Warden’s message

October belongs to the Freshers. There is a whirl of activity that signals the beginning of a new academic year; and at its centre is the cohort of students entering the College for the first time.

There is the induction programme for new students organised by the MCR. This is part welcome, part information, part entertainment – and part stamina test… There are the Freshers’ meetings and Freshers’ dinners organised by the college; the matriculation ceremony and the freshers’ photograph. (It is always impressive to see so many students, dressed so smartly, up so early on the morning of matriculation: a triumph of mind over mattress?)

But the significance to the college of its newly admitted students is more fundamental than their visibility during the first hectic weeks of term. Each year’s intake of students is like the annual growth ring of a tree: a measure of continuity and renewal. Each year’s intake is conscious that others were here before them, and that others will follow them. That is the continuity that is such a powerful element of a college’s existence. But each year’s intake is also distinctive, different from any other, with its own character (and characters!) and it is this that constantly refreshes and renews a college’s identity.

The arrival each year of graduate students is the raison d’être of Green College. It is why the college is here. And so I thought it worthwhile in this term’s message to say something about the student community of the college in 2007, its size, its academic profile and its international range.

Firstly, who are the incoming students? Well, they comprise 160 new members of the college. The largest single group is made up of 32 clinical medicine students (28 commencing their second BM and four admitted on the ‘fast track’). Then there are clusters of students in particular disciplines. There are 21 entrants to the MSc degrees in Social Policy and in Evidence-based Social Intervention, plus two D Phil students in Social Policy. The College’s links with the Department of Social Policy, already strong, are further buttressed. Educational Studies is another department with whom the college enjoys extensive links. This year sees 15 students embarking on the PGCE, six MSc students and two D Phil candidates with their headquarters at 15 Norham Gardens.

Other disciplines with double digit numbers in this year’s intake include Environmental Science and Anthropology (Medical and Social). In addition, and very much in line with the college’s commitment to diversifying its student base, there are students in a whole range of other disciplines, including Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Criminology, Forced Migration, Global Health, Ophthalmology and Pharmacology.

These 160 new students join 212 already here, continuing their postgraduate degrees, and this makes a total of 372 students at Green College. These numbers actually tell a remarkable success story. It is difficult to imagine it now, but when the College opened its doors in Michaelmas 1979 there were only 27 students. The annual intake then grew quite quickly and in 1983 (when John Walton became Warden) the college had 106 students. When Crispin Tickell became Warden in 1990, there were 181 students in the college, and when John Hanson succeeded him during academic year 1997/98 there were 214. Numbers grew steadily during his Wardenship and when I took office last year there were just over 350 students in the college.

Of the 372 students who make up this year’s total, they may be divided by type of degree to reveal the following pattern:

- Research degrees: 165
- Clinical Medicine (incl. fast track): 105
- Taught MScs: 66
- All other (incl. MBA, MPhil, PGCE): 36

But beyond these details of fields and levels of study, the most striking feature of the student community at Green is surely its internationalism. The range of different backgrounds and cultures, encountering one another on a daily basis, is a distinctive feature of the college.

I believe that this year the cosmopolitan nature of the college is more pronounced than ever before. There are students from no fewer than 53 nationalities at the college: from Armenia and Australia to Zambia and Zimbabwe, with every continent represented. And in a pleasing statistical quirk, it appears that our numbers of British students are precisely matched by those from elsewhere: 187 in either category! Many of my guests to the college comment on how diverse and distinctive the college is because of the make-up of the student body.

Let me end on an entirely different topic. It was a pretty soggy British summer this year, with May, June and July all drenched in rain. But there has been a positive result of this weather pattern, in the quite startling richness of the autumn colours. I have never seen Oxford quite as resplendent in yellow, orange and red as this year – and Green College has been quite outstanding in this respect. Michael Pirie’s planning and planting deserves much of the credit; but Nature has played its part too. As I write this message, the autumn flowering cherry in the McAlpine quad has shed half its leaves, and is surrounded by a dense, tawny carpet.

October belongs to the Freshers, yes; but these autumn colours belong to all of us.
Welcome dinners, first classes, and busy social events - Michaelmas Term began with a bang and is now in full swing at Green College. September saw the arrival of a new group of medics and PGCEs, followed shortly after by the bulk of the college’s new students - both masters and DPhil - at the end of the month. Freshers and returning students alike were welcomed to a new academic year with two weeks of well-attended events, all organized by a busy MCR Committee. An elegant wine and cheese welfare party at the top of the Observatory, a three-legged pub crawl, brimming welfare brunches, a matriculation day bus tour (in sub-fusc), and an A-Z costume bop represent only a significant amount of behind-the-scenes work by committee members, all Green students are now able to use their Bod cards as swipe passes at the Iffley Road Sport Centre Gym and Swimming Pool, representing a savings of over £100 per student. Some of this extra gym access may have given Green College an advantage in Cuppers Touch Rugby: the women’s team ended up taking the University trophy, undefeated in all of its games! The MCR Committee was also successful in its bid to increase travel grants to each student; the amount available each year has now doubled from £100 to £200. Similarly, the bar’s entertainment capabilities virtually doubled as well, with the addition of a much-heralded widescreen plasma TV, which recently played the world championship rugby match to a standing-room-only crowd. Not to suggest that the bar is only used for (rugby) balls and bops – in Third Week it was the venue for the MCR’s autumn hustings, which saw a number of students running for vacant positions on the MCR Committee. It was encouraging to see that a high percentage of the applicants for these positions were Freshers, eager to contribute their talents to a college community that they had so quickly made their home.

This beginning of term was also significant as it represented the final year in which students would matriculate as students of Green College. Much work is currently underway at the MCR level in preparation for the merger with Templeton. During the upcoming year both colleges’ student committees will continue to put on combined social and planning events to bring the student bodies closer together. As such, we have no doubt that at this time next year there will be as much - if not more - energy and enthusiasm in and around the Radcliffe Observatory, as two colleges become one and an enlarged and diversified student community begins anew.

Rich McKay
MCR President

The MCR Committee was very happy to welcome all Green students to another academic year with two novel benefits: College-sponsored gym/swim passes and an increased travel grant. As a result of a significant amount of behind-the-scenes work by committee members, all Green students are now able to use their Bod cards as swipe passes at the Iffley Road Sport Centre Gym and Swimming Pool, representing a savings of over £100 per student. Some of this extra gym access may have given Green College an advantage in Cuppers Touch Rugby: the women’s team ended up taking the University trophy, undefeated in all of its games! The MCR Committee was also successful in its bid to increase travel grants to each student; the amount available each year has now doubled from £100 to £200. Similarly, the bar’s entertainment capabilities virtually doubled as well, with the addition of a much-heralded widescreen plasma TV, which recently played the world championship rugby match to a standing-room-only crowd. Not to suggest that the bar is only used for (rugby) balls and bops – in Third Week it was the venue for the MCR’s autumn hustings, which saw a number of students running for vacant positions on the MCR Committee. It was encouraging to see that a high percentage of the applicants for these positions were Freshers, eager to contribute their talents to a college community that they had so quickly made their home.

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Rich McKay
MCR President
Green Templeton update

At their meetings on June 14th this year, the Governing Bodies of Green and Templeton approved a Memorandum of Understanding between themselves and the University setting out the basic terms of a merger. The University Council approved the MOU at its meeting on June 18th and the MOU was duly signed by the three parties shortly after the end of Trinity Term.

Since then, a great detailed of detailed work has been carried out by the joint Steering Group and by several Working Groups that it has established. These include:

- **An Operations Working Group**: it is concerned to ensure that the merged college is “fit for purpose” at the point of merger. This involves some long-term provision but also shorter term steps prior to the availability of the new building. This Group oversees physical infrastructure and its upgrading; library and IT provision and services; dining arrangements; coordination of the student application process and accommodation.

- **A Statutes Working Group**: this group has worked, with lawyers, to produce a revised Charter and set of draft Statutes for consideration by both Governing Bodies. The intention is to submit the Charter and Statutes to Privy Council in January 2008 for approval by Order of Council and it is anticipated that this should be available by June or July 2008.

- **A Communications Working Group**: is concerned to support the merger process by ensuring that communications within the two colleges and with audiences beyond them are regular, clear and consistent; and to prepare all aspects of the visual identity of the merged college. This latter includes everything from a new coat of arms to the design of stationery, information for prospective students, and an interim website prior to merger and a full functioning new website at the point of merger.

I would like to use this update to thank those staff members and Governing Body Fellows who have given so freely of their time, thought and energies in progressing the merger.

Consultation with Green College staff continues; a Q&A session on the merger, jointly with the MRC, is planned; and there will be regular future updates. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, concerns or good ideas about the merger!

The Warden

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Alumni update - Johnathan Demenge

I have just come back from Bihar, last week, where my wife runs a nutrition programme. We visited a hospital there, and the sisters who run the hospital told me they lack qualified medical doctors (particularly surgeons and orthopaedics).

The Nazareth hospital, situated in Mokama (2 hours from Patna, Bihar), was the first hospital to open in the region in 1948. It is situated in lush and quiet surroundings less than 10 km away from the Ganga River. It is run by extremely friendly and qualified staff, is one of the few hospitals to work with HIV/AIDS patients, and offers the best medical services in the area. They would be interested in having trained medical doctors – either newly qualified or retired – working there as volunteers for periods of six months to one year (or more). It is a wonderful opportunity for somebody who is looking for a different experience, and for giving some of his/her valued time and expertise to those who crucially need it. Although they are not in a position to remunerate the volunteer, they are more than happy to provide accommodation and meals, in addition to good facilities and a friendly atmosphere.

If you are interested, please contact: Sr Nirmala Mulackal at Nazareth h@satyam.net.in, or nmulackal@yahoo.com

Phone number: + 91 6132 232367, or + 91 6132 233014

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Opportunities for medical electives or research projects

‘*A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds*.  
Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626)’

One of the benefits of being a student at Green is the sheer number of senior members who share students’ academic interests and who have contacts able to provide amazing opportunities. However individual students do not always know about such opportunities in time to take advantage of them.

We would like to make it easier for students to approach senior members or old members to discuss potential opportunities for medical electives or research projects. Although students are generally aware of the academic interests of most Governing Body Fellows they may not be aware of the interests of other members. For example, if you have a close relationship with a centre of excellence (especially abroad) or a unit providing amazing experience, we would like to hear from you, especially if there is any additional support (e.g. accommodation or travel bursaries) for which a Green College student may be eligible.

Please contact me if you feel you could be helping more to direct students to such opportunities.

Laurence Leaver
Senior Joan & Richard Doll Clinical Tutorial Fellow
laurenceleaver@hotmail.com

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The Website working group is pleased to announce the launch of the Green Templeton gateway website. This is an interim website, providing links to both College websites, as well as information directly related to the progress of the merger. The design has been kept deliberately neutral, so does not reflect the design of the future joint College website, which is currently under development. Please visit www.gtc.ox.ac.uk
**Fellow receives awards**

Dermatologist Professor Terence Ryan, Emeritus Fellow of Green College has been awarded the Highest Award of the International League of Dermatological Societies in Argentina at the World Congress of Dermatology. The award is only given every five years for distinguished service.

Two weeks earlier he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the Medical Faculty of the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg. This was given for his achievements in Public Health Dermatology.

**OBITUARY - Professor Richard Ericson**

Professor Richard V Ericson died on 2 October 2007 in his 59th year after a long, difficult struggle with multiple health problems. Richard was an Honorary Visiting Fellow of Green College whilst he was Principal of Green College, University of British Columbia, between 1993 and 2003. In 2001 he delivered the Green College Society Inaugural Lecture on 'Why the police do not simply follow rules', and he and his wife, Diana, joined fellows afterwards at the garden party and dinner.

When he left Green College, UBC, in 2003 he returned to Oxford to take up the post of Professor of Criminology (and Fellow of All Souls College) and Director of the Centre for Criminology, before returning to Canada to the Center for Criminology at the University of Toronto where he was Professor of Criminology and, from 2005, the Director of the Center.

Richard’s research interests encompassed areas as diverse as young offenders, police work, crime reporting in the media, risk and regulation, insurance and governance, the regulation of financial institutions, and the role of coroners in death investigation and public safety. He was admired by criminologists and sociologists across the world, and a friend to many in Oxford, but his proudest achievement was Green College, UBC. Like Green College Oxford, Green UBC was a graduate-only college established with a generous donation from Cecil and Ida Green. As its first principal, he developed a positive, nurturing and creative environment where young scholars and university faculty came together to share ideas and enjoy friendship. He cherished the role of enabler and derived great pleasure from watching young scholars grow in intellect and confidence. Richard’s integrity, dedication and intellectual leadership will be sorely missed. In his memory, the Richard V Ericson Scholarship Fund has been established to support graduate students in his field; see www.criminology.utoronto.ca/ericsonfund.doc

**OBITUARY - Sir John Burnett 1922 - 2007**

When considering the origin of a college, one normally identifies the Founder Warden and Founder Benefactor. In the case of Green College Sir Richard Doll and Dr Cecil Green are well established in the corporate memory as the founders. However, we must also remember others whose support and encouragement were instrumental and essential to the creation of the institution. Among these one of the outstanding contributors in time and effort was Sir John Burnett who died on 22 July. For me it is a great privilege to write this short obituary as I used to share teaching a genetics course with him and learned much of the ways and wiles of the University and Government from him.

John Burnett was a renowned mycologist who wrote the standard text on mycology. He was Sibthorpean Professor of Rural Economy at Oxford and Fellow of St John’s College from 1970 to 1979 when he headed the Department of Agriculture, taught undergraduate courses and continued to conduct his own research. He fought hard for the continuation of the Departments of Agriculture and Forestry and eventually headed the merger of them and their undergraduate courses. Following the subsequent fusion of them with Botany he progressed to become Principal of Edinburgh University. During his earlier career he had also held lecturerships or professorships at Oxford (Magdalen), Liverpool, St Andrews, Newcastle and Glasgow. In the latter he held a Regius Chair from 1968 to 1970. He received several honorary doctorates from British and American universities and Honorary Fellowships from Green and Merton Colleges at Oxford. In 1987 he was knighted.

While at Oxford he was appointed Chairman of the General Board for two years and in that time he, along with Dr Jim Holt, Dr Trevor Hughes and others, exerted great influence on the University authorities to allow the creation of Green College and the occupancy of our current site based on the Radcliffe Observatory.

Outside his academic life, John Burnett was a visionary, staunch supporter and activist in establishing or managing organizations and programmes for the assessment, recording and conservation of biological diversity. He was at various times creator, chairman, secretary or member of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, the International Organization for Plant Information, the World Council for the Biosphere, the Coordinating Commission for Biological Recording and the National Biodiversity Network.

John had an outstanding intellect, good political sense, efficient managerial capacity and personal concern for the welfare of his colleagues and students. He foresaw the value of a multi-disciplinary college, perhaps broader in scope than the founder Warden and Benefactor had planned, and his vision has been proven by the success and eminent place of our College within Oxford and outside it.

*Professor Jeff Burley*  
Emeritus Fellow
Reducing risk of major stroke

Professor Peter Rothwell, Department of Clinical Neurology, Oxford University and Governing Body Fellow of Green College led the EXPRESS study into the treatment of TIA (transient ischaemic attack) or minor stroke by comparing urgent treatment of TIA and minor stroke using a combination of drugs (aspirin, clopidogrel, blood pressure lowering drugs and cholesterol lowering drugs) with standard (ie delayed) treatment.

Mini-strokes, or transient ischemic strokes, have the same symptoms as a big stroke, including facial numbness, slurred speech, paralysis on one side of the body, blurry vision or a sudden headache. But in TIs, the symptoms last less than a day and in “minor strokes” the symptoms are non-disabling. In the week after a TIA or minor stroke a person has a one in ten chance of a major stroke.

Two complementary papers by Oxford teams published at the same time in The Lancet and Lancet Neurology investigated both the effects of faster treatment, and what kind of treatment was best. Professor Rothwell’s research was drawn from a larger population of nearly 100,000 people being studied in his Oxford Vascular Study (OXVASC). All patients with TIA or stroke were ascertained and followed-up. Of 1,278 patients identified, about 600 had TIA or minor stroke and were managed in the EXPRESS Study clinic.

In the first 30 months of the study, patients were assessed and treated with standard care according to UK guidelines. They received standard treatments, including aspirin, blood pressure lowering drugs, and cholesterol lowering drugs, but these were initiated by their general practitioner, often after a delay of several weeks.

In the second 30 months of the study, patients were seen in a daily emergency TIA and minor stroke clinic and given all necessary medications immediately. The methods of ascertainment, assessment and follow-up of patients in the two phases of the study were otherwise identical.

However, the risk of major stroke during the 90-days after the TIA or minor stroke was reduced by 80 per cent in the second phase.

‘Eighty per cent reductions in risk are very rare in modern medicine,’ says Professor Rothwell. ‘We normally get excited about 10–15 per cent.’

Current lack of provision in the UK, with a 14-day average waiting list at TIA and minor stroke clinics, means that thousands of patients per year have major strokes before they are seen and treated. The Department of Health is committed to acting on the EXPRESS results, published in The Lancet http://www.thelancet.com/, and the findings are already being used to redesign stroke prevention services in the UK and elsewhere. ‘If the EXPRESS study was rolled out across the UK, the number of strokes would be reduced by about 10,000 per year, saving the NHS up to £200m in acute care costs alone,’ says Professor Rothwell. The Stroke Association has suggested that the results of the EXPRESS study should be a ‘clarion call’ to all local health providers to make the changes in organisation needed so that everyone who has a TIA gets the stroke prevention treatment that could save their life. Worldwide, nearly 15 million people have a stroke every year, and it is one of the leading killers in the industrialised world.

Summer ball

This year the annual Green College Summer Ball was held on Saturday 14 July and was medieval in theme. The grounds of Green College were transformed into a medieval wonderland and this was, in no small part, thanks to the help of college members who assisted with lighting and decoration. The lighting was spectacular with the observatory providing a stunning centrepiece.

Upon arrival our medieval patrons were treated to a champagne reception set to the sounds of the string quartet in the gardens. With champagne in hand the guests explored the magical gardens and enjoyed the Oxford Medical School String Quartet.

To see the night in a popular local DJ provided the perfect mix of cheesy classics and modern pop to get everyone dancing.

Overall the ball was a great success with all of the guests having a fantastic time. The Green College ball allowed students, old member and fellows to get together and celebrate the end of the academic year. The ball would not have been possible without the dedication of the ball committee, the continued support from Green College and the help of our sponsors.

Margaret Johnston
Green College Ball President 2007
Sports news - Green ladies lead the way

Green College women’s football team welcome all new female students to join our team. We have a friendly relaxed atmosphere and play to have fun. We train on Wednesday evenings and play matches in the University league and coppers competitions in weekend of term.

We play in the 1st division and we came 3rd in the University league and won the indoor University 5-a-side tournament in 2006. Everyone is welcome, so please get involved. Playing football is a great way to meet new people. Please email karen.jakobsen@green.ox.ac.uk

Robert Turner Visiting Scholar

The Robert Turner Visiting Scholarship is awarded to either a post-graduate physician or scientist working in the field of diabetes or related disciplines in Oxford. It is named after Professor Robert Turner, who was a founding Fellow of the College and the Director of Diabetes Research Laboratories, Nuffield Department of Medicine from 1976 until his death in 1999. His widow Dr Jennie Turner set up this Scholarship in 2000 in his memory.

Dr Gang Feng (above) has been awarded this years Scholarship. Having graduated in medicine and obtaining his MD degree from the Sichuan University of Southwest China, he came to Oxford in 2002 on a two-year postdoctoral training programme. In 2007 he completed a DPhil thesis “On ex vivo generation of regulatory T cells that prevent transplant rejection by modification of the cytokine environment”. Gang now works as a post-doc Scientist with Professor Kathryn Wood in the Transplant Research Immunology Group, Nuffield Department of Surgery at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

He was awarded a Young Investigator Award from the World Transplant Congress in 2006 and the prestigious Medawar Medal from the British Transplantation Society in 2007 for his research in transplant immunology.

Dr Sonia Antoranz Contera
RCUK Fellow in Condensed Matter Physics

Dr Sarah Darby
Environmental Change Institute

Dr Angela Coulter
Chief Executive, Picker Institute Europe

Mr James Kennedy
Clinical Lecturer in the Department of Surgery Department of Urology, Churchill Hospital

Dr Kyle Pattinson
Nuffield Department of Anaesthetics, John Radcliffe Hospital

Dr Sarah Rae
The Manor Hospital, Bedford

Dr Abdolvahab Vahabzadeh
Iran University of Medical Sciences, Institute of Neuroscience

Mr Trevor Mostyn
Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

Dr Robin Olds
New Zealand Health Research Council

Mr Ian Rees
Girdlers’ Company

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Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

Robert Turner Visiting Scholar

Women’s Touch Rugby Cuppers champions for 2007

Undefeated in all 5 pool games, this outstanding team beat Teddy Hall in the semis and went on to beat Univ in the Final with a sudden death try in the second half of extra time. A thrilling finish to a fantastic tournament!
In the historic year of the closure of the Radcliffe Infirmary I was delighted to receive from Gay Stuart Ogg one of her limited edition photographs for our archives. It is the most attractive depiction of a building that is often viewed in sombre colours.

Rosemary Fitzherbert Jones has finished her archiving of the files from historian, Alastair Robb-Smith. Her meticulous annotations are now available on our website and can be found at (http://www.green.ox.ac.uk/about-the-college/13-norham-gardens/sir-william-osler-archival-material-from-alastair-robb-smith.html). Rosemary will return after she has completed a history of medicine course. She has presented us with ‘An Innkeeper’s Diary’ by John Fothergill which includes the following anecdote of a visit of Lady Osler with Dr Harvey Cushing, Sir William Osler’s Biographer, to ‘The Spread Eagle’ in Thame.

“Lady Osler, widow of the late Regius Professor of Medicine, lunched, bringing her equally huge and generous sister. The second time they came, they often come now, Lady Osler asked me if I remembered her and I replied, ‘Not quite’. She then said, ‘Don’t you remember telling me you never saw three such big people getting into an old Ford car?’ This time she brought Dr Harvey Cushing, one of the world’s great surgeons, who cuts brains out, now lecturing in Oxford and Edinburgh.

“He was excited to meet me as a kinsman of Doctor J F in the eighteenth century, the Quaker friend of Philadelphia. He is a dear, keen, emotional little man and it’s good to be remembered by such a one. After lunch he said he’d never had ‘such a good dinner’ and shook hands for the third time (twice during lunch).”

William Gibson, Honorary Fellow, who by introducing Cecil Green, is part of our history, has just published another book Old Endeavour and has sent us a copy. With current changes in population dynamics people are living longer and more senior citizens are marking important contributions and achievements.

Old Endeavour presents 129 crisp and challenging biographical studies that show how retired physicians and scientists from all parts of the world, imbued with social and humanitarian concerns, have significantly enriched medical, scientific and social progress ‘after 65’. This inspiring book should be read by all who are fascinated by human endeavour, young and old alike.

Bill who worked with Oxford’s Nobel Prize winner Charles Sherrington before the 2nd World War is part of Oxford’s History of Medicine and has just celebrated his 94th birthday. He continues to combine his huge knowledge of the history of medicine with creative thoughts about the future.

We were distressed to hear of the death of Richard Ericson (FRS Canada) former head of our sister college in Canada and a frequent visitor. The following is the “Newcomer’s Card” of 13 Norham Gardens drawn by his wife Diana during her stay with us.

Professor Terence Ryan
Emeritus Fellow

Awards for students

Justin Loke
L J Witts Prize in Haematology or Gastroenterology

Jeremy Fabes
Liz O’Brien Prize 2007 for the first year practical examinations in the Graduate Entry Medicine course

William Berry III
Joint winner of the Roger Hood Prize for the best performance in MSc Criminology & Criminal Justice 2007

Nicholas Meyer
Emanoel Lee Prize for the best elective essay 2007

Students receiving distinctions:
William Berry III, Jermy Fabes, Matthew Knox, Rachel Lenane, Margaret Loney, Anna Lyons, Rich McKay, Lena Saleh, Hannah Trayford, and Katharina Umpfenbach

Green College Book Club

Dates for our other meetings this academic year are as follows:
24 January 2008
27 March 2008
22 May 2008
3 July 2008

In March, following the award of the Noble Prize for Literature in 2007 to Doris Lessing, Eve Bertelsen has agreed to present one of Lessing’s novels in place of Kundera’s The Unbearable Lightness of Being.

All meetings will be held in the small room off the Common Room starting at 6.00pm.
Alumni focus

Mark Richardson 1986-1989

At school I hated the idea of joining the Cadet Force, so volunteered to visit residents of a local hospital for learning disabled adults instead. It was a traditional Victorian asylum, now thankfully closed, inhabited by empty-faced half-naked people rocking in corners and urinating out of the windows. Deeply moved, I maintained a link with learning disabled people in Cambridge after starting university there, spending a regular session playing the piano and making music with youngsters at a school for children with learning disabilities. One afternoon, without any warning, a boy collapsed heavily onto the floor, began to convulse and turn blue; I was convinced I was witnessing his sudden and awful death. To my surprise the school staff reacted calmly, attended to him, and half an hour later he was back banging a drum happily.

Epilepsy is extremely common, but a hidden stigmatised condition neglected by scientists and research funding bodies. In the UK, 382000 people are affected and there is an annual mortality of about 1000. Ignorance and lack of interest on the part of the medical profession contribute to an estimated 400 avoidable deaths per year, 69000 people living with unnecessary seizures, 74000 people taking epilepsy drugs they do not need and £189 million needlessly spent each year. In the deprived inner-city community where I work, we recently found that only 14% of people known to have epilepsy who access emergency medical services have any long-term medical supervision. There is enormous scope to improve this situation, but the biggest challenge is to get epilepsy out of the shadows and onto the agenda. Epilepsy lacks – or has lacked until now – a high-profile “champion” to raise public awareness.

Very recently, Paul Getty III, of the prominent Getty family made wealthy from American oil, made a very substantial donation to King’s College London to support a new Paul Getty III Chair in Epilepsy and an associated research programme. This is the largest individual donation to epilepsy research ever made in the UK. As the first holder of this new post, I am thrilled at the opportunity to bring new treatments to people with epilepsy in the shortest possible time; and I am daunted but not deterred by the size of the task ahead.

Mark Richardson MA PhD FRCP
Paul Getty III Professor of Epilepsy
Director, Institute of Epileptology
King’s College London

Announcement which appeared in Viewpoint, King’s College London

John Paul Getty III’s foundation is donating £1 million to King’s College London to endow a chair for research into epilepsy. The postholder will be a key academic in the planned King’s Clinical Neuroscience Institute that will be home to some 200 academic clinical neuroscientists: epilepsy will be one of the main themes of work. A major appeal is underway to raise the £26 million needed to build the Institute next to the newly opened James Black Centre.

Green College would like to congratulate Mark on his appointment and wish him every success for the future.

Nathaniel David Schluter (Neuroscience D Phil 1994-7)
Helen Elaine Schluter nee Ridler (Clinical Medicine 1992-5)

What did you do after leaving Green College?

Nat went on to more education, at Wycliffe Hall, where he went to train as an Anglican minister. Meanwhile, Helen did her house jobs and later completed her General Practice training in Aylesbury. During this time we lived in Headington.

Our first child, Miriam, was born in 2000. Diagnosed with congenital heart disease when she was 10 days old we were very grateful to be living so close to the John Radcliffe Hospital for the initial treatment and surgery. We moved away from Oxford later that year, but we didn’t go far, just 30 miles down the M40 to Gerrards Cross where Nat worked as a curate for the next 4½ years. During that time we had 2 more children, Christopher and Bethany.

Then came the ‘BIG MOVE’…. Having looked at various job possibilities and after much prayer, it seemed that God was calling us to move to South Africa, specifically Johannesburg, to set up a bible college. So the Johannesburg Bible College was birthed! We moved at the end of 2005 and we live about 10 minutes drive from ‘down town’ Jo’burg.

We love living in Jo’burg; college life is going well, people are very friendly, and the flora and fauna beautiful. The challenges include living in a city ravaged by poverty and crime, and being an 11 hour flight from friends and family.

The most recent addition to the family – we adopted Isaac earlier this year! He was born in November 2006 in Durban and has been such a blessing to us.

So, what have we been doing since leaving Green College…. following God’s call on our lives, growing a family, and moving continent…. more than enough to be keeping two Green College graduates busy for 10 years!!

We would welcome alumni news for future issues of Green News.
Please email your articles and photos to Sharan Attar, Development Officer at sharan.attar@green.ox.ac.uk

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