THE PEMBROKIAN

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July 2012

Tarik O'Regan's *Heart of Darkness*

Vikings in the Wirral

Pembroke's Own Diamond Jubilee

Patrick Pichette on Pembroke

PAST EVENTS

Careers Fest,
23rd February 2012

Tesdale Lunch,
10th March 2012

Choir in Paris,
19th March 2012

New York Reception,
9th May 2012

Biology and Biochemistry Dinner,
11th May 2012

Garden Party
26th May 2012

City Breakfast,
30th May 2012

Gaudy 2001-03
22nd June 2012

FUTURE EVENTS

Gaudy 1971-1973
31st August 2012

Alumni Weekend and Annual Dinner
14th - 16th September 2012

New Buildings Open Days
10th & 20th November 2012

Annual Meeting
26th January 2013

Gaudy 2007-2008
April 5th 2013

Gaudy 1962-1964 Golden Jubilee
August 2nd 2013

For other events throughout the year, make sure you are receiving emails and checking e-News

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Whether or not you are feeling proud of Britain, I hope that our two *Pembrokians* this year will instil a sense of pride in your College as we unashamedly celebrate all that which is connected with Pembroke: our trajectory as a College into the 21st Century, our Events (traditional and less conventional), our fascinating Fellows and of course you – our diverse and always-remarkable alumni.

The College has been bursting with energy over the past year, and I have tried to ensure this is reflected in all our communications; from the monthly e-News, flash e-mails and Facebook updates, to the *Pembrokian* and the Annual Report. I know we stress this a lot, but if you are not receiving e-mails or haven't yet found us on Facebook – and would like to – then please let us know.

April 13th saw a Diamond Jubilee celebrated in College – no, not that one. The Gaudy for years up to 1957 included the 1952 matriculands. We plunder the archives on p.6 to get an idea of their Pembroke experience. Pages's 8-9 contain a fascinating profile of Canadian alumnus, Patrick Pichette (1987) by Evan Labuzetta (2002). He discusses his ongoing relationship with the College - not only did Pembroke stand him in good stead for his astonishing career, but it is also where he met his wife, Tamar (1986). We take a light-hearted look at Pembroke's Olympics connections on p.11 - with apologies to Radio 2 for 'borrowing' the Top Ten-uous idea - and carrying on the sporting theme, Jonathan Ross (2006), next year's President of the PCBC gives his take on the year's activity on p6, including the victorious re-capturing of the Headship by W1 this May.

Turning to music, which seems to play at least as prominent a role in our community these days as sport, Tarik O'Regan (1996) gives us an insight into the creation of his opera based on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* which premiered at the Royal Opera House last November. More alumni news on p.7, where you can discover why Steve Harding (1973) has recently been made a Knight of the First Class by Norway's King Harald V. Pages 12-13 celebrate the diversity of the Middle East as our undergraduates share their intern experiences.

A mixed bunch; reflective of the range found within the walls of the College and without in "greater Pembroke". Hopefully something for everyone, but all feedback gratefully received – Sophie.

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Magazine edited and written by ***Sophie Elkan***
Magazine designed by ***Nick Gulliver*** *(2008)*
Front cover image: ***Nick Gulliver*** *(2008)*

STAGING *HEART OF DARKNESS*

From Locus Iste *to Conrad's classic*

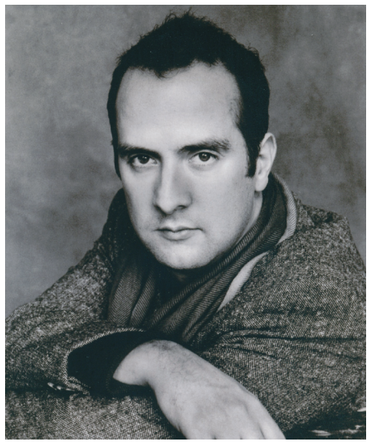
Two-times winner of the British Composer Award and twice Grammy® nominated Tarik O'Regan (1996) is known to many of us at Pembroke for his setting of *Locus Iste,* originally composed for the College Choir whilst he was an undergraduate.

Since then, he has quickly established his career as a composer, taking on academic posts at Corpus Christi and Trinity Colleges, Cambridge as well as positions at leading Universities in the US, including Harvard, Yale and Columbia. Last November the Linbury Theatre at the Royal Opera House was the setting for the staging of Tarik's first opera, based on Joseph Conrad's classic, *Heart of Darkness*.

How have you moved on since your time at Pembroke? Has the College played any role in your development and/or career?

You'll have to ask my tutor, the great and legendary Dr Guy Newbury!

I suppose in some ways I haven't moved on at all, in that I'm still trying to define a "voice" for myself. After many years of teaching, I now make my living exclusively from composing. This transition has had a huge and positive impact on my life. My desire for artistic self-sufficiency whilst staying within the wider professional music world stems from my time at Pembroke, I think.



Tarik O'Regan

Having been a Fellow at a giant college (Trinity College, Other Place), where there is a greater sense of anonymity and thus a need to form strong, binding and often exclusive subsets of the larger community, I would say Pembroke's strength lies partly in its small, robust size, but also in its myriad strands of individuality.

When I was an undergraduate, Pembroke was a place where it was easy to get fully involved in many different aspects of extra-curricular student life, yet still not disappear down the rabbit hole of 'cliquishness'. I graduated in 1999 and, although I've seen the College grow in every way since then, I suspect that core, Pembrokian sense of tightly-bound pluralism, which has proven to be so influential to me, continues to flourish.

Why Heart of Darkness?

I first read the novel in my early teens and didn't think much of it; I remember claiming, arrogantly, the language to be "turgid"! I read it again, whilst at Pembroke, in fact. It was during this reading that I came across some introductory material containing something Joseph Conrad had written in 1917. He said that "*Heart of Darkness* is experience ... pushed a little (and only very little) beyond the actual facts of the case." In other words, the novel is largely autobiographical. This was when something "clicked" for me; there was more to this work than there seemed on the surface of its very few pages.

Alan Oake as Marlow

At a later point, I'd become drawn to the chamber opera form by listening to the works of Benjamin Britten. I knew I wanted to write one, but I didn't have a firm subject in mind. It was only when Tom Phillips (my Librettist) mentioned the novel that suddenly all the pieces came together.

Operatic music can add a new layer of interpretation, perhaps hitherto unexpressed, in a very direct and visceral way. For such a short, nuanced and controversial novel, this approach seemed very appropriate. Our goal in making an opera was to distil Conrad's dense narrative, in which navigation is both a practical part of the tale - a journey by boat on a river in an unnamed country in Central Africa - and a metaphor for telling, or indeed not telling, the truth of his experiences on this voyage. This double 'navigation' is central to the opera's drama.

In this respect, musically and in the libretto, we tried to reflect Conrad's split-frame narrative: Marlow, the novel's protagonist, is seen to be in two places simultaneously (London as an old seafarer and Central Africa as a young steamboat captain), both psychologically and empathetically. It is Marlow who reveals his own younger self's lie. We see him both as liberator and abductor of the truth. This resonates with Edward Said's understanding of the conflict within the author himself: "As a creature of his time, Conrad could not grant the natives their freedom, despite his severe critique of the imperialism that enslaved them."

Thus the central premise of our opera, the need to "come clean", is both timeless and ever-timely.

In terms of its musical language, the opera codified a lot of my stylistic traits: add North African Al-Andalusian music, American minimalism and Renaissance polyphony to 1970s rock music (e.g. the Who) and you get a pretty good idea of where my music comes from. The end result is often tonally-centred, very rhythmically driven in odd patterns and with a strong sense of texture, especially in the vocal writing.

In *Heart of Darkness* I tried to create an individual sonic world, which inhabited the characters' minds, rather than their geographical location. No single composer has ever been responsible for writing truly "new" music. But the very best of them (in any genre, popular or classical) have succeeded in creating innovative permutations of that which has gone before. That principle remains my goal and I think the nearest I've come to getting anywhere close is here.

What was it like to work with the Royal Opera House?

Big opera houses are like giant ships: very elegant, huge machines, which can only move slowly and gently. We were able to work in a co-production with a much smaller, niftier company called Opera East, and it was the first time we've worked together in a composer/producer relationship. My connection to Opera East goes back to my days as a percussionist: one of the ways in which I got to grips with the Benjamin Britten chamber operas I mentioned before (*The Turn of the Screw, The Rape of Lucretia, Albert Herring*) was by playing percussion for Opera East under the direction of their artistic director, Oliver Gooch. It was Ollie who conducted *Heart of Darkness.* This combination allowed us full artistic control and speedier decision-making with tremendous support from the main house.

Ed Dick (director) wanted Marlow's tale on stage to become a form of psychodrama: what the protagonist has to say in London as an old man in some way begins to exorcise his inaction as a young man, following his expedition to Africa. This psychological intimacy was a perfect fit for the Linbury stage.

We hope to announce the US première of the opera very shortly (possibly even by the time you've read this- do check my website: www.tarikoregan.com or my Twitter @tarikoregan).

And looking to the future, what are you currently working on?

I've just completed an orchestral suite from the opera, which will be premiered in 2013 by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. I've also recently been involved in a new project with the Dutch National Ballet. The world of dance is hitherto something into which I've not really delved (musically)! I'm also about to complete a new commission for the Australian Chamber Orchestra; it's called *Chaabi* and is the second piece of mine which explores Arab dance forms.

The Cast of Heart of Darkness

Photographs: Marion Ettlinger (left), Catherine Ashmore (production photographs)

Top photograph caption: Morten Lassenius Kramp as Kurtz & Gweneth-Ann Jeffers as the River Woman

THE ROWING YEAR

by next year's PCBC President Jonathan Ross (2006)

After the drama of last year's Summer Eights, the PCBC would have to wait another year to burn a boat, but it was well worth the wait!

Work began in September, as the last vestiges of summer warmth and long evenings slowly slipped away. A determined set of rowers on both sides of the Club embarked on the long ergos and early mornings necessary to secure success. Meanwhile this year's eager novices started their long and hopefully illustrious rowing careers at Pembroke under the beady eye of head coach Barrie-Jon Mulder.

Only the senior men raced in Michelmas Term, with a four of rowers who all learnt to row at Pembroke, some of them only last year, conquering all comers with consummate ease at Autumn Fours. Across the Atlantic, an alumni Eight raced at the Head of the Charles in Boston, a first for Pembroke. Term was to end on a high, with the 1st Eight placing 9th overall at Wallingford Head, beating crews now poised to win the Thames Challenge Cup at Henley. Unfortunately such success couldn't be repeated at the Fairbairns Cup in Cambridge, where a meeting with the bank denied the crew a victory that half-way times seemed to imply was inevitable.

Into Hilary, and Pembroke remained dominant. At the Isis Winter Leagues, M1 claimed the overall trophy with emphatic victories over all other colleges, whilst W1 won the final race in the series. Torpids came into view with the mood in the Pembroke camp buoyant.

W1 let nerves overcome them as they slipped down one on the first two days, before recovering to bump Oriel and St Catherine's on Friday and Saturday and end the week up one. No such problems for W2 however who rose four places, denied blades on the Saturday by a strong St Anne's crew. M2 continued their meteoric rise through Division II, bumping Exeter, St Peter's and St Edmund Hall to finish 15th overall and a full twelve places ahead of the nearest 2nd VIII. Does a place in Division I beckon next year? But Torpids belonged to M1. So often so nearly, there were to be no mistakes this year. Christ Church were dispatched dispassionately two minutes into racing on Wednesday, and the Headship secured with three dominant row-overs. Time to burn boat number one.

M1 burning boat

With Torpids finished it was time for the girls to rise into the ascendancy. At the Henley Boat Races, they became the first Oxford College to win the Colleges race, thumping Emmanuel by four lengths. The men, after coming 42nd at the Head of the River, and the 4th fastest university crew, were unable to beat a much larger and racier crew from Caius, losing by a third of a length.

Onto Summer Eights and it was W1 who displayed the clinical ruthlessness that had been lacking in 2011. Balliol were bumped outside of the Pembroke boathouse, and on Friday and Saturday, Wadham, so hopeful of a Headship after just missing Magdalen in Torpids, never even got close. Time to burn boat number two. W2 were again just denied blades, going up three. For the men it was a difficult week, with not a single bump made, and as ten years ago Eights ended with the women on top and the men still tortoise chasing. With a Pembroke/LMH composite qualifying for the Temple Challenge Cup at Henley and the ten year anniversary of the heady days of 2003 rolling around next year, whispers of the Double Headship are again afoot.

W1 Triumphant

VIKINGS IN THE WIRRAL

From Tranmere Rovers to the Royal Palace

As a small boy growing up in the Wirral, Professor Steve Harding (1973) often wondered where the name of his local football team, Tranmere Rovers, came from. On finding out it was a legacy from AD 902 when a group of Vikings were ejected from Ireland, and formed their own mini-community on what is now known as the Wirral, a lifetime fascination with Vikings was born. Now Director of the University of Nottingham's National Centre for Macromolecular Hydrodynamics, Steve has received acclaim and awards for his research throughout his career, including a DSc from the University of Oxford, but perhaps none more unusual than his most recent: the *Ridderavførsteklasse, den Kongelige Norske Fortjenstorden,* or Knight of the 1st class, the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit. This award, the highest that can be given to any foreign national who is not a head of state, was presented to Steve by the Ambassador at Liverpool's Nordic Church, in recognition of his work uncovering the vast heritage left by these one-time settlers, and in September Steve will travel to Norway to be received by King Harald V at the Royal Palace.

Viking-inspired sign

Over the past fifteen years Steve has been working with the participation of the general public and a team from the University of Leicester on the *Genetic Survey of Wirral and West Lancashire*. Using DNA testing it has been proven that there remains a significantly higher proportion of Viking genes in families throughout the Wirral and neighbouring West Lancashire than previously realised, and this has in turn, led to a more extensive survey across the rest of northern England, which will be published next year.

Peter Copland, Consul from the Royal Norwegian Consulate of Liverpool said, "Norway has every reason to be grateful to Professor Harding for his enormous contribution towards unearthing the facts surrounding the country's early colonial expansion, and I would like to offer him my sincere thanks and congratulations for all that he has done to increase our awareness of the common heritage of the two countries".

"Norway has every reason to be grateful to Professor Harding "

The research was funded by a Watson-Crick DNA award from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council and has had real impact both academically, and within the community, through lectures, school visits, heritage trails, signposting and most recently establishing the 13 mile St Olav's Heritage Walk between Wirral and Chester, which was featured in BBC2's *The Great British Story* this summer. Working with Wirral's cultural ambassador Mike McCartney – formerly of the *Scaffold*, and brother of Sir Paul – they produced a web site for Schools, which was praised by the Times Educational Supplement. (www.wirral-mbc.gov.uk/vikings).

Professor Steve Harding shows his award

STEVE'S COMMENTS

"The award came as a big shock and I could think of many others more deserving than me - but nonetheless this is a great honour and I'm delighted it is being featured in the *Pembrokian* as the defining moment was actually in the College Library whilst revising for Physics finals. Desperate for respite from all the formulae, I spotted, by chance on the shelf, F.T. Wainwright's book *Scandinavian England* which - when opened - made the connection with Tranmere. The College has always been supportive, particularly when I was awarded the DSc, and I am very happy to be part of the alumni community".

Photograph: Mike McCartney (top right)

PATRICK PICHETTE

A profile by Evan Labuzetta (2002)

Foundation Fellow, Patrick Pichette came to Pembroke from his native Montreal in 1987 as a Rhodes scholar reading for an MA in PPE. Since leaving College, he and his wife Tamar (1986) - Pembroke Bridging Centuries Campaign Board Member - have been generous benefactors of Pembroke, and active in the *Pembroke in North America Society*. Patrick moved through senior positions at *Call-Net* enterprises, *McKinsey & Co.*, and *Bell Canada* before becoming Chief Financial Officer at *Google* in 2008. He recently took a few minutes to talk Evan Labuzetta (2002) about his experience, the future of College, and the importance of giving back.

Why did you choose Pembroke?

There were two main reasons: I was looking for a College that was strong in PPE, and I was wary of drowning in what I imagined to be this sea of grandeur at Oxford. I wanted a smaller College that would be more tight-knit and comfortable, and I was really happy that Pembroke turned out to be so friendly and manageable.

What was it like moving from Montreal to Oxford?

It was about as different as you could imagine. My undergraduate university at Montreal is the equivalent of a big US state school, with tens of thousands of students. To move from that to a cloistered little community of a few hundred, where you wore gowns to Hall and sat one on one with tutors, was a complete and total shock.

Any fond memories from that first year?

I lived in the MAC my first year, and the scouts there, Barbara and Brenda, were just wonderful people. They were hilarious and great at their jobs, but they also really tried to help the students – if you needed anything, they'd find it. They were the most eccentric people I've ever met in my life; JK Rowling didn't even come close to having the richness and the colour of these people. At the same time, they really revealed the town and gown divide, as well as the class divide in Britain. It was very strange for me to have housekeepers in College, and to have this sense of the students being somehow privileged and set apart. But they were absolute treasures and I have immensely fond memories of them and of the entire College staff.

Patrick Pichette

The MCR

"I thought it was important to keep the fort up and running"

Other than that, there were the little things, like the number of different designs for electrical plugs, or the ubiquity of the "quick pint", which was refreshing compared to the more typical binge drinking culture in North America.

The main cultural thing I remember from that first year was the shock of being plunged into an international community that collapses the whole world into one place. I met people from all over and it was such a rich environment compared to my undergraduate years. For example, I'd lived less than 100km away from the USA for most of my life, but I met more Americans and learned more about America in my two years at Oxford than during my whole life up to then.

And of course, my experience at Pembroke changed my life in a very direct way, because that's where I met my wife Tamar. She was reading Law at the time, and went on to a successful career in Canada. We have now been together for over 20 years.

Why did you stand for MCR president in your second year?

To be honest, I knew that no one else was going to stand, and I thought that was just unacceptable. The late 80s were a tough time for College, academically and financially, but I thought it was important to keep the fort up and running. We were able to get the MCR set up with a secretary and treasurer, and that year we won some promises from College to have buildings in the back quad set aside for dedicated graduate housing. I was very proud of that accomplishment because of what it meant to graduate students in future years. Living out of College breaks up the magic of the Pembroke experience.

Looking back on your time in College, what perspective do you have now?

Well, the international experience was hugely influential. But more generally, I've come to realise that Pembroke is a fantastic manifestation of the Oxonian values. The tutorial system, the Hall, the College bar, and the close community are all part of this basic infrastructure for supporting students and simultaneously preparing them to do great things in their adult lives. That environment trains people to be leaders, each in their own way, because you need to be self-reliant and motivated to thrive there. Pembroke will always make sense for young people in that way; it's a wonderful incubator and brings out the best in students.

Why have you chosen to support College financially?

It wasn't really a choice – it has always been a priority for both Tamar and me. It's how we were brought up, and we promised ourselves that as soon as we were done paying our school debts, we would immediately start giving, and would always give no matter how much or how little money we made. At first, we could only give small amounts and it took us years to establish anything substantial, but Giles [Henderson] and the whole College team are always immensely gracious about any level of support. And as we've been able to give more, we've been very comfortable doing so because we've seen how the institution has done so well. College is in a fantastic position for the next decade and century; the Bridging Centuries project is just the first step in that direction.

Any last remarks for your fellow alumni?

Help however you can, and don't wait. Any significant gift to College or to any charity is a little like having kids. If you wait for exactly the right time to do it, you never will, because there's always a good excuse not to. Once you start, it will be an absolute joy to your life, but you have to take the plunge. If you're reading this, it's because you love Pembroke and the time you spent there mattered to you. Give something back. The College changed your life, and you have an obligation to make sure the next generations have that opportunity as well.

EVAN LABUZETTA

Like Patrick, Evan Labuzetta also met his future spouse at Pembroke and is now married to Jamie (2002). He supported Bridging Centuries himself by organizing a sponsored Pembroke crew to enter the Head of the Charles, the world's largest Regatta, in October 2011.

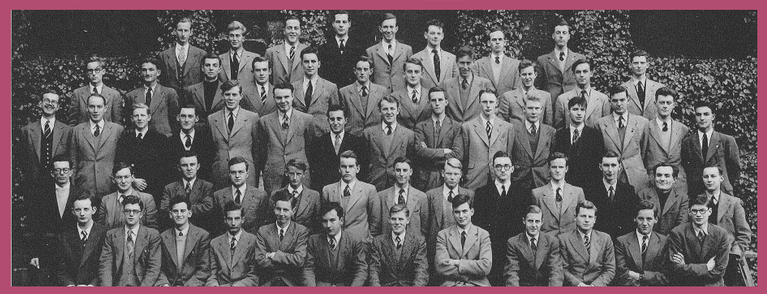
DIAMOND JUBILEE GAUDY

Pembroke revisits 1952

No-one in the UK can have been untouched by the Diamond Jubilee celebrations as we commemorated 60 years of our Queen on the throne. Also celebrated were our 1952 matriculands who returned to Pembroke in April to fete their own Diamond anniversary. The Gaudy, which was for all years up to 1957, was held in April. Juanita Hughes, our Alumni Relations Manager went to every effort to ensure that this very special event was honoured in the appropriate fashion. She delved into Pembroke's Oral History project, and unearthed the JCR'S 1952 *Food Suggestion Book.* In it we discover as the UK and Commonwealth were preparing for the Coronation, the most pressing matter for the JCR was the 'Sassenach' preparation of porridge and the quality of the fish served in Hall.

The 1952 group (pictured below) should represent the very epitome of respectability and gravity. However, close reading of the Book, maintained by the Chair of the Food Committee, reveals another side to these august fellows.

Most contributors were mainly concerned for the common good; more than "one saucer of marmalade per table" please, and sufficient glasses and water for all. There was also the suggestion that the lunch menu be posted up in advance (especially on fish days which seem to be subject of much controversy, from spelling of spratts/sprats to whether smoked haddock, kippers or herring should prevail). The fish debate was enlivened further with the suggestion that the Chef send the "putrefying remains" of his catch to the Royal Zoological society rather than attempt to serve them to the JCR; "must we put up with the shrivelled piscine material that is served to us at breakfast nowadays? The haddock and kippers would be an insult in a civic eating house."



The language used was unfailingly precise, although not always kind, such as the suggestion that the Chef may substitute the "interminable supply of somewhat hybrid liquid euphemistically described as soup" for a sweet at lunch, or even a small portion of cheese [which was still under rationing but the allowance had very recently been increased].

"the haddock and kippers would be an insult in a civic eating house"

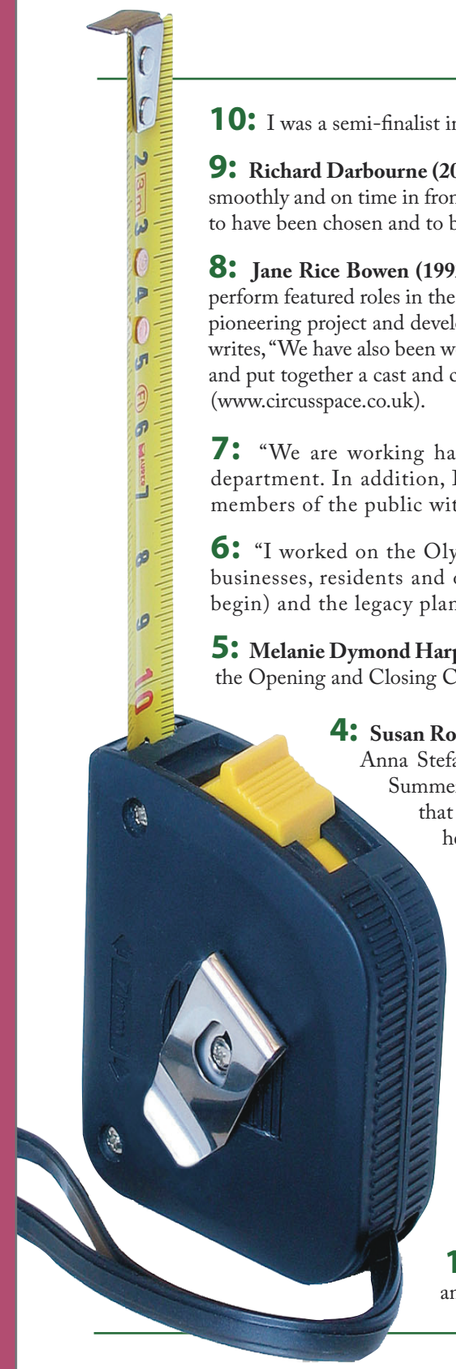
However, the greatest contributor to the book must be the chap who sparked off the 'great porridge debate', which develops into an ongoing saga. It starts with his request that the morning porridge to be prepared according to the Scottish method. Describing "sugar on porridge [as a] barbarous and unwholesome custom that cannot be too heartily deplored" he sought out a private meeting with the Chair of the Food Committee but was "shocked at his intransigence", and made the accusation "[you are] guilty of oppressing a minority, without benefiting the majority". These entries include first inkling of impending Coronation when he asks if the porridge decision may be reached "before the coronation of Elizabeth, Second to none?". And later wonders (with more than a hint of irony) "is there any prospect of [the Committee Chair's] name appearing on the Coronation Honours List for courageous determination and obstinacy in the face of vastly superior arguments".

The world has changed in many ways since 1952. Hopefully, all alumni and guests thought the food in 2012 an improvement on that of 1952.

Photograph: Sonia Pether (Gaudy photo, above)

PEMBROKE'S OLYMPICS TOP TEN-UOUS

With full credit to Radio 2's Breakfast Show feature



10: I was a semi-finalist in the 400 metre hurdles at the Rome Olympics in 1960. **John Metcalf (1954)**.

9: **Richard Darbourne (2000)** has been selected as one of 25 Producers to make the 805 medal ceremonies happen smoothly and on time in front of thousands of spectators and millions watching around the world. Richard is delighted to have been chosen and to be part of the Games Delivery Team.

8: **Jane Rice Bowen (1992)** is Joint CEO of Circus Space, who are helping prepare deaf and disabled artists to perform featured roles in the Opening Ceremony of the Paralympic Games. After the games they plan to build on this pioneering project and develop ongoing training in circus and physical performance for deaf and disabled artists. Jane writes, "We have also been working closely with one of the presenting partners (sponsors) for the Olympic Torch Relay and put together a cast and creative team which have been on the road following the Olympic flame". (www.circusspace.co.uk).

7: "We are working hard on the coverage of the Olympics at the BBC, where I work in their online department. In addition, I am working as a London Ambassador during the Games - helping tourists and members of the public with their visit to the Capital. **Elizabeth Lane (2004)**.

6: "I worked on the Olympic Bid, Olympic Park site assembly (acquiring the land needed and relocating businesses, residents and other occupiers; and remediating the site in preparation for construction work to begin) and the legacy planning". **Isobel Leaviss [nee Perkins] (1992).**

5: **Melanie Dymond Harper (1986)**: "My friend **Helena Smalman-Smith (1986)** and I are volunteer performers in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies."

4: **Susan Rowett [nee Kalmanson] (1982)** and **John Kalmanson (1982)**. "Our Danish grandmother Anna Stefanie Nanna Fryland Clausen (April 1, 1900 – August 2, 1981) competed in the 1920 Summer Olympics in Antwerp and won the gold medal in the 10m platform diving. The story is that Danish selectors told her that they would not send her all that way just to dive and made her also part of the gymnastics team, which she was most scornful of. Her diving training involved breaking holes in the ice. She clinched gold with her last dive – a swallow dive."

3: Our niece, Lucy Shuker, should be representing GB in the Paralympics Wheelchair Tennis. Lucy had a motorcycle accident in 2001, when she was 21, which severed her spinal cord and left her with the use only of her upper body and arms. She is one of the UK's highest ranking women in sport and played at Beijing in 2008 and at Wimbledon the last three years. **Jim Thomson (1963).**

2: I run an inner-city community cricket project called StreetChance on behalf of the Cricket Foundation, working in deprived areas across UK Cities. The project is very much aimed at using cricket as a tool to combat social problems, break down barriers between young people from different backgrounds and between young people and police. We will provide activity for young people across London who might be inspired by the Games – pretty tenuous, but we have projects in all the Olympic boroughs. (www.streetchance.org). **Richard Joyce (2001).**

1: My stepfather's brother's granddaughter is Jessica Varnish, who, in February, took Gold and a world record in cycling with teammate Victoria Pendleton. **Philip Sen (1993).**

MIDDLE-EASTERN INTERNSHIPS

Student experiences across the region

Last summer, four Pembroke undergraduates were inducted into very different experiences of everyday life in Arabic-speaking countries; Jordan, Oman and Kuwait. Each reflecting the enormous diversity in lifestyle, culture and language across the Middle East, these internships were facilitated by Dr Elisabeth Kendall (1989), Senior Research Fellow in Arabic and Islamic Studies, as part of her goal to help Pembroke to forge partnerships in the Middle East.

The opportunities ranged from two months living (and fasting during Ramadan) with the boys and staff in an orphanage in Amman; five weeks intensive study of Arabic and Omani culture at Dhofar University; and a month living the high-life among Kuwait City's elite, whilst writing for one of the national newspapers.

These opportunities would not have been possible without the generous support of Honorary Fellow Princess Basma of Jordan (1989), Prof Rula Quawas of Jordan University, the Anglo-Omani Society, the Omani Foreign Ministry and the British-Kuwaiti Friendship Society, with special thanks due to Richard Muir, former HM Ambassador to Oman and Kuwait. These unique experiences proved a resounding success, and the cultural insights, language skills and all-round knowledge acquired - together with the friendships formed - will have a lasting impact on our students.

Roland reading the Kuwait Times

JORDAN

Roberta Duffield (2008) and Sylvie-Anne Stenton (2008)

This summer, we travelled to Jordan to spend five weeks working and living in the capital Amman at the Mabarrat Umm al-Husayn; a foundation that provides security, support and refuge for disadvantaged boys who can no longer live at home permanently. Our role was to teach English, spend time with the boys during their daily routine and extra-curricular activities, such as football practice, excursions and singing classes. It was hoped that being exposed to native English speakers would encourage interest in speaking foreign languages, and that our presence would promote a positive image of Western women.

Adjusting to our new life was easy as the people of the Mabarra were extremely welcoming and hospitable. The Islamic holy month of Ramadan began on 1st August and, while many of the boys returned home, we stayed to join in the Ramadan routine of the remaining boys and staff. From the hours of 4am until 7.30pm eating and drinking is forbidden and it is an arrestable offence to violate this rule on the streets of Amman. We were struck by the sense of community and solidarity as we all broke our fast together each evening and lived through what can sometimes be a very physically and mentally demanding time.

This was a summer unlike any other and we were both sad to say goodbye to the close friends that we made over a relatively short space of time.

Roberta Duffield and Sylvie-Anne Stenton in Amman

OMAN

Ra'eesa Mehta (2008)

Twenty hours after leaving London, we arrived in Salalah, Oman, to begin a five week course at Dhofar University, sponsored by the Anglo-Omani Society and the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Starting at 8am every morning, we were driven to the Campus in the desert, a surreal experience after the crowded streets of Oxford, and received Arabic tuition in a variety of subjects, mainly centred on Omani history and culture. However the real understanding of Omani culture was developed out of 'school' hours when our hosts organised trips well off the beaten track into the Dhofar region. The landscape was incredibly varied - we found ourselves climbing green mountains, sitting on picturesque cliff tops, standing at the edge of sink holes and even driving to Yemen and back! Yet the most fascinating trip was our camping trip following the footsteps of Wilfred Thesiger into the 'Empty Quarter'- the desert between Oman and Saudi Arabia. After experiencing temperatures of 50°C in the barren desert, we were relieved when at night it dropped to a 'mere' 35°C. As it was a tiring business - slowly melting on the sand dunes - we were offered an interesting 'beverage' when we visited a Bedouin camp - namely a metal bucket of fresh (I emphasise the word fresh) camels milk- still warm and frothy! The summer culminated in my grand graduation ceremony wearing traditional Omani dress, an unforgettable experience.

KUWAIT

Roland Singer-Kingsmith (2007)

As my first taste of life in the Gulf, I found Kuwait unlike the rest of the Arab World that I have visited. Part humble intern and part cultural delegate, I sampled Kuwaiti society variously from my journalist's desk at the *Kuwait Times*, in the boardroom of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and at the dinner table with the Spanish Ambassador's family

Kuwaiti nationals are, by virtue of their blood, born kings in a modern welfare utopia. Education and healthcare are completely free, private sector workers regularly protest for equal pay with their public sector counterparts and petrol is cheaper than bottled water. So forget the labyrinthine souks of Fes and the ancient mosques of Damascus, and cue instead a full-fat diet of Las Vegas highways, Miami Vice motorboats and Prada handbags.

The high-society aspect of Kuwait, although seductive, is not altogether physically healthy. One of the stories that I covered at the *Kuwait Times* was a scientific symposium on combating the rising problem of diabetes in Kuwait and across the Gulf in general. It's not a simple problem to solve – midday temperatures upwards of forty degrees for six months of the year and the unavoidable need for a car in Kuwait pose a serious challenge to those trying to lead a physically active life.

Kuwaitis are a proud and generous people and handle their guests with exemplary Arab hospitality. I made some wonderful friends with whom I shall stay in contact and visit when life leads me back to the shores of the Arabian Gulf.

I have Pembroke's Elisabeth Kendall and the Kuwaiti-British Friendship Society's Richard Muir to thank for my first heady taste of the Gulf, as well as Emiranda Winter and Abdullah Bishara, who became my adoptive parents in Kuwait.

Bishara boat

Moving forward, Dr Kendall organizes these internships on an annual basis, to take place in the Summer Vacation. If you are interested in offering similar internships anywhere in the Middle East or would like to get in touch with our students socially whilst they are in country (currently Kuwait, Jordan, Oman; but year abroad undergrads also go to Cairo and Beirut) please get in touch via the Development Office on development@pmb.ox.ac.uk

NEWS, VIEWS, SCHMOOZE...

This page is for the Community to share their news and update fellow alumni on their whereabouts and life events. Further, if anyone is interested in promoting their business here by offering exclusive alumni discounts we welcome all contributions.
Please contact Sophie Elkan on sophie.elkan@pmb.ox.ac.uk

BOB COOPER (1956)

"At the age of 76, I have been awarded a PhD by Nottingham University. The subject matter is Harold Macmillan and the Suez Crisis, and I am now converting the thesis into a book. This may be of some interest to my contemporaries."

JAMES FERGUSON (1975)

James is currently editorial director of *Signal Books*, a small, independent publisher based in Oxford. With an emphasis on travel and history as well as Oxford-related books, *Signal* is happy to offer a discount of 25% (and free P&P in the UK) to Pembrokians who order any title on the website or by phone (www.signalbooks.co.uk, 01865 724856).

ROBERT BLACK (1969)

The case of Shannon Faulkner fighting to be admitted to the all-male Corps of Cadets at The Citadel may very well be one of the most famous cases ever to come out of South Carolina. Robert Black served as Shannon's local counsel in Charleston and writes to let us know that his book about the case has been published: *Local Counsel: Four Women of the Citadel and Beyond*, Carolina Academic Press.

WILL BADGER (2011)

Will Badger got in touch to correct our earlier assertion that Michael Berliner was responsible for unearthing the X-Men image, featured in the last edition. He states "Rather than the MCR following up Mr Berliner's post, this image had already gone viral within the MCR Facebook world the month prior. We are of course very grateful for Mr Berliner's interest and alumni participation generally."

TOM MINOR (1991)

"I rowed for Pembroke 1st VIII between 1993 and 1995 and was compelled to write as I saw such parallels between this year's race and that of 1995. After being in a similar position on the Wednesday of Eights Week, we went on to gain the Headship, which transformed my life. I received job offers, an unbelievable number of free drinks, and became very popular with all the best-looking girls in College. But, it also led me to understand that anything is possible: when it comes to it, and if we really want it, we have far more strength within us than we realise."

TIM HARDING (1966)

"My new book 'Eminent Victorian Chess Players: Ten Biographies' has very recently been published. The Pembroke College Chess Club was very strong in my day, and won the cuppers competition several years in a row. Pembroke's connection with chess goes back to 1891 at least. That year the dining hall was the venue of the Counties Chess Association congress (effectively a British amateur championship tournament). See www.chessmail.com".

RIGHT REVEREND DR SIMON OLIVER (1969)

"Having retired in 2010, I spent 2011 in Mauritius as Director of Studies for the Anglican Diocese and was asked to come to northern Madagascar as Bishop - something rather unexpected! I have responsibility for a Diocese which covers an area the size of England, marvellous scenery and wildlife but impoverished by reason of poor infrastructure: often the only way of reaching distant villages is on foot. It takes four days to reach our remotest parish - I admit I haven't been there yet! Some of my doctoral work saw the light of day in a volume which I edited jointly with other practitioners including Professor Leslie Francis (1967), *Ordained Local Ministry in the Church of England*, Contiuum, 2012".

KATHERINE (2005) & RICHARD (2004)

We all love a good wedding, and couldn't resist sharing Kat and Richard Reading's photo from their March wedding here in College, as mentioned in the last edition. Kat wanted to say how "very grateful [we are] to the Pembroke staff - especially Joanne Bowley in Conferences and Events, and Chaplain Andrew Teal - who put so much effort into our day, and really made it one of the best days of our lives!"

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

With such a wealth of successful, informed, expert Alumni, we thought we'd dedicate the back page to an expert recommendation, between friends...

This month,
Andrew Rosenheim (1977)
recommends: *Prague Fatale*
by Philip Kerr

Even people who don't like thrillers will like the novels of Philip Kerr. They're written as well as 'literary' novels and straddle the lines between spy, crime and historical fiction- enough genres for anyone. The most recent is called *Prague Fatale*, and it's the ninth in a series that features Bernie Gunther, an ex-cop in Germany who sets up as a private detective in pre-war Berlin. He manages to survive both the war and post-war years without joining the Nazis and acts like a Germanic equivalent of Chandler's Philip Marlowe – tough but sensitive, wisecracking yet more than just a macho smart-alec. The novels have a robust historical credence, but you never feel Gunther's merely a figurehead for his creator's research. Highly recommended – and the nine-book series (so far) can be read either in sequence or willy-nilly with equal pleasure.

Andrew Rosenheim came to Pembroke as a Rhodes Scholar in 1977 and has lived near Oxford ever since. His most recent novel Fear Itself, *about a German plot in 1940 to keep America out of the War, was published last year by Hutchinson.*

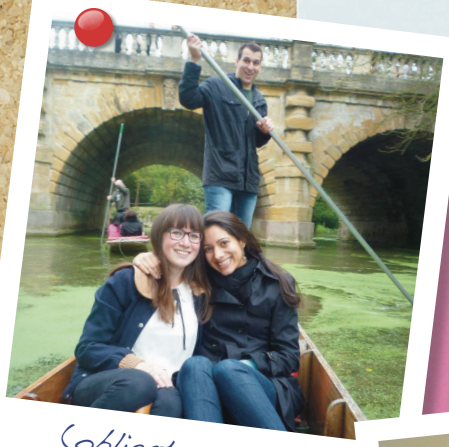
Cover image: Quercus Books

Students' Arts Week 2012

Rapt!

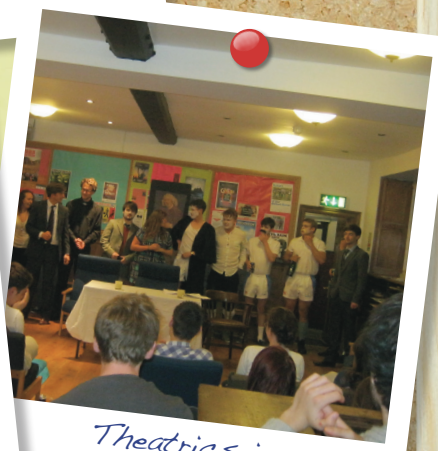
Student bucket-list

Graffiti workshop



(obligatory punt)

Open mic night



Theatrics in the JCR

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