

Reminiscences of Pembroke College The 1980s

The 1980s

- 1981 Hall Tower restoration completed (after the removal of the ivy)
- 1981 Prince Charles marries Lady Diana Spencer*
- 1981 Percy Newport, Clerk of Works, and Mr Cox, Manciple, retire after 52 and 46 years respectively
- 1982 The Falklands Conflict begins*
- 1982 250th anniversary of the consecration of the Chapel
- 1983 Junior Members are invited to attend Governing Body meetings for the first time
- 1983 A new High Table is commissioned
- 1984 The Miners' Strike*
- 1984 Sir Roger Bannister is elected Master (assuming office in 1985)
- 1985 Live Aid*
- 1986 College purchases the Grandpont site where the GAB will be built
- 1986 Scenes from the BBC's 'Gaudy Night' are filmed in College*
- 1987 The foundation stone of the GAB is laid
- 1988 Scenes from the Inspector Morse episode 'Deceived by Flight' are filmed in College*
- 1988 The Liberal Democratic Party is formed*
- 1989 Tim Berners-Lee invents the World Wide Web*



Inspector Morse in the Porters' Lodge

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Gill Stredwick - (m.1981) Agriculture

I was at a girls-only grammar school called Nonsuch in Cheam, Surrey. The head had been at Girton and encouraged a tiny number of girls each year to apply to Cambridge. I upset the apple cart by insisting I wanted to apply to Oxford, even though I wasn't considered 'worthy' in her eyes. They did their utmost to put me off, including writing to my parents, not giving me any preparation (e.g. practice papers for the entrance exam) and even giving me the wrong timetable for my exams (I was doing two Biology papers, a Chemistry paper and the General Paper - much feared in its day, but I loved it). I passed the entrance exam and got invited to Keble (which I had applied to) for an interview. I knew nothing about Oxford and the school weren't helping, so I sought the advice of someone at a careers evening who said that I should apply to a college that offered the most places in the course I wanted to study. Clearly lots of people did the same thing because, at Keble, there were 45 of us applying for four places to read Agricultural & Forest Sciences, so they farmed us out to other colleges for interviews over two days.

The Keble interview was a nightmare (8.30pm in the evening on the day I arrived - here's a bone, a piece of coal, a banana and your own hand: pick one and talk about it: I picked the coal). Then I went to Somerville (hated it), St Anne's (OK, but architecturally not my idea of an Oxford college), St Hilda's (fantastic interview but I did not want to go to an all-female college, as it was then). I was beginning to get fed up, when I walked into Pembroke on a cold, frosty December morning and fell in love with it. I climbed rickety stairs to Vernon Butt's room, where he had a fire going and a plate of crumpets. We chatted for forty minutes - I wasn't even aware that I was being interviewed - and I left, desperate to get offered a place. Thankfully, on 22nd December, a letter arrived from Pembroke saying they were offering me one of the two places on the course. I was asked to meet the matriculation requirement of two grade Es. Naturally, after the way my school had treated me, I gave up going after that - I knew I could get two Es standing on my head. So I turned up for my exams in May and managed to get an A, D and E. When I arrived in Oxford in the Autumn, Dr Butt asked us all to his room for sherry before our first dinner in 0th week. When he had chatted and given us our essay titles for the following week, he dismissed everyone but asked me and one other 'fourth term' girl to stay behind. He very nicely, but firmly, told us that we had the lowest A Level grades he had ever admitted into Pembroke, "and I hope that is the last time I ever have to mention it". It was.

In those days (1981-84) you got to live in for your first and second years (the majority of us) and lived out in your third year. We had scouts who cleaned our rooms every day and generally looked after us. My Scout in my first year (Staircase 12) was Daisy, who told me that I kept the tidiest room on the staircase. In my second year (Staircase 9) I had Geeta. There was one telephone in the Porters' Lodge, which was always very busy on Sunday evenings and, as I rarely wrote home, my parents had very little idea what I was up to,

which was just as well! We had formal hall (wearing gowns) every night except Saturday. The food was mediocre - we started with soup and it was almost always varying shades of greenish-beige with no distinguishable flavour, apart from the one recognisable 'Brown Windsor'. If you got invited to a special dinner (e.g. a Bump Supper) it was ALWAYS rack of lamb. There was once a motion in the JCR to move the dining time back to 6.30pm, to give everyone more time to get across Oxford to concerts, theatre, debates etc which tended to start at 8.00pm (we were always heading off somewhere at a run). The debate went on for a while, until one student (two years ahead of me and who had been Charterhouse) stood up in disgust, and muttered, 'Good God, only the plebs eat before seven' and marched out of the JCR. It left everyone in stunned, but amused, silence and we felt beholden to vote against the motion for fear of being considered plebs! The college bar was in the corner of Chapel Quad and was cheap and cheerful. The walls were repainted by an undergraduate fine artist while they were there - I seem to remember they looked a bit like cave paintings on a pale blue background. The bar was the venue for all sorts of raucous events - the Poetry Competition, the Talent Night and Burns Night being particularly memorable.

Our rooms were very basic in those days. There were no en-suites, only communal shower blocks. We had a rule on Staircase 12 that, if you heard water running, you shouted "male or female?" and if the voice came back "male" you waited until they had vacated before going in. We had electric fires and used to fashion toast racks out of coat hangers to toast bread in front.

The winter of 1981/82 was bitter. There was snow on the ground in Oxford from 6th December (Varsity Match day) until early January. One of the girls in the year above me had the room above the old Porters' Lodge, known as Johnson's Room. There was no WC in that block at all, so she was expected to traipse across the frozen quad at night if she needed to 'go'. She started to use her washbasin (well, anyone would!) and it fell away from the wall. The handyman who fixed it could not work out why such a thing had happened.

I didn't go to chapel - I have always been atheist - but I was very fond of John Platt, who was our Chaplain then and was legendary for his kindness and common sense. In 1989, I got married in Pembroke Chapel and John Platt officiated at the service. He also read out the College Grace (Pro hoc cibo...), which we had listened to every night at Formal Hall.

We had a buttery in the corner, next to the JCR, where they served tea and toast in the afternoon. You bought a book of buttery tickets at the start of the term. I could never decide between Marmite, honey or peanut butter, so often had all three. I was rowing in those days, so I didn't put on weight.



John Platt

We got very close to our scouts (well, you did if you knew what was good for you) and we also developed a fondness for the waiters at dinner (again, good strategy as you got extras). I particularly remember Margaret, who was a legend in her own lifetime. The porters were also very important to us. Back then we had a Head Porter (sadly I can't remember his name) who was married, and his wife also manned the front desk from time to time. They were fantastic. Because I was a scientist, I spent a lot of my time in the Agriculture Department and did not mix much with Pembroke Fellows apart from Vernon Butt. I adored him with a passion - we all did. He remained my 'moral tutor' throughout. The Master in my first two years was Geoffrey Arthur: he was quite remote. Sadly he got a thrombosis and died. In our final year, we had Roger Bannister, who was more approachable and more of a household name.

I became Secretary of the Friends of Pembroke College Boat Club (FoPCBC) in my second year. In those days, this role was always held by a College member, to encourage better interaction between alumni and existing students. This brought me into contact with the Bursar, Colin Leach. I wasn't keen on him, especially when, after Eights Week in 1983, when I had run the food and made a profit for the FoPCBC of over £80 (which was a huge amount in those days), he bracketed my profits in with the bar losses (mixing Pimms too strong!) and recorded that "Food and Drink made a loss" in the Accounts. I was livid! Apart from being Secretary of the FoPCBC, I was not involved in administering any of the clubs and societies I was involved in.

I threw myself into College life wholeheartedly. I rowed (and coxed one summer); I was Secretary of the FoPCBC; I was a founder member of Pembroke Women's Group; I was a member of the Bollinger Club (a dining society); I acted in plays and reviews; and stood for, but didn't get, the role of JCR Secretary. I was very friendly with lots of people - too many to mention. But in terms of lasting impact, I was a good friend of Ron Dingli, a promising lawyer, who died in our second year and I was also hugely fond of Andy Mitchelson, a brilliant biochemist, who was involved in a tragic skiing accident only a few years after leaving Pembroke, and who also died too young, unable to fulfil his promise. I'm proud that I was also a friend of Angela Eagle, MP, who persuaded me to join the Labour Party.

You needed to be self-starter. The usual routine was that you were given an essay title by your tutor - no other hints - and had one week to submit a decent, well-argued essay on the subject. There was no internet of course, so all your research was done in the library. Pembroke's library was no good for biological sciences, so I was mainly in the Agricultural



Vernon Butt

Department library, reading scientific papers. On our course, we had two tutorials a week, so two essays, then a one hour tutorial to discuss them. Most of the courses were four weeks long, so you did four topics in a term. Most of our tutorials were one-to-one, but occasionally you did them in twos, depending on the topic. I loved the tutorial system - and I particularly loved quirky things like one of our Agriculture tutors, Phil (again, I forget his name) who refused to take you for his soil science course unless you had read the complete works of Jane Austen!!

We had lectures most days from 9 or 10a.m. until 12, then practicals in the afternoon. The best thing about our course was that you got to go out on field trips every week (usually Wednesday afternoon) to Wytham Woods or to a farm or research station.

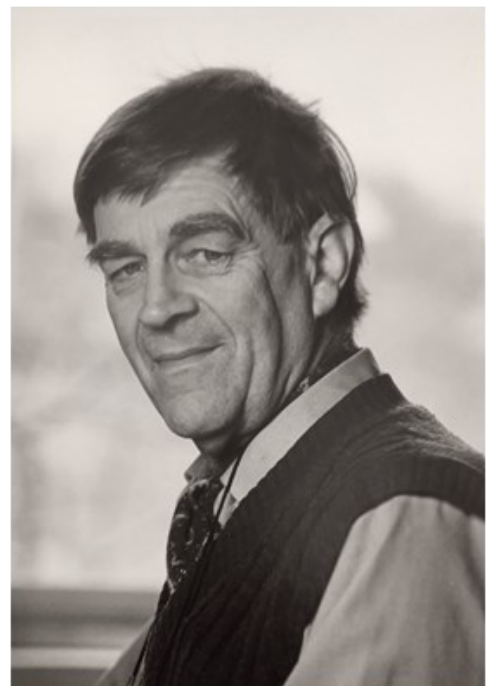
Science courses required more time commitment than humanities - I remember I used to get very jealous when I'd get back to college at lunchtime (lunch was included in our fees, so we usually tried to get back) and find groups of historians, just out of bed and huddled over the Times crossword!

The 'Essay Crisis' was infamous and used an excuse for all sorts - "I can't come to X, I've got an essay crisis". What this meant was that your essay was due in the next morning and you hadn't even started to write it yet. If it meant any worse - you hadn't even researched it yet - that was more than a crisis, that was bordering on suicidal! A typical essay took at least three hours to write up from your notes, so you had the option of staying up until the wee small hours, or - my preferred option - getting up at about 4.30a.m. and writing as the sun came up.

I loved my course - it was basically Applied Biology (in fact, it changed its name a year after I finished.) We did a two term shared Biology Prelim with the Zoologists and Botanists, in the Zoology department. In 1982, this was a modern, state of the art lab/library but was condemned as unsafe and emptied overnight a few years ago. Once we split into our preferred option for finals, we 'Agrics' moved to the Agriculture Department (there was a separate Forestry Institute as well on South Parks Road, where we went for the forestry aspects and also for Statistics, which we were taught by the rather enigmatic Colyear Dawkins, Richard's uncle I think.)

It was hard work, but I never felt stressed or overworked - we were there to learn so what did you expect? And I loved sharing knowledge and ideas with other people, most of whom were far more brilliant than me. In fact, I have never considered myself brilliant at all, just above-average bright and very lucky.

The Agricultural & Forest Sciences course had its own club, called The Plough Club, where we invited speakers and held an annual dinner and an annual cricket match against the staff.



Henry Colyear Dawkins

I was President in my final year and, at the end of that year, I was awarded the Soper Heygate Prize, which was awarded annually to the student who had given the most to the course over three years in terms of academic and social commitment. After this, Pembroke awarded me with a College Prize for Achievement, so I ended up leaving Pembroke with two prizes, which was amazing.

Social life was hugely important to student life, as I'm sure it still is. I've already mentioned some things - the College Poetry Night, Burns night and Dining Societies (there were a few, I was in the Bollinger). I acted in a few university plays in my first year and the College review. A particular memory was being an extra in one of Hugh Grant's early films - *Privileged* - filmed in Oxford. They filmed a ball at the Union and I went along in full ball gown with a few others. I saw the film twice and never spotted myself, but two others I went with got onto the film poster! My main sport was rowing (although I did play hockey, in goal, a couple of times). I loved rowing and all the social events that it offered as well - lots of meals out together on Saturday nights and Bump Suppers if we were lucky. Eights Week was always a big highlight - not just the rowing itself, but the atmosphere. We used to open the college boathouse to everyone and it was always packed with locals as well as students.



Hugh Grant in *The Privileged*

Pembroke had a ball at the end of my first year, which I loved, so in my second year I went to St Peter's ball and another (I forget where) and, in my third year, Pembroke had another ball and I also went to Univ and Trinity's balls as well. They were magical - usually a reasonably big band, smaller acts, a disco room somewhere, magicians etc, then a piper at dawn - or getting hold of punting tickets and ending the night/morning punting on the Isis in your ball gown, with your partner still in his DJ.

I was a Union member, but selective about what I went to - not in it for personal gain. William Hague was a celebrated President in my first year, as was Kevin Brennan from Pembroke (who also went on to be an MP at one point).

I never got invited to anything in the Master's Lodgings or garden - not sure what you had to do to get invited, but despite all my activities and commitment to College life, I clearly didn't cut the mustard there, but it never worried me.

Christmas Dinner was a riot - literally! More food got flung about the place than consumed - huge fun, but I remember going to my sister's college (she was Bishop Otter College in Chichester, doing Teacher Training) where they sang the Twelve Days of Christmas, each table being given a verse which they stood up to sing - it developed into a hilarious and enjoyably event) and I ended up wishing ours was a little more sedate and festive.

I've mentioned the Plough Club, which was a big thing for the Agrics. The Annual Dinner (at the Cherwell Boathouse), when I was President, went down as one of the best ever. We had a superbly entertaining guest speaker, a chap called Johnny Johnstone, who had been a farmer, but also had many other experiences (including during the war) and as a raconteur he was second-to-none. The Annual Cricket Match was also a big thing and, in my year, I wrote a parody of 'The Walrus and the Carpenter' about the Agricultural Finals: "If seven dons in seven gowns taught them for half a year, do you think, Bob Lucas asked, that it would all come clear? I doubt it, said Geoff Hodgson, and shed a bitter tear...".

It is the one-offs that stand out in my memory though - the mixed rugby match, after which I ended up so battered and bruised (and drunk) that I slept until four the next afternoon and missed whole day of my life; the mixed Eight that went out in fancy dress and somehow got stuck under Folly Bridge; the trip to Reading Regatta, when 'G' decided to emulate John Belushi in 'National Lampoon's Animal House' and crush a drinks can against his forehead, but our metal cans were too tough so he put one against a wall and head-butted it and nearly knocked himself out; the Men's Bumps Supper when 'JS' was on high table and threw a carnation in my direction (way down the room) and it landed perfectly in my wine glass; punting on my birthday; being met outside schools (and going to meet others) to celebrate the end of Prelims and Finals; taking a drive out (not sure who with) to Blenheim Palace for a champagne picnic....So many lovely memories.

One other evening has always stuck in my memory - the JCR Elections in my first year. A call went out offering free College port for invigilators. I wasn't planning anything particular that evening, only going to a party late evening at Somerville, so I volunteered to do it with a few others. We had about five bottles of port between three of us and I'm not sure much actual invigilation went on - we just let them count while we drank. Afterwards, I remember getting to Somerville, but apparently I had to be carried home when we couldn't find the party...

And, finally, my Graham Norton 'red chair' moment: on my first Saturday we had our Freshers Photo, before going off to the Matric ceremony. A big 'A' frame was built in Chapel Quad: being a shortie, they put me on the back row, at the top. When the photo had been taken, everyone piled off hurriedly to form up to go to the Sheldonian. I took a step forward to descend and the back of my skirt got caught on the top of the 'A' frame. It jerked me back - I fell but, rather than falling to the ground, I ended up dangling from the frame by my caught skirt, exposing my lower half to the waist. In those days, I thought it was quite sexy to wear suspenders and stockings - all black subfusc of course - so it was all on display for the whole college, until someone came and lifted me free. That wasn't the worst though - three years later, at my schools dinner, I was sitting next some ancient don who had retired some years before. No idea who he was. He was chatting amiably about all the things he had seen in his many years at Pembroke, but then went on "but one of the most amusing incidents was a few years ago when I looked out of this very window and saw a young lady dangling by the waist....".

They were, literally, practically the first and last things that bookended my Oxford experience!

My year was the first year when Pembroke had three years of women: by 1981 we were nearly 50/50 split. The college tried very hard to make us all welcome and made a few

adjustments (like segregating most of the WCs and installing Tampax machines). Really, though, it wasn't a big issue for most of us - staircases were mixed; shower blocks were mixed (as I said, you shouted to check and simple good manners meant that if the showers were in use by a member of the opposite sex, you waited until they'd finished); we only had curtains in staircase 12! Academically we more than held our own and all the sports had adapted to welcome the influx of women. We took on all sorts of responsibility in clubs and societies, so I never felt I was treated any differently as a woman. We did set up a 'Womens Group' in Pembroke, but it was more about wider issues, like violence against women, FGM etc, than complaining to the college about things they were getting wrong. Ironically, the worst case of sexism I came up against was from another woman, who challenged me when I stood for JCR Secretary, suggesting (in hustings) that I should be embarrassed to be conforming to stereotype as a woman by standing as Secretary instead of, say, Treasurer. I replied that I thought it was more embarrassing to stand up in public in 1983 and still be suggesting that your sex should define the role you were capable of performing.

produced as evidence.
Gill Sheddwick proposed the next motion on behalf of the Women's group. It asked for £40 towards outside speakers and publicity. Marina Benjamin, whilst recognising the value of the group, questioned the principle of giving money to a society with closed meetings. In reply Gill said that 4 of the meetings would have to be closed for the confidence and success of the group to be ensured. The motion was overwhelmingly carried. ... which was then awarded

JCR Minutes, 13th June 1982

Going to Oxford undoubtedly made a difference to the way I was perceived in employment (where I did come up against a lot of sexism in the 80s and 90s and the 'Oxford card' often put people in their place). I have had a rewarding career because of the skills I learned and the confidence it gave me.

I am not the kind of person to network and use my contacts, so I have kept in contact with only a tiny handful of contemporaries (and most of them are from other colleges), but I have stayed in touch with Pembroke and returned to events and gaudies whenever I can and am a member of the Tesdale Society.

I am eternally grateful for that December morning when - disillusioned with the whole interview experience and wondering where I would ever find creeper-covered, honeyed stone quadrangles - I wandered into Pembroke in search of Dr Vernon Butt's room.



Duncan Tincello - (m.1981) Engineering Science

Dr Godfrey Bond on driving

I was approaching the lodge from Pembroke Street one day, passing the gates at the east

end of North Quad. The gates were open and Dr Godfrey Bond was attempting to manoeuvre his small car in or out of the quad - it wasn't clear which. He reversed into a large ornamental stone lying on the edge of the grass verge. There was a loud crunch, which brought him bounding out of the vehicle to look at the damage, and attracted the attention of several bystanders. Leaping about in a rage, he picked up a stone from the verge and hurled it at the wall of Staircase 8. Unfortunately he scored a direct hit on a small window, punching a small hole in the glass. This threw him into a deeper rage and he shouted something, probably in Latin, leapt back into the car, and roared off.

Within hours this story was all over College and some wag had given us the memorable phrase, "The name's Bond, Godfrey Bond... licenced to smash windows!"

Dr Godfrey Bond on sneezing

In his role as Dean, Dr Bond supervised Collections at the start of term. Faced with an enormous reading list from Dr Edgar Lightfoot for my summer vacation, I did very little reading and had a great summer. I returned to Oxford in October with some trepidation. I learned that all my friends had been equally distracted by the pleasures of the summer of 1982. We wandered into Hall for the Collection and struggled through the papers. The atmosphere was tense, with a lot of shuffling and looking around.

My good friend Mark Twyman seemed to have a sneeze coming. He made a few quiet preparatory noises, then abruptly turned left to aim behind our good friend Rich Funnell and sneezed violently. Rich was never one to pass up a comic opportunity. He reacted with a loud groan of horror, and mimed wiping Mark's mucus from the side of his face. Mark was horrified. The table erupted into laughter, bringing the rest of the room into the fun. The atmosphere was broken and everyone had a good, warm laugh and gossip until the fury of Dr Bond brought silence to the Hall. Dr Bond delivered a long and eloquent rebuke. We all looked suitably remorseful.

Everyone did badly in the Collection, but with no apparent lasting harm. The mysteries of education in Oxford are many.

On rowing, and ransom

One year at Eights I was working in the bar at the boathouse, in between a bit of coxing. It was busy and quite a few of the non-rowers I knew were milling around for the convivial atmosphere and the vast quantities of Pimms. I noticed my friend the lawyer Jon Grassi entertaining a small group of strikingly attractive women. He disappeared for a while, then returned with the flag from a boathouse down the riverbank - it might have been Oriel, I forget. He explained to his companions and a growing audience that he had taken the flag to hold it ransom for gin.

How on earth did you manage that, Jon? He had walked into the boathouse and calmly started to lower the flag. When challenged, he explained to a large oarsman that he had heard of a flag theft along the river and was taking down the Oriel flag to put it safely away. The challenger was reassured, helped Jon lower the flag, and they wrapped it up. A bit later Jon quietly slipped out of their boathouse with the flag and returned in triumph to the Pembroke boathouse. His companions were delighted. We joked about the skills and the very nature of a lawyer - it all made sense!

My friend and neighbour Pete Moroz, not a lawyer, was inspired by this stunt. He set off

for Teddy Hall boathouse, next door to ours. He started lowering their flag, and was challenged by a large oarsman. I'm taking down the flag to stop someone stealing it, he explained. Hey, you're from Pembroke! Grab him! Pete was hauled outside and thrown in the river. He returned dripping wet and reflected on the dangers of attempting a copycat crime.



Simon Tombs - (m.1982) Classics

I am the first person in my family to go to university. I went to King Edward VI School Southampton. It was a state grammar school when I arrived and became independent when I was in the sixth form.

I did 7th term exams. My 'A' Level grades were quite low but I was determined to succeed and worked really hard for that extra term with some very good support from my teachers. It was the making of me really. I did well enough to get an interview and then a place. I don't remember much about the interview, other than that there was snow on the ground: they ran very late and I really didn't know how to answer the philosophy question or a question about the myth of religion by Peter Cuff.

I remember on the first week we were invited for tea by the Classics students in the year above. They left us in no doubt about what was not so good. I asked them why, if it was so bad, they stayed on the course. But they did - and I did (and one of them is still a friend).

My main memory of the college was the sheer physical discomfort: cold and damp. The washing and toilet facilities were pretty basic. The regular food was pretty poor, particularly the lunches. I think students would expect far more now. My room was Staircase 13:2, looking out on to Pembroke Street opposite the Marks and Spencer loading bay. I kept it for two years - I liked being able to look out on to an urban street and keep contact with reality beyond college life.



Pembroke Street

I was in the Chapel Choir throughout my time. It was good when I started and it gave me the confidence to do a bit more music around the University (I still sing in a church choir now). It tailed off over time after Chris Lander left. Looking back, it is absurd that women did not sing the top line in that period.

I lived out for two years. For the first, I had a room in a house and still ate in college. For the second, I was a bit more independent and learnt to cook for myself though I'd still eat lunch in college.

Student services didn't really exist in those days. I remember Savile Bradbury saying that the Oxford way was for everything to be sorted out by the tutor. People were beginning to realise at the time that this was not adequate. There were clearly abusive relationships and some poor mental health (one of my contemporaries repeated a year because of a drug problem).

To my shame, I remember almost nothing about the tutorials in terms of content. They were like an obstacle course to be overcome and much of it went over my head. People were kind to me though. Towards the end, I think that they spotted more academic potential in me than I spotted in myself. For my final Master's collection, Sir Roger Bannister put it to me that I could get a first and that it was down to me. There was a bit of an argument from the others present about whether it was really down to me and whether support would be available. I listened to the argument rather than really take to heart his message.

I was fortunate. I had been well taught at school and could do the work with a bit of effort. Oxford taught me how to work, to rely on myself and to think through an academic problem. I worked systematically both in the College library and in the Bodleian. I think it was that independence rather than anything I learnt from a tutorial that was the biggest benefit to me.

I was never confident socially in my time at Oxford. I think in many ways I was scared of the place and never felt at ease. I'm not in touch now with anyone from my year from Pembroke. That unease lessened over time and, by the end, I knew more people, specifically in years below because I was doing a four year degree. I was at the ball in 1985: I was singing in a quartet. I remember rehearsing when we stood on the balcony in Old Quad but nothing about the actual event. I didn't join any college clubs or societies. In my time, this seemed well organised. JCR meetings with Jonny Seitler as president were well attended when I arrived. It became less of a thing as time went on.

I became a teacher. I went to Nottingham University to do a PGCE and then went on to be a Classics teacher in London. I did a masters degree in the Psychology of Education at the Institute Of Education, University of London, in 1995. From 1998, I spent most of my time teaching 'A' Level Psychology. I retired from full time teaching after 36 years in July 2023 and now do some tutoring, teacher training and writing. Studying and living at Pembroke was not easy for me: in many ways, I did not fit in. However, with the support of many good people, I found a way. I'm married to someone I met at Oxford, although not at Pembroke. Every day in my work, something of what I learnt at Oxford has come out in what I have been doing. I'm grateful for that.



Peter Cuff



Susan Copson - (m.1983) Japanese

Detesting pomp and ceremony, I didn't want to attend my graduation ceremony. However, as the first person in a working class family to attend university, I could see that my parents would relish the opportunity to be proud of their offspring.

Sheldonian Theatre duly attended, scroll received and cameras smiled at, a buffet lunch was provided back at College Hall. The College Master, Sir Roger Bannister, was circulating and congratulating students. Trying to appear cool, I was mortifyingly embarrassed when my dad gushed forth praise upon Sir Roger, explaining how he had watched him run the 4 minute mile in a rental TV shop window as a nipper in suburban Birmingham in the 1950s, and that he would be honoured to shake the great man's hand even after all these years! Sir Roger 'shook', smiled with good humour and was courteous and professional throughout. My dad spoke of that great moment throughout his life.

My dad was also a sportsman and appreciated how sport could bridge any divide and be a significant educational step on life's path. Being born into poverty, the last of 9 children (almost gassed to death by his mum at 5 years old), my dad left school at 14 and worked long hours to become an excellent schoolteacher for 30 years, bringing many poorer kids to also appreciate sport and represent their school/city/county at table tennis championships.

My subject of Japanese produced no fellow students in College and all teaching was at the Oriental Institute in Pusey Lane. Classmates thus being at other colleges throughout Oxford, how could one get to know other Pembroke College inhabitants other than stumbling (literally sometimes) across them on your staircase? Sport of course... A small room in the MacMillan building was found to have a table tennis table and this became the venue for local games and matches, with a Singaporean called William Yapp bringing true Asian flair to the table. I also joined the University table tennis club and played twice against Cambridge gaining half blues, but we lost both times - apologies! Hearing of a questionable emotional divide called 'Town and Gown', I then joined a local table tennis club based at some car plant in Cowley, playing in the Oxford league with local people. Result - it doesn't matter your heritage status, public education, or mundane daily job routines - sport can connect you. I also played women's hockey and mixed hockey for the college, enabling me to meet more student friends that way, with sport again weaving its connection magic. I was a 'comprehensive school kid' and found the culture of Uni life quite a revelation. Although Pembroke had far fewer 'airs and graces' than other colleges back in those days, without sport as my shock absorber, I am not sure I'd have survived.





Michael Daly - (m.1985) Mathematics

It is hard to sum up what Pembroke has meant to me in a few words. Somewhat randomly selecting it as my preference college on the Oxford application form (as much for the prettiness of the quads in Summer as anything else), if I'm honest, I have never regretted it. As time has passed, I have felt an increasing attachment, a closeness, a feeling of being part of something intangibly greater, that so many defining personal memories have helped solidify.

Coming from a London comprehensive and the first person to have got into Oxford from the school or my family, it was a huge cultural shock when I 'came up'. Some abiding memories from those early weeks include: forming those lasting friendships that have survived way beyond my time at college; getting to grips with the tutorial system; some memorable nights at the Winchester Club (the affectionate name for the old Pembroke bar); and, of course, football. During Freshers Week, I remember signing up to a list in the lodge asking for anyone interested in playing for the College and their prior experience. My mention of recently playing for a professional club's youth team, Crystal Palace, drew some attention and raised expectations in the first training session. Over the next few years, we were to assemble the best team Pembroke had ever had, winning Cuppers in 1986, and again in 1987, and becoming league champions in 1988.

The first XI Cuppers football victory in 1985-86 remains vividly in my mind, and I am sure is fondly remembered by many others at college at the time. Pembroke had, I understand, not won Cuppers for more than 50 years (it may have been closer to a century), and we were not seen as contenders at all that year. Optimism started to grow after convincing victories in the early rounds, and reached fever pitch in the famous 2-1 win after extra time against hot favourites, Oriel, where most of the College seemed to turn out to watch the game. Our most vocal touchline supporter, Reverend Platt, was lost for words I seem to remember.

The game finished 1-1 after normal time. We were out on our feet, but somehow found another gear, with Tony Burns



Cuppers match against Oriel at full time, 1986

slotting home the winner to jubilant scenes on the touchline. We went on to win the final against Hertford, 2-1, another legendary occasion played at night under floodlights at the old Oxford City ground near Folly Bridge, and the resulting celebrations, parading the cup to our adoring fans, live long in the memory. We won Cuppers again the following season, beating Teddy Hall 5-3 after extra time in the semi-final (I found out after the game that I had broken my wrist, and had to play in a cast in the final, and also had to learn how to write left-handed in lectures for a few weeks!) We beat Exeter 1-0 in the final, with the unlikely scorer Sid (Rick Sidebottom) and won the league title the year after that. Heady days.

Darts was a huge College sport back in those days, and the men's first eight were almost invincible. I managed to scrape into the team as Board 8, forming a formidable doubles partnership with Rick 'Wideboy' Simpson. As one of their best customers, courtesy of frequent visits after darts nights, the India Garden restaurant along the High Street agreed to sponsor the team.

We were a fearsome outfit, turning up at away games to practise an hour before the match with our entourage of groupies, decked out in our white T-shirts with 'India Garden' emblazoned on one side and our nicknames on the other. Dazzer, Chopper, Fridge, Scyther, Willog, Rodhernee, Wideboy, and me. I suffered the consequences of ordering a chicken korma after my first darts match and was then saddled with the nickname 'Korma' for the rest of my time at college. Still, it could have been worse. There were Biryani Bowcock and Bombay Potato Cumberpatch.

During the eighties, the college was certainly not flush with cash, and accommodation in college could be spartan. My room in Staircase 8 certainly was. The cold showers down in the bowels of the staircase were bracing, especially during a particularly icy winter in my first year. In many ways, it helped galvanise the college spirit – we were definitely not Christ Church. I have been back to Pembroke a few times since leaving, and the accommodation seems to have improved immeasurably. I am hugely impressed with the addition of the Rokos Quad and the Annex.

My time at college flew by, and I left after graduating to embark on a career as an actuary, which has taken me across the world. I feel honoured and immensely proud to have attended Pembroke and to have contributed in some small way to its remarkable history.



Cuppers victory celebrations, 1986



Manuel 'Manny' Gonzalez - (m.1985) PPE

My family were immigrants from Cuba to the United States and I came to Pembroke as a Visiting Scholar. My first impressions of Pembroke were that it is a place of friendliness and scholarship. Pembroke is much friendlier and more cozy. A beautiful place with great people who care about others. Sir Roger Bannister (coached me about running), Dr. Pelczynski (my tutor in Political Philosophy), and Ken Mayhew (my tutor in Economics) were great teachers that inspired me. Great food and robust pastoral services. Very helpful staff, particularly in the dining hall. Many fellow students made a positive impact on me. I enjoyed the Christmas festivities a great deal. Pembroke should definitely keep broadcasting the Christmas Carol Service worldwide as it has done in recent years so people can see and hear it live and in playback.

Significance and joy in life is found in serving others. Serving others, not being served. Giving joy and life to others. Pembroke College is an oasis in a world with many deserts.

Pembroke provided an outstanding academic experience with 1:1 classes via tutorials with great scholars in their field. The workload was challenging but manageable and rewarding. The academics were outstanding and beyond my already high expectations. The academic experience at Pembroke was very beneficial in my receiving degrees from both Cornell University and Harvard University and also in my careers in marketing, sales, innovation and operations, entrepreneurship, venture capital, and consulting.

My Pembroke experience greatly helped me succeed in both the academic and business worlds. But most important, it made me a better human being that benefitted my sons Emmanuel and Sebastian and the world around me of which we are all an integral part.



Maurizio Ragazzi - (m.1985) Law

When my wife, Grazia, and I were about to arrive at Oxford in 1985, we were offered an apartment that a former College fellow had placed at the disposal of visiting professors or graduate students. Hardly did we imagine that we would end up spending 4 memorable years at that apartment, enjoying birds and squirrels as our neighbours, becoming close to our gracious landlords Sir Robert and Lady Dorothy Macintosh, and growing spiritually at the Catholic church of SS Gregory & Augustine, round the corner on Woodstock Road, the parish priest of which was beloved Rev. Vincent Lucas (Prof. Bernard Rudden, then holder of the Chair of comparative law, was a regular reader at the Sunday Mass).

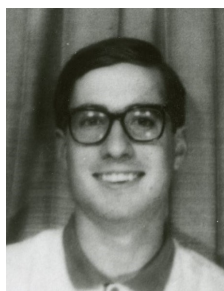
We fairly soon discovered that Sir Robert, then in his late 80s, had been a pioneer of anaesthesia, admired worldwide, and the holder of the first Chair of anaesthesia in the UK. His clarity of mind and exposition, and his practical sense in searching for simple

and workable solutions, epitomized the best of the English intellectual talent. Through him, Lady Dorothy, and other members of their family (and such dear Fellows as Dr Kallistos Ware, Prof. Dan Prentice and John Eekelaar FBA), we came to realize that colleges are not at the heart of the Oxford University system by virtue of dry organizational decisions. Rather, they take central stage precisely on account of the spontaneous affection for newcomers that continues animating current and former fellows, and their families, in their commitment to true collegiality, which knows no boundaries of discipline or generation.

I was in law practice for 25 years: my Oxford DPhil dissertation was published by OUP and later also in Chinese translation. Among my publications is a book of essays by scholars worldwide, which I edited in memory of Sir Ian Brownlie, my Oxford supervisor. I live in Washington DC with my wife, Dr Grazia Mangano, a theologian and author of a monograph on St Catherine of Siena, also published by OUP.



Sir Robert and Lady Macintosh, 1988



Ian Johnston - (m.1986) Botany

Admission

I was raised in the town of Berkhamsted in the county of Hertfordshire. My father was a fitness instructor and is from Dundee, on the East coast of Scotland. My mother worked as a part-time teacher of physical education, and was born in the village of North Stainley, in Wensleydale, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. You could say that I was born to exercise. I went running with my father from an early age. My mother took me to church, where I was recruited to the choir. When my voice broke, I learned to sing bass, and have done so ever since.

I acquired an early interest in plants, mainly from my family. My maternal grandfather maintained a splendid vegetable patch. My paternal grandmother liked her more ornamental garden, and her house plants.

I attended my local comprehensive school, Ashlyns: a rough old place at the time, but one which offered good opportunities to children who were willing to work and could withstand a certain amount of adolescent 'argy-bargy'. I became particularly interested in science, and began to think seriously about going to university.

I had been interested in Oxford and Cambridge Universities since I first saw the film '*Chariots of Fire*' as a 13-year-old in 1981. I was also an admirer of Margaret Thatcher when I was growing up. I agreed with most of her policies and I liked the way she spoke in the

House of Commons and at party conferences. I admired the way she had risen from a humble background to become political leader of the country. If a grocer's daughter can go to Oxford, why not a fitness instructor's son?

One lunchtime in January 1985 found me in the careers room next to the Sixth Form area at Ashlyns



Ashlyns School

School, reading the Oxford University Undergraduate Prospectus. I was left with serious doubts that I had the academic ability to get a place. Then I read the Alternative Prospectus, produced by the Oxford University Students Union, which informed me that Oxford had accepted 100% of those who had applied to read botany the previous year. The year before it had accepted 60% of applicants. I remember the winter sunshine streaming in through the window. It was a 'Road to Damascus' moment in reverse; St. Paul was struck blind, but my eyes were opened.

Choosing a college proved rather more difficult. I decided that I could not apply to Brasenose, because I had no idea how to pronounce it. I admit that I eventually nominated St. John's as my first choice, largely because of a statement in the college prospectus that it would like to attract more applicants from state schools. Pembroke was my second choice, because it admitted four applicants to read botany each year - more than any other college. I had also heard that Pembroke was recruiting a larger number of undergraduates that year in order to help fund a new building.

I had two outstanding teachers when I was in the sixth form. My chemistry teacher, Mr. Dodd, was a graduate of Corpus Christi College. He was proud to be from the East End of London, and, like me, supported West Ham United! Mrs. Ainsworth, who taught me biology, was a graduate of Cambridge University. Both were supportive of my intention to apply to Oxford.

I sat the Oxford University Entrance Examination in the Autumn Term of 1985 - 'Fourth Term Entrance', as it was called in those days. I offered three papers: Biology, Further Biology and Chemistry. I found the Chemistry paper difficult, but the Biology papers required me to write four essays in three hours, recalling science from memory, and suited me rather better.

I was invited to Oxford for interviews in December 1985. I spent the nights of Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th at St. John's College, where I was interviewed, and was also invited to an interview at Pembroke. This was my first visit to the college. The interviewer, Dr. Vernon Butt, seemed such a kindly gentleman and talked a lot about my interest in running. He was training for the London Marathon. He only just stopped short of saying, "Welcome to Pembroke"!

I admired the architecture of Old Quad and was tempted to explore the college, but decided it was wiser not to spoil my chances by doing something silly, like trespassing. The application process could not have gone better, and I expected to return. On my way up St. Aldates I went in to the Tourist Information Office and bought a street plan of Oxford which I expected to need on my arrival the following October. I still refer to it.

I still have the letter dated 20th. December 1985 from Dr. Savile Bradbury, then Tutor for Admissions, offering me a place for admission to Pembroke College in October 1986. I was pleased to accept.

Accommodation

In my first year I lived in room 8:12, on the second floor. So I have the satisfaction of knowing that I lived in the Samuel Johnson Building, even though, in my day, it was known as 'The decrepit Staircase 8'. I liked living in one of the oldest parts of the college, and its shabby condition did nothing to spoil my enjoyment. It was cleaned by a charming scout named Ann.

Thick stone walls gave me an exterior windowsill so wide that I could air my running shoes on it. I gradually filled the interior windowsill with potted plants which I propagated at the Department of Plant Sciences. The window afforded an excellent view of the Hall.

There was a threadbare green carpet on top of loose floorboards. The walls were so faded that I was not sure what colour they were supposed to be. Occasionally, a flake of paint would detach from the high ceiling and drift gently downwards.

I slept on a mattress stuffed with horse hair, supported on an iron bedstead. There was an old wooden desk with drawers, a rather more modern chest of drawers and a tall, narrow, wooden cupboard which served as both wardrobe and larder. Heating was provided by a two-bar electric fire mounted in an old open fireplace. Only one bar actually worked, but it also toasted bread quite effectively.

There was a basin with an electric water heater. I often found that boiling a kettle provided hot water more quickly and cheaply. Having been raised on a low income, and being supported only by a local authority grant, I kept an eye on the electricity meter downstairs.

The toilet was next door, and shared with three other students whose doors opened onto the same landing: Gordon Buxton, Mike Dooley and Richard Gilkes. The shower was two floors below in the 'mouldy old shower room'. Student rooms with ensuite bathrooms were then unknown.

In February 1987, the college issued a circular asking students what improvements they thought needed to be made to their rooms. Respondents were asked to be 'brief'; I had



'Staircase 8'

worked on a building site for a few weeks in between leaving school and starting at Pembroke, and my brief response covered two sides of A4!

Broadgates Hall had recently been refurbished, but many of the college buildings were not in a particularly good condition. Mathematics student Anthony Brewer told me that part of the ceiling in his room had collapsed while a party was going on in the room above. I believe he lived on Staircase 12.

The gate was locked at midnight, but students were issued with 'Late keys'. This was not, in my opinion, a good idea: drunks used to come rolling home in the early hours and woke those who took their studies more seriously. Students who held unauthorised parties in their rooms did not help, either. Matthew Arnold's 1866 description of Oxford as "That sweet city with her dreaming spires" took on a new meaning. It was so noisy at night that only structures made of stone could sleep.

I had to complain to the Dean, Godfrey Bond, on several occasions. Mr. Bond was a very pleasant gentleman of the 'old school', but appeared to lack a firm hand for maintaining discipline. I decided that I would not live in college again after my first year.

One of my 'running mates' was studying history at Oriel. He told me that students returning to Oriel after the gate was locked had to ring a bell to summon the night porter. Thus any who had been drinking had a watchful eye upon them when they returned.

Great Tom's 101 bongs at 9 p.m. used to signify the time when the 101 students studying at our neighbour across the road had to be back in college. That was a better plan.

Visiting Pembroke College in 1995, before visitors were banned from the staircases, I was allowed to enter my old room, and found that it had been rather nicely redecorated.

I had a friend at Merton College whose parents owned a house at 16 to 17 Union Street, off Cowley Road, and were looking for tenants. I spent my second and third years living there. Originally two Victorian 'Two-up, two down' terraced houses, it had been knocked into one by the previous owner. I shared it with four other students, including Pembroke College mathematician and oboeist Andrew Martin. Another of my housemates, John Minty, a mathematics and philosophy student at Queen's College, was unknown to me when we moved in, but quickly became one of my best friends. He still is.

I moved out of college in search of quieter nights, but once again acquired some noisy student neighbours. Noise at night was then the responsibility of the Police, not the local council. I had to call the Police on several occasions.

However, my decision to spend two years 'living out' proved fortunate. Pembroke expected to offer rooms in the new Geoffrey Arthur Building to third year students from Michaelmas Term 1988, but completion of the building was delayed by a year after it was discovered that the builders had forgotten to install wall ties between the exterior and interior cavity walls. Students who had expected to live there had to find alternative accommodation at short notice. Thankfully, I already had my landlords' agreement that I could live at 16 to 17 Union Street for another year.

I still have an angry, hand-written, photocopied letter from Mary, a Secretary of the Junior Common Room who did not give her surname. This was circulated just before Easter 1988 and asked all students and their parents to complain to the Master, Bursar

and Dean about the unavailability of accommodation in the new building and demand compensation from the college.

Studies

One unfortunate consequence of obtaining a place at Oxford is that I found myself near the bottom of the class. I got here mainly through my ability to memorise facts and write them out under examination conditions. If you are looking for experimental design and interpretation, critical analysis or intellectual insight, you would be better advised to look elsewhere.

Only one of the botany students was noticeably less able than me, and she accepted that she was going to do badly. I was having none of that. My solution was to work hard, in an era when many students worked very little.

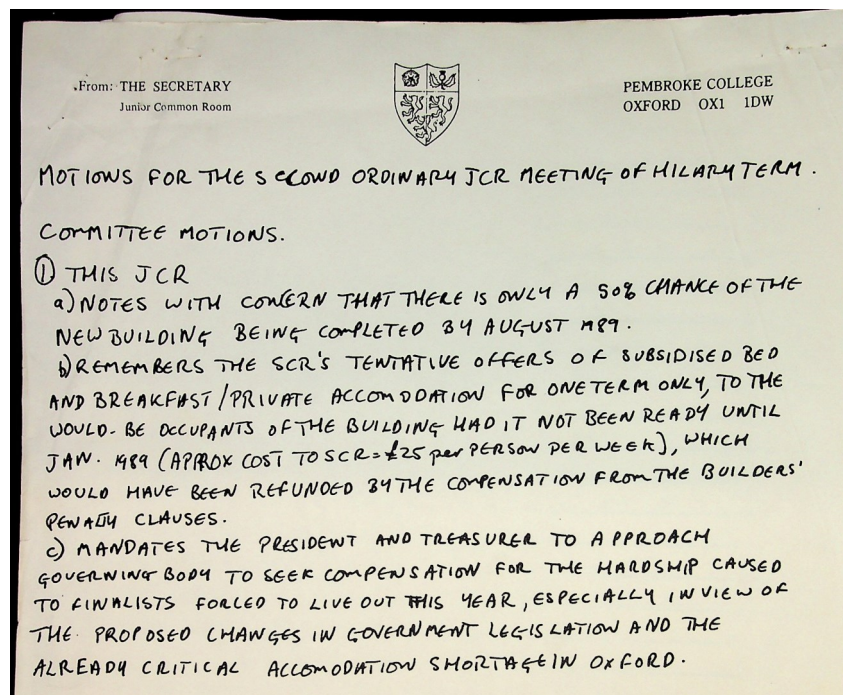
I was required to write an essay every week during term, and usually one each vacation. I found that I could write as well as anyone in the group, as long as I took twice as long to do it. The essay you are now reading was edited on a word processor before being submitted: in the late 1980s I had no access to a computer and all my essays were handwritten. Every word had to be carefully chosen as there was limited scope for alteration later.

Senior Tutor, Dr. John Eekelaar, issued circulars reminding students of the perils of illegible handwriting, especially in examinations. Students might have to have their scripts typed, at a cost of up to £150. My handwriting was never neat, but people could read it.

There was no internet, so all research had to be done from books and printed scientific papers, most of which were found in the library at the Department of Plant Sciences, but some of which were missing. My reading material for this essay comes from my personal archive in the attic, from which no student ever borrows and fails to return.

The reader may infer that I liked an essay and had a tendency to write at some length. I often wished that I had more time to research and write them. Subjects covered a wide range including biochemistry, photosynthesis, metabolism, genetics, plant classification, ecology, roots, shoots, leaves, fossils, conifers, fungi, viruses and many more. I still have all my essays, but since this one is about my time at Pembroke College and not my work at the Department of Plant Sciences, I have not included further details. Sometimes the next essay would fill my mind, leaving little room for anything else. This could annoy my fellow students. The old problem recurred while I was writing this one.

Practical classes were more of a challenge. I could follow instructions as long as they were clear, but sometimes I found them otherwise. After completing the experiments, I had to



write them up and draw the right conclusions from the results. Here I often fared badly. I handed in my write-ups: they were usually returned weeks later with "Short on discussion" written on them. The teaching had long since moved on to other topics, and I usually thought it wiser not to ask what I should have concluded.

I spent my first two terms, Michaelmas 1986 and Hilary 1987, on the Biology Preliminary course. My tutor, Dr. Vernon Butt, was on a year's sabbatical in Australia, so my tuition was overseen by Dr. Chris Hawes. I was also introduced to Dr. John Krebs, a zoologist who went on to have a distinguished scientific career including professorships. He appeared on television news bulletins when Chairman of the UK Food Standards Agency and has been elevated to the House of Lords.

I attended many interesting lectures given by distinguished lecturers. For example Sir Richard Southwood, Professor of Zoology, spent much of his time lecturing to first-year undergraduates. I am sure he could have delegated this task had he wished to.

I still have lecture lists for eight of my nine terms - Michaelmas 1986 is missing - but what was delivered in the lecture theatre and by whom was not always the same as shown on the list. I also have my lecture notes.

I passed the Biology Preliminary Examination. This consisted of three papers. The first two, entitled "Organisms and their environment" and "Cell biology and genetics" were sat on Wednesday, 22nd. April from 9:30 to 12:30 and 2:30 to 5:30 respectively. Candidates were required to answer four essay questions. The third paper was "Biological chemistry, biological physics and statistics" on Thursday, 23rd. April. Candidates had to answer five questions. I still have all the examination papers, but I recall little of what I wrote in the examinations. There is something about that level of mental exertion which makes it difficult to remember afterwards.

Some joker inked in the letter 'D' (for Distinction) alongside my name in the published results, which I took as a compliment on my work ethic. Sadly, I did not achieve one. Academic distinctions are not achieved by hard work alone. They require outrageous levels of talent, which I had not.



John Eekelaar



Richard Southwood

In Trinity Term 1987, I began the course leading to Final Examinations in Botany. We spent a week doing field work at various locations around Oxford, including Wytham Woods. After spending all day in the field, I had to read for and write an essay in the evenings and at the weekend. That was a ninety-hour working week.

I particularly enjoyed a series of practical classes on plant propagation given by Mr. Ken Burras, who worked at Oxford Botanic Garden. I stocked the windowsill of my room at Pembroke with the plants I propagated, and still have descendants of most of them at home.

I had to stay up for an extra five days at the end of term to finish all the work. Pembroke College was kind enough to give me a small 'vacation grant'.

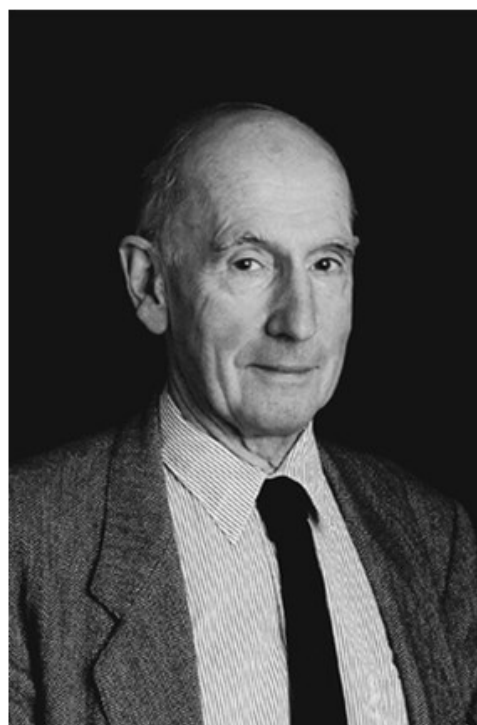
At the start of my second year, Michaelmas Term 1987, Dr. Butt returned from his sabbatical. At an early tutorial he said, "I'm sorry, but from now on I am going to push you". I remember thinking, "Oh, no!" From then on I saw a very different side of the 'kindly gentleman' who had interviewed me for a place at Pembroke. Dr. Butt was bad-tempered, fiercely critical, unreasonably demanding and often incomprehensible. To be fair, he also understood his subject, plant biochemistry, in great depth and had the best memory of anyone I have ever met. Then in his sixties, he worked all day then went out for a run at 9 p.m. I had to admire his toughness.

I thought about asking for a change of tutor, but decided against it. It was Dr. Butt who had offered me a place at Pembroke. I was also aware that students in previous years who had caused trouble had been awarded poor degrees. This may have been entirely just, but there was a certain mystery about how degree classifications were awarded and I did not want to risk a 2:2 - a possibility Dr. Butt used to wave like a shroud. In retrospect I was always going to get at 2:1, so all this 'Butting' was unnecessary.

The appropriately named Dr. Barrie Juniper taught me for the first half of Hilary Term 1988. In his report he wrote, "Ian has written four excellent essays for me, but has little idea how to use a tutorial". I would rather he had not told Dr. Butt.

By the time I reached a tutorial, my brain was often too tired to absorb any further information. I did not know what questions to ask the tutor. If the tutor asked questions of me, I was often not articulate enough to answer. I used to try to get the tutor to do the talking - something most were quite happy to do - and turn the tutorial into a lecture. I did not always understand what was being said, but it used up the time. I learned never to wear a watch to Dr. Butt's tutorials, so he could not accuse me of looking at it.

Hilary Term 1988 was also notable for its wet weather. The Cherwell overtopped its banks at Magdalen Bridge, flooding Angel and Greyhound



Barrie Juniper

meadow, but the Botanic Garden escaped inundation.

We attended a field course in Portugal from 13th to 27th March 1988. We stayed in the Hotel Lagosmar, in the town of Lagos on the Algarve, doing ten days of field ecology and three days of sightseeing. I enjoyed the latter rather more than the former; I went off on my own, as I was wont to do, taking the train along the Algarve coast and to Lisbon.

One of the tutors who accompanied us was Dr. Roger Hall, a likeable Australian ecologist who had played junior county cricket for Middlesex. I remember him being in college.

Wet weather continued into Trinity Term 1988. Field work outdoors usually resulted in a soaking. One afternoon an inch of rain fell in forty five minutes, turning Union Street into a river and flooding a neighbour's cellar.

From Michaelmas Term 1988, I was described as a 'Finalist'. Revision for Final Examinations began, while lectures and practicals continued. Many of the practical classes that term were on microbiology, which I found rather interesting, but I also found that spending long hours looking into microscopes did not improve my poor eyesight. While running in Cross Country Cuppers, I fell into a ditch which I had not seen. I was unhurt and continued in the race, but thereafter wore glasses when running cross country.

In December 1988, I received a letter in Dr. Butt's neat handwriting telling me to prepare for a Collection in the Hall from 2 to 5 p.m. on Friday 13th January. I liked the challenge of examinations, but Collections were not my favourite. I had sat two before, also in the Hall on winter afternoons. I had failed to get myself into the right frame of mind and performed less well than I would have liked (and far less well than Dr. Butt would have liked). Of one, he said, "If you had written an essay like that for me, you would be for the high jump". I wanted to tell him that I selected the college athletics team and that, if he spoke to me like that again, he would be for the 400 metres hurdles. I just glared at him and said nothing. I did a lot of that.

January 1989's Collection consisted of practice in writing the kind of essays I would need to write in my final examinations. Friday 13th proved lucky for me. Even Dr. Butt was not excessively critical of my efforts.

Lecturers that term included Dr. Richard Dawkins, well-known for his atheism and his books such as *The Selfish Gene* and *The Blind Watchmaker*.

Lectures and practicals continued for the first half of my final term, Trinity 1989, but the second half was taken up mainly by revision. My brief academic career then came to an end. I had not achieved the academic excellence that I would have liked, but I have the satisfaction of knowing that I tried.

I met Dr. Butt on friendly terms on several occasions after I graduated. On the last of these, after we had both attended Evensong in the chapel



Richard Dawkins

in June 2016, he pretended that he was going to give me a tutorial on an essay I had written during Hilary Term 1988. He actually invited me to the Senior Common Room for a glass of wine. Dr. Butt died in April 2020, aged 98. Rest in peace. I know you meant well. All is forgiven.

Finals

My Final Examinations began with four theory papers on Thursday 15th and Friday 16th June 1989, from 9:30 to 12:30 and 2:30 to 5:30. Candidates were required to answer three essay questions in each, and these comprised eighty percent of the final marks awarded. I felt that my training in competitive sport gave me an advantage. Sports people learn to raise their performance for a major event and not to worry beforehand. At least not too much! Heading for the North School of the Examination Schools, wearing my full academic dress, I dropped my mortar board in Union Street, earning mock disapproval from the Lollipop Lady supervising primary school children crossing the road. "Sorry - I must be nervous or something", I said. "Good luck", she replied.

On arrival, I offered a few words of reassurance to Lindsay, a fellow botanist from Wadham College, while noting that her version of 'full academic dress' was both brief and beautiful. Sure that no-one would be looking at me, I quietly removed my gown, jacket and white tie. Nobody told me to put them back on. Sub fusc may be smart, but it is not the most comfortable form of dress on hot days.

You know when you have had a good run, before you look at your watch. Dr. Butt had advised me that I needed four 'alphas' in order to get a 2:1. I was confident that I had them. My academic transcript later told me that I had gained five.

Saturday 17th brought a six-hour field practical in Wytham Woods. Candidates were asked to investigate the ecology of the plant species growing in the understorey; in other words at ground level, under the trees. Towards the end of the time allowed, the aforementioned Dr. Hall told us that he had lost his glasses case, and asked if anyone had seen it. A student who was also enjoying his finals whispered, "A glasses case has been found, and will be returned on receipt of a First"! I do not know whether Dr. Hall received his glasses case, but the student received his First. Being familiar with the standard of his work, I have no doubt that his degree was justly awarded!

On Monday 19th there was a six-hour laboratory practical at the Department of Plant Sciences covering physiology, biochemistry, genetics and plant pathology. A certain amount of laboratory equipment had been laid out for my use, including items I had not seen before, could not identify and did not know how to use. I was glad that this paper comprised only five percent of the final marks. Lunch was provided in an adjoining room - rather delicious salmon sandwiches on a silver platter.

The last paper was another laboratory practical, from 9:30 to 12:30 on Wednesday 21st. Taxonomy (plant classification) and microscopy were involved. I still have all the examination papers.

Students had been banned from throwing noxious substances over each other outside the Examination Schools, but this restriction did not apply outside the Department of Plant Sciences. I had tired of student silliness, and needed my suit for job interviews. I bent the dress code further by wearing my running shoes.

After the examination was concluded, I caught sight of a number of inebriated students outside the revolving doors. "Aren't you going outside, Ian?" asked Lindsay, wearing her mini-skirt again. I did - through the adjoining Department of Psychology. That part of South Parks Road was deserted, but I ran back to Union Street anyway, merely because I could.

That afternoon I packed my bags, ready to leave Oxford the next day. I then went for a run. I started with a spring in my step, but became progressively slower. I gradually realised how tired I was. I did not go to the party in the evening. I have long thought that the best celebration is the quiet satisfaction of a job well done.

Chapel

The Chaplain, the Reverend Dr. John Platt, called all the freshers in for a conversation during our first week, and told us about services in the Chapel. When I told him that I sang in the choir of my local church, he invited me to join the Chapel choir - an invitation I was pleased to accept. Like many students over the years, I found the Rev. Dr. Platt's support invaluable during my time at Pembroke. He was reassuring when I found my studies difficult, and he was also my best source of news regarding what was going on in College, especially when I was living out.

In those days there was a College Communion service at nine o'clock every Sunday during term, from the Alternative Service Book of 1980, which was attended by very few of us. Attendees were then invited to the Chaplain's study for coffee, toast and marmalade. I used to note with some sadness the full bar on Saturday night, and the empty chapel on Sunday morning. The motto of Oxford University is "The Lord is my light". The Lord is not Bacchus.

The choir sang at the evening service at six o'clock, which was better attended, but there were still plenty of empty seats. Most weeks this was Evensong according to the order of service in the Prayer Book of 1662. This involved the choir singing the Preces and Responses, a setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, a Psalm and an anthem. The Chaplain or a visiting preacher would preach a sermon.

On the fourth Sunday of Michaelmas Term 1986 and 1987, there was a Commemoration of Founders and Benefactors. A list of those who had made substantial donations to the college over the centuries was read out, beginning with the founders, Thomas Tesdale and Richard Wightwick. A left-wing student dismissed this rather unkindly as "God bless the rich"!

A Service of Music and Meditation sometimes replaced Evensong during Lent or at Whitsuntide. College Corporate Communion occasionally took place on a Sunday evening. There was a Christmas carol service on the evening of the last Sunday in Michaelmas term; a tradition which continues. The choir practised for an hour at 6 p.m. on a Thursday and on Sunday afternoon.

Choral highlights included singing Handel's *Zadok the Priest* and *The Heavens are Telling* from Haydn's *Creation* on several occasions. In May 1989, the choir stood on High Table in Hall to sing Pergolesi's *Magnificat*, conducted by the senior Organ Scholar, Philip Cree.

During my second and third years, I served as College Sacristan. It was my job to get the Chapel ready for services, and to clear up afterwards. Every Friday evening, I used to collect the chalice and paten from the 'silver man', Michael Bond, who supervised the cellar beneath the hall. I handed them in at the porters' lodge for safe keeping, and collected them when I arrived for the morning service on Sunday. I put them on a small table in front of the altar, having arranged a few wafers of unleavened bread on the paten, along with glass jugs of communion wine and water for the Chaplain to pour into the chalice at the appropriate point in the service. I delegated flower arranging to a music student and choir member named Helena Stoward, coincidentally from my father's native city of Dundee.

The chapel was candle-lit in those days, and it was my job to look after the candles. I ordered supplies from a local shop, sending the invoice to the Bursar, Mr. Colin Leach. I lit the candles before services, and saw that they were snuffed out afterwards. In those days the choir contained several boy choristers, who were often keen to help with this. After the Sunday evening service I returned the chalice and paten to Mr. Bond at the hall.

I still have the termcards giving details of the Sunday evening services for eight of my nine terms. Hilary 1989 is missing, but I hope that I may find her. I have copies of the service sheets detailing the music at Sunday evening services from Michaelmas 1987 to Trinity 1989.

Running

Having competed for Thames Valley Harriers since the age of twelve, I came up to Oxford with some experience. I joined the Oxford University Athletics Club and had early success, winning the 3000 metres in the University Freshers' Trials at Iffley Road in Michaelmas Term 1986 and then in the Freshers' Match against Cambridge, in a time of 9 minutes 15.4 seconds. Seven and a half laps of the old cinder track at Milton Road, Cambridge - the last time I ever ran on cinders. That was not the sort of time in which the Freshers' Match 3000 metres was normally won: the following year, the winner ran 8:15. It was another twenty years before there was a winning time slower than mine. Cambridge won the match.

Minutes of the Amalgamated Clubs meeting held on Sunday 5th week Michaelmas Term 1986 at 5.00pm at Clarendon

Present were: the Senior Treasurer, the Junior Treasurer, Simon Samles (rugby), Charlie Rice (Cricket + hockey), Ruth Potter (women's rowing), Simon Gosselle (men's rowing), Tim Anderson (Tennis + squash), Andy Pitt (Darts), Dave Ramsden (Table Tennis?), Sarah Wilson (women's hockey) and Iain Johnston (Athletics).

Andy Pitt secured a new dart's board for the Curry boys but attempts by Iain Johnston to obtain vests for the athletic team were thwarted by the agreement that rowers had to buy their own vests.

I ran for Oxford's third team in the Varsity Cross Country match for three consecutive years. The Blues teams race each other on Wimbledon Common every year, but the second to fifth teams' races were organised in a separate fixture in early December which alternated between Oxford and Cambridge. In 1986 I had a bad run at Cambridge for some unknown reason and finished last. In 1987, Oxford staged the fixture at Shotover Country Park. The start took me by surprise, and found me still wearing my tracksuit trousers. I quickly stripped them off and joined in at the back of the race, where I stayed. I struggled in the mud and finished last again. I found my trousers after the race, still where I had left them, but when I was finishing my warm-down I saw the coach which had been hired to take runners back to the centre of Oxford driving away. When it's not your day, it's not your day. I jogged back to Union Street and baked some flapjack.

In my final year, 1988, I finally had a reasonable run, finishing eighth in a relatively uneventful race on firm ground in Cambridge. This was not enough to prevent Cambridge from winning the team race for a third consecutive year.

In February 1989, I was selected to run for the University's second team in the British Universities Cross Country Championship at St. Andrews. The team travelled by coach from Oxford to London, and then London to Edinburgh, where we spent two nights either side of the race in bed and breakfast. I was the second Oxford runner to finish in the second teams' race, in 12th place, and helped Oxford to finish third, behind Loughborough and Birmingham. At the time I had never run better. Third prize was a small wooden shield for each team member. I still have mine.

In my last term, Trinity 1989, I won the 1500 metres in Athletics Cuppers, and was selected to run the same event for Oxford's second team, known as the Centipedes, in the Varsity Athletics Match. I lost contact with the first three on the last lap and finished fourth. I was really designed for longer distances, and my lack of finishing speed counted against me. However, Oxford won both the men's Blues and Second Team matches.

I was never a contender for First Team selection or a Blue, so high were the standards. I kept running-related paperwork in a blue folder, as that was as near to a Blue as I was going to get.

Following a race in my first term, a fellow member of the Oxford University Athletics club said to me, "Ian, what sort of team does Pembroke have for Cross Country Cuppers next week?" I replied, "I don't know - you had better ask our college captain. By the way, who is our college captain?"

"As far as I know, it's you".

Thus I designated myself Pembroke College Captain of Athletics and Cross Country, and for the next three years recruited students to run in Cuppers, the Oxford Colleges Running League and other inter-college races. I found a few willing participants, most of whom were fit young men rather than serious runners. There was more interest in rowing, football and rugby at Pembroke in those days than in running.

Social

Following our matriculation ceremony, the freshers were invited to a reception in Broadgates Hall hosted by the Master and his wife, Sir Roger and Lady Moyra Bannister.

As a young runner, I was honoured to meet the first man to run a sub-four-minute mile. In the course of an evening in a crowded room, Sir Roger and Lady Bannister made sure they spoke to every one of us. I met Sir Roger on many subsequent occasions, the last being after the Annual Meeting in January 2014. I found him to be a gentleman in every sense of the word. He said that his greatest achievement was not running the sub-four-minute mile but writing his textbook, *Diseases of the Autonomic Nervous System*, which is still used in medical schools. Lady Bannister was supportive too; she was often in college, interacting with the staff and students.

I never liked noisy parties, drunken youths or late nights, but I did enjoy donning my blazer and tie and attending receptions at Pembroke, with a glass of wine and some engaging company. I attended events in Broadgates Hall, the Weatherley Room, the Fellows' Garden and on the lawn in Chapel Quad. I once had an interesting conversation on railways with Dr. Savile Bradbury: Fellow in Medicine, Lecturer in Human Anatomy, flautist and builder of model steam locomotives. Students I came to know quite well included Jane Pepper, who succeeded me as College Sacristan; rower Tim Waters and horse racing enthusiast Ashley Cook, both fellow botanists; Iain Henderson, who gained Blues for both cricket and golf; biologists Sue Wild and Roger Price; all-round sportsman and occasional zoologist Rob Evans; anglicist and future Bodleian librarian Philippa Irving; classicist and footballer Jonathan Hewitt; hockey player Rebecca Welland; rugby player Richard Matthews; pole vaulter and darts player Tony Harris; golfer James Robson; a rower from Canada named Deanne (I cannot recall her surname); Adam Dixon and Townley Chisholm from the United States; soprano Lotje Visser from the Netherlands and bass Yang Wern Ooi from Malaysia.

I organised a few social events myself, mainly in the lecture room at the foot of Staircase 8. An enjoyable time was usually had by all, but after one evening spent drinking Beaujolais Nouveau, there was confusion over who was supposed to take the hired glasses back to the wine merchant. Some days later I was met by a displeased Head Porter, Brian Aveyard, who told me that Lecture Room 8 was still full of dirty glasses. I also had to apologise to the Junior Dean, Geoffrey Willis, and spend an afternoon washing glasses when I should have been at a practical class.

I was invited to social events all over Oxford. One invitation asked guests to dress in 'Lounge Suites'. Whether they were to wear two-piece or three-piece suites was not specified. I thought it wiser not to become part of the furniture.



Brian Aveyard

Food

Catering was not what Pembroke College did best in the late 1980s. The food was palatable enough, my favourite being scampi in breadcrumbs with Tartare Sauce. I was slightly alarmed by meat which was still red in the middle, but I always ate it and it appeared to do me no harm. College custard caused some amusement, when students demonstrated how the spoon could be stood up in it, or how the jug could be inverted without any spillage.

No, the problem with college catering was the service. College dinner started at 7:15 p.m. Once the students had assembled, the Master, Fellows and their guests proceeded in and sat at High Table. The Master, or in his absence one of the Fellows, banged on the table, conversation temporarily ceased and a classics student read the Pembroke College Grace in Latin. There was then usually a long wait, followed by a starter, followed by another long wait. If you wanted to go to a meeting of a University club or society in the evening, that would start at 7:30 or 8 p.m. You could be still waiting for your main course at 7:45.

The food was served by teenagers, most of whom were not particularly good at their job. One was openly rude to the students, but a lot of complaints had to be made to the head of the hall, Terry Curtin, before the boy was dismissed. I once had to stop a boy from serving soup onto flat plates. A girl named Sharon was popular, as much for her ability to carry seven plates at once as for her personality. When her colleague, Fiona, tried to carry seven plates, the result was predictable.

One evening, a boy carried a cardboard box full of apples into the hall, only for the bottom to fall out of the box. I joined in the general effort to retrieve apples from under the tables and the benches.

A menu was displayed outside the hall, including some original spelling. 'Patie' was often served as a starter. The main course at Christmas Dinner in Michaelmas Term 1986 was 'Turkey'. At this particular event the hall was severely overcrowded and there was not enough food to go round. What little food there was, was thrown around by drunken students. I hardly got anything to eat but still had to pay in full. I declined invitations to attend in my second and third years.

Lunch was better, being served according to a cafeteria system, but when I was studying at the Department of Plant Sciences I did not have time to go to College for lunch. Sandwiches proved more practical. College breakfast did not start until 8:15 a.m.; too late for those of us with 9 a.m. lectures to attend in the Science Area.

I spent my second and third years living out in a house with a kitchen, and catering for myself. I did not eat in the Hall in my second and third years, except at the annual Chapel Choir Dinner.

I ate lunch in the Hall after the Annual Meeting in 2012, 2013 and 2014. I met a number of alumni who had attended Pembroke College in eras other than my own and was impressed by the high quality of the food and by the prompt, courteous service from the staff.

Health

The Covid-19 pandemic reminded me of 'College Throat', a regular problem which was probably caused by mutating Coronaviruses, too. It spread rapidly through a population of gregarious students. I took steps to avoid it; I drank orange juice to obtain Vitamin C and tried to get sufficient sleep when the neighbours permitted it. I also kept a bottle of rum (for medicinal purposes only, of course), but still succumbed on occasion. A raging sore throat would follow, for up to ten days. The aforementioned Dr. Juniper said, "Hilary Term is a pathogenic disaster".

Some students also suffered upset stomachs due to *Cryptosporidium* contaminating the water supply, even though we were told that this was harmless to healthy adults. At Pembroke it became known as "Dr. Johnson's Revenge".

Politics

I attended two meetings of the Junior Common Room, which were held on Sunday evenings after dinner. They consisted mainly of left-wing politics: as a Thatcherite, I did not feel much like getting involved.

I do not remember a rent strike, but I do recall a hard core of activists who seemed to devote their efforts to war on authority in general instead of to their studies, usually resulting in Penal Collections and either poor degrees or rustication. I wonder how they feel about that now? One such said to me, "If you think about it, it's not a privilege to be here". I did think about it, and mentally ticked the box marked 'Strongly disagree'.

I was aware that my political views put me in a minority in the college, but not in the country. A general election took place on 11th June 1987. The Left Caucus threw a party, hoping to celebrate a victory by the Labour Party, led in those days by Neil Kinnock. One activist left the party to check on her laundry, and found that her clothes had been stolen. I do not know who was responsible or if she ever got her clothes back, but sometimes it is possible to feel quite sorry for a socialist from a privileged background.

The BBC exit poll predicted a hung parliament, but the Conservatives won with a majority of 101, giving Margaret Thatcher her third consecutive term of office as P.M.

I suggested to my fellow Conservative students - there were a few, even at Pembroke - that when they heard Great Tom's 101 bongs at 9 p.m., they should think of the majority at the election.

A few days later, a poster appeared in the lodge advertising a "Public Meeting - Which way now for the Left?" Somebody drew a large black arrow on it, pointing downwards.

Battels

Each term, every student would receive a battels bill from the college, covering items such as rent and electricity for those who lived in, meals eaten in hall, food purchased from the pantry and buttery, and contributions to the JCR political and charitable fund. My bill was wrong six terms out of nine. An incorrect bill necessitated a visit to the college accountant, Mr. P. Kennedy, to compare my figures with his. Eventually, Mr. Kennedy asked me if I would like a job in his office. I declined, but if I had known the difficulties I was to face with employment after graduation, I would probably have accepted.

Career

During my final two terms at Pembroke I began to apply for graduate trainee positions but received no job offers. After graduation I continued, with the same result. I could find no credible advice regarding what job might suit me, or how to go about getting it. Graduate recruiters would not tell me why they kept rejecting my applications, which did not help.

Several interviewers told me that they had received over two hundred applications for a single vacancy. Their early questions were usually about my father's occupation and the type of school I had attended. Many interviews went little further. I was not articulate enough to give coherent answers to difficult questions. I did not have that bubbly, gregarious, sales-type personality which every employer seemed to be looking for. I fitted no-one's fixed idea of a young man who had been to Oxford.

Those who did not advertise specifically for a graduate trainee rejected me for being over-qualified and having no relevant experience. It is instructive that they all said 'over-qualified' first. I had worked during the summer vacations in gardens and on building sites, but no employer was prepared to consider that 'relevant'. Some regarded university as an 'ivory tower' where impressionable young people have their heads filled with silly ideas and become accustomed to a life of idleness. If I convinced them that I could get up before mid-day, they were unimpressed that I had had to work so hard to get a 2:1.

Most of the graduates I know had some help from their father's money and connections in securing their early jobs. My father was made redundant when I was in my first term at Pembroke and knew no-one who could help. After re-training twice, in business administration and computer programming, I only found it more difficult to obtain interviews. After eight years, I settled for life as a self-employed gardener and handyman.

While my chances of gainful employment and of using my degree were slipping away, my running career was heading in the opposite direction. My club, 'Thames Valley Harriers', won the British Athletics League in 1994. My most successful event has been the 10,000 metres track race. I ran a personal best time of 31 minutes, 31.37 seconds in 1999. I won the Herefordshire Championships fifteen times, and the British Masters' (age 35 and over) eleven times, the last of these being on the Horspath Road track in Oxford in 2022.

Perhaps my best result was winning the 10,000 metres in the colours of Great Britain Masters at the European Masters' Games in Malmo, Sweden, in 2008. Other highlights included helping Hertfordshire to win the Eastern Inter Counties Athletics Match at Great Yarmouth in 1996 by winning the 5000 metres, and doing the same again on the new synthetic track at Wilberforce Road in Cambridge in 1998.

In March 1996, I spent two weeks with the Achilles Club - Oxford and Cambridge past and present - in Stellenbosch, South Africa. We took part in an athletics match against the University of Stellenbosch, the University of Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape. We also ran in the open race following the World Cross Country Championships. This event was opened by Nelson Mandela, then President of South Africa, who told us in his speech of how he had enjoyed running in cross-country races as a boy.

I am proud of my Scottish ancestry, and have also enjoyed running north of the border. I won the West of Scotland Indoor 3000 metres Championship in 2004, and have been Scottish Masters' champion at 3000, 5000 and 10,000 metres. I ran for Scotland in the British and Irish Masters' Cross Country International for twelve consecutive years, until Covid-19 halted the event.

I ended my career with the Veterans' Athletics Club (VAC), which specialises in athletics for those over the age of 35. I still run every day to keep fit but, in 2022, aged 54 and not in my best form, I decided to retire from competitive running and become a bowls player. In 2024, I won the Men's Singles Championship at Kitchener's Bowls Club in Berkhamsted. A new sporting career beckons.

The choir in which I sang as a youth, in the daughter church of this parish, was disbanded while I was at Pembroke. I have sung in the choir of the Parish Church in Berkhamsted, St Peter's, since 1991.

The church has a service of Choral Evensong once a month, at which the choir sings much of the music which I first learned in Pembroke College chapel. In April 2009, the choir spent five days touring Venice and singing in Venetian churches, including St. Mark's. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited St. Peter's Church in May 2016. I was part of the choir which sang for her.

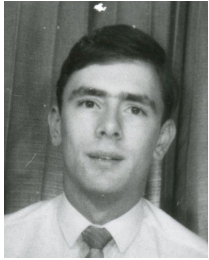
My botanical skills are mainly employed on my two allotments, which I have been cultivating since 1995.

Thank you, Pembroke College, for three unforgettable years. I loved you then and I love you now. You were kind to an eccentric undergraduate of limited academic ability and you are still kind to an eccentric alumnus of limited financial means.

In an age when so many institutions have been debased, it is encouraging to see how Pembroke College has gone against the trend and improved in so many ways, from the quality of the accommodation through the behaviour of the students to the standard of the catering. May your second four hundred years be even more distinguished than your first.



Winning the VAC 5M Road Championship, 2015



Andrew Martin - (m.1986) Mathematics & Computation

I was in the first cohort at Pembroke to study Computer Science - BA Mathematics and Computation, as it was called then - in 1986. We felt like we were blazing a trail!. There was just one computer for student use in the college - well, in fact it was a terminal with a connection to the (pre-internet) University data network. It was in a little room - barely more than a cupboard - just adjacent to the entrance to the library. We'd have loved 24 hour access (because several of us wanted to use it), but that was not allowed.

Eventually, that room got a second computer - a real computer, this time. I was responsible for it, and also provided IT support to the College Office. I was (I'm fairly sure) the first Computer Officer in the College.

Things were moving fast after that. I went down in 1989, and came back to do a DPhil in 1991, by which time there was a Computer Room in the Mac, and another at the GAB. The former was funded by donations from old members (from the 1950s, I think? hence the rather implausible title "the 1950s computer room"). Someone else had been Computer Officer in my absence, but I resumed the role in 1992 - so I was the Third Computer Officer, too! By then, the role came with free accommodation in college, in return for being 'on call' for all kinds of computer issues.

The big event, around 1993 I think, was the arrival of the internet in college. The 1950s room had been set up with this in

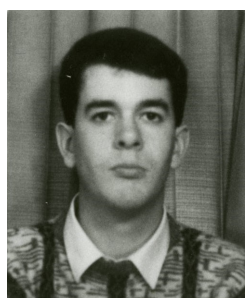
mind, I think, and the computers there (some/most of them hand-me-downs from college offices) all got properly hooked up. Because computers need names, particularly when on the network, I was determined to avoid prosaic 'Computer A' etc., so I chose Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, etc. Dr Carroll Morgan, Computer Science Fellow, was from Australia and contributed some more obscure names when more computers arrived (Tumut, Wagga Wagga, ...). I gave computers in the GAB names from New Zealand, and when a small computer room was set up in the Brewer Street building (before the big redevelopment over there), well, they had to be named after towns in Tasmania!

Computing then never went quite as smoothly as intended. I recall one Fellow couldn't find the pound sign (£) on his computer, and so wrote a proposal (for the cost of visiting students, I think) using a dollar sign instead – if that hadn't been corrected, the college would have lost a great deal of money, given the exchange rate!



The 'Mac' computer room, 1990

Being the computer officer had its perks. I was probably the first student to have the world-wide web in his college bedroom (in 1994), thanks to my room in 13 Pembroke Street happening to have an old connection to the university data network - just in time to read the first national newspaper to go online. I created the first Pembroke College website, too, though there was no internet archive in those days, so I don't think it's preserved for posterity. Some of the things students got up to on the computers in the Mac computer room when the internet first arrived are probably best left unstated: but staying one step ahead with computer security there launched for me a life-long career interest. On the academic side, I remember once being very surprised, sitting in the library, to see Godfrey Bond, the Dean and Tutor in Classics, come in, find a book in the computer science section, and take it away. I didn't imagine he'd ever touched a computer. Later I put two and two together: he was Public Orator, and the University was to give an honorary degree to Prof. Donald Knuth, a famous computer scientist, so Godfrey had come to get a book to get inspiration for his Encaenia speech!



Timothy Waters - (m.1986) Biology

I rowed in the Men's 1st VIII in 1987-1992 inclusive and in three torpids crews when not rowing for the Oxford University Lightweight Rowing Club. I was Boat Club President 1990/91. I was also coach for a number of crews whilst up, and, after I left, was lead Coach for the Men's Headship crew in 1995. I was delighted, then, to also be invited to the joint Headship dinner when the Women's VIII added the other Headship to the list (coached by Gordon Buxton, I think, a key player in that 1985-1995 period).

It was an interesting time, with students, senior members and alumni all working to transform Pembroke rowing. In particular, both men's and women's rowing moved forward together in a way which took Pembroke from being just *a* rowing college to *the* rowing college.

One bit of memorabilia that I have is the spoon from the blade that hit Oriel in 1995 to take the headship. The blade shaft broke later that summer in a collision at Henley and the crew kindly presented my dinner on it at the Headship Supper, then getting it painted up for me with crest/names etc. for my blades collection.



Men's First Torpid on the river: R. Evans (bow), Z. Horne, T. Waters, A. Fachinello, R. Peeters, G. Cheveley, J. Johansen, D. Sperry, S. Gruselle.



Emma Brining - (m.1987) English



Following a halycon blue Matriculation day, I was taken under the wing of some third years including a Welsh theologian who was keen to show me his Dolly Parton book collection - I did not know she made candles. Late one night in Michaelmas term, a knock at my door revealed a News of the World hack accompanied by a fresher eager for his first Fleet Street scoop of college scandal. What did I know?

Hall dinners were formal affairs nightly with the college silver laid out and senior academics in attendance. An invitation to dine at High Table invariably led to an avuncular Dean insisting on serving whilst sweeping his gown sleeves in wide arcs through the gravy on his plate, splashing it far and wide. When asked by an august and ancient professor why I didn't eat meat, I replied, without wishing to give offence to the college kitchen, that I was a "pragmatic vegetarian". The label stuck. My first year saw an overreliance on the kebab van in Pembroke Square. Frequently breaking off from an appallingly timed essay crisis for food at midnight, I was a familiar enough customer to be given credit.

I decided to get a tattoo and told no one - something tasteful, a butterfly on my ankle. A knock at my study door saw my adjacent room Experimental Psychology fresher, with Bible in hand, proclaim, "I've just been reading Leviticus 19:28 and it says, 'Thou shalt not get a tattoo'." It put the fear of God into me and I was sufficiently alarmed that I chickened out of ever doing it.

Pembroke's bijou dimensions meant one could not go five yards without stopping to have a conversation with someone. Its perjorative moniker, the House's 'coal scuttle', lent itself to an erstwhile college mag and seemingly inspired the Hadean interior design of the bar, painted black. Trinity term arrived and with it the promised Arcadian punting. A stroll with friends down to Folly Bridge punts and the anticipated pleasure of an idyllic afternoon on the river, ended within seconds when a drunken townie jumped off the bridge, falling on the end of the punt as it came out from under the bridge. He collapsed into the water screaming whilst we began to sink. We scrambled back to shore and an ambulance was called.

What I didn't know then was how important a touchstone my Staircase 17 scout Krishna would become. With a room that faced the back of Marks & Spencer's, to be woken by their reversing lorry daily at 6am, Krishna was my daily mother figure whose grounding presence I took for granted at the time. It is unbelievably special to know she is still on Staircase 17 and she hasn't changed one jot. We are so blessed to have her.

The lots for the second year ballot fell in my favour, netting me a larger room in an older quad house, decorated with a python skin given to me by a Zoology Pembrokian, along with a gifted photograph of him in a loin cloth in a jungle. My new digs gave a great vantage point to observe the escapade later on the night of the Pembroke Event, the party zenith of the year. Pembroke JCR, being proud of its socialist credentials, refused to

have a Ball. About three weeks beforehand, stickers started appearing on lampposts in the vicinity of college proclaiming 'SMASH PEMBROKE EVENT'. Rumours swirled that a group of London anarchists were planning to run amok on the night. Allegedly, a third year mathematician got them to climb over the wall and they ran about for a bit, jeering. An Eng. Lit. MCR friend was put to work on defining new American swear words for the second edition of the OED to everyone's amusement. This was followed by its preface creating its own neologism thanking the work of the 'keyboarders' - an agent noun that didn't appear in the dictionary.

The academic lull between Matriculation and Finals allowed in my second year for the establishment of the enormously pretentious Sake Club. To outsiders, it may have sounded like we were paying homage to a macabre twentieth century satirist. Instead, it was an alcoholic reward for studying all evening. Once Tom Tower began chiming at 9pm (Oxford time), one had 101 strokes of the bell to slip into a silk kimono and leg it to a club member's college room. One evening, I bet the organ scholar that I would give him £10 if I could break two eggs on his head. I broke one egg on his head and ran away.

Michaelmas 1989 rolled around and I lost my lofty place in college retiring to the badlands of Grandpont in a house of four boys. I insisted on the upstairs room. The first morning coming downstairs, the entire hallway and ground floor were covered in slug trails. Clearly, the damp problem was out of hand. Returning from lectures that afternoon, I stepped inside the front door onto something crunchy. Looking down, the ground floor was now covered in blue slug pellets. The thought of stepping over dead slugs was too much. I hoovered up the slug pellets, went to the corner shop, came back and duct taped the entire ground floor. Problem solved. Should have done Engineering.

A Finals friend was so egged and floured he was only recognised by his gait. I went down the High to wish fellow Eng. Lit. Pembrokians good luck.

"Aren't you coming in?"

"No, I've already done two papers as extended essays...Bye!"

So much of what Pembroke had to offer as a benign environment was because of the Master, Sir Roger Bannister. I was very lucky to be a student in his time. He was always approachable in college and at garden parties over the decades. Thank you, Pembroke.



Hithanadura de Silva - (m.1988) Medicine

I am Sri Lankan, and had my primary and secondary education at Royal College, Colombo. I come from a medical family - my father was a leading physician. I was accepted for postgraduate clinical training at the John Radcliffe Hospital (JRH). My supervisor was Dr. Derek Jewell - he made a lasting impression on me and we are still in contact. While training, I decided read for a DPhil. I received funding from an Overseas Research Scholarship award from the CVCP (Committee of Vice-Chancellors and

Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom) and a Wellcome Fellowship. As Dr. Jewell was an alumnus of Pembroke, he recommended that I apply to Pembroke (over Merton as suggested by Sir John Badenoch who was known to my father!), which I did, and was accepted as a graduate student. While at Pembroke, I won a Wingate Scholarship. I did not live in college as I was also undergoing clinical training at the JRH, but visited often and liked it because it was relatively small, warm, friendly and relaxed.

Royal College Colombo and the Colombo Medical School from which I graduated MBBS are both venerable institutions. But nothing prepared me for Pembroke which was very different - beautifully preserved and much more formal, especially the dress code.

I lived in doctor's quarters at the JRH in Headington, so I did not have the experience of living in college. At the matriculation dinner, I remember the Butler instructing us politely on the use of the cutlery that was laid out. The Master, Sir Roger Bannister, was my 'Moral Tutor'. So I dined many times at High Table as his guest, and, although the food, wine and port were excellent, it was a pretty stressful experience. I once passed the port the wrong way! When I dined with the other students (which I much preferred), it was great fun - more drinking than eating.

I am afraid I did not have much interaction with the College staff other than the Master who I met fairly regularly. My work was at the JRH - both clinical and labs. As I was doing clinical training in addition to my DPhil, it was more or less full time. The Master was kind and considerate. I remember his joke that it was difficult to take a photograph with me because he was well over six feet tall and I was five foot three.

As I stated earlier, it was hard work as a graduate student doing both clinical training and reading for a research degree. Both were at the JRH, and the College was a more 'formal, social' entity. This was all the more because I set myself a very tough timeline so I could return home to Sri Lanka, where my career awaited me. I matriculated in Michaelmas 1988 and set myself a target to complete my DPhil before Michaelmas 1990, which I thankfully did. The experience was both exhilarating and harsh, and I was proud to have survived it.

I did attend College Balls, Eights and evenings at the Mater's Lodgings. I once went for rugby practice at the College (my College application indicated that I had played for Colombo University), but, after a few sessions and many bruises, I gave up! My main social interactions were with my colleagues at the JRH. They were from different Colleges - and, like me, their social activities revolved around our truly international clinical unit - postgrads from Bolivia to Japan, India and China, Belgium, Italy, Greece to Ghana, South Africa and Australia. We had a cricket team that had fun playing the surrounding villages. I did visit the MCR occasionally, but was not involved in any of the College Clubs.

There were many memorable events but one stands out - slipping on an icy Oxford pavement and fracturing my elbow trying to catch a ride to the airport for a flight to a conference in Bologna, then delivering my paper there with my arm in plaster and winning a prize. And, at the (Gastroenterology) Unit Christmas dinner at Green College, being awarded the 'annual silver suppository' for the person who had the most eventful experience for that year.

I did experience rent rises and the Poll Tax during the Thatcher government. As a Sri Lankan student living on scholarship, I was not pleased.

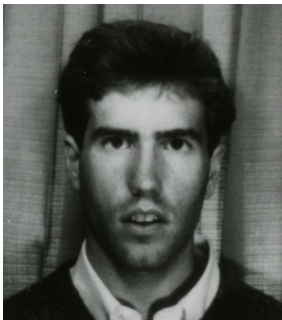
I remember buying my first computer: an Apple Macintosh SE20 (I could not afford a SE40), and, while writing my thesis on it, thinking how lucky I was to be using such an advanced (!) and convenient piece of equipment compared to using a type-writer.

I still remember my graduation. It was a fabulous experience, worth all the hard work. Walking from Pembroke to the Sheldonian, the DPhils given pride of place. The lunch at College afterwards and being gifted a bottle of port by the Master. Also, the farewell dinner with the whole Gastroenterology Unit at Wadham, with my Supervisor giving the farewell speech. I was too emotional to respond.

I decided on an academic career. I am currently Professor and Chair of Medicine at the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka and Consultant Physician to the Colombo North Teaching Hospital. During my career, I have been Dean of Medicine at the University and Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine at the University of Colombo, a member of the University Grants Commission and Chairman of our National Research Council. I sincerely believe that my qualification from Oxford achieved as a graduate student at Pembroke greatly helped my career giving me a head-start over the competition.



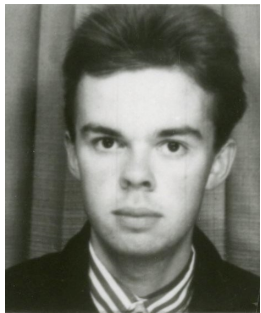
Apple Macintosh SE



Blair Hoxby - (m.1988) MPhil English

I was a student at Pembroke College from 1988-89. I have many fond memories of lively conversations in the dining hall and friendly exchanges on the football pitch – not to mention my moral tutor's solemn advice that I never drink more than six pints of ale before settling down to write my weekly essays. My lodgings were in an Elizabethan house with a walled garden overlooking Pembroke Street. Both the house and the garden were in need of some maintenance. When I told the handyman that my bed was missing a leg, he grumbled, "There's nothing I can do. You'll just have to lie very still." But the house and garden were all the more romantic for being in a little disarray. My girlfriend Caroline, now my wife, and I called the enclosed garden our Secret Garden, and it became magical indeed in Michaelmas term when the unofficial college cat, whom we named Gwendolyn, introduced her kitten to me. He was so fierce that we named him Alexander, but a saucer of milk soon won him over. He would go out "hunting" for fish and chips and doner

kebabs from the food trucks on St. Aldates every night, and loudly announce his successes – much to the annoyance of the other students in the house. As we were preparing to leave for Egypt during the break, we saw that Alexander was stranded up a tree. We hesitated to reveal all to the porter, but we did so, and he promised to save the kitten. When we called from the airport, he assured us that the gardeners had rescued him. From then on, we knew that everyone's heart was in the right place at Pembroke. Gwendolyn gave birth to another kitten in Trinity Term, whom we named Raphael, after Milton's sociable spirit, and we brought them with us when we left Oxford. They lived long lives as "college cats," traveling from Oxford, to Harvard, to Yale. They now lay buried in our garden at Stanford, and we never look on their memorial without thinking of those happy days at Pembroke College.



Andrew Kirk - (m.1988) Music

In the Pembroke prospectus of this era, the organ scholarship was described: "for those who enjoy the challenge of running their own show, the system provides the maximum of encouragement with the minimum of supervision". I can vouch for the accuracy of that statement!

In alternate years, there were two organ scholars; the senior scholar (third year) trained the junior organ scholar (first year) and normally, in the second year, the organ scholar worked alone, although this was not always the case.

In the Chapel Choir, undergraduates sang the lower parts with a top line of boy trebles, who were largely supplied by New College School – although there were boys from the wider Oxford area too. In 1990, New College School ceased to provide a regular stream of recruits, so there was a recruitment campaign to seek more trebles. Christ Church, New, Magdalen, Worcester, Exeter and Pembroke College all had boy trebles in their choirs (there were then no Oxford college choirs where school-age girls could sing).

We were fortunate to secure the services of a volunteer Assistant Organist Mr Terence Carter FRCO whose sons sang in the choir, and one of whom, Benjamin, successfully auditioned for the choir of Peterborough Cathedral. The Organ Scholar was therefore able to direct the choir most weeks, which enabled a more ambitious 'cathedral-style' repertoire to be sung.

During term time, there were usually 8 or 9 Sunday services per term, mostly Evensong, but always including a College Corporate Communion once per term, along with an occasional carol service in Michaelmas Term. After a rehearsal in the chapel for 45 minutes, the undergraduates and boy choristers retired to the Organ Scholar's rooms at the top of Staircase 6, where one of the choirboy's mums would have prepared a high tea for everyone which was rather lovely. After Evensong, the choir got a free meal at formal hall.

As well as singing in Chapel, there was often a termly concert with the Pembroke Music Society for larger scale works, sometimes in Hall. Lady Bannister graciously allowed use of the Oak Room in the Master's Lodgings for smaller scale chamber music recitals. There was a lovely grand piano there and on a number of occasions, Lady Bannister would sit and sketch the performers.

In 1990, the Chapel Choir, joined by some extra singers, sang Evensong at Salisbury Cathedral for four days, staying in Sarum

College. In the same year, the choir sang a charity concert in the lecture theatre at the John Radcliffe Hospital – it was quite hard work, as the acoustics were clearly not designed for choral singing!



The College Choir, Trinity 1989

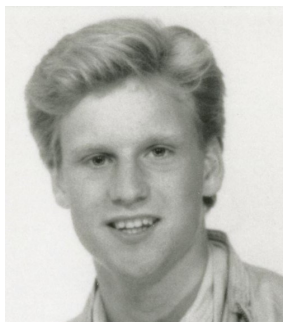
In 1991, the decision was taken to disband the boy trebles section of the choir. It was becoming more difficult to recruit but there were also a large number of student sopranos eager to sing, so it felt right to make this transition to an all-student choir. Exeter College made a similar decision a few years later, leaving four college choirs where boys sang. In 2015, Merton College established the first choir which girls from the city of Oxford could join. Cambridge University was rather ahead of Oxford in giving these opportunities for girls to sing at several colleges at an earlier stage.

There has been an impressive list of Organ Scholars over the years, who have all continued their musical careers after graduation— some to cathedral music: Harry Bramma (Southwark); Marcus Huxley (Birmingham); Edmund Aldhouse (Ely); Laurence Lyndon-Jones (Chelmsford); as well as the Greater Churches: Andrew Kirk (St Mary Redcliffe).

David Titterington, as Head of Organ Studies at the Royal Academy of Music, and Crispin Woodhead, as Chief Executive of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, rank amongst those who have also gone onto distinguished musical careers.

David was one of the chief advisers for the installation of the Letourneau organ from Canada in the Damon Wells Chapel in 1995. This instrument, with its 22 ranks, is regarded as one of the finest in Oxford. The College was extremely fortunate that a substantial sum of money was promised in the early 1990s to enable this project to come to fruition. Amongst the celebrities who played opening concerts were Dame Gillian Weir, Lionel Rogg, Barrie Cabena and David Titterington himself, who recorded a delightful CD.

The organ scholarship provided a wonderful opportunity to learn new musical skills, as well as developing the necessary people skills to keep music thriving in college. The support of the Chaplain, the Master and Fellows as well as the students made it a very worthwhile experience, providing a solid foundation for a future musical career.



Iain King - (m.1989) PPE

Coming from a comprehensive school, where only two former students had gone to Oxbridge in the past decade, I came to interview with something of a chip on my shoulder. The public/private school divide turned out not to be nearly as bad as I feared, but I do remember thinking that several of my peers had already done most of the first year course (for PPE) at school; there was lots to catch up on.

The college bar was closed during the first term I was there - something to do with not paying VAT - so we had to go to pubs and bars. Lots of people joined the Union, but we hardly ever went after the first term. When the bar did open, it quickly became the focus of social activity again, and we barely left Pembroke again.

In January 1990, the college decided that many more of the first years would have to live out during their second year than had been expected. The only fair solution was a ballot, with names and numbers drawn from a hat; roughly the top quarter of names drawn would get a room in college for their second year. As NUS rep, I had to organise the room ballot, and then drew number one. Everyone thought I'd fixed it (I hadn't - honest!), but it meant was able to choose the best room in all of Pembroke - Staircase 2:5, a semi-palatial suite with a balcony, directly above the JCR Common Room and the JCR snack shop (which sold crisps, sweets, and instant coffee for, I think, 10p a cup), and with a view overlooking Mr McCoy's kebab van every evening.

Ken Mayhew, our Economics tutor, was superb. He would spend hours telling us the gossip about so many aspects of college life, including all the politics of the Master's inner circle. It was the perfect preparation for working life as a professional bureaucrat.

I remember once, probably in Spring 1991, we heard that someone was using a 'portable computer' in the library. This seemed at once remarkable and silly - why would someone want to carry around electronics to type their notes when they could just use a pen and paper? Giggling, and a little drunk from the bar, a few of us ventured to the library's upper floor to confirm that someone really did have what we would now call a laptop. We tried to spy on them secretly, but I fear we giggled too loudly to remain unseen.



Ken Mayhew

I loved the bops! Every fortnight, there'd be dry ice, disco hits and alcohol, and it would all end with 'Come on, Eileen!' - although the sweaty bodies were a bit off-putting at times...

JCR elections, every November, were fun, intense and occasionally bitter. Hustings were held for all posts: all the candidates would present a short speech in the JCR common room, then field questions - usually the serious interrogation first ("What will you do to help people living out?") then the silly ones ("Sing us a song!", "Tell us a joke!", "What's the most newsworthy thing you've ever done with an animal?"). Most candidates issued paper manifestos, hand delivered around college. There was an archaic voting system, where students could give any and all candidates one, a half or zero points. And, of course, a big 'results night', held in the bar, on Friday of seventh week, with songs, and sketches, as well as celebration and commiseration. The jobs people were vying for were nowhere near as interesting as the elections to them.

I remember being in a tutorial with Zbigniew Pelczyński in Autumn 1989, when he had a call from Lech Walesa of Poland. All through that Autumn, as the Communist bloc disintegrated, he told us what the events meant, and where they might lead. Viktor Orban of Hungary was there at that time, as well as a Czech dissident who appeared late to a speaker meeting because the government in Prague had collapsed earlier in the afternoon. Later, Zbigniew told us what he remembered of his former pupil, Bill Clinton. It felt that we were close to history, and that the future - the adult lives which lay ahead of us - would be so much better than the past.

Pigeon post was wonderful: it seemed almost magical that a postman would hand-deliver any paperwork to any other person in a different Oxford college - all within 24 hours, and all free. I'm sure it's all done by email now.

In the first years after leaving Pembroke, it seemed that everyone who had studied PPE was working in the field they hadn't studied - the politics and philosophy types were working in economics, the economics and philosophy people were working in politics, and there was even one person who'd studied politics and economics doing philosophy!



Zbigniew Pelczynski with Bill Clinton at the White House, 1993

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Front cover clockwise from top left:

The MCR Revue; PCA (PMB/N/22/36)

The Dining Hall Tower after restoration; PCA (PMB/N/5/9); Savile Bradbury

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2 Inspector Morse at the Porters' Lodge;

<https://morseandlewisandendeavour.com/2014/08/18/deceived-by-flight/>

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36 Men's First Torpid on the river; PCA (PMB/N/21/1/165)

40 Apple Macintosh SE; Image taken from Ebay

42 The College Choir; personal photo of Andrew Kirk

- 43 Ken Mayhew; Fellow in Economics, 1976-2014; PCA (PMB/N/14/78)
- 44 Zbigniew Pelczynski & Bill Clinton; PCA (PMB/N/14/49); Official White House Photograph, 1993;

