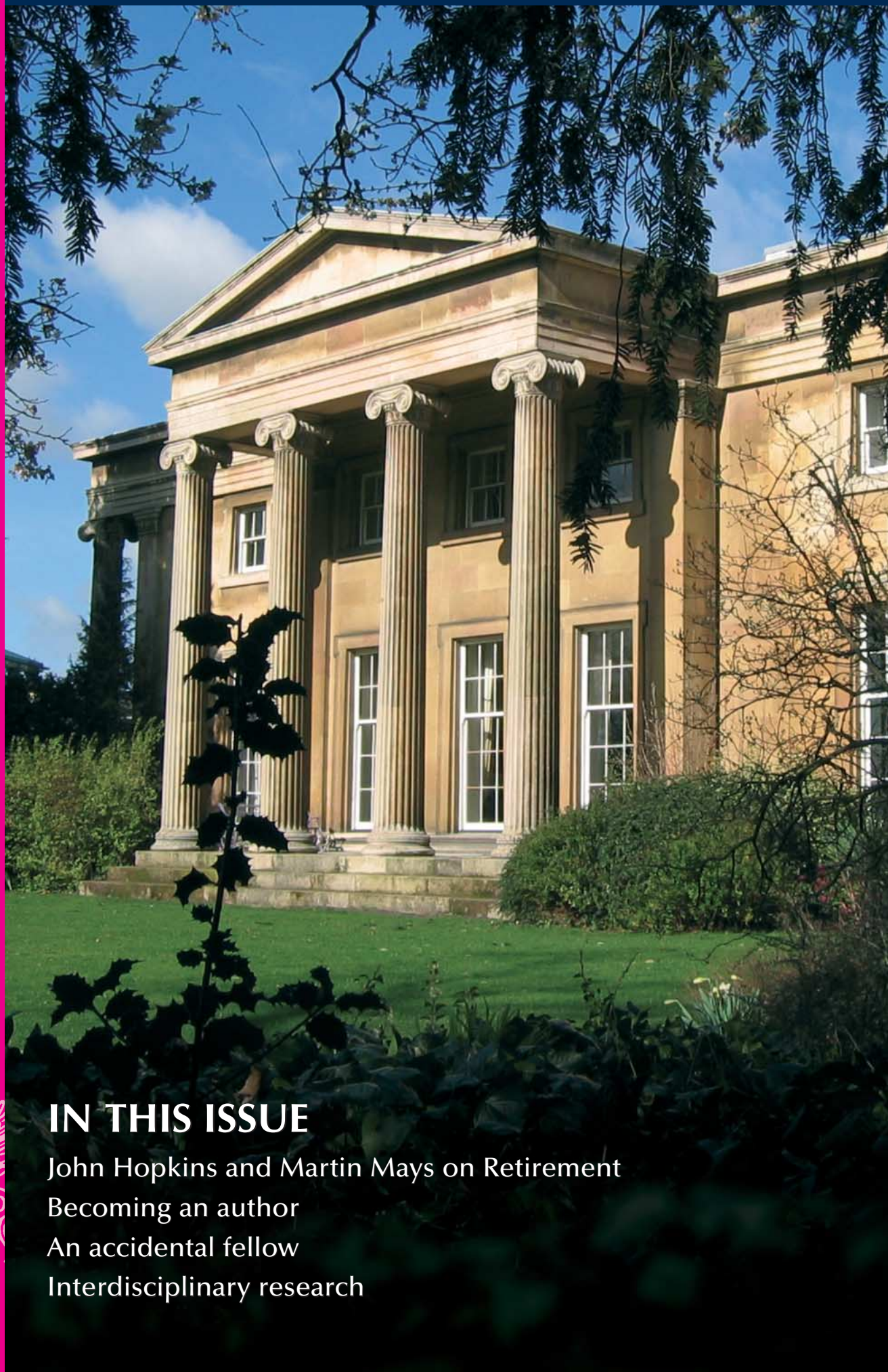
DOW@CAM

Including The Magenta News with Updates from Year Representatives

THE DOWNING COLLEGE MAGAZINE

VOL 11 | AUTUMN 2004



IN THIS ISSUE

John Hopkins and Martin Mays on Retirement
Becoming an author
An accidental fellow
Interdisciplinary research

DOW@CAM

THE DOWNING COLLEGE MAGAZINE
VOL 11 AUTUMN 2004

Dow@Cam magazine is published bi-annually by the Downing College Development Office.

Editor in Chief
Professor Barry Everitt

Writer:
Ms Debbie Pullinger

Contributors
Mr Mark Knowles
Dr Martin Mays
Dr Paul Millett
Dr Will Poole
Mr Tariq Sadiq

Editorial Board:
Dr Bill Adams
Professor Barry Everitt
Miss Helen Limbrick (Publication Co-ordinator)
Dr Martin Mays
Mrs Jane Perks
Ms Debbie Pullinger
Mr Graham Virgo

Photographers:
Mr Richard Stibbs
Professor Barry Everitt

Design and printing:
Cambridge Printing, the printing business of Cambridge University Press.
www.cambridge.org/promotional

Address:
Development Office
Downing College
Cambridge CB2 1DQ
Tel: 01223 334850
Email: hjl26@cam.ac.uk
Website: www.dow.cam.ac.uk

Dow@cam is intended to give an informative, light-hearted view of College-related events and people. The name was chosen to reflect the forward-looking nature of Downing.

Cover photograph by Professor Barry Everitt, Master

The Master's Voice

This time last year, I knew I was facing a tough twelve months as I took on a fresh set of responsibilities as the new Master. I knew it would be busy, but could never have imagined just how busy.

But it has also been both a very happy and exciting time, all the more so thanks to tremendous support from Fellows, students, staff and, especially, many old members.

At the conclusion of this period, it falls to me, on behalf of the College, to bid farewell to our two longest-serving Fellows, John Hopkins and Martin Mays. Both have been Fellows for over 40 years, both have held the posts of Senior Tutor and Admissions Tutor, and both have been Director of Studies, for Law and Natural Sciences, respectively. On a personal note, I have known John and Martin as Fellows for nearly 30 years, and have very much appreciated working with them, in particular during my time as Director of Studies in Medicine, when John was Senior Tutor and Martin was Admissions Tutor. Both of them have made an enormous contribution to the College in their very different ways, and they will be greatly missed. To both of them we convey our deepest gratitude and our very best wishes for their futures.

There is a very real sense in which, as Martin and John depart, a part of College history goes with them. Their unrivalled knowledge and memories of the College are irreplaceable, as their recollections herein demonstrate. Whilst we are a forward-looking College, rising to many and diverse challenges, I am also acutely aware that we should not lose our understanding of the past, and that we work to maintain that vital connection.

Alongside the sadness of departure comes the excitement of welcoming outstanding new Fellows: Drs Liping Xu, Paul Barker Dave White, Guy Williams and Marc Richards. Continuing our new series in which we feature some of these new Fellows, we focus this time on Ludmilla Jordanova, recently elected Fellow in Cultural History.

Finally, in this issue we also profile the achievements of two Downing graduates – Professor Dorothy Trump (for whom I directed studies) and Louise Dean – who have distinguished themselves in two very different fields, but who have both done so whilst fulfilling their role as a mother of young children. Whilst their experience and those of many others shows that this accomplishment is not only entirely possible, but something that can benefit both family and workplace, this view is not universally accepted. In celebrating their success, I feel it is very important that we work even harder to ensure that in our society, family and professional life can be mutually beneficial; that those women – and men – who study at Downing and elsewhere will not find barriers to their personal choices with regard to the balance between career and family.

Downing College rare books

One of Downing's richest and yet most forgotten treasures is its collection of rare books. Housed in the basement of the Maitland Robinson Library, the collection numbers around 3,000 volumes, and embraces both manuscript and printed material, from fragments of medieval manuscripts to modern first editions.

The collection consists of various individual bequests in addition to items withdrawn from Downing's main stock, as and when they are recognised to have graduated to the class of 'rare' book. At the core is the bequest of John Bowtell (1753–1813), a Cambridge bookbinder and antiquarian. For his own history of the town, he assembled a mass of local material which still lies in manuscript in the collection. He was also a very keen bell-ringer, and amongst the Bowtell Collection is an eighteenth-century bell-ringing manuscript. The Collection contains other eye-catching items: as well as some miscellaneous verse, there is the personal and administrative diary of Alderman Newton, kept from 1664 to 1717; an account of a balloon ascent from Trinity Great Court sometime after 1785; and pieces of old manuscript rescued from the bindings of various printed books – the common destiny of such 'scrap' paper in the earlier period of the printing press. The printed material in the Bowtell Collection is no less remarkable. Bowtell collected dozens of newsbooks from the civil war period, and in a few cases Downing possesses the only surviving copy.

These volumes comprise many individual items, so the real size of the collection is considerably greater than the actual number of volumes suggests.

Other collections advertise particular interests: the Cuttle Collection, for instance, contains early printed material in English and Dutch concerning the political career of Sir George Downing (d. 1684). A prize component is the Woods Collection, itself numbering almost 1,000 volumes ranging from a fragment of an 'incunable' (a book printed before 1500) to editions of H.G. Wells and Joseph Conrad. The older items are particularly remarkable: our incunable fragment is a section of a French Livy printed in 1487, and we also hold a 1502–3 edition of Ovid from the famous Venetian press of Aldus Manutius.

Individual copies of very old books can be particularly important to scholars if they bear marks of early use, especially in the form of annotation. One volume, for instance, contains a handwritten account of a Cambridge town-versus-gown clash, and another has a marginal note exhorting Oxbridge students to eat only one meal a day: "A full bellie is vnfit for study". Shown in the photograph is one of the most splendid annotated books – an important herbal text printed in 1562 in Frankfurt by Egenolph. It is in six languages so that Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, German and French speakers can compare nomenclatures matched to illustrations. Our copy is densely annotated throughout by a seventeenth-century English user, who has added English names as well as information on colour, season and location. This book therefore behaves as a working manuscript and piece of field apparatus, not merely as a shelf-bound reference text.

Downing has relied and continues to rely on the generosity of donors and old members for such gifts, from the founding collection of Bowtell to more recent additions, such as the gift of N.P.H. Dewes. We take this occasion to remember and thank these donors warmly.

Dr William Poole

Res ipsa loquitur

After 43 years as a Fellow of Downing, John Hopkins will surely be remembered by generations of Downing Law students – as surely as he remembers them. Renowned for his phenomenal mental database on all his former pupils as well as for his pipe smoking, his line in terrible jokes and an inimitable teaching style, memories of John will be undoubtedly be part of the fabric of the college for many years to come. He talked to Debbie Pullinger for Dow@Cam about his thoughts on retirement or semi-retirement.

What were your first impressions of Downing?

Sheer fright! When I came up to Cambridge in 1957, I got off to a shaky start because my trunk and bicycle had not arrived and my lodgings were about 2 miles from my undergraduate College, Queens'. I spent the weekend feeling quite disoriented. On Monday morning, after trying to collect my bicycle from the railway station, I arrived in College at ten o'clock to find a furious note from the Queens' Senior Tutor. In fear and trepidation I found the formidable Mr Armitage, who said, "Where were you, this morning, nine o'clock?" Being very young and ingenuous, I blurted out the truth. "At the railway station, to get my bicycle." He exploded. He had instructed all the first year Lawyers to meet him at nine o'clock, and I was the sole member of that group who had not turned up. "Go at once and find Mr Parry at Downing." Having sought directions to Downing from passers-by, I arrived at the College feeling that I would probably be decapitated, or worse. "Oh," said Mr Parry, "you're the missing sheep! Come and sit down."

Little did I know then that Mr Parry would become my Master in the Law, that in his rooms I would meet my wife, that he'd become my daughter's godfather and my son's namesake and I'd become his grandson's godfather. Now, that's all very sentimental and very personal, but I suppose I did get an immediate sympathy and liking for Downing.

Is there anything else that makes it special?

I think it's partly physical. Its configuration makes it unique; it's more akin to a campus really. Size helps too. And from my point of view, the fact that it was founded especially for the study of Law does not diminish its attractions. Do you mind if I smoke my pipe?

Not at all. Er – your career has been essentially devoted to the college and to teaching. What took you down this path and what kept you on it?

It was Clive Parry together with Arthur Armitage, by then the President of Queens', who put the idea to me. I had never thought of an academic career, but apparently my eyes shone.
I like the young; I like teaching them.

Much of what I have tried to do in this regard is to assist them in the process of acquiring a well-stocked mind – and that is not obtained solely by application to the content of Law Reports. Then the fun of the whole game is to see my pupils becoming high court judges, lord justices of appeal and senior partners in this firm and that. But it's not only the success in that sense: it's the pupil who expected a 2:2 and unexpectedly got a 2:1. Somebody asked me a while ago if I had children. "Yes," I replied, "Eighty-two. That's two of my own and eighty of other people's."

Biography in brief

John Hopkins came to Cambridge in 1957 and took 1st class honours in all parts of the Law Tripos and in the LLB degree examination, and was awarded the Whewell Scholarship in International Law. He has been a Fellow of Downing since 1961, was called to the Bar by Gray's Inn in 1963, and became a University Lecturer in Law in 1965. He has also been Visiting Professor of Law at the City University since 1980 and in 1982 was elected Honorary Bencher of Middle Temple.

In a career essentially devoted to the teaching of Law and to the College, John was Director of Studies in Law for 35 years, Tutor for 8 years, and Senior Tutor and Arts Admissions Tutor for 16 years. He has been governor of Eastbourne College, Harrow School and Sherbourne School and is still a governor of Wellington College.

And has that experience changed at all over the years?

Essentially they are the same people they were in 1957. In fact, in some ways they're now more akin to the class of '57 than the class of '69. Cambridge was rather a horrible place around the few years of student unrest – but then the sun shone again. And I see more similarities to my contemporaries among my present pupils than I did among those of thirty years ago. Of course the most fundamental change is the ladies. I was against them coming. Being conservative by temperament, I'm rather like the Lord Chancellor in the 19th century who, when learning of a proposal for reform, said, "Reform, Reform! Aren't things bad enough already?" But I was totally wrong. They have improved us out of all recognition.

It's a very different world we're in now from the one 40 years ago. Has Law teaching had to change accordingly?

I think the demands have gone up a bit and they do work a bit harder, but fundamentals don't change. People think they do... Brave New World ... European Union ... Human Rights Act ... Oh Rubbish! Obviously you have to update and you don't teach Law as it was in 1960, but the principles remain the same. To paraphrase Churchill in legal terms: I'd let them do – shall we say – Family Law for pleasure and European Union Law for a treat, and I would not whip them for not knowing those. But I would whip them hard for not knowing the basic principles of contract and tort, and constitutional fundamentals.

What will you miss and what do you look forward to when you retire?

Point 1: I'm not retiring. I shall be doing about 12 hours' supervision a week. But I shall miss giving lectures in Cambridge. I shall 'miss' meetings of the College Governing Body – I'm not a committee man, so that will be a total pleasure! I'll catch up with some reading and writing – but definitely no 'rithmetic. I shall also enjoy more time with children and grandchildren, more time at Middle Temple and (his eyes light up) more time at the opera!

"Being taught by John is enjoyable. He makes the complexities of Equity seem easy. The obscurities of Roman Law (even on a Saturday morning) become clear. International Law appears to have some legal content."

—George Pulman QC.

On John Hopkins as interviewer

The interviewee, expecting questions possibly on the Hegelian view of the universe, the Home Office's current reforms of the Criminal Justice System, or the political and tribal problems of Afghanistan, is surprised to be asked to which characters in Winnie the Pooh he would liken his parents, best friends, teachers and worst enemy – and why.

On John Hopkins as supervisor

John talks. The pipe, empty of tobacco, filled from the tin, the waving of the large box of matches, the shutting of the box, the box put aside, the pointing with the pipe, the taking up of the box, the striking of the match, the box put aside, the lift of the pipe and the match to the face – and again and again, without result.

Becoming an author

With her first novel on the longlist for the Man Booker prize and film rights already sold, Downing graduate Louise Dean is making her mark in the literary world.

Pregnancy can be most productive. Whilst expecting her third child, Louise Dean wrote a whole novel. Result of labour: a girl (Elsa, 6lbs 11 oz) and a hardback (*Becoming Strangers*, 291 pages). She describes how being pregnant gave her an extraordinary creative energy and, curiously, the discipline she needed to get on with it. "It was a wonderful, wonderful process," she says, "I felt so alive!"

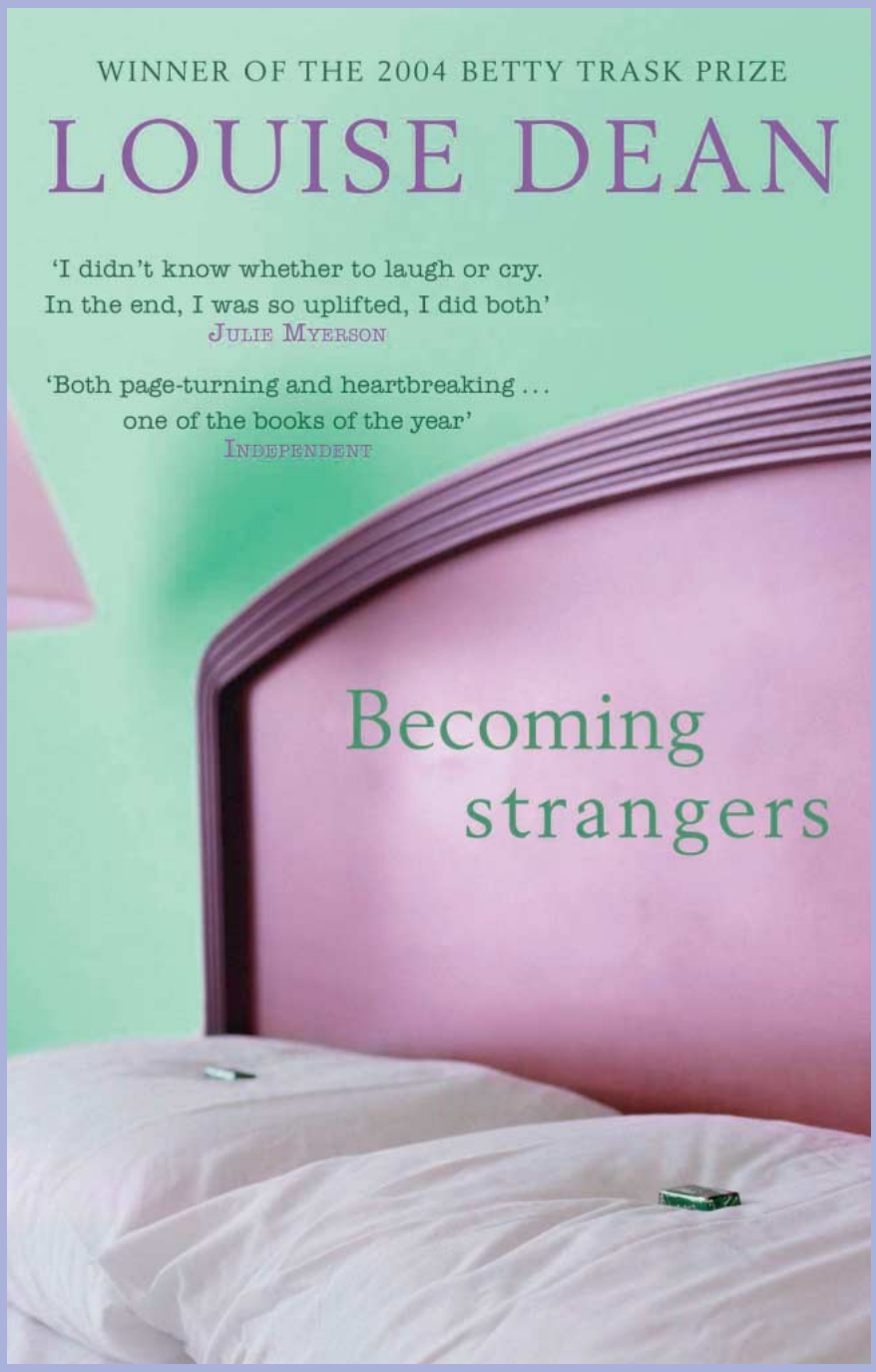
Louise thinks her creative streak has been there since childhood: she says that as well as being a voracious reader, she has always filled books with notes and drawings. But when it came to graduation and finding a career, she didn't think she could ever be a writer. Nor, despite a good Cambridge degree, did she have enough self-confidence to believe that she could get into a creative field such as advertising. So she hung back. "I went off and did what was sensible and what my Dad would have liked me to have done and got a good commercial job." She found working for Unilever – largely on improving the fortunes of 'Chicken Tonight' – "a pretty underwhelming experience". After a few years, she moved to a London advertising agency to work in strategy and planning.

The next chapter of Louise's life has something of the page-turner about it ... a whirlwind romance with a champion speedskater from Texas ... a life-shaping backpack tour of Asia ... marriage ... a move to New York ... a baby on the way. Whilst expecting her first child, Louise finished off her first novel, not yet published.

New chapter: in which Louise finds herself a single mum in New York and becomes a partner in a hot-shot creative agency. With leaving work early to be with her toddler and then working the 'night shift', life was fairly tough, but it worked. It was at the creative agency that Louise met her now-husband, who – in what she describes as 'a complete deal-clincher' – changed her small son's nappy on their first date. To seal the matter, he also made her an offer that could not be refused: "I'll work; you write."

Two more children and two draft novels later, Louise finally sold her work to a publisher, and Becoming Strangers came out in hardback earlier this year. A little unusually for a story about romantic love, the book has older people as its central characters. Throughout, Louise manages to be kind

and affectionate without losing an ounce of grit. It was not surprising to find amongst the glowing reviews, one from the Guardian that made the apt comparison with Alan Bennett's



"wicked, yet empathetic eye".
As she talks about what fires her writing, she reveals a compulsion towards honest enquiry into difficult themes. She's a writer, but she's also a fearless explorer. In that respect, she sees her work as somewhat counter-cultural. "I think that we're so secular now ... There's so much destruction of the humanity within people going on. I'm also very interested in apostasy – the idea of betraying your group. I think writers have to be interested in that theme because they have a commitment to the truth." And it was this theme that she decided to pick up in her next novel.

Being fascinated by the early 1980s, Louise had wanted to write about shifting values of the period and the onslaught of Thatcherism. She began with a visit to the newspaper library and was surprised by what she found. "I was gripped by how much England had changed in 23 years. It was just a different world," she says. She became engrossed in a copy of the Daily Telegraph – 5 May 1981 and her eye was caught by tiny column on the front page about the death of the hunger striker, Bobby Sands.

Intrigued as much by what was left out as what was put in, Louise began researching the IRA hunger strikes, and quickly reached a decision: "I said to myself, 'I know nothing about Northern Ireland. I am the most ignorant person about this and the least qualified to write about it ... so I'm perfect for it.' Without a shadow of a doubt, I knew that's what my next book would be about." No hanging back now, she flew to Ireland and spoke to Sinn Fein leaders, IRA members, former prison officers, mothers whose children had been killed, and the only hunger striker of the eleven who did not die. Her approach was disarmingly honest: "I just said I was an English mother, and they had every reason for not talking to me but I just wanted to say I was sorry." And that, thinks Louise, was what tickled them: no one had ever said they were sorry.

For a year and a half, the project took over her life, and The Human Season, is to be published in April 2005. With the final draft just gone to her publisher, ideas for the next novel are already bubbling under the surface. "I have to have a book on the go," she says, "If I don't, I'm a bad person to be around."

Biography in brief

Louise graduated from Downing in 1991 with a degree in History. She has worked in brand management for Unilever, in advertising in London and also in New York where she also ran her own creative agency. She now lives in Provence with her husband John Doig, a food and wine writer, and her three children Jules (7), Cass (4) and Elsa (3).
In addition to her writing work, Louise makes periodic trips to Sierra Leone where she is involved in an adult literacy project.

World Record Pull-Ups Challenge for Cancer Research UK

"If you wanna be a record breaker, dedication's what you need," was the late trumpet-tooting Roy Castle's refrain. I knew dedication would be needed in bucket-loads as I made an attempt on the world record for the number of pull-ups in an hour on Saturday 12 June at Battersea Park. But add perfect weather, a vociferous Downing-dominated crowd and the brand of verbal support unique to John Andreopoulos – and I had to be in with a chance. Neil and self-confessed 'battleaxe' Christine Hamilton agreed to adjudicate for Guinness and entered into the spirit of it wonderfully, playing to the crowd but also strictly observing the rules.

All was fine until the seventh minute of the hour, when my forearms tightened and an unexpected cloud of nauseating dizziness descended. The rate faltered and even the initial target of 239 (set by a US Marine) looked uncertain, let alone the 1988 world record of 370 by the diminutive Lee Chin-Yong. At this point my excellent 'motivators', Dwayne Goss and Steve Sumner, demonstrated masterful intuition by adjusting the rate to keep the numbers ticking whilst allowing the lactic to vacate my arms. Varying the grip also employed fresher muscle groups. "Eat the bar!" shouted Big John. As the mist cleared, the training investment kicked in and the scoreboard once again registered 7s and 8s per minute. The mileposts came and went and eventually, with just a couple of minutes remaining, the 400 barrier was breached. The final total of 411 may have been 40 in excess of the record, but it certainly felt much tighter! Sincere thanks to everyone who supported, donated to the tune of £1,600 and drank with me afterwards. Next stop: the 24-hour record!

Mark Knowles (1995)

Wilfrid Mellers celebration

On the afternoon and evening of Wednesday 20th October, Downing will celebrate – with talks and a recital – the 90th birthday of Wilfrid Mellers: composer, author, musicologist and one of the College's most distinguished Honorary Fellows. There will be performances of several of Wilfrid's own pieces, as well as works by composers who have been his personal friends, including Copland, Rubbra, Britten and Joubert. In addition, there will be short musical tributes from Howard Skempton, Ned Rorem, John Paynter, Stephen Dodgson and others. Wilfrid himself will give a talk on Shakespeare.

Whilst an Undergraduate at Downing in the 1930s, Wilfrid read both English and Music, later supervising in both subjects. This breadth of experience is reflected in the eclectic range of texts for which he has composed, from Aristophanes and Aeschylus to Gerard Manley Hopkins, Blake, e e cummings and Downing's own David Holbrook. His books (and he is still writing) are also impressively varied in subject matter and include monographs on French and English music, a definitive history of American music, and the first serious study of the music of the Beatles. In 1964 he was given the opportunity to create a degree course in Music at the newly founded University of York. The result was an innovative syllabus which decisively influenced the direction of musical education in this country.

Details of the performances in Wilfrid's honour are available from Dr Paul Millett (pcm1000@cam.ac.uk).

A new development

This summer, Downing College has been delighted to welcome Tariq Sadiq as its new Development Director. Tariq brings with him a wealth of experience in fundraising and higher education administration. Prior to this appointment, he was based in London as Development Director at Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, and before that he was responsible for setting up the Development Office at Selwyn College, Cambridge.

After graduating from Durham University in History and Politics, Tariq spent eight years working at the London School of Economics where he also took his Master's in The History of International Relations.

The Development Campaign

We are delighted to report that the Development Campaign, begun in 1996, has now exceeded its target of £12m. The College gives heartfelt thanks to the many old members who have given so generously over the last eight years. Congratulations are also due to Mr Julian Darley (1956) under whose Chairmanship the Campaign Board guided and directed this magnificent effort.

The telephone fundraising campaign held in March 2004 was also a great success, with 330 Alumni pledging a total of £131,956.36. Of these pledged funds, 93 per cent has already been received.

The Hopkins Parry Fellowship appeal has now reached its £1m target. This fantastic achievement is due to the generosity of many old members as well as the enthusiasm and dedication of the appeal committee and its Chairman, George Pulman QC.

Planning continues for the Mays Wild Fellowship appeal in Natural Sciences under the leadership of John Hawkins (1952). Over £200,000 has already been donated or pledged towards a goal of £500,000. The appeal will be officially launched on 9 November 2004 at Salters' Hall, before the London event.

As we now approach the end of the Campaign, the College will be taking a fresh look at its needs and priorities for the coming years, and will be considering new ways of engaging and involving old members in Alumni activities and in the life of the College.

Serendipity

Martin Mays, who retires this year, looks back on 40 years of being a Fellow at Downing. Here, we learn how this central figure in the life of the College could so very easily have been a tax inspector … or had his career curtailed by a laboratory accident … or given his distinguished service not to Downing, but to Clare!

If I had to choose a word to summarise my career, it would undoubtedly be 'serendipity'. It was indeed a happy accident that led me to Downing College in the first place, since I had nominated Clare as first choice on my application form. It was only on returning to school to take the seventh-term entrance examination that I found no less than five others in my class had also nominated Clare. It was not too late to change my choice, and Downing (because of Downing Street) was the only other College name which seemed familiar. Thus the die was cast. I had no idea that at the time (1954) Downing was considered by some as not quite in the same league as certain other Colleges, from the point of view of its facilities and academic standing.

I came up to Downing in 1957, having completed two years National Service, and in June 1958 I obtained a 2.1 in Natural Sciences prelims. A letter from the then Senior Tutor, Frank Wild, quickly followed, informing me that the Governing Body was not satisfied with my result. Better was expected from a scholar, and I duly obliged in years two and three. At the time of my graduation in 1960, job offers grew on trees for all graduates and I had no less than five to choose from. But at the last minute I was persuaded to stay on for a Ph.D.

After a brief spell in industry and as an Assistant Lecturer at Imperial College, I was all set to change tack in my career. Possible plans included becoming a tax inspector or a patent lawyer, or retraining as a doctor. But before I had put any of these plans into action, a call from my former research supervisor suggested that I apply for a job that was going in my area in the Chemistry Department at Cambridge. To my surprise I was offered the post. To my even greater surprise, Downing – who had got wind of my University appointment – phoned in the person of Frank Wild to offer me a Fellowship, even though the College already had two chemists among its 23 Fellows.

It was, of course, a very happy accident that I came back to Downing in particular, since its proximity to the Chemistry department meant it was possible to combine teaching and administrative duties within the College (and a good College lunch) with an active research career, without wasted travelling time. The short walk across the grass from the chemistry department to the dining hall, especially on a fine summer's day, has been one of the greatest pleasures associated with my time at Downing.

Appointment to a five-year Assistant Lecturer post at Cambridge in the 60's did not guarantee reappointment as a Lecturer. However, the help of some able research students and some further serendipity in the laboratory together produced enough interesting results to ensure my promotion when the time came. Another timely coincidence was my decision to go on sabbatical leave to Australia in 1972 as a Visiting Professor at the ANU. Whilst I enjoyed six months of Australian sunshine, my colleagues back in Downing were coping with a cold winter, student sit-ins and broken windows in the SCR.

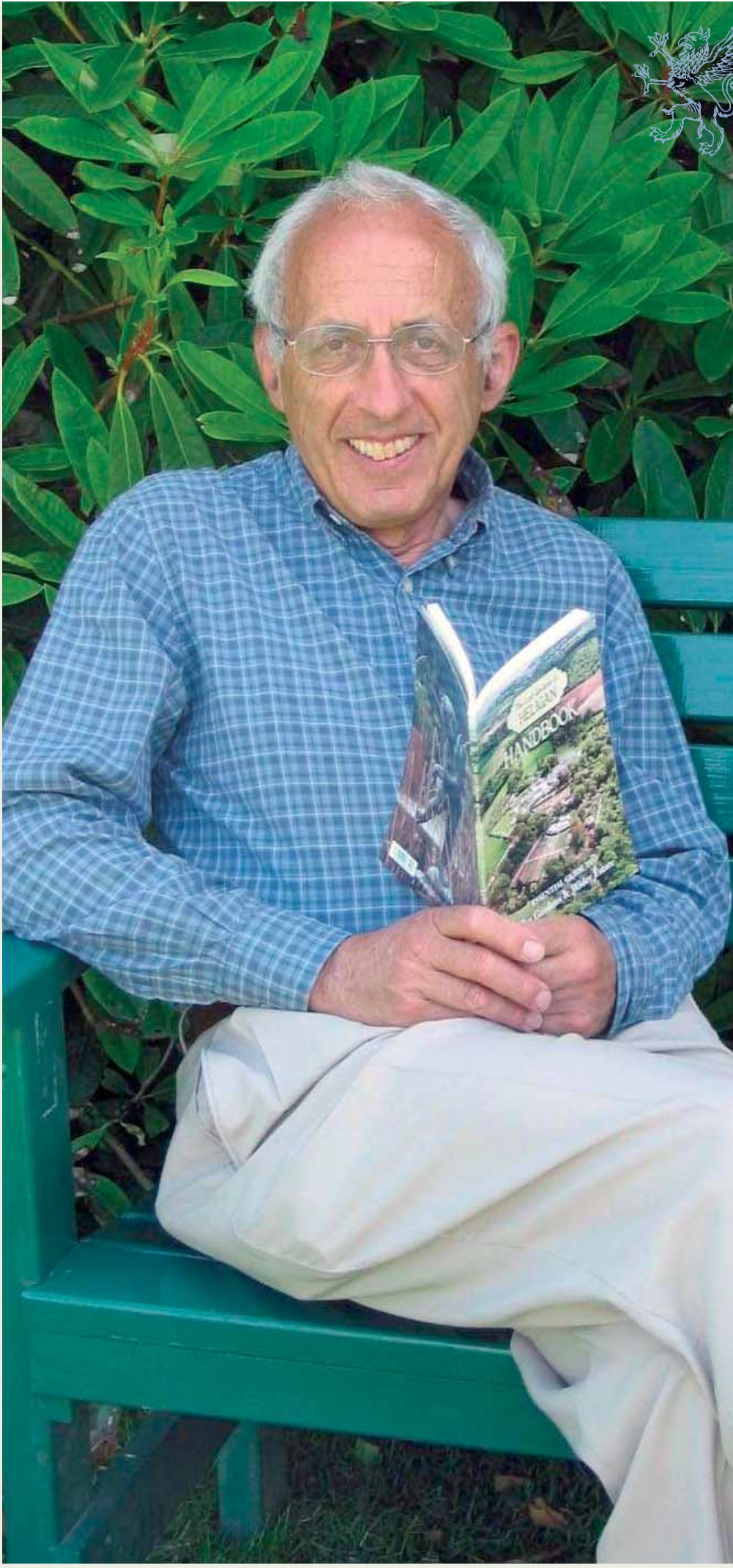
In addition to these happy accidents,

there were also a few unhappy ones. Health and safety regulations then were not as stringent as now, and one incident resulted in an unscheduled ride to Addenbrookes' Hospital in an ambulance. On more than one occasion I was lucky to escape serious injury, as were my research students.

I became a Tutor in 1967 (at Frank Wild's insistence) and took over from Peter Gay as Admissions Tutor in 1978 just before the admission of the first women to the College in 1980. In this year there were over 200 applicants for places, but by 1992 when I resigned to take over from John Hopkins as Senior Tutor, there were nearly three times that number. This was due in no small measure to the admission of women, but it also reflected the improving status and reputation of Downing. During the same period, the Fellowship grew in number and strength to its present size of around 45, still small by comparison with most other Cambridge Colleges.

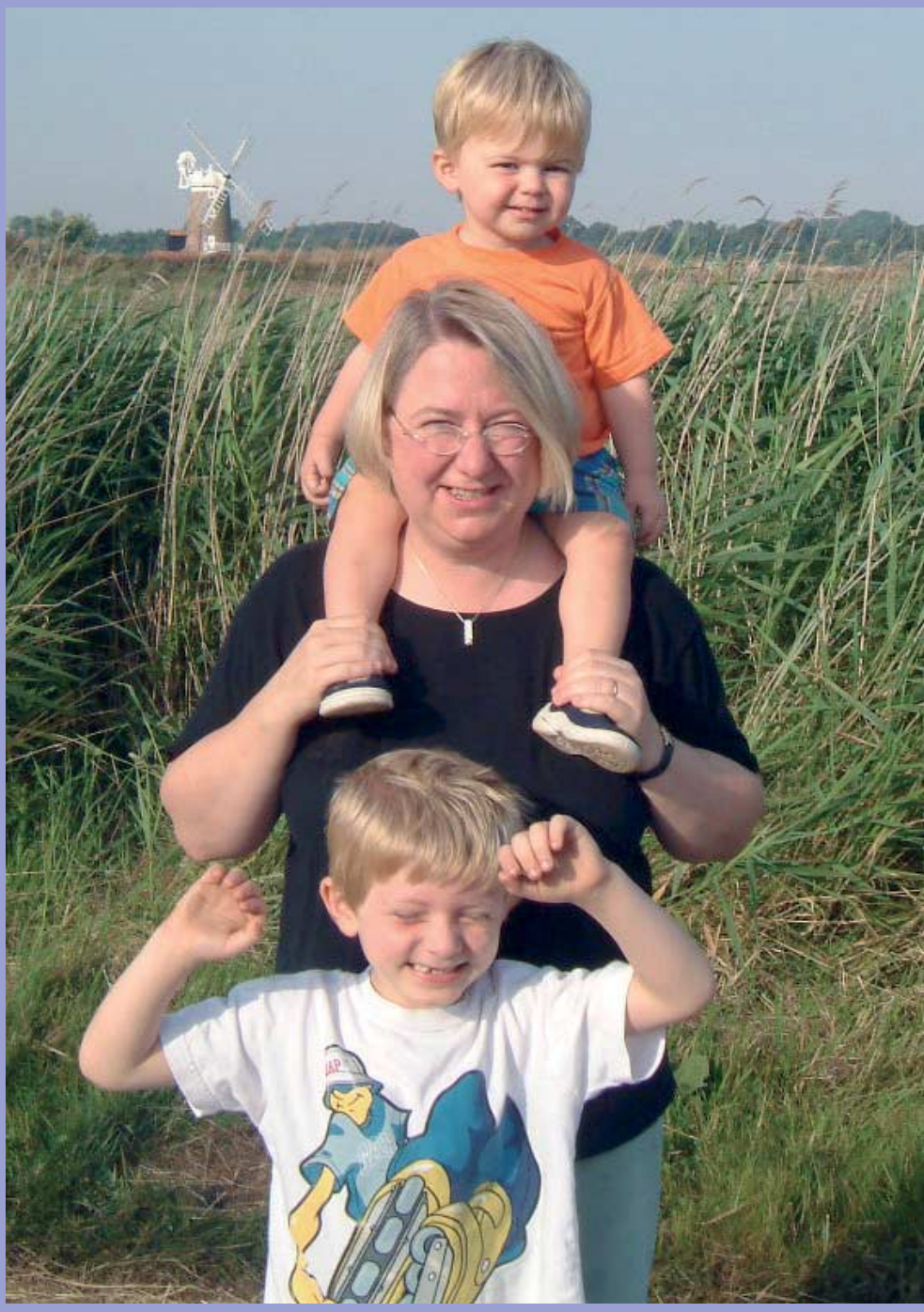
In 1989, by another happy accident, I happened to bump into Stephen Fleet, then University Registrar, who mentioned that the University needed another candidate to serve on the Council of the Senate. I was persuaded to stand, and was subsequently also put on the General Board of the University. I was thus centrally involved in the government of the University for the next four years, serving on countless committees, and gained a detailed knowledge of the way the University worked. This experience was invaluable when I took over as Senior Tutor at Downing. If I couldn't solve a particular problem that arose, I almost certainly knew someone in the University who could.

So the happy accidents that have dictated the course of my working life at Downing and within the University have led to a rewarding career that, for me, has been as much of a hobby as a necessity. I have enjoyed almost every minute of it. In my retirement I shall carry on doing some teaching but I also look forward to having more time to spend with the family, to play bridge and to travel. Who knows, there may be further happy accidents in store which will offer other possibilities as well!



X marks the spot

Downing medic Dorothy Trump has recently taken up a chair in Medical Genetics at Manchester. She talked to Dow@Cam about her work.



For a little over half the week, Professor Dorothy Trump works with molecules. Specifically, she studies the genes and proteins associated with genetic eye disease, in particular retinoschisis, a rare form of genetic eye disease that affects the retina.

Dorothy began this work when the human genome was still largely uncharted territory, so much of her initial research was focused on tracking down the location of the responsible genes on the X chromosome. These early endeavours put her name on the map. Or rather, on The Map. Should you ever delve into the catalogue of human endeavour behind the human genome project, you'll find that two and a half per cent of the X chromosome bears the name of Dorothy Trump.

Now that the inner space of the human genome has been pretty thoroughly explored and the heady 'gene hunting' days are over, molecular genetic research has moved into working out what the proteins are doing. This, says Dorothy, is actually much more interesting because it's all about processes and pathways in the body. She explains: "The gene is like a recipe that tells the body to make something – and that something is a protein. So if the gene is wrong, the protein will be abnormal in some way. So if you understand what the protein is doing, then it tells you about how a pathway in the body works – for example how a tissue is created, or how a retina functions."

As with the earlier work on characterising the chromosome, there is always the prospect of an exciting result, but the day-to-day reality is unrelenting repetitive labour in the lab. And that 'eureka' moment might happen the first time you do the experiment – or the 10,000th time. "For example," says Dorothy, "at the moment we know that the retinoschisis protein reacts with some other protein outside the cell, and we're trying to work out which one. Now that really is finding a needle in a haystack." But she is undaunted. "On the days you do get a result it gives you a real high. And you do have to enjoy those, because there are so many other days!"

For the rest of the week, Dorothy works with patients and their families in St Mary's hospital clinics. At one of these – a specialist genetic eye clinic – she sees her molecular theories quite literally become flesh, as she counsels patients with retinoschisis. Dorothy

says that the ability to zoom in and out between the macro and the micro is a vital aspect of the work. “The thing I love about genetics is working with molecules and then relating that back to patients. It’s fascinating, knowing that just one base change in a gene can give you this whole syndrome; just one ‘spelling mistake’ can produce that particular disease in a patient. You need to be able to move backwards and forwards. You need the bigger picture in order to work out what the protein is doing. And if you’re a clinician, then you’re thinking about the patients as well.”

Dorothy says her interest in molecular genetics was kindled after she began an MRC training Fellowship and was inspired by Professor Raj Thakker. Or perhaps that should be *re*kindled. “Once I’d started working with him, I realised that genetics was what had really inspired me when doing A level biology. But you forget about that in the run-of-the-mill learning to be a doctor.” The next step was a move back to Cambridge to set up her own research programme at the Cambridge Institute for Medical Research (CIMR). Dorothy was casting around for a possible project when one of the consultants suggested retinoschisis. “I knew the gene because it was next door to one of genes I had been working on in London. Obviously we’d both been working on the X chromosome, so that narrows it down, but it was pure chance they were so close together.” Having worked extensively on retinoschisis, Dorothy has now branched out into other genetic eye diseases, although she retains a soft spot for the disorder: “I’m quite keen on retinoschisis, because it was my first eye disease.”

Since moving to Manchester last year, Dorothy has been involved in setting up the Centre for Molecular Medicine, a new initiative that aims to bring together research groups working on similar areas with the aim of sharing knowledge, technologies and techniques. Having been involved in Cambridge’s CIMR, which is founded on the same principles, Dorothy has brought valuable experience and expertise to the project. The Manchester centre is currently a lot smaller than the Cambridge version (about 20 people in the lab) but has plans to expand. Although it’s early days, Dorothy says it’s already very exciting and there are benefits all round. Of course, that’s in basic practical things like sharing a piece of equipment you need but will use only once a fortnight, but it’s also the cross-fertilisation of ideas. “If you bring people in lab-based science together and they talk, it really is a good thing. You inevitably get better things coming out.”

Being at the cutting edge of clinical genetic research is not all high-powered stuff, Dorothy puts in. “There’s a lot of hassley admin. This morning I’ve been over to sort out the lab clean-up rotas!” And what with the university lecturing as well, it looks like a packed schedule. Nevertheless, Dorothy is unreservedly enthusiastic about her job and her move to Manchester. As well as appreciating a “fantastic department” and a city with a “great buzz”, as a ‘Northern lass’ she is also enjoying a return to decent walking country. (“Well, you convince yourself you like Norfolk ...”)

It all seems very positive. A model medical career. Any downsides? “Well,” says Dorothy, “you should try being pregnant as a geneticist. When you look at what happens in a cell, you think it’s amazing any of us are here at all. And when you spend your days with people with genetic diseases and see the sorts of things that go wrong, you become totally paranoid.” Despite the passing paranoia, she produced a healthy baby boy. And then did it again. Now, as a mum of two (aged seven and two), she speaks about that feeling – so familiar to working women with young families – of ‘walking a tightrope’. Indeed, there’s a commonly held view that a career in academic medicine and being a mother are not to be attempted simultaneously. In cheerful defiance of all the health warnings, Dorothy says that if there’s one message she would like to put across, it’s this: “It is possible, and it works!”

Biography in brief

Dorothy Trump read Medical Science at Downing. After graduating in 1985, she went to the Royal London to do her clinical work. After junior doctor jobs, she spent three years in Hammersmith as an MRC Training Fellow and registrar in endocrinology. Then she moved to Cambridge on a Wellcome Trust Clinician Scientist Fellowship to set up her own research programme in clinical genetics. In 1999 she became a lecturer at Cambridge with an honorary consultant contract. She also enjoyed the opportunity to supervise some first year medical student supervision back at Downing.

In 2003 she took up a chair in Medical Genetics at Manchester. In her spare time, she enjoys running, and took part in the Great North Run, September 2004.

The gentle art (and science) of interdisciplinary research

Tucked away on the old Cambridge University Press site in Mill lane, is the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH). The centre's new director and recently elected Downing Fellow in Cultural History, Ludmilla Jordanova, talks to Dow@Cam about the joys of interdisciplinary study.

Lest you read this article hearing Professor Ludmilla Jordanova's words in a vaguely East European accent, it should be pointed out that whilst her name was conferred by her Bulgarian father, Ludmilla was born and brought up in England. When people say to her, "You speak very good English," she replies, "I should jolly well hope so!" Indeed, she is a fine exponent of the art.

The other mistake you could be forgiven for making, given her credentials – director of the CRASSH, trustee of the National Portrait Gallery, author of a standard historiographic text – is that Ludmilla's academic homeland is in the arts and humanities. In fact her first degree, at New Hall in Cambridge, was in Natural Sciences. Her decision to embrace history was, she says, the result of encountering the celebrated historian Roy Porter in the course of her Ph.D on the History of Science.

Although she has written on a staggering range of topics – from Lamarck and the history of evolutionary thinking to the presentation of women in scientific and medical texts – much of her recent interest has focused on how people construct their identities through the history of their own fields. "In the 18th century," she explains, "professions such as science and medicine are quite contentious; they don't really have assured status. So these groups try to construct an identity for themselves in a whole range of ways, for example they think about what they look like, what they wear, what they carry ..."

Reflecting on the nature of this type of research, Ludmilla says, "It doesn't come out of saying, 'I want to be interdisciplinary'; it's finding interesting things and then following them up." And indeed that has been Ludmilla's story. As she found her historical research leading to work on visual material, taking an MA in Art History was an obvious step. She explains, "I wanted to be respectful enough to the discipline to really know how to use it and know what you could and couldn't say about objects and images."

She acknowledges that in a society that increasingly demands specialism, the heyday of the polymath is sadly at an end. "I suppose it's inevitable that in a highly specialised society, there's a lot of division of labour. But I don't want us to be too despairing about it."

Biography in brief

Ludmilla Jordanova came to Cambridge in 1968 to read Natural Sciences at New Hall. She stayed on for a further seven years, completing a Ph.D in the History of Science and becoming a research fellow. After a brief spell at Oxford, she took up a lectureship at Essex in 1980, where she completed an MA in History of Art, before becoming Professor of Cultural History at York in 1994. Four years later she was invited to become Professor of Visual Arts at the School of World Art Studies and Museology at UEA, where she retains her Professorship whilst seconded to Cambridge.

She has many publications, including History in Practice, and Defining Features, a book accompanying the National Portrait Gallery Exhibition.

Ludmilla confesses to a love affair with Scotland – she escapes to a small flat overlooking the Firth of Forth whenever she can – and also with chamber music. She has recently taken up running under the tutelage of one of her two daughters – which she says has been "quite a revelation".

Ludmilla Jordanova with her team at CRASSH

She does, however, think that some people are suspicious: "They think if you do interdisciplinary work, you're just not very serious. Well, I can see that it's a different kind of work, but it isn't any more or less serious – it's just different."

This perceived difference, Ludmilla thinks, is one of the challenges facing CRASSH. For the centre's work of fostering interdisciplinary research cultures she clearly has passion and vision enough for a whole army of scholars, but she is also cautious. "Certainly we could grow, but I'm very tentative about this, because there are people who are sceptical – and I first want to persuade Cambridge this is a good idea for them."

"I see part of my role as trying to promote research projects in Cambridge. Perhaps that sounds a bit grand – I don't know. But I'm very keen on things that have public implications, because I think we – that's not just CRASSH, but everyone in humanities and social sciences – have to show not that we're useful in some narrow sense, but that we help people think hard about difficult issues." She mentions that working on one such project under the Centre's roof is Downing's Jude Brown, who comes from a social policy background, collaborating with Sir Bob Hepple, who comes from a legal background, on the question of how to build bridges between equality issues and more theoretical perspectives.

Another project Ludmilla hopes the Centre will be able to adopt concerns the Shahnahma, which is a Persian epic, a bit like the Bible. The project aims to describe the entire collection of Persian illuminated miniatures and make them available on the web. Ludmilla explains that the epic is ongoing – and a live issue in Iranian culture. "At a time when we need to engage with the cultures of the Middle East, this will make a really important contribution to the scholarly community."

And what about joining the Downing Fellowship? "Absolutely delighted!" Ludmilla exclaims. "One doesn't like to appear too partial, but I do feel so blessed. The Fellowship is relatively small and there's a fantastic sense of conviviality – and they have been so very kind. We also have very good food and good wine!" It seems like a very happy homecoming.

CRASSH

The activities inside the CRASSH building include helping people get interdisciplinary research projects off the ground with the aid of project fundings; offering advice on research projects at all stages; staging conferences and running lunchtime seminars for students doing interdisciplinary research to support each other.

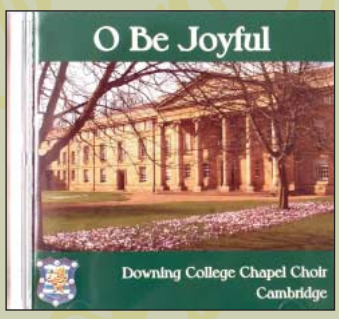
Annual themes link many of the conferences and other events. More about this year's theme of migration, and other areas of activity, can be found on the CRASSH website: www. crassh.cam.ac.uk

Christmas Offers

1. Two Trees at Midnight—Pack of 10 cards £2:99 *SPECIAL OFFER PRICE 2 packs for £4:99. The greeting inside this card is "With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year."

2. Robins—Pack of 10 cards £2:99 *SPECIAL OFFER PRICE 2 packs for £4:99. The greeting inside this card is "Season's Greetings"

3. The Virgin with Angels—Pack of 10 cards £3:99 *SPECIAL OFFER PRICE 2 packs for £6:99. The greeting inside this card is "With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year."



4. Downing College Chapel Choir CD—Special Price £8:99 each. A collection of 18 traditional choral classics recorded by members of the college choir to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the chapel building.

ORDER FORM

Name_____**Matric Year**_____

Address_____

_____**Tel** _____

Item Number	Quantity	Price (Inc P&P)	Total
1. Trees	packs	£2:99 per pack/£4:99 for 2	£ :
2. Robins	packs	£2:99 per pack/£4:99 for 2	£ :
3. Angels	packs	£3:99 per pack/£6:99 for 2	£ :
4. Choir CD		£8:99 each	£ :
		SUB TOTAL	£ :
I wish to include a donation to Downing College			£ :
		GRAND TOTAL	£ :

I enclose a cheque for the sum of £ _____ **(please make cheques payable to Downing College)**

OR

I authorise Downing College to debit from my Switch/Visa/Mastercard the sum of £ _____

Card Number: ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Expiry Date: ☐☐/☐☐ **Issue No:** ☐☐

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Please send your orders to: The Development Office, Downing College, Cambridge CB2 1DQ