years conducting

fieldwork in Senegal. Upon completion of my PhD in 2009 I moved to South Africa, for what I thought would be a year working in HIV research in a Johannesburg neighbourhood infamous for crime, drugs and sex-work. Seven years later, South Africa is still home.

Three years ago I decided to forego the world of academia to join the international humanitarian aid organisation *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF, also known as Doctors Without Borders). MSF provides emergency medical assistance to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, healthcare exclusion and natural or man-made disasters.

Working with MSF has been, in many ways, the stuff of my undergraduate dreams. I return from the metaphorical (and often literal) field covered in mud, notebooks full of semi-legible scribbles, my head spinning from the stories I've heard and the words scrawled on my page. The social sciences – and the methodological tools that accompany them – are increasingly incorporated into humanitarian aid work and MSF works with anthropologists to gain a deeper understanding of the places they go and the people to whom they are providing medical assistance. The kinds of questions I explore when I am 'on mission' are varied. My role can be to explain local beliefs and practices to clinicians to help them in their work, or to look for answers to questions such as '*why aren't there any men coming to our clinic?*' or '*why are people not taking the ARVs (antiretroviral treatment) prescribed to them?*'

Since 2012, I have worked across Sub-Saharan Africa and more recently I spent time in Italy working with Eritrean refugees in Rome. I have conducted fieldwork in South Africa, Kenya,

Lesotho, Liberia and Mozambique and am currently packing my bags (and long-suffering running shoes) for a trip to Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo. For the last six months I have worked as a 'mobile' anthropologist, supporting MSF's projects around the world to implement anthropological and qualitative research studies where they are most needed. Weekends at home have become a rarity, and my rucksack always remains half-packed, waiting for the next adventure.

In late 2014, I went to Monrovia during the Ebola outbreak that devastated the West African region. It was an exhausting and often frustrating period, leaving me with more questions than answers, as well as an overwhelming sense of respect for the work that MSF does in humanitarian crises. I spent my days going into different neighbourhoods across Monrovia to explore people's beliefs about Ebola and to find out how best to adapt our services to meet their needs. I talked to survivors of Ebola, community leaders, the families of patients and health-care workers to find out what they understood about the virus and how it was affecting their lives. I learned of the stigmatisation experienced by Ebola survivors, and saw how the fear of the virus infiltrated every aspect of daily life across the city.

Words drawn from interviews conducted in an urban slum such as Kibera in Kenya, or informal conversations in a clinic waiting room in Zululand, can become action for MSF. The little things that people tell me about their experiences and beliefs help to design health interventions. In-depth conversations give communities the chance to voice their views and describe the health issues affecting them. It doesn't matter if a conversation takes place on the floor of a hut, in the depths of a forest or leaning against a tent in a refugee camp: local words and voices are essential to the work of MSF the world over.

When I studied Social Anthropology (Professor Phyllis Lee was my Director of Studies), I was always drawn to the applied, practical side of the subject and my essays would come back to me with comments scribbled in the margins about how I needed to be more theoretical. As much as a theoretical grounding is important (and yes, I do still read books occasionally!), my work requires me to be creative and adapt the tools of my discipline to suit the context I am working in. In an emergency situation such as Ebola there is not the time to do a thorough literature review before boarding a plane.

Working for MSF is unpredictable and exciting, but also heart-breaking. I ask a lot of people a lot of tough questions but I am not always prepared to hear the answers. I see solutions to the problems people face in accessing health-care services and medication but do not always have the ability to fix them. As an undergraduate, I never imagined that I could work as an anthropologist outside of a university environment, but working for MSF gives me the opportunity to use my studies in a practical, applied way in a range of global contexts and, has seen my running shoes put into action in a lot of different countries!



Established by a group of primarily French doctors, Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has been delivering emergency medical aid to people affected by conflict, epidemics, disasters or exclusion from healthcare since 1971. From its inception, MSF has proved itself to be unlike any other NGO, and remains fiercely independent of both governments and institutions.

MSF's commitment to the principals of independence, neutrality and impartiality was recognised in 1999 when MSF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "in recognition of the organisation's pioneering humanitarian work on several continents" and to honour the medical staff who have worked in more than 80 countries and treated tens of millions of people. As well as responding to emergencies with specialised medical and logistical help, MSF also runs longer-term projects to tackle health crises and support people where the need is greatest. Current projects include assisting refugees across Europe, supporting people in need of ARV treatment in Sub-Saharan Africa and delivering emergency aid to people affected by violence in South Sudan.

For more information on MSF, visit www.msf.org.uk



DOW@CAM



Q&A with Ollie Fielding

Ollie Fielding (2004) came to Downing to read History, but soon found himself immersed in the world of theatre. While studying at Cambridge he launched his own theatre company, Peaceful Lion Productions. He also works as a business analyst for an IT company that supplies the NHS. Here Rachel Helen Smith asks him about Peaceful Lion and its innovative performances for families.



Q When did you first become interested in the theatre?

A For me, theatre has been a lifelong passion. My parents took me to the theatre as a child and I got involved in drama clubs during my school years, but eventually took an academic route and applied to read History at Downing. While I was studying, acting became something that I did 'on the side', but it was at Downing that I first tried my hand at directing.

Q What was your directorial debut like?

A It was an absolute and total disaster. I directed Aristophanes' *The Clouds* at Downing and assumed that I would take to it like a duck to water. In fact I made a right mess of things – but I certainly learnt a lot from the experience and it didn't stop me from becoming President of the Downing Dramatic Society (DDS) the following year.

Q How did you go from there to founding your own theatre company?

A For the summer of 2006 I was thrown into the world of children's theatre head first. For the DDS May Week show I wanted to do something really different. That is when I thought of adapting Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*. Our publicity team obviously did a good job, because lots of local children turned up to Downing with their families. They sat in the front row smiling, laughing and crying. Watching them watching the show, I began to think that this was what I wanted to do with my life. Then I spent the summer producing *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, a Cambridge University production that went up to the Edinburgh Fringe. Invigorated by both experiences, I founded Peaceful Lion with the hope of creating stylish, mischievous, spectacular shows for people of all ages.

Q What was your first production?

A We started with an adaptation of *Dracula* in the Fellows' Garden. People thought I was mad to try and stage an outdoor production at night in the middle of October – and they were probably right – but it was all part of my vision to make theatre that breaks out of traditional spaces. The show went really well and that was when I realised my interest in theatre might actually go somewhere.

Q Your next show was a production of *The Enchanted Castle* that you took to the Edinburgh Fringe. How was that experience?

A *The Enchanted Castle* was the first semi-professional production we had put on and it was a complete eye-opener for me. We had just graduated and we threw all of our energy into it. I even emailed Quentin Blake and used the Downing connection to ask whether he could do a quick sketch for our posters. He responded with the most incredible image, which



Photographs by Pamela Raith of the dramatisation based on the book *Rosie's Magic Horse* by Russell Hoban illustrated by Quentin Blake ©2012
Quentin Blake and Russell Hoban. Licensed by Walker Books Ltd., London

we used for all of our publicity. Receiving that drawing was so exciting; without it, everything could have been very different.

Q Within three years you went from your disastrous debut to successfully staging *The Enchanted Castle* and *The Magic City*. How did that feel?

A I loved doing the shows and the support of Quentin Blake was amazing, but I was beginning to realise that I had no formal training in theatre. I was just making it up as I went along! I couldn't afford to go to drama school, so the only option was to write letters to as many directors as I could think of and beg to be their assistant. I spent two or three years learning on the job and by 2012 was ready to launch Peaceful Lion's next show, *Bringing Down the Moon*. That felt like the first really professional thing we'd done. We followed it with *Hey, Presto!* and then *Rosie's Magic Horse* (another book with a Quentin Blake connection), which finished touring in November of last year.

Q What's next for Peaceful Lion?

A In December we opened *Nutcracker! The Musical*. We've gone back to the original fairy tale and reimagined it as a contemporary musical, with a glorious libretto by the Emmy Award-winner Nancy Holson. We are really excited because it combines all the sumptuous imagery and famous melodies of Tchaikovsky's music, but it recaptures from the original

story the idea that the imagination of a child can do amazing things – something that we very much believe in. Following *Nutcracker*, our production of *Orion and the Dark* will tour from February.

Q It sounds like you'll be busy. How do you fit it all around your day job?

A I constantly feel like I am juggling too many things. Unfortunately, theatre just doesn't pay enough to live on at the moment, especially as I have a bad habit of taking the money that was supposed to pay my salary and ploughing it back into the productions. That means that I also continue to work as a business analyst advising the NHS. Both my parents worked for the NHS and I worked in hospital labs to fund the text books for my A-Levels, so it is a familiar environment.

Q You studied history, work in the NHS and love the theatre. Are these things in any way connected for you?

A There is a huge overlap between my two jobs as I am developing a Theatre for Hospitals initiative. My dream is to have a company dedicated to touring hospitals right across the UK and bringing poorly children a moment of normality and joy. So far we've held 20 performances around the UK, mainly in London. Watching the children's faces light up as theatre comes to them is amazing and the feedback we have received has been overwhelming. To try and make it sustainable for the future, we're now seeking funding. To make theatre work you need artistic dreams, but you also need a head for business!

RACHEL HELEN SMITH is a freelance writer.
www.rachelhelensmith.com

Downing Dramatic Society

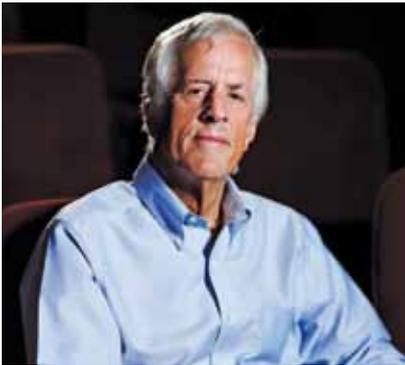
Michaelmas 2015 was a busy and hugely rewarding term for the Downing Dramatic Society. Workshops and discussions (including one with RSC director and Downing alumnus, Alex Lass (2008)) have dotted the calendar alongside a visually stunning and beautifully acted interpretation of Shakespeare's most challenging romantic-comedy, "As You Like It". No sooner had the magnificent, autumnal woodland set been cleared than meetings were arranged to prepare the ground for an even busier Lent period. Already the Festival of New Writing has entries flooding in from all over the University and a number of submissions have been entered for the Freshers' Play at the end of February. There's even an original film project on the go and proposals to stage Frank Wedekind's ever-controversial masterpiece, "Lulu" in the summer.

STEPHEN BENNETT



New Honorary Fellows

Downing College is proud to announce the election of three Honorary Fellows who are distinguished in the fields of cinema, music and art.



MR MICHAEL APTED (1960) is a prominent film director. He worked in the UK on numerous television productions and movies, most notably the *UP* films (1964–2012), a unique series of documentaries following the lives of 14 people every 7 years from the age of 7. 63 *UP* is due in 2019. Among the over 60 television dramas he directed was Laurence Olivier in Harold Pinter's *The Collection* for Granada TV. He relocated to the USA in 1979 and worked on both sides of the Atlantic – amongst his best known movies are *Stardust*, *Coal Miners Daughter*, *Gorky Park*, *Gorillas in the Mist*, *Nell*, *Enigma*, *Amazing Grace*, 007's *The World is not Enough*, and Narnia's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. His work has garnered many Academy and BAFTA recognitions. He served 3 terms as President of the Directors Guild of America (2002–2008), the only non- American to hold the position, and was awarded the CMG in the Birthday Honours in 2008.

"I am honoured to be a small part of the new College Arts Fund which will give students an early awareness of what's going on in the diverse world of the arts. It should be an essential part of everybody's education whatever career they intend to pursue."



MR MARTIN BAKER (1985) is a leading organist and choirmaster. He graduated from Downing in 1988, and has subsequently held positions at St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, before returning to Westminster Cathedral as Master of Music in 2000. He was recently elected a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music, and he delivered the inaugural recital on our new organ in February 2015.

"The organ scholarship at Downing was a vital element in my pursuit of a career as a cathedral organist, allowing me to develop the necessary musical, liturgical and administrative skills while developing as a choral conductor and organist. The new organ, as beautiful to play and touch as it is to see and hear, is a most welcome addition to the Chapel, bringing much greater versatility and quality to chapel music and acting as a major draw to future generations of organ scholars."



MR STEPHEN CHAMBERS RA was based at Downing for a year whilst he was the Cambridge University / Kettles Yard Artist in Residence, 1998–1999. Primarily a painter and printmaker, his work is held in public collections around the world. Recent exhibitions include The Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2012, The Pera Museum, Istanbul, 2014, and Galeria Pages, Geneva, 2015. In 2017 he will become the first British artist to hold an exhibition at Palazzo Dandolo during The Venice Biennale. In the same year he will have an exhibition of his work in The Heong Gallery at Downing College.

Stephen has designed three sets for The Royal Ballet, Covent Garden, collaborated with poets on several books and produced a number of short films with the Swedish director, Jonas Grimås.

He was elected a Royal Academician in 2005.



Photographs by Tim Rawle and Louis Sinclair ©

The Arts Fund: the Great Tradition at Downing College

The opening of The Heong Gallery in February 2016, together with the Howard Theatre and Kenneth Tickell organ, bring the arts to the centre of College activities more than at any other time in its history. To maximise the potential of these outstanding facilities, the College is launching an Arts Fund to support the culture programme in Downing as well as to create a membership scheme to substantially build our audiences. The name of the new College Arts Fund celebrates F. R. Leavis and asserts Downing's claim in the world of arts

and culture. The funds donated to the project will allow Downing to become a centre of excellence for culture within the University and beyond.

The goal is to create a £1million endowment fund, the income from which will be disbursed for programming costs in the theatre, art gallery, music, poetry and literature. Student groups will also be able to apply for funds, and small bursaries will be allocated on the basis of need.

Benefits of supporting the Arts Fund

Arts Fund Members

Gifts at all levels

Will receive by email advance information on all gallery exhibitions, theatre productions at Downing, music recitals, poetry readings and writers' lectures by Downing Societies, and other cultural events at Downing that are open to the public.



Arts Fund Patrons

£1,800 per annum

In addition, Arts Fund Patrons will receive invitations in the year of the gift to:

ART: three private opening receptions per year with the curator, Advisory Board and special guests. Invitations to all symposia and other events related to each exhibition.

THEATRE: invitation to a special pre-performance reception with the Honorary Patrons or special guests.

MUSIC: invitation to the Advent Carol Service and an invitation to post-recital refreshments.

Membership of the 1800 Circle for that year.

For more information on how to support the The Arts Fund, please contact Donna Thomas dt396@dow.cam.ac.uk or visit our website www.downingcambridge.com/the-campaign/the-arts-fund-the-great-tradition-at-downing-college



DOW@CAM



Photograph by Perry Hastings ©

The Heong Gallery at Downing College

Created at the entrance to the College from the original Edwardian stables (built in 1902–1903), The Heong Gallery, a new art gallery at Downing College dedicated to modern and contemporary art, opened on 6 February 2016.

GENERATION PAINTING 1955–65:
British Art from the Collection
of Sir Alan Bowness

6 February – 22 May 2016
Free Admission

.....
Opening Hours from 6 February 2016
Wednesdays: 10 – 8pm
Weekends and bank holidays: 10 – 6pm

The gallery opened with an exhibition from the private collection of Sir Alan Bowness (1950), former Director of the Tate, featuring works by an array of significant mid-twentieth-century British artists including Patrick Heron, Allen Jones, Peter Lanyon and William Scott. It is the first time these rarely seen works have been displayed together, and the exhibition is a celebration of Bowness' collection and his long career in the arts. The exhibition is curated by Rachel Rose Smith.

The Gallery has been named for Alwyn Heong (1979), an alumnus of Downing College who read medicine, but made his career in international finance. Now a resident of Australia, he is a passionate supporter of the visual arts and a collector. Owing to his substantial support for the gallery, it will be named The Heong Gallery at Downing College.

In 2009, Alwyn established a fund to support Downing graduate students facing financial hardship. This belief in education had been strongly instilled in him by his father, who had struggled greatly against the odds to finish his own high school education. His father was born in 1925, orphaned at the age of 3, and sent to work in the tin mines of Malaysia as a child labourer at the age of 12. He finally completed his high school education at the belated age of 25, challenged by financial hardship and the Japanese occupation of Malaysia when all schools were closed. Armed with this basic education and a great deal of drive, he

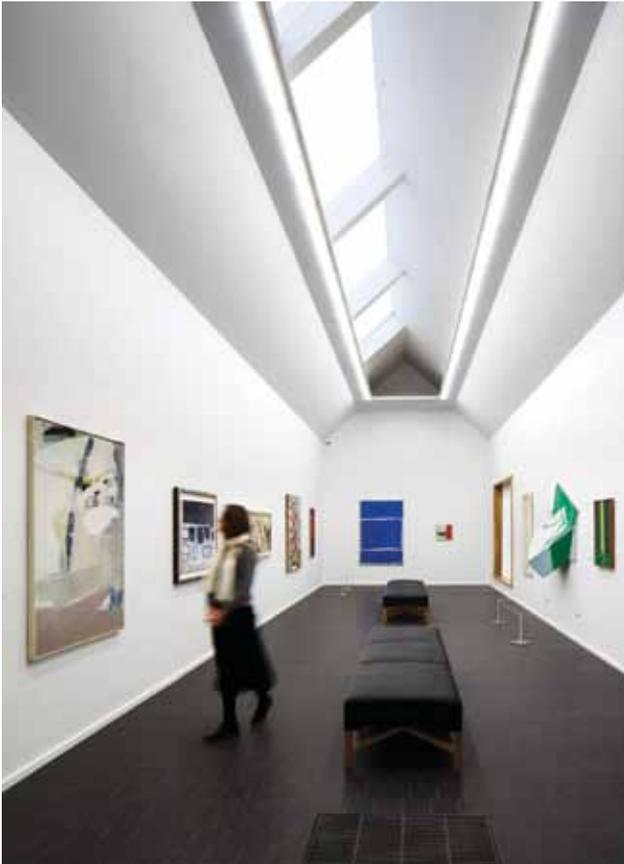
established his own mining business, which prospered and allowed Alwyn the privilege of being educated in the UK.

The art gallery is part of a larger construction project at Downing College that includes the refurbishment of the former Parker's House (renamed Battcock Lodge) to provide 78 student rooms, along with the creation of a new court, 'First Court'. The completion of this ambitious project signifies a huge achievement for everyone involved in bringing it to fruition, and the College is extremely grateful to all those Members who have so generously supported it.



Battcock Lodge, The Heong Gallery and First Court

Photographs by Tim Rawle and Louis Sinclair ©



The Heong Gallery at Downing College



The Heong Gallery at Downing College



Donor bricks, First Court

The History of the Gallery Building



The current building dates from late 1902, when Messrs Coulson & Lofts were appointed to build a new stable block on the East side of the Domus. This followed the decision in 1885 to remove the original Wilkins-designed stable block, for the use of the Master, Professors and Fellows of the College, which had occupied roughly the current site of the Maitland Robinson Library. The new stables appear to have been for the sole use of the Master, although the Governing Body minutes in the archive contain very little information on the building after its completion. This is the earliest known photograph showing the building, taken in 1937 from the window of R6 looking towards Regent Street.



John Tancock and Ai Weiwei

JOHN TANCOCK (1960) studied at Downing and then at the Courtauld Institute. From 1967 to 1972 he was Associate Curator in the department of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Art and Curator of the Rodin Museum at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He received his Ph.D. in 1977 for his thesis on “The Sculpture of Auguste Rodin”. Beginning in 1972, John had a long career with Sotheby’s. He now works with Chambers Fine Art, a gallery specialising in contemporary Chinese art located in New York and Beijing.

AI WEIWEI was born in Beijing in 1957 and grew up in political exile with his father, the poet Ai Qing, during China’s Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). After returning to Beijing and participating in the early stages of the development of contemporary art within China, Ai moved in 1981 to the United States, where he had his first exhibition in 1988. He returned to Beijing in 1993 and was a leading figure in the Chinese avant-garde. He founded the atelier FAKE Design in 2003, which has realised more than seventy building and landscaping projects.

Rachel Rose Smith, curator of Downing’s Heong Gallery asks John Tancock about bringing Ai Weiwei to Cambridge.

Q Please first tell us a bit about your time at Downing and how you came to the History of Art.

A My English master at school had been a pupil of F. R. Leavis in the 1950s and assured me that there was only one college for me to consider! I have vivid memories of seminars in the Fellows’ Garden even when the weather was not particularly warm. I am still thankful for the reading habits I acquired under his tuition, but began to resist what I felt to be his dogmatism.

The History of Art Tripos had just been established and it seemed to me that this would offer a perfect environment for the development of my strong visual interests. So for my final year I became a pupil of Michael Jaffé and Francis Haskell, both outstanding scholars and teachers. In retrospect, there were strong similarities in the approach required in both disciplines, Leavis’ focus on the particularities of language being not so different from Jaffé’s analysis of the qualities of a Renaissance bronze.

Q After Downing, you specifically researched the work of French sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840–1917). Was it this that took you to the States?

A Yes, after Downing I went to the Courtauld Institute where I was fortunate to study under Sir Alan Bowness (1950). At the time I was not aware that he had attended Downing. With his encouragement I began to focus on 19th and 20th century sculpture as I began to look for a topic for my Ph.D. and came to the conclusion that the greatest of them all – Auguste Rodin – was really the least studied.

In 1967 the Philadelphia Museum of Art was looking for a curator to research the collection of the Philadelphia Rodin Museum, at the time the largest collection of Rodin’s work outside the Musée Rodin in Paris, and the catalogue I wrote was accepted for my Ph.D. However, my five years at the Philadelphia Museum were not limited to researching Rodin. As I walked to my office each day, I passed through the galleries that house the Walter and Louise Arensberg

and A.E. Gallatin collections and developed a life-long interest in Marcel Duchamp, whose greatest works are housed in Philadelphia.

Q When did you first learn about Ai Weiwei's work?

A Ai Weiwei was living in New York in the 1980s, but I was not aware of him at the time. Outside a very small circle of like-minded Chinese artists and Chinese-American hands, he was really not known at all. I began to see photographs of his furniture-based works in the late 1990s, but it was not until 2002 in the exhibition *Cement* at Chambers Fine Art that I saw one of his works for the first time. This was a small work called *Souvenir from Beijing* which consists of a brick from a demolished traditional Chinese house housed in a box crafted from Tieli wood.

Q Ai became more widely known in Britain after his sunflower seeds installation in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall in 2010, but the exhibition at the Royal Academy last year was his first major institutional exhibition in the UK. What is your most vivid impression of Ai's work from this exhibition?

A The Royal Academy exhibition was exceptional in several ways. Firstly, it was the first international exhibition he had been able to attend, since his passport had been confiscated in 2011. This was an emotional experience for him. Secondly, he always pays particular attention to the relationship between his works and the architectural environment in which they are displayed. The splendid proportions and natural lighting of the galleries at Burlington House provided a perfect setting for the works that Ai had chosen so carefully for their formal and thematic relationships.

Q Ai responds in his art and writing to the cultural heritage of China and to contemporary events. Is it possible to describe his impact on Chinese cultural and artistic life today?

A While President Xi Jinping was in London last October, the Chinese Ambassador was asked what he thought about the Ai Weiwei exhibition at the Royal Academy. His answer adhered

strictly to the party line and was extremely hostile in tone. So the official attitude has not really changed and the 'official' art world in China wants nothing to do with him. On the other hand, he has a tremendous following among younger people and is admired for his outspokenness.

Q Do you think it is fair to say that many of his works are about connecting Chinese culture and history to the rest of the world?

A Not really. It is true that he has tremendous respect for the great cultural and artistic achievements of China but he is also a citizen of the world and is totally *au courant* with developments in contemporary artistic theory and practice in the West. Much of his work is a commentary on blind acceptance of traditional values and he is well known to incorporate ancient materials in his own work – Neolithic and Han dynasty vases, for example, and Qing dynasty furniture – but for reasons I have already touched on, he has been received much more warmly outside the country of his birth than within it.

Q Ai was not able to leave China between 2011 and July 2015 but continued to produce much work from his studio in Beijing. How did he start to develop his ideas for Downing?

A Although unable to travel, Ai has been the subject of numerous international exhibitions in the last four years. We must never forget that he has also had a very successful career in architecture and is very much interested in the way in which his works relate to the space in which they are exhibited. So with the Downing project as with all the others, he first of all familiarised himself with the space before deciding which category of his works would be most appropriate.

Q And finally, without giving too much away, what might we expect to see this summer?

A Ai was impressed with the elegant proportions of the new Downing Gallery and decided that a selection of works in which the emphasis was on form and volume would be the best fit – sculptures that are related to minimalism but depart from it in many ways. Outdoors, on the other hand, will be trees, ancient specimens that will provide a wonderful contrast to the living trees around them.

AI WEIWEI CURATED BY JOHN TANCOCK will be on display at The Heong Gallery at Downing College between June and October 2016.



'Souvenir from Beijing' (2002), courtesy of Ai Weiwei Studio



A Life of Crime



Rachel Helen Smith

Downing counts among its illustrious alumni politicians, actors and scientists, but did you know that in the last few decades the College has also produced a number of crime novelists? Here, three very different Downing authors speak to Rachel Helen Smith about the highs and lows of life as a writer.



When I speak to award-winning novelist **LOUISE DEAN (HISTORY 1988)** she is enjoying a week off to spend half term with her children. However, she still got up at 6am to fit in some writing. 'It's called a crisis,' she laughs. 'Just like it used to be with essays at Cambridge.'

On graduating, Louise was persuaded to embark on a career in marketing. After three 'lost years' working for a large corporation she was despairing, 'It was just tedium and pain, and I thought that it could only go downhill from there. Then I met a lovely young man with long, curly hair and rollerblades, and we decided to go to Hong Kong together.' From there they moved to New York, where Louise worked for an advertising agency. Writing became her full time occupation when the agency folded.

She says: 'Writing novels is a lot like making pancakes – the first go is always a flop. My second attempt was a dog's mess. I soon discovered that if you want to do something well it involves a lot of hard work.' It was not until 2004, after six years of working and receiving rejection after rejection, that *Becoming Strangers* was published.

It won the Betty Trask Award for Best First Novel, was longlisted for the Man Booker and nominated for the Guardian First Book Award. Louise followed it with *This Human Season* (2006) about prison hunger strikes in Northern Ireland, and *The Idea of Love* (2008), a tale of exploitation and mental illness. Her latest novel, *The Old Romantic* (2011), focused on the relationship between a dying man and his estranged son.

Her books are often described as 'darkly comic', but these are not cheerful topics. What draws Louise to such dark and difficult subject matter? 'I like to look at people in extreme situations,' she says. 'I like the rub of weird combinations and things that aren't supposed to happen. I'm very interested in moral weakness.'

Her fifth novel is a psychological thriller. 'Having written the first draft,' Louise says, 'I showed it to my agent. She told me to get rid of two thirds of the content but keep the character of the detective inspector. Learning to write crime fiction is like doing

another degree. You have to learn the formalities so that you can meet the readers' expectations. It is fun though, because you have to give the characters enough space to be devious, even to you as the writer. I have no idea how this one is going to end yet.'

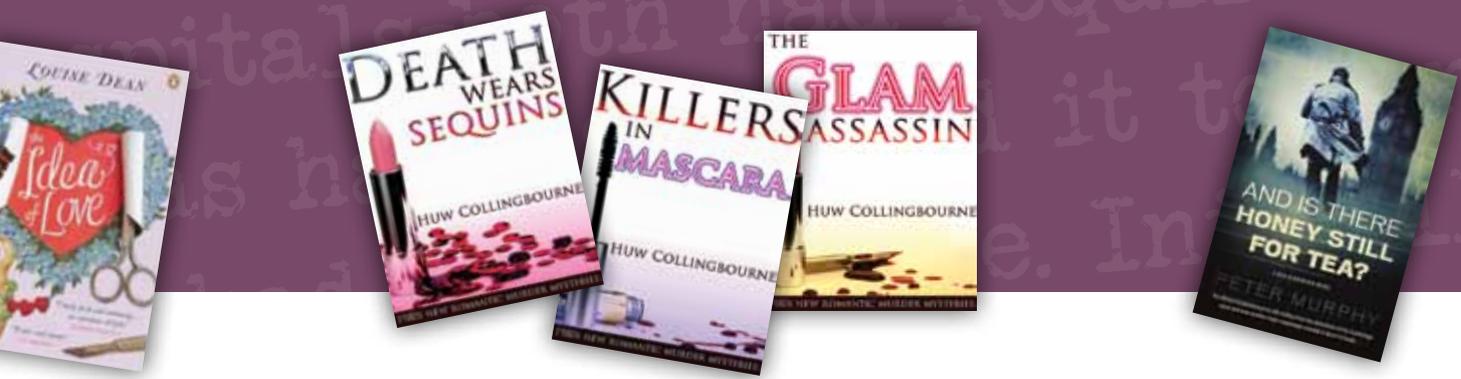
Her advice to budding writers is to read widely, to 'get the rubbish out of your system' as soon as possible and simply to love writing. She says: 'I thought you had to be clever or good to be a novelist but in fact you don't have to be either. You just have to be prepared to learn the craft.'



HUW COLLINGBOURNE (1977) has been writing since the age of 11, when he began selling articles to the magazine *Pet Fish Monthly* in order to finance his tropical pets. Having realised at an early age that he could make money by writing, his progress was interrupted by a three-year stint reading English at Downing. He remembers feeling clueless when faced with *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, and escaping into the absurdity of student theatre. 'I wrote a play called *Relics* that we put on,' he says, 'about a man who realises he is likely to be made into a saint after his death and so starts disposing of his various organs in advance.'

Despite his longstanding love of writing, Huw was lured by recruiters to take a graduate role in a market research company, which he found dull and repetitive. In his spare time he began phoning magazine editors to pitch short stories and articles, and embarked upon an eclectic freelance career in newspapers, magazines and television, much of it focused on the 1980s music scene. It was this that led him to discover his second vocation. He explains: 'I was sent to interview the famous cross-dressing disco diva, Divine, and on arriving at his manager's office, saw an early Apple computer sat on the desk. I thought it was just amazing and immediately went out to get myself an IBM PC in place of my clunky old typewriter.'

Huw was impressed by the flexibility of the computer, but frustrated by the primitive software. He decided the only way to solve the problem was to learn to code himself and



spent a year programming an adventure game called 'The Golden Wombat of Destiny'. Knowing how to code, Huw then found himself writing columns for computer magazines.

Then, nostalgic for the excitement of the 1980s London music scene, he had the idea of writing a series of novels set in the clubs that he used to frequent. The New Romantic Murder Mysteries series contains three novels, with a fourth on the way. As well as capturing the clothes, cocktails and characters of the period, they draw inspiration from classic Golden Age murder mysteries. Having previously battled to have books published through the conventional route, Huw decided to self-publish the series, a decision which he says puts him firmly in control of the whole process.

Now, he is working on a new novel about the political sex scandals of the 1960s. His challenge to young writers is not to make excuses, but to get on with it: 'If you want to write, do it. Write every day. If you're not in the mood, write a different bit of the novel or write something else entirely. And if you have to work to pay the bills, write at night.'



A third Downing writer living by this last piece of advice is **PETER MURPHY (LAW 1963)**.

His novels have been written alongside his day job as a Judge of the Crown Court. His books are heavily influenced by his work, although he insists that none of the characters are entirely drawn from real life: 'I'll take scenes and change them, or I'll combine elements of two or three people to make up a character.'

Peter's novels are set in the 1960s and follow a young barrister starting to practise. 'I would describe them as legal thrillers,' he says. He was inspired to begin the series during the 1980s, when living in America. Telling the story of his hero Ben Schroeder was a way to help explain the English legal system to an American audience. A chance dinner meeting with a friendly Australian led to his connection with No Exit Press, which continues to publish his novels at a rate of one per year.

Previously all the writing had to be done at evenings and weekends, but since his retirement in November 2015, he now has the luxury of writing full time. Living with his wife back in Cambridgeshire, an area for which he feels huge affection, Cambridge and the surrounding area often feature in his novels. 'Oxford has Morse, so why not?'

His own advice for would-be novelists: 'If you think you've got a novel inside you then sit down and write it. However, you have to be patient and let the story develop. Don't worry too much if you don't know how it will end or if it takes a different direction to the one you had originally imagined. And try not to edit until you are at least half way through the book or you'll never get past a few chapters.'

With such wise advice from three successful alumni, Downing may produce more crime novelists yet. Who would have thought that the College's courts and rolling lawns would end up obliquely inspiring thrilling tales of crime, deception and murder?

Artist **ELLA BERTHOUD** and novelist **SUSAN ELDERKIN** (both 1987) met during their first term at Downing, over a pile of books and two steaming mugs of coffee. It was, one recalls, 'the first really important moment of my life involving someone to whom I wasn't, in fact, related'. The two English students instantly connected over a love of literature and began passing books back and forth, sharing and debating the significance of what they were

reading. Both addicted to narrative, they understood books to be 'a dream into which you sink as a drug' and resolved that 'they would use the drugs together from then on'. And so they did, embarking on a friendship and a reading list that would eventually result in *The Novel Cure: An A-Z of Literary Remedies*.

The Novel Cure invites you to look up a condition from which you are suffering: it could be toothache, hiccups, loneliness

or low self-esteem. Ella and Susan then prescribe some reading to cure you or offer some much-needed solace. Sometimes it is the content that reminds you you're not alone. Sometimes, it is the rhythm of the words that soothes or invigorates you. It has the additional benefit that it introduces you to books you'd never have thought to read, or invites you to return to well-loved classics. Most of all, it is a testament to the fact that reading a book really can change your life.



From the Development Office

Past Support, Present Beneficiaries A “thank you” to our donors

Mays Wild Fund for the Natural Sciences

The Mays Wild Fund was set up to build on Downing’s mission to attract, nurture and encourage promising young researchers and teachers by bringing them into a community of Fellows with rich and diverse experience.

With the help of many alumni, the fund reached its original target in 2010. However, the fund still has room for growth, the initial target of £500,000 having been low. The primary intention of the fund is to cover the costs of a Fellowship in Natural Sciences. In addition, vacation study grants are also currently awarded. As the fund grows our hope is to enable the creation of Research Associateships and Studentships. The current Mays Wild Fellow is Mike Housden.

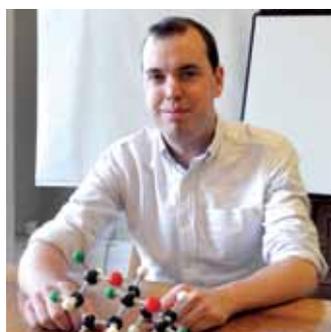
MIKE HOUSDEN grew up in Chester before coming up to Cambridge in 2003 to study Natural Sciences at Christ’s College. Having specialised in organic chemistry, he remained in Cambridge for his PhD on the total synthesis of the brasilinolides, a family of bioactive natural products.

On the completion of this postgraduate research, he began to diversify the application of his laboratory research based on an underlying theme of selective and precision bond construction. This principle drove interest in the development of novel synthetic techniques and strategies to design molecular structures with direct application in electronic device manufacture, in particular organic photovoltaics and OLEDs (organic light-emitting diodes). The rational design of small molecules with delocalised bonding that behave as semiconductors when assembled into three-dimensional architectures has much potential for use in many everyday technologies in the 21st century, from flexible and lightweight displays to sources of renewable energy.

Recently, in addition to these studies, he has been working with a collaborative team of chemists to investigate the application of

highly cytotoxic molecules from extreme marine environments as a part of a novel antibody-drug conjugate therapeutic.

In addition to his research, Mike is Director of Studies for Chemistry at Downing and supervises organic chemistry and spectroscopy for all four years of the Chemistry Tripos. He also lectures advanced organic chemistry courses at Part III and postgraduate level.



“My Research Fellowship at Downing supported by the Mays-Wild Fund has been a fantastic opportunity for me at this early stage in my academic career. This support has allowed me to develop and execute my own chemistry ideas less constrained by a conventional

postdoctoral phase under the direct supervision of a senior academic. I have been able to gain experience over a wide range of modern synthetic chemistry and collaborate across departmental borders, particularly with device physicists and engineers with whom bench chemists often do not interact. I feel that the cross-disciplinary nature of my research, with a strong grounding in complex molecule synthesis at the core, is very much in the spirit of the broad education provided by the Natural Sciences Tripos at Cambridge. Downing’s place as an institution for teaching and inspiring generations of scientists was firmly established by the extensive contributions of Frank Wild and Martin Mays and I feel privileged that the College has been able to help me in my transition from an education phase of my life to an independent research career.” **MIKE HOUSDEN**

In his spare time, Mike enjoys rowing and racing on the Cam and strives to improve his contributions to his pub quiz team.

Everitt Butterfield Fellowship



Those who have donated to the Everitt Butterfield Research Fellowship in Biomedical and Biological Sciences will be pleased to know that applications are currently coming in for

the first Fellowship. Interviews are scheduled to take place in February 2016 and a Fellow is expected to be appointed by the Governing Body in March. We will be in touch soon afterwards to let you know the outcome. The fund itself is still below its target. Please get in touch with the Development Office if you are interested in making a donation.

The 1970s Grant Fund

This relatively new fund has been set up thanks to alumni who came up in the 70s who have acknowledged the differences in funding of students between then and now, as well as the difficulties graduates now face in finding work.

OLIVIA MORGAN 2012 (ENGLISH) received a 1970s grant which allowed her to attend a training day which helped her realise that TV and film are something she is serious about pursuing. She is now studying TV journalism in London as a result. She says "Thank you so much for your help. It means so much that I was able to attend this course and boost my CV with the correct skills for employment in the creative sector. It was an invaluable experience."

Hardship and Student Support

Over the year, a large number of grants have been awarded to students for travel and research projects as well as to cover periods of hardship. These could not have been awarded without the generosity of our donors to the funds which support such awards.

One such award was made to **NEIL GANDHI 2014 (MPHIL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY)**, whose grant contributed towards an internship at the United Nations Development Programme in Geneva. Neil was responsible for programme management, representing UNDP at international conferences and conducting research on HIV, Health and Development. He worked primarily on non-medical factors of health in the context of global health, which required a challenging study of technical detail, health policy and ways to improve health through non-medical interventions. He provided support to the Global Fund, focusing on people who are vulnerable to HIV, malaria and TB. He also learned much about the United Nations and its work in development, particularly its approach to global health and contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Another travel award was made to **JAMES COLLINS 2010 (MEDICINE)** to help fund his medical elective in Malaysia. He spent 4 weeks in A&E in the large state funded Hospital in Kuala Lumpur followed by 3 weeks in Sarawak General Hospital attached to the general surgery ward. He also visited a private hospital and a heart centre before making a trip deep into the Bornean jungle to run two rural clinics which provide a primary care service for isolated communities.



James Collins in Kuala Lumpur hospital, and on the descent from the rural clinic up a mountain in the jungle

James learnt about the presentation and characteristics of many conditions which he would never see in the UK, such as Dengue Fever. He was impressed at how well the Malaysian healthcare system copes with drastically lower resources. Indeed, the differences in healthcare were very challenging, especially seeing some patients who sadly died but would not have done so if they had the resources available in UK hospitals. Whilst he feels the experience has made him better rounded as a doctor he was also pleased to help the poor and isolated communities in the Bornean Jungle whose monthly charity run clinic can only exist because of the assistance of medical students.

... Continued



Hardship awards have been made in cases of family illness, where the student concerned could not have continued without an award to cover food and other living costs, as well as in cases of unforeseen expenses and hardship through prolonged courses. These are comments that recent recipients have made:

"I will use the grant for food for the rest of Term 3, and living expenses during the summer as money is in short supply at home because my mum has cancer and had to stop working.

This grant is very important to me; it not only has assured me that I'll be able to buy enough food for this term but it is also going to be a really great help to me during the summer when I receive no student loan or grant. It has also helped reduce stress for me by helping out my financial situation so that I can focus more on my studies. I'm extremely grateful for your support in funding the Student Hardship Grant. It's such a lovely, generous deed and I know it has really helped out many students in the past and present, and will in the future." **UNDERGRADUATE IN ENGLISH**

The College is as grateful as those who benefit from these funds. It is with your generosity that we can continue to build on the excellence that is our hallmark and ensure as many worthy candidates as possible have access to an education at Downing.



Amy's students in Chile

"The year has involved a large number of unforeseen costs, such as my laptop breaking down the day before my first exam, and a large number of vaccinations in preparation for my third year abroad (I have a job in a university in Chile) that I hadn't anticipated costing as

much as they did. The grant is incredible. This has enabled me to undertake my original plans meaning I will have a year fully immersed in the language which is the best possible preparation for my final year.

Thank you very much for your donations. I am so very grateful that there are people that want to support me when my ability to study is hindered by a lack of money. Hopefully one day I will be able to do the same!!" **AMY HOATH 2013 (MML)**

Extract from **'THE IMAGINARY ICEBERG'** (1946)
by Elizabeth Bishop

*We'd rather have the iceberg than the ship,
although it meant the end of travel.
Although it stood stock-still like cloudy rock
and all the sea were moving marble.
We'd rather have the iceberg than the ship;
we'd rather own this breathing plain of snow
though the ship's sails were laid upon the sea
as the snow lies undissolved upon the water.
O solemn, floating field,
are you aware an iceberg takes repose
with you, and when it wakes may pasture on your snows?*

'SONNET' (1946)
by Judith Wright

*Now let the draughtsman of my eyes be done
marking the line of petal and of hill.
Let the long commentary of the brain
be silent. Evening and the earth are one,
and bird and tree are simple and stand still.
Now, fragile heart swung in your webs of vein,
and perilous self won hardly out of clay,
gather the harvest of last light, and reap
the luminous fields of sunset for your bread.
Blurs the laborious focus of the day
and shadow brims the hillside slow as sleep.
Here is the word that, when all words are said,
shall compass more than speech. The sun is gone;
draws on the night at last; the dream draws on.*



Photograph by Perry Hastings ©

DR SARAH KENNEDY is a Research Fellow in English at Downing College, specialising in modernist and contemporary Anglophone poetry. She is currently writing a book about metaphor, landscape, and literary selfhood in the work of three mid-century poets: Elizabeth Bishop, Seamus Heaney and Judith Wright. Her most recent publication is “Where’s home, Ulysses?” Judith Wright in Europe 1937’ in *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (6 August 2015). A chapter on ‘Ash-Wednesday and the Ariel Poems’ will appear in the forthcoming *New Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Poetic personae: sounding out the lyric self

With its glittering roll-call of literary alumni, Cambridge draws many a student keen to walk in the footsteps of Milton and Marlowe, Wordsworth and Byron, Plath, Hughes, and Woolf. The turbulent histories of these writers compel our fascination, and our reading of their works often feels shadowed by their ghostly presences. But readers are no mere innocent victims of their haunting. It is a feature of our modern sensibility that English scholars have become accustomed to thinking critically about the role and presence of the author in a literary text. Put simply, we live in an intellectual age that has deprived the author of the pretence of a unified and authoritative self (if such pretence ever really existed). Yet literary language – the language of poetry, novels and plays – remains inescapably bound to its author’s voice. The tensions between writerly presence and absence, between creative personality and authorial impersonality, and between the inner landscape of the poet’s mind and the external world of the text, inform and underlie my current research.

While I was writing my doctoral thesis on the use of metaphor in T. S. Eliot’s poetry, I found myself returning to Eliot’s celebrated essay from 1953 “The Three Voices of Poetry”, which begins “The first voice is the voice of the poet talking to himself – or to nobody.” Eliot describes a process by which the poet “...has something germinating in him for which he must find words; but he cannot know what words he wants until he has found the words; he cannot identify this embryo until it has been transformed into an arrangement of the right words in the right order”.

Eliot depicts a poet straining to hear the stirrings of an unknown, perhaps unknowable inner voice. For some (if not all) poets, writing poetry is a means of identity-formation: the writing of a poem is also, in a strangely literal sense, the creation or revelation of a self.

My work attempts to map these processes by analysing the use of metaphor. Metaphors should not be mistaken for mere decorative flourishes. Rather, they are mental structures that allow us to order and categorise our experiences via a series of ‘like, and yet not like’ connections. A metaphor is a provisional kind of encounter. It is a moment of familiarity, a drawing of a relation, even as its very form recognises and acknowledges separation and difference. Metaphor maps the relation (and failures of relation) between individual consciousness and the wider world. Of course, the self is always, in some sense, situated within a spatial world. It is no accident that the rhythms of lyric poetry – its repetitions and pauses, its accelerations and diminutions – are measured in spatial terms. My study of the ways in which modern poets speak to the nature of the self is increasingly a study of the way the poetic self is filtered through and transfigured by landscapes both physical and imaginative.

One of the subjects of my study, the American poet Elizabeth Bishop (1911–1979), was fascinated by the Baroque poetic project (as she found it described by M. W. Croll) to “portray, not a thought, but a mind thinking”. She sought to “dramatise the mind in action rather than in repose”. Bishop finds an imaginative language for those “elements least visible” (as she called them) in the refractive geometries of icebergs and the glittering flare of sunlight on water. The hazards of exposure are suggested in her reference to a self that “cuts its facets from within”. Another, the Australian poet Judith Wright (1915–2000) makes deftly introspective tracteries of the interpenetration of the human and the natural. In “the fission and the fusion” between the poet and her not-quite-native landscape, she meets a “perilous self won hardly out of clay” (*Sonnet*, left). In such ways we as readers too might encounter and bear witness to the phantoms that throng the spaces between art, self, and world.

Events Calendar 2016

SATURDAY 20 FEBRUARY

Griffins' Club Dinner

THURSDAY 17 MARCH

1987-1995 Reunion Drinks

FRIDAY 1 APRIL

Downing Medics Conference

SATURDAY 23 APRIL

Segreants' Club Dinner

TUESDAY 26 APRIL

1979-1985 Reunion Drinks

SATURDAY 14 MAY

MA Congregation and Dinner

FRIDAY 10 JUNE

DCBC Captain's Dinner

SATURDAY 11 JUNE

Donors' Garden Party

SATURDAY 2 JULY

Annual Reunion Dinner

SATURDAY 16 JULY

1749 Society Garden Party

FRIDAY 23 SEPTEMBER

Year Reps Meeting & Dinner

SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

Alumni Day and
Association Dinner

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

London Alumni Reception

THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER

Varsity Rugby

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Alumni Events

Autumn–Winter 2015 saw the introduction of two new events in the Downing alumni calendar. Mid-November saw our Teachers' Networking Event, where teaching alumni and those interested in the teaching profession gathered back at College to hear talks on current issues in education.

The morning's panel discussion on bridging the gap between school and University sparked a lot of lively debate amongst attendees, as did the afternoon's talks on thinking globally. Presentations from representatives from Teach First and the Cambridge University School of Education concluded the day's seminars. There were around 35 attendees, including alumni, guests and current students with an interest in teaching. The feedback has been very positive, so do keep an eye out for other related events in the future.



Teachers' Networking event, November 2015

We were also delighted to hold our inaugural London Alumni Carol Service at St Stephen with St John in Westminster on 3 December. The Service was well attended and we are very grateful to all alumni who participated, particularly those who contributed to the readings. The service was led by Rev Dr Keith Eyeons and we extend our thanks to organ scholar Louisa Denby for organising the Choir and the service itself. The Service was followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the church. Look out for another Carol Service in 2016.



London Alumni Carol Service, December 2015