NEW COLLEGE NEWS | NOVEMBER 2011

Welcome...

The Warden’s Report

I am pleased to say that New College remains in good heart during these turbulent times for British higher education.

Come to think of it, there has been nothing but turbulence since 1988, when the Higher Education Act recklessly expanded the number of universities, making all of us more and more accountable for less and less of taxpayers' money. Through all this, New College has enjoyed a golden age of high academic achievement, reasonably stable finances, and overwhelmingly happy and productive students and fellows. But it does seem we are entering a spell of truly foul weather.

There is little I can write in this report that many Old Members will not already know from our redesigned website: www.new.ox.ac.uk. The number of on-line visitors has much increased since its launch, from prospective students at home and abroad, Old Members, extensive internal use by students, staff and teachers, to those listening to the choral Evensong webcasts, and many more. Comprehensive, inter-active, constantly updated and handsomely designed, our new website is so admired by the Bodleian Library that it has been selected as a model for archiving. The other innovation which will complement if not eventually supplant this printed newsletter is New College E-News. If you did not receive the first October issue, please contact develop@new.ox.ac.uk

The 2011 graduating class and their tutors are to be congratulated on our rise from fifth to third place in the Norrington Table (out of 30 colleges). Despite misgivings about measuring one college against another within the greater university and the table’s notorious volatility (Oriel, for instance, was 11th last year and 29th this), New College should be justly proud to have ranked consistently high for several years, and this year we missed second place by 0.02 percent. There is a danger that in valuing degree results above everything else, a college might become very unhappy and unhealthy. It is therefore reassuring that our 2011 finalists have amply demonstrated that it is possible to get a first and get a life. The range of extra-curricular activities - clubs, societies, volunteer organisations, music and drama events - grows ever wider and was supported and encouraged by an outstanding JCR team. The spectacular blossoming of sport at New College reported on the website over the past year is a bit more difficult to explain, since we do not admit students on the basis of athletic ability. However, one cannot deny that our prowess and skill on the field, court and river and the resultant series of famous Cuppers victories have greatly lifted spirits.

To return to that foul weather, there is much concern in Oxford about the effects - intended and otherwise - of the government’s new higher education funding regime. This radical trebling of tuition fees to be repaid through a career-long graduate tax (pace Vince Cable: let’s call a spade a spade), increased emphasis on access and widening participation, and the creation of a cut-throat internal market which favours the ancient universities will paradoxically leave Oxford only slightly better off in financial terms. Stewart Millman (1967) explains all this wittily but rigorously in his recent booklet New College Finances Revisited. He points out that there will still be a substantial gap between our fee income and what it actually costs to educate an undergraduate: ‘however careful New College continues to be with its money, its very high standards for physical fabric, teaching, research and other cultural activities cannot be sustained without financial damage, unless endowment return and donations together continue to cover at least the same proportion as now of expenditure.’

As readers will know from my report in last year’s News, we have made people, and tutorial fellowships in particular, a priority of the capital campaign, New College 2019. Providing external funding of academic posts is the most effective way to relieve the budget. I am pleased to report that we have reached our target to endow Music, are very close with Ancient History, and are making good progress with Modern Languages and Law. We also have our sights on Chemistry and Biology. Our other main priority is to continue to increase the Old Member participation rate for annual giving, now just above 17 percent.

We welcome the arrival earlier this year of a new Director of Development, Mark Curtis. An Oxford graduate with many years’ experience in university fundraising, Mark has already galvanized his team and indeed impressed upon the whole Fellowship the importance of strengthening relations with Old Members and coordinating our development effort. A back-of-envelope calculation shows that if we were to endow four tutorial fellowships and increase annual giving by just 10 percent, New College would then be one of the richest in Oxford.

Whilst firmly believing that we must put people - that is, teaching and research - at the forefront of development, the longer I live in New College the more I appreciate its physical beauty and my responsibility to help preserve it for future generations. Old, exquisitely decorated stone buildings are hugely expensive to maintain and repair, as are the less beautiful but no less charming houses in Longwall Street. This wonderful fabric, the celebrated gardens, dining in Hall, the whole quirky establishment are integral to the New College experience and do, I think, inspire the finest teaching and research. Whence would North American universities have spent billions imperfectly imitating our quads and spires? However, it is all too necessary to defer maintenance in order to meet nationally agreed pay awards and sky-rocketing utilities charges, so the Chapel roof still leaks, the medieval kitchens cry out for modernisation, and the potholes on the slype are increasingly hazardous to navigation.

Our development effort must be holistic: teaching, research, social and cultural activities, the built environment are of a piece; an endowed post releases funds which can then be spent on the Chapel roof; increased annual giving will help assure that qualified students from families with minimal residual household incomes can afford to come here. What is about to be removed from this virtuous circle is government funding - completely in the case of the humanities and much reduced for science and medicine. The new student voucher and graduate tax system mean that Oxford and Cambridge, and particularly their larger and better endowed colleges, can no longer be described as ‘state supported’ but must become private almost overnight, like Harvard or Yale, but without multi-billion dollar endowments and with their tuition fees and student numbers still under tight government control, as incredible as that may seem.

This transition will not be easy for New College, but we have already made much progress in the right direction. It is my fervent hope that ten percent of you Old Members who read this report but who have never made a donation will now see the wisdom in doing so. And to those who have been repeatedly generous to the College, may I offer my sincere thanks and the hope that you will continue to support us.

Curtis Price
Securing the College’s Future

Mark Curtis, Director of Development

My first six months at New College have been as varied and exciting as I could have wished for.

Having spent the previous six years at Oriel (the House of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Oxford), it really has been a question of moving from the old to the new, but perhaps one of the greatest pleasures has been in seeing how a much larger college, in student numbers, size of the Senior Common Room and physical space, manages to retain a feeling of great friendliness and intimacy.

I am most appreciative of the warm welcome that I have received and for the support I have had, in particular from Sue Ashcroft-Jones and Jonathan Rubery in the Development Office team. I have also greatly enjoyed meeting many Old Members over the past months, whether at events, in meetings, or as they visit the College, and I hope to meet many more of you over the coming year.

As the Warden explains in this issue of New College News, the support of Old Members and other friends has never been more critical to the future of the College. Last year some 17% of Old Members donated to the College and we are most grateful for their generosity. However, some Colleges are now enjoying the support of over 30% of their Old Members and so we hope that many more will now be prepared to do likewise, bearing in mind that all contributions are welcomed and add up to make a real difference.

As many of you will know, the Collegete University is now nearing completion of the first phase of its ambitious fundraising campaign, Oxford Thinking, with £1.15 billion already received towards its £1.25 billion target. All contributions to New College count towards this, the first ever Oxford-wide campaign involving Colleges, departments, libraries and research centres. The priorities of Oxford Thinking match precisely those of New College: attracting the most able students irrespective of their financial means; securing the future of the exceptional tutorial system; developing young academics and investing in the cutting-edge research of tomorrow; maintaining and developing our historic fabric to enhance the academic and cultural experience of Oxford life.

One example of how the College and University are working together to meet these aims is the recently established Teaching Fund, funded by a commitment of £60 million from Oxford University Press to match philanthropic gifts and ensure the endowment of seventy five key teaching posts. This response to extensive cuts in government education funding will ensure that the University and College are in a position to support the future of the tutorial system. It is now the case that many posts cannot be refilled on retirement, creating a critical situation which jeopardises the future of teaching and research. New College has been successful in “bidding” for three such posts and has made considerable progress in securing the £1.2 million required to trigger the £800,000 of matched funding from the Teaching Fund to endow each Fellowship in perpetuity. In Music, a grant of £1.2 million has been pledged by a Foundation, in Ancient History some £850,000 has been committed by over forty Old Members and in French a grant of £250,000 from the American Friends of New College has started the ball rolling. And outside of this scheme, the College is also working to secure posts in Law, Chemistry, History and Biological Sciences.

But, whilst underpinning the tutorial system must be a priority, much more is also to be achieved. To ensure that no students are deterred from coming to Oxford under the new fees regime, we will need help in delivering what will be one of the country’s most generous packages of bursaries and fee waivers for those from the lowest income families; we must become more competitive in our financial incentives to retain and recruit the very best graduate students; and we must not ignore our duty to preserve and enhance the extraordinary buildings in which we work, live and learn.

I am under no illusions as to the work ahead in ensuring the continuing success of New College, but am confident that with your support we can secure the future of the College.

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News from the New College Fellowship

Robotic car developed by Oxford University

Professor Paul Newman, Fellow and Tutor in Engineering at New College, is leading the Oxford project to develop a new car that can ‘see’ the world around it. The modified Wildcat can interpret data from technology such as cameras, radar and lasers to drive itself. The hope is that the technology will eventually improve traffic safety and cut congestion. The car drives without human intervention by being aware of its surroundings. In the future Professor Newman is convinced that on-board computer capacity will have an enormous impact on motoring. He envisages car companies in an ‘arms race’ working to achieve the greatest number of minutes of autonomous driving per vehicle. Paul says, “Think of the impact that computers have had on offices - they have totally transformed them, and the same thing is going to happen on the roads. In the future autonomous robotic vehicles will get us safely and efficiently from A to B whilst taking the load off their human drivers. Our long-term aim is to enable a new generation of robotic vehicles that can make the roads safer, less congested, cleaner, and personal transport more accessible. We do this by making smarter cars”.

Two New College Fellows among seven Oxford academics to be elected a Fellow of the British Academy for 2011

Sir Adam Roberts, president of the British Academy, said: ‘I congratulate all the distinguished Fellows who have been elected to the Academy this year, on achieving this peer group recognition of the outstanding contribution they’ve made to scholarship and research in the humanities or social sciences. Election is not only an honour, but also a beginning. I look forward to their active participation in the life and work of the Academy.’

Professor Ruth Harris lectures in European history and has been a Fellow at New College since 1990. Professor Harris won the 2010 Wolfson Prize for her book, The Man on Devil’s Island: Alfred Dreyfus and the Affair that Divided France.

Professor Laura Marcus has been a Fellow at New College since 2009, and Goldsmith’s Professor of English Literature since January 2010. Professor Marcus’ research and teaching interests are predominantly in nineteenth and twentieth century literature and culture, including life-writing, modernism, Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury culture, contemporary fiction, and literature and film.

Astronomer wins 2011 Balzan Prize

An Oxford University scientist has won a prestigious Balzan Prize for his work in astronomy. Professor Joseph Silk, Savilian Professor of Astronomy and director of the Beecroft Institute for Particle Astrophysics and Cosmology at the Department of Physics since 1999, is a newly-elected Emeritus Fellow of New College, and a Fellow of the Royal Society. He is one of four winners of the 2011 Balzan Prize, which entitles him to £585,000 – half of which is devoted to projects involving young researchers. The Balzan Prize focuses on fields often overlooked by other foundations. Professor Silk was recognised for his project, The Early Universe (From the Planck Time to the First Galaxies).

Bengt Gustafsson, a professor of theoretical astrophysics at the University of Uppsala in Sweden, read the citation for the assignment of Professor Silk’s prize at a ceremony in Milan, saying the prize was ‘for his pioneering work on the early evolution of the Universe, by studying the effects of various physical processes and phenomena such as dark matter and space curvature on the fluctuations of the Cosmic Microwave Background and the formation of galaxies of different types.’
The **2010 Wykeham Society Lunch** and **Warden’s Club Concert** was held on 30 October. Invitations for the 2011 lunch and concert have been sent to all those eligible and we are set for another marvellous celebration for those who have remembered the College in their Wills and those who have donated £500 or more during the fiscal year. We have decided this year to extend the lunch invitation to members of the 1379 Society, all donors who have given £1,379 or more during the year. **Above:** L to R Russell Julius (1978) travelled from Hong Kong; Bill Kerr (1963) came from New York to join the Warden at tea after the concert.

21 May 2011 was the **Open Day for the Parents**, family and friends of Freshers, a chance to spend a relaxed day at the College when parking restrictions are not pressing and the students find time to show their visitors where they eat, sleep, study and play. **In the foreground:** Tom Pearson-Jones on the left and Arjun Pillai lead the gathering from a drinks reception in Cloisters to Hall for lunch.

**Events**

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**8 July Gaude**

for those who matriculated 1984-1989. This was a bumper occasion which needed Hall and Founder’s Library to seat all the guests. The Catering team headed by Brian Cole and Chef Jak Knighton worked tirelessly to make it a huge success.


Far Right: Robin Stinchcombe, Emeritus Fellow, catching up with his former student, Mark Chadwick (1983) and his wife Frances (née Blackmore, 1987) before dinner. Mark and Frances met whilst up and travelled from their home in New Mexico for the occasion.


**New Chamber Opera**

under the direction of Michael Burden and conductor Steven Devine, again gave marvellous performances of Antonio Salieri’s Falstaff.

As we have come to expect, the weather was variable but whether in the Warden’s Garden or sheltered in the Ante-Chapel, the effect was the same, long and appreciative applause at the end of the performances.

Left: Giles Underwood as Sir Giles Falstaff and Rachel Shannon as Mistress Ford.
A high point in the Lord Mayor’s year of office

Oxford’s Lord Mayor, Elise Benjamin, accompanied by the Warden and entourage of members inspected the old city walls in a historic practice dating back to the College’s foundation in 1379. King Richard II ruled the inspection should take place every three years as New College was built within the city walls.

Up to about the 12th century, the City Walls were the responsibility of the Mayor and Citizens of Oxford and, on the King’s demand, had to be put in a state of good repair, such demands being made at varying intervals according to what was deemed to be necessary in the interests of national security. The money to repair the walls was raised by a tax on most of the goods coming into Oxford for sale.

On 30 June 1379, King Richard II gave leave to William of Wykeham, the Founder of New College, to acquire certain plots of land on the north-east of the City which were uninhabited - a place of gravel and sand pits where robbers lurked. William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, built New College in such a position that the City Walls could not be inspected from inside without going on to New College ground. A condition of the Royal Grant, therefore, was that the College should keep the City Walls in repair and make two posterns, one at each end of the property, that the Mayor might pass through every three years to view the Walls. For this purpose, the Founder made a gate which opened into Queen’s Lane, called the ‘Non licet Gate’.

There is every reason to suppose that the triennial inspection of the City Walls was carried out right up to the 20th century. The custom appears to have lapsed during the 1914-18 war, but was revived in 1957, inspired by the then Warden of New College, Mr A H Smith, who expressed a wish that the inspection should be resumed before he retired.

Launch of Novum Label

6 October 2010 saw the launch of the Choir’s own label ‘Novum’ at a Gala Concert at St John’s, Smith Square which also celebrated the 100th term that Edward Higginbottom has spent in charge of the Choir since joining the College in 1976 as Organist and Tutor in Music.

New College Choir CD

The latest Choir release (on the Novum label) is a CD of motets by François Couperin (1668-1733), the greatest figure in the French musical scene of the early 18th century. Everybody knows his fabulous harpsichord pieces, few his equally fabulous motets. Many of them were effectively lost for over 200 years, and some have survived only in incomplete form. As a result, the motets are a sorely neglected part of his output. This New College release puts that right. Something like half the CD is of music never before recorded. The incomplete sources – violin parts lost soon after composition – have been reconstructed here by Edward Higginbottom. The CD features solo voices from the Choir, including two exceptional trebles and a real haute-contre, together with an instrumental ensemble of distinguished baroque players.

For online purchase, visit the Choir’s website: www.newcollegechoir.com.

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Boat Club

James Kennedy (Boat Club Alumni Officer) writes: it was our great pleasure to welcome back the 1986 Men’s 1st VIII at Eights Dinner 2011 to commemorate twenty-five years since their heroic efforts in gaining Headship in Summer Eights. The reunion was quite an achievement on behalf of Tim Gokey (1983), Captain of Boats 1985-6, who brought together the crew from, quite literally, all over the world, back to the College for one night only. For some, it was their first time back since they graduated. It was an even greater honour to accept their generous collective donation to the club of a new men’s coxed four, which has been aptly named Spirit of ’86. She was officially named on 2 October in the presence of Pete Sudbury (1983), 7-man in the Headship Crew, and given her inaugural race at the ‘Autumn IVs’ regatta on Sunday of 3rd week, where she contended with high winds and resultant Atlantic wash to reach the semi-final of the plate competition. The new boat will be invaluable to the club for training and racing, and will hopefully see NCBC that bit closer to eventual Headship over the next few years.

Distinguished Friend of Oxford 2011

Derek Benham (1972) was nominated by the College to receive this prestigious University award. Derek has been a constant support and advisor, giving willingly of his time, over many years. Here he is receiving his award in October from the Vice-Chancellor Professor Andrew Hamilton.

Maths Star’s Eight Top Marks

Eleanor Davidson is one of the country’s highest A-level achievers having earned eight A* grades. Her eight top grades earned her a place at New College, to study Maths. Eleanor, who attended King Edward VI High School for Girls in Birmingham, earned A*s in Greek, Latin, Maths, Further Maths, Additional Further Maths, Religious Studies, General Studies and the extended project.
**Forthcoming Events for 2011**

**Old Members’ Carol Service**
**Saturday, 10 December 2011**
Old Members matriculating up to and including 1969 are invited to apply for up to four tickets.
[develop@new.ox.ac.uk](mailto:develop@new.ox.ac.uk)
See below for telephone numbers

**New College Law Society Dinner**
**Thursday, 9 February 2012**
For more details about this event, please contact Matthew Mills, President of the New College Law Society.
[matthew.mills@new.ox.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.mills@new.ox.ac.uk)

**New College Society British Museum Visit**
**Saturday, 28 February 2012**
A private view of the *Hajj Exhibition* kindly arranged by Neil MacGregor (1964), Director of the British Museum.

**Annual Inter-College Golf Tournament**
**Friday, 23 March 2012**
Captain Mark Steers (1978), will contact you nearer the time.

**Open Day for the Parents, Family and Friends of First-Year Students**
**Saturday, 5 May 2012**
Invitations will be posted to you nearer the time.

**Gaude**
In 2012 there will be two Gaudes. Watch the website for an announcement of the matriculation years to receive invitations.
- **Saturday, 17 March 2012**
  - invitations to be posted before Christmas.
- **Friday, 29 June 2012**
  - invitations to be posted in March 2012.

**New College Society Cloisters Party**
**Tuesday, 26 June 2012**
Please keep this date free and ask your friends and family to join you for supper in the Cloisters. We particularly hope that those who matriculated in 2002 and 1992 will come back to College to celebrate the passing of 10 and 20 years respectively since matriculating.

**Opera in the Warden’s Garden**
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s
**II Re Pastore (The Shepherd King)**
**Saturday, 7 July 2012**
**Friday, 13 July 2012**
A booking form is enclosed.

To visit the Alumni area of the College website for more information on events, to Update Your Details and to log on to the Old Members’ On-Line Database:
[http://www.new.ox.ac.uk](http://www.new.ox.ac.uk)

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**Launch of Social Media**

We are pleased to announce that we now have a presence on the following social media sites:

- To ‘Like’ us on Facebook, search for: ‘New College Old Members’.
- To follow us on Twitter, search for: ‘NewCollegeOMs’
- To connect to New College LinkedIn, search for: ‘New College, Oxford – Alumni and Old Members’
- To watch the New College Channel visit:
  [http://www.youtube.com/user/NewCollegeOxford](http://www.youtube.com/user/NewCollegeOxford)


We encourage you to visit these sites to keep up to date with news from the College.