Bin Brook **ROBINSON COLLEGE MAGAZINE**

LENT TERM 2007

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COLLEGE

Moving on to pastures new



Dr S. Trudgill, Chair of the Gardens Committee (left) wishing Desmond O'Grady (right) well at the reception held to thank him for his work as Head Gardner.

Desmond O' Grady left College employment in February 2007 to pursue further horticultural study elsewhere. He joined the gardens team as an apprentice to Stuart Limpus, the first Head Gardener, in 1977. In 1978 he left to complete his training, but soon returned, succeeding David Brown as Head Gardener himself in 1982.

The College gardens you see today are actually a combination of no fewer than ten original gardens. The largest is the central garden of Thorneycreek house, built in 1895. Four gardens of other houses now link into this on the Adams Road side with one further garden at 1 Sylvester Road (1933). Additionally three large houses and a cottage block were demolished in order to build the College – one in Adams Road and three in Herschel Road.

The College Gardens derive their character from the vision of the Landscape Architect, J.S. Bodfan Gruffydd. His original plan sought to maintain diversity but to provide unity through linking the new College building to the Thorneycreek garden by means of an elevated walkway over the Bin Brook stream. He saw 'a wild woodland water garden'; focusing on the Bin Brook and a new small lake at the heart of the site. The vision espoused a feeling of park and informal woodland, while at the same time keeping the sense of the more formal Edwardian gardens beyond.

This vision provided only the most general guidance for the uncertain future, for we could not know how or when the other

houses might pass into our hands. It was Desmond who planned and managed the incorporation of the very different gardens of 2, 4, and 6 Adams Road, and 1, Sylvester Road into the wider scheme, and in due course planted the area round the Graduate House. He also oversaw the development of the areas around the main College building where some of the original trees still stand with underplantings of spring bulbs next to the inner lawn. His plantings comprise the Hall border, largely of Mediterranean shrubs, and commemorative trees, while outside the College the Herschel Road plantings of shrubs now flourish. Those alert to such things will recognise his fingerprints wherever in the gardens they encounter some variety of *Sorbus*, for he quietly established a splendid collection of these all about the site. It was Desmond too who first recognised the landscape potential of the site of our outdoor theatre.

The gardens are thus a fusion of several pre-existing gardens which are subtly linked while still retaining their distinctive character. Through Desmond O'Grady's stewardship, we now benefit not only from the original plantings and the focal water garden but also his more recent developments. Thus, the tribute to Desmond's time here lies in the magnificent mature trees and wilder areas which are juxtaposed with more formal sections. This makes for a diverse garden full of historical and horticultural interest which has become a haven for wildlife and a pleasure to the eye. (see front cover)

Dr. S. Trudgill Chair Robinson College Gardens Committee from 1997. Dr. Martin Brett, Gardens Committee 1979 – 1997.



COLLEGE

The New Graduate Accommodation – an update

In the last issue of *Bin Brook*, we profiled the College's plans for new accommodation on Sylvester Road. The plan is a solution to the problem Robinson has in providing enough graduate accommodation to attract the best students who wish to study for MPhils or PhDs at the College. Detailed planning is now complete and, as we go to press, is out to tender, enabling construction work to begin in July this year.

Early on in the planning process, a small group from Robinson visited the accommodation provided for graduates by the other Cambridge colleges. The purpose of these visits was to enable the College to get a better idea of the standard of accommodation and the range of facilities available to students from other colleges. In addition, it would help establish the sorts of facilities that Robinson College would plan to offer. The variety in style, proximity to the main college site, quality, pricing of rent, age, fittings and facilities in these buildings really surprised the group that visited the sites. It was certainly never going to be the case that any real pattern for graduate accommodation could be found in the University.

The overall aim as far as the design of the accommodation goes is to bring together high quality, thoroughly modern design, fixtures and fittings together with affordability. Graduates are often living on strictly limited funding, or in some cases are funding their studies through working part time or from savings. It is vital that Robinson produces not only high-quality, well-designed living spaces, available to graduates throughout the time that they are studying, but that the College offers accommodation at a price the students can afford.

Fittings Fit for Students

Each room has been carefully designed to reflect the needs of students. It was decided early on that en suite facilities would be available in all rooms, as is largely the case for most undergraduate rooms. The rooms themselves are required to be both a home and a workplace - somewhere to relax, unwind and perhaps socialise, as well as a place to study. As you can see from the designs shown (right), provision has been made for a large desk space on one side of the room. Sufficient shelving for books is also a clear priority in student accommodation. There will be shelves above the bed and also above the desk (big enough to fit text-books and files, storage of which can sometimes be problematic in student accommodation).

As regards technological facilities, it is the wish of the College to provide facilities which are the fastest and best available at present This is both in order to have good facilities available in the new buildings and also to ensure that technology installed now is not rendered obsolete in a very short period of time. All the rooms will have the fastest network connection currently available, and wireless internet access, a rarity in current student accommodation, but something that is surely set to become the norm in future years.

The shared dining and kitchen facilities will provide a space to prepare and eat food, and an area for students to congregate and socialise. There will be a dining table in these areas, making it easier for students to eat together if they should wish. The kitchen will be fitted with highquality fittings and appliances, including fridges and freezers, as well as facilities for plugging in a television, should students want to share that amenity.

Environmental Concerns

Another major concern in the planning for the new accommodation has been that it is as "green" as possible, namely that steps are made to see that it is energy efficient. The College feels that there is a responsibility to minimise the "carbon footprint" of the project, and will do all that is practicable to insulate the buildings adequately, as well as to look into possibilities to have energy sources that do not rely on fossil fuel. Painstaking effort has been put in during the planning process to look at every possibility, and to weigh each benefit against cost and practicability.

Funding the Accommodation

This new accommodation is desperately needed by Robinson College in order to provide first-class facilities for graduates and thus enable the College to attract the best students. The Warden and Fellows are immensely grateful for the financial support so far offered by Alumni, Fellows and Friends of Robinson towards the cost of the new buildings. The College continues to seek donations to complete the financing of









this project. There remain a limited number of naming opportunities for donors. Please contact the Development Office for further details. The total cost for the construction and fitting out of the new accommodation, along with the refurbishment of the preexisting house on the site, is five million pounds, two million of which needs to be secured as soon as possible to ensure that construction can run to schedule, and high quality, affordable housing for Robinson's graduate students is available in the near future.

PEOPLE

Dr Jeremy Thurlow, Fellow of Robinson College and Lecturer in Music had his latest composition "Search Engines" performed by the BBC Philharmonic in February this year conducted by James Macmillan. The programme also contained works by Christian Mason, Symon Clarke and Matthew Brooks. If you would like to hear the piece and missed the concert, listen out for the live recording which is to be broadcast on *Hear and Now*, on BBC Radio 3 in the near future.

A prolific composer, Jeremy is currently writing a new piece for the BBC Singers, to be premiered in July 2007, and collaborating on a new work for voices, video and electronics with writer Alastair Appleton. He is also working on a piece for the Fitzwilliam String Quartet, to be premiered in the Maverick Music Festival, New York, in August 2008. His solo piano piece 'The Will of the Tones' was written for Matthew Schellhorn and has been performed extensively by different pianists in London, Edinburgh and elsewhere. Dr Thurlow writes of his most recent work:

"Search engines – For me, those two words side by side - search / engines conjure up powerful images. There's not only the vision of new machineries, but also a sense of aspiration, of deep enquiry. In the background are legendary forebears: Stevenson's Rocket, Babbage's Calculating Engines, the Hubble space probe, among many others. 'Search engine' is an artful choice of name for today's explorers of the worldwide web, and resonates with the imagery accompanying many web browsers glimpses of the infinite recesses of outer space; search beams scanning across the darkness, probing the myriad pinpoints of distant light. Together, the two words suggest voyages of discovery, pioneering and even heroic, through territories at once spatial and mental, technological and imaginative. It's these evocative images that form the starting-point for my piece."

Anyone wanting to find out more about Jeremy's compositions should go to http://jeremythurlow.wordpress.com

Apologies to Professor **Mark Villiger** for misspelling his surname in the last edition of *Bin Brook*.

Staff

Arrivals: **Whisley del'Ovo** (Apprentice Electrician) and **Clare Jarmy** (Development Assistant)

Departures: Desmond O'Grady (Head Gardener) Amanda Spivack (Alumni Officer)

Competition Winners

In the last edition of *Bin Brook*, we were giving away three signed copies of *Suite Francaise* by Irene Nemirovsky, translated from the French by Senior Member **Sandra Smith**. The three lucky winners, who knew the answer to the question "*Why was it unusual for Suite Francaise to win the Prix Renaudot?*" – the fact that it was the first time the prize was awarded to an author posthumously, were Ms Nicola Harris (1995), Mrs Fiona Baxter (1997) and Mr David Yirrell (Porter, Robinson College).

Sandra Smith has recently translated another work by Irene Nemirovsky, *David Golder*, which was published with an introduction by Patrick Marnham by Chatto & Windus and Vintage on the first of February this year.



Junior member, Catherine Watts (2006) agreed to review the book: "David Golder opens with a conversation between two old friends, but this is no French romance. This is a finance war in the business world of

1920s Paris, which then delves

into the complicated lives of the nouveau riche. Behind the ostentatious façade of luxury, the materialistic gains of the Parisian elite, there is the dysfunctional Golder family, who, apparently typical of their social circle, are held together by pride. At the heart of their relationships is not love, but money – a force which can both build lives and ruthlessly destroy them.

This is the focus of *David Golder*, a short burst of a novel, though not one without depth. The dark opening sets the narrative perfectly in this world full of possessions yet devoid of love. Golder's character may be the narrative's main protagonist, but he is also its victim and its villain. He is a man who moved from an undesirable past to find himself in an undesirable present, whose blood, sweat and tears poured into his work to elevate himself from his lowly background, yet simply leads to more of the same.

Sometimes film-like in its nature, sometimes like an Ibsen play, *David Golder*'s narrative form allows a swift movement between past and present, between what is said and what is thought. It allows us to see Golder as both a harsh and yet vulnerable character living in the harsh yet vulnerable world created when financial power and drive meet the weariness of an empty life. As social commentary, it carries the simplest of messages: money can't buy you happiness." Recently, the College Library has gratefully received four books from Members of the College.

Presented by the author, **Dr P S Corthorn**, Graduate 1999-2001: In the Shadow of The Dictators: The British Left in the 1930s. Published by Tauris Academic Studies, 2006.

Presented by the author, **Dr KD Kahn-Harris**, Undergraduate 1991-1994: Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge. Berg, 2007

Presented by the translator, **Ms S Smith**, Senior Member: David Golder, by Irene Nemirovsky (see left). Vintage 2007.

Presented by the author, **Mr R C Sargeant**, Undergraduate 1999-2001: Gowers Review of Intellectual Property. TSO, 2006.

A sculpture called "Fin Back" by artist Ben Barrell has been commissioned by College to stand in the middle of Main Court. The new piece is inspired by his existing work at the Cass Sculpture Foundation in Goodwood, near Chichester in West Sussex.

The work is intended to provide a memorable and inspiring landmark right at the heart of the College, which will greet visitors as soon as they arrive, and provide a focal point for the large main court. The committee responsible for choosing this sculpture were please at the way its fin-like shape picks up details on the chapel doors. In addition, when viewed from the appropriate angle, it will also complement the wonderful stained glass windows.

The work has been commissioned because of a requirement that the College should, as it is in the process of planning and constructing a large building, spend a further 1% of the total building costs on commissioning new public art to stand somewhere within the College site (though not necessarily on the site of the new buildings). Further works of art are in the process of being commissioned, but are still at the earlier planning stages.



PEOPLE

Submissions

If you have news you would like to share with other Robinsonians, either in the form of an announcement, or in the form of general news items, please do get in touch with the Development Office. Perhaps you recently met up with some of your year group, or would just like to let other alumni know about a project you've been involved with, do let us know.

Jonathan Randall (2004) (pictured right) will be running his first full marathon in Paris on April 15th and invites you to support him in raising money for HopeHIV; a registered charity which seeks to offer children in sub-Saharan Africa, who have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS, the love, protection and support they need to build foundations of hope for the future, within

Snow

One Thursday morning in the middle of February, the College awoke to a heavy covering of snow. Undergraduates took this as an opportunity to pre-empt the arrival of the new sculpture in Main Court.

Not to be outdone, inhabitants of Adams Road created this charming Robinson couple.

Alumni in Whitehall

On Tuesday February 20th some Robinson Alumni now working in the Civil service met up to share experiences of their working lives and memories from their time at College. Fran Sainsbury (1998) writes:

I'll admit it. I never thought I would end up as a civil servant. Watching episodes of 'Yes Minister' or 'The Thick of It' gave me a certain view of Whitehall officialdom. So how did I end up sitting in a pub in Westminster, with a group of Robinson alumni discussing our shared experiences of central government?

Together with another Robinson alumnus, Chris Duffy (Economics, 2002) I work at the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, in the Cabinet Office. Last year Daniel Workman (Philosophy 1997) had hosted the Annual Reception in rooms at the Foreign Office so I had a few names to go on. We got together a small group to meet for a drink in the Red Lion pub in Whitehall.

Daniel Workman and Eleanor Petch work in the Foreign Office and have both spent time posted abroad. Tom Hartley read economics in 2002 at the same time as Chris Duffy and now works for the Ministry of



their communities. Donations can be made online at www.justgiving.com/jonathanrandall.

Green Tinge

Robinson College has come second in the green Colleges ranking, after Churchill.

Robinson Geographer **Peter Wood**, CUSU Ethics and Environmental Committee, Best Practice Co-ordinator writes:

"With Robinson College coming runner up for the second year in a row, we can be quietly assured that our ranking is not down to mere chance. Robinson has made serious attempts to improve its environmental impact, and is gaining a green tinge to its reputation. There is still much work to be done, but we can hold our heads high, and start aiming for the top spot next year."



Defence. Richard Sargeant is working at the Treasury. Others who couldn't make it on the night are working in Parliament, the Scottish Executive and the Home Office.

Between us as a group we had worked on everything from energy policy, anti-social behaviour and parenting, intellectual property, eastern Europe, transport policy, public service reform and defence to name only a few!

Everyone had a different experience of the civil service but all were positive about it. The variety of work, the challenging environment and the skills development were some of the benefits mentioned. As someone interested in policy, I find central government is the most interesting place to work, as you're constantly faced with the latest issues (though as with every job it does have its down sides too!)

Everyone remembered having lots of questions when they started out in the civil service. If you're thinking about it as a possible career let us know. Any one of us can talk about the civil service generally or about the departments specifically (there are specialist tracks for economists and linguists for example).

So we discovered there's a group of friendly alumni in the civil service. If you're a Robinson civil servant who'd like to meet up some time, or a current student with any questions do get in touch.

Francesca.sainsbury@cabinetoffice.x.gsi.gov.uk Want to know what the Fast Track exams are really like? Which department is best to work for? Is it really like 'Yes Minister?'



You can find information on the Cambridge Careers Service site: www.careers.cam.ac.uk/Sitemap/sectors.asp

If you're interested in taking the Faststream exams, take a look at the Civil Service Recruitment Gateway: www.faststream.gov.uk/

Births

Helen Harden (nee Ashley 1993) and Paul (Clare 1988) are delighted to introduce (rather belatedly) their two boys: Francis Stephen, born 19th August 2003 at 9lb 6oz and Timothy Edward born 22nd April 2006 at a much easier 8lb 6oz! (Below)

Marriages

Mark Sydenham (2000-04) married Elizabeth Berry at Christ Church, Malvern in September 2006. After the wedding they spent two weeks on honeymoon in the south of France and are now living in Malvern, Worcestershire. (Below)



Chris Keane (1992) and his wife Elinor are delighted to announce to birth of their first son, James Michael (below) born on 1st April 2006.



Wicce St Clair-Gray (nee Hawkins) (1988) and Dave Gray are delighted to announce the safe arrival of Byron Herne (Pagan) in October 2006. His football-loving brothers Ben and Ted are delighted with him and cannot wait for him to join the family team as a mid-fielder!

Engagements

Ruth Manning (1998) would like to announce her engagement to Miles Norris. Their wedding is booked for March, 2008.



Hannah Rawlinson (1991) and Mark Starling (1991) were married on 18 August 2006 (below). The day was brilliant with a few Robinson Alumini in attendance including Lee Taylor (1991) as best man. It completed a very busy year for them with the birth of their second child Isobel (a sister for Hamish) in March.



Miranda Wilkinson (neé Bradley) (1997) got married to Grant Wilkinson on 2nd September 2006 in English Martyrs RC Church, Streatham, London. Miranda met Grant just before starting her second year at Robinson and lots of people will have known him, even though he didn't attend the University.

Nigel Hanson (1986) married Patricia in October 2006

Helen Dixon (Matriculation 1996 – MML French and Italian) married Emiliano Chiarenza in St. Albans on April 15th 2006 in the presence of many friends and family from Italy and England. Guests included Robinsonians Isabelle Bleaney, Neil Dixon, Iain Ballentine, Anne and Lee Benfield and Kerry Williams. The couple now live and work near Venice in Italy. (Below)



On 1 September 2006 **David Gullette** (2001) completed his doctorate in the Department of Social Anthropology. On 9 September, his partner. Mini Choi, and he were married at a small service in St. Mary le Strand, in London (below). He and his wife are now living in South Korea. They went to be near her family and so that he could learn some Korean.

David hopes to return to Cambridge in the early part of 2007 to have his PhD conferred upon him. (Below)



Helen Cornish and her husband, Liam Devlin, are delighted to announce the safe arrival of George Robert Devlin (below) on 24 November 2006. George was baptised in the College Chapel on 4 March 2007 by the Chaplain, Maggi Dawn.



Dr M D Hurley has been awarded an Early Career Fellowship from the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH), to be taken up in the Easter Term 2008

Bye-Fellow **Joyce Malcolm** was Director of Research Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington, DC last year and is now Professor of Legal History at George Mason University School of Law in Virginia.

Peter Kornicki was on leave in 2006 in the Easter and Michaelmas terms, and spent some time in Japan, Korea and Vietnam. He took to Vietnamese cuisine with gusto and found time to go on a short course so that he could prepare some dishes for his family on his return. This was rather more successful than he had intended, for he is now on constant standby for preparing Vietnamese dishes!

Peter gave keynote addresses at the meetings of the National Japanese Language and Literature Association in Tokyo in June and of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing at The Hague in July.

In September he organised two conferences in Cambridge, one on 'Women and the book in premodern Japan' and the other, to mark the retirement of a colleague on 'Japan's twentieth century in retrospect'.

College Chaplain **The Reverend Dr Maggi Dawn** has recently published an article entitled *Whose text is it anyway? Limit and Freedom in interpretation* in the new book *An Acceptable Sacrifice? Homosexuality and The Church* published by SPCK on February 1st 2007. It is edited by Duncan Dormer and Jeremy Morris, the Deans of St John's and Trinity Hall, respectively.

Professor John Houston Miller joins the College this term as a Bye Fellow from The George Washington University in Washington, DC, USA. Professor Miller's area of expertise is Chemistry.

Telephone Campaign 2006

The Robinson College Telephone Campaign has raised £73,619 to date. The Warden and Fellows are immensely grateful to all those who donated or pledged money to the College.

Reflections on Returning

Professor Myles Burnyeat, a household name to those studying Ancient Philosophy and former



fellow of Robinson College, ended his Fellowship at All Souls College, Oxford at the end of the last academic year. At the beginning of this year, Robinson College welcomed him back as an Honorary Fellow. Professor Burnyeat reflects on this time of change.

"This has been a year of transition and mixed feelings: much sadness when my Fellowship at All Souls College, Oxford came to an end in September, great pleasure when Robinson welcomed me back as an Honorary Fellow. Problem: obviously I could not expect to return to my spacious room at 5 Adams Road, so for the first time in my academic life, I find myself having to house absolutely all my books at home.

"Home is a small terrace house in Cambridge which I kept because I always planned to return here on retirement (Cambridge being the best place in the world for Ancient Philosophy). I took advice from a structural surveyor about where it was safe to install new shelving, found a splendid lady carpenter (carpentress?) to do the job, and am now painting my way round her handiwork. Meanwhile, the books remain in boxes in my garage, which often causes serious inconvenience.

boxes in my garage, which often causes serious inconvenience. "Nonetheless, I have managed to publish a couple of professional journal articles and a long front page piece, just out in the London Review of Books (22 February 2007), on how little we know these days about Pythagoras. (Forget the theorem named after him, forget the mathematical analysis of musical concordances: most of what you and I were brought up to believe about him is fiction, much of it deliberately contrived already in antiquity). More important, this was the year that saw the publication of a book I edited during my stay in the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin in 2004-2005, Bernard Williams' *The Sense of the Past: Collected Essays in the History of Philosophy*, (Princeton University Press, 2006). Williams was my teacher, and a great source of inspiration, when I was a graduate student long ago at University College London, so the opportunity to edit and write an introduction for the volume was for me an important act of homage. Lastly, there was the wicked enjoyment of translating (from my favourite foreign language, Russian) a quietly devastating denunciation of a case of scholarly plagiarism involving ancient Greek inscriptions from the area around the Black Sea. You can read it online at Bryn Mawr Classical Review

http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2006/2006-02-15.html.

"Meanwhile, for the first time in 22 years I have gone back to undergraduate teaching. Not much, not too many pupils, just those few Robinson students who are taking ancient philosophy papers in either the Classics or the Philosophy Tripos. The experience has been immensely enjoyable. But I will not offer considered comparisons between now and the past until this time next year."

Boat Race Saturday, April 7th

Join fellow alumni and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alison Richard, on board the elegant MV Elizabethan moored at Putney Pier to watch the 2007 Boat Race. See www.foundation.cam.ac.uk/events.php for details.



Singapore Dinner April 15th 2007

As part of the Warden's tour of South East Asia, he will be having dinner in Singapore with Robinson alumni. If you would like to come to dinner and have not already confirmed with the Development Office, please get in touch.

MA Congregation and Dinner

Saturday, 12th May. By invitation only.



May Ball Saturday, 15th June

The Robinson May Ball Committee invites you to join us for this year's ball, "A Midsummer Night's Dream". It promises to be one of the best balls in Robinson's history, offering an evening of great food, superb entertainment and more, all in the exquisite setting of our gardens. Tickets are nearly sold out but there is still limited availability;we would like to invite all alumini and friends of Robinson to attend. For further details please visit our website at www.robinsonmayball.co.uk

Spamalot Thursday, April 19th Tickets £75

Alumni are invited to join Simon Russell Beale (Gonville and Caius, 1979) for an exclusive drinks reception in the Stalls Bar at The Palace Theatre, London from 6.00pm–7.00pm and a performance of SPAMALOT at 8.00pm.

Lovingly ripped off from the classic film comedy Monty Python and the Holy Grail, SPAMALOT is the new musical directed by Oscar Winning Mike Nichols, with a book 💺 by the third tallest Python, Eric Idle, and an almost but not entirely new score by Eric Idle (no relation) and John du Prez. Retelling the legend of King Arthur (played by Simon Russell Beale) and his Knights of the Round Table, and featuring a number of gratuitously scantily clad showgirls, not to mention the cows, killer rabbits and French people, Monty Python's SPAMALOT has been hailed as: "A no-holds-barred smash" The New Yorker "Triffic!" Michael Palin (no relation) "The most sublimely daft musical I've ever seen. Entirely delightful" Stephen Fry

SPAMALOI

Steinway Concert

23rd June, Robinson College Chapel More details will be available from the Development Office in April.

Annual Reception

3rd July, The Oxford and Cambridge Club We are pleased to invite our alumni and friends to join us at the Robinson Annual Reception. Further details about this event will be available from the Development Office in May. For more information about the venue, please visit www.oxfordandcambridgeclub.co.uk

Reunion Weekend

September 21–23rd, Robinson College This year, Robinson College will welcome back those who matriculated in 1982, 1987, 1992 and 1997 for their Reunion weekend. Bed and Breakfast will be available on the Friday night, with a welcome tea, followed by drinks and dinner on Saturday. Pegasus Society Brunch takes place on the Sunday morning and is open to all Pegasus Society members. More details and tickets available from the Development Office nearer the time.