Master’s introduction

Welcome to the Trinity Term 2011 edition of CatzEye...

It will not have escaped readers of CatzEye that we are now very close to celebrating this great college’s half-century milestone. 2012 will be a special year for St Catherine’s and it provides a golden opportunity to reflect on our past achievements as well as look to our future. I hope very much that you will want to take part in the celebrations next September.

As you can see in the following pages, our community has much to celebrate in the form of student, Fellow and alumni successes across a breadth of athletic, creative and academic endeavours.

Since the last CatzEye, we have thoroughly enjoyed Sir Trevor Nunn’s tenure as Cameron Mackintosh Professor; welcomed hundreds of members to events including our London party at the Inner Temple, Gardens and our Hong Kong mission; and seen our students excel in sport, drama and music alongside their studies. As you will see, this particular edition of CatzEye has a distinctly musical flavour with news of current students appearing on BBC radio and ITV’s Britain’s Got Talent as well as contributing to numerous musical groups within the College and University (see the interview on page 5). Mark Simpson’s new compositions and... alumni includes musical, academic and professional successes alongside some botanical and horticultural ones!

Although the world of Higher Education might still be uncertainly awaiting the full repercussions of budget cuts and fee increases, we continue to offer a world-class education within a friendly environment. I hope you can see from the JIC and MBC reports what an inclusive and active place St Catherine’s is. Maintaining this excellence, strengthening academic excellence and attracting the best students, irrespective of their financial means, are crucial goals for us, and we are grateful for the support we receive for the CatzFunders Campaign from alumni and friends alike.

For the first time, St Catherine’s hosted a lunch for those who have chosen to make a gift to the College in their Wills. The event brought together College members from across the generations and recognised that these individuals have chosen to make such a personal gift. I would like to thank warmly all those who have chosen to leave a legacy and everyone who has contributed to our fundraising efforts.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of CatzEye and, as ever, we are keen to hear from all our alumni so please do send in your news for future editions.
Students impress on Britain’s Got Talent

Describing the group’s performance as ‘funny, original’ and the royal family needs to see this, judge Louis Walsh sent Out Of The Blue (OOTB) through to the second stage of ITV’s Britain’s Got Talent at a televised audition. Fellow judge Amanda Holden agreed, and gave the group a standing ovation, saying: ‘I thoroughly enjoyed it boys!’ OOTB made it through to the live semi-finals but failed to win either the audience or judges’ vote needed to progress to the final. The show’s winners will perform in front of Her Majesty the Queen at the Royal Variety Performance later this year.

OOTB is an imaginative all-Oxford, all-male, a cappella music troupe: the members arrange all their own music, ‘capturing the essence of original tracks while integrating into them vibrant, exciting and unprecedented ideas to ensure their shows are always fresh and unusual!’ Nick Barstow (2010, Music) and Selali Fiamanya (2010, Medicine) both joined the group when they arrived at St Catherine’s last October.

OOTB has received multiple plaudits since it was founded in 2000, including recently winning ‘Best Musicality’ at Voice Festival UK. Nick and Selali told CatzEye that anyone who wants to know more about the group should visit its website (www.ootb.org.uk) or follow on Twitter (@ootboxford). The group will be returning to Edinburgh this year to perform at the Fringe Festival.

Wilfrid Francis Knapp MA 1904 – 2011

The College is sad to announce the death of Emeritus Fellow Wilfrid Knapp on 30 March 2011. Wilfrid arrived in Oxford as an Exhibitioner at St Catherine’s College in 1922. He returned to New following a year at the Somerville but soon joined St Catherine’s Society as Tutor in Philo in 1924. Wilfrid was one of the College’s founding fellows and will be dearly missed by the whole St Catherine’s community.

Award-winning student journalist

A St Catherine’s undergraduate has been awarded the Philip Geddes Memorial Prize for 2011. Camilla Turner (2009, History), currently editor of student newspaper Cherwell, scooped the £1,000 prize, which is awarded annually to Oxford’s most promising student journalist. The judges were particularly impressed by the quality of her investigative stories and unanimously agreed to award Camilla the prize.

Carolina’s work has also been recognised on the national stage as she wins the 2010 Reporter of the Year prize at the Guardian Student Media Awards. Extending the reach of her journalism well beyond Oxford, Carolina plans to travel to Ghana this summer to work for a newspaper based there.

The College hopes to establish scholarships honouring Wilfrid’s contribution to the College. If you would like to contribute please make cheques payable to St Catherine’s College writing ‘Wilfrid Knapp Memorial Fund’ on the reverse. Please contact Saira Uppal in the Development Office (saira.uppal@stcatz.ox.ac.uk or 01865 281585) if you would like further information.

Wallace Watson Award winner announced

Thomas Mallie (2009, English) is the winner of this year’s Wallace Watson Award. He plans to undertake a solo trek through Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam following a section of the Ho Chi Minh trail that bypassed the principal supply line to central South Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

The journey has particular significance for Thomas, an electrical engineer, as his grandfather was stationed during the war in Kon Tum, where the trail ends.

Thomas was announced as the winner at the Wallace Watson Award Lecture on 10 March, where last year’s recipient, William Carwell-Smith (2004, Mathematics), gave an account of his cycling trip across a section of the Alps from Geneva to Monte Carlo. A full account of the lectures will appear in The Year.

Camilla Turner (centre) at the Guardian Student Media Awards. Photograph by Marta Szczesneba.

Thomas Mallie (right) receiving the Wallace Watson Award from Teddy Watson.

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Inaugural Lunch for Legacy Donors

On 7 May, alumni and friends of St Catherine’s came from near and far to the first ‘Lunch for Legacy Donors’ which recognised the contribution that Legacy Donors make to the College. Well in Bell, the lunch brought together forty-one of the College’s 135 current Legacy Donors and their guests.

The Legacy Donors represented over fifty years of history at St Catherine’s and ranged from former Society Members, who matriculated in 1938, to more recent alumni who have decided to make such a personal gift, as our Legacy Donors also include Fellows and friends of the College.

There have already been ten new legacy pledges this past year. The most recent legacy we received was from the late Fellow, Jack Pole: the funds will be used to support Graduate Students in the Arts and Humanities, as he requested, and will make a wonderful difference to our students.

We are grateful to everyone who was able to attend the lunch. If you would like to know more about leaving a legacy to the College, or would like to inform us of your existing plans, please contact the Development Office.

From the Music House

In April, the band Spring Offensive performed an exclusive rendition of its song, *To Burn Or Build*, for the local BBC show, *Introducing in Oxford*, which aims to support ‘under the radar’ music. The intimate setting for the performance was the Music House at St Catherine’s which was appropriate as the group’s lead vocalist, Lucas Whitworth (2006, Modern Languages) is an alumnus and his brother Theo (2008, English Language & Literature), guitar and vocals, is a current student.

Spring Offensive has released five records to date and received national airplay including being interviewed for the BBC’s 6Music. The band has already toured the UK and its latest single, *A Stutter And A Start*, was released in April in the format of a limited edition eight-page colouring book. Samples of the group’s music and more information can be found at www.myspace.com/springoffensive.

Women’s football

For the first time in several years, the St Catherine’s women’s football team reached the Cuppers final in Hilary Term. Showing determination and skill throughout the competition, the team built on success in previous seasons to beat a combined St Antony’s/Lyceum side 4-2 in the semi-final and set up a final match against New College the following day. Unfortunately the team lost 1-0 in the final, which was a very close game.

Player Becky Taylor (2008, Law) said, ‘We were underdogs in the final as New College had seven University players on the 1-0 result was actually a great achievement and we played exceptionally well.’

First-year student’s artwork exhibited at Oxford Castle

Arthur Laidlaw (2010, History of Art) was one of nine talented artists offered Oxford Castle as a showcase for their works. As part of the 29th annual Oxfordshire Artweeks festival, which took place in May, the art gallery at the Castle and nearby bars and restaurants hosted displays of painting, sculpture and photography.

Arthur told CatzEye that he was proud to have one of his photographs in the exhibition which won a top place in a hotly-contested competition. He has been a regular visitor to the Artweeks Festival in the past but this was the first time he has had his work exhibited. The photograph, *Tombstones*, was taken at Holywell Cemetery in Oxford.

Although he says he’s more of a painter, Arthur is clearly having success using a camera which allows him to get results in less time than it would take to sit and sketch. You can see examples of Arthur’s artwork at www.arthurlaidlaw.com.

Arthur Laidlaw with fellow artists Lucas (centre) and Theo (second from left).
A musical life

CatzEye spoke to Ben Holder (2009, Music) and Jeffrey Douglass (2008, Biological Sciences) about the musical life of the College. Ben started by outlining a few of the projects he has been involved with:

I am one of two Répétiteur Scholars: this means I have responsibility for various aspects of College music, both as a performer and an administrator. I'm a pianist and, as part of the scholarship work, a Répétiteur and a Conductor for the New Chamber Opera in Oxford. I have been lucky enough to work on productions ranging from Cavalli to Rossini and beyond. I also appear quite often as a concert accompanist and occasionally as a harpsichordist.

What are the attractions of studying music in Oxford? Ben said:

Oxford is a city with unrivalled musical heritage and the opportunities for music-making are as exciting as they are diverse. Of course, what makes the degree experience so interesting is balancing various facets of music study with performance: all taught by experts in their respective fields. A challenge, yes, but one to be relished.

What advice would you give to students about balancing their studies with extra-curricular music? Ben said:

There are particular challenges for music students balancing work and playing music outside of the course. Time management is key: once you have found it and are well organised, you can balance it all. I send a lot of emails too.

Jeffrey, who has played with Catz Quintet and Hertford Bruckner Orchestra amongst others, added:

Knowing when to say no; best to start saying no early so you're not player paddled later. Beyond large projects which take up a lot of time in a week, for example when I played in Somerville Train, even a rehearsal per day is monotonous. There are times when I do more sports and music than study. Your priorities not the only thing to do at university. I felt that a person keeps their extra-curricular activities after they leave university more often than their subject.

Ben summed up the music community at St Catherine's:

It has a sense of unity and drive, but also diversity - our interests and disciplines are wide-ranging. Having four students studying music per year makes the College's cohort relatively large.

What is the music community like at St Catherine’s this year? Ben said:

Oxford is a city with unrivalled musical heritage and the opportunities for music-making are as exciting as they are diverse.

Mark Simpson

One remarkable musician leaving St Catherine’s this year is Mark Simpson (2008, Music) who gained fame even before he set foot inside the College. As the only person ever to be named both BBC Young Musician of the Year and BBC Proms/ Guardian Young Composer of the Year, Mark - who was awarded both accolades in 2006 - has quite a reputation to live up to. He has achieved this by using many other things, conducting the Oxford Sinfonietta, the University’s contemporary music ensemble, and leading the Catz Quartet.

This year, Mark launched a CD of works for clarinet and had a work of his own composition premiered in the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall. Mark describes his latest work, Straw Dogs, as: based on a small paragraph in a book by John Gray, about the Chinese ritual where straw dogs are revered and processed and then thrown aside. It’s a metaphor for people to be aware that if they don’t treat the world with respect then it will turn against us and treat us like straw dogs.

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Mark’s CD, Prism: New Works for Clarinet, was launched on 18 April and is widely available.
College Ball

After months of preparation by the twenty-five members of the Ball committee, 12 February had arrived and it was time to see whether all the hard work had paid off. The marquees had been decorated, the bands were waiting in the green room and the champagne had been poured. The doors were ready to be opened.

As the first guests made their way up the red carpet, they were greeted by showgirls, cabaret dancers and jugglers in the champagne reception tent. For those guests who had chosen to dine, this was followed by an exquisite five-course meal, to a background of a cappella music and a string quartet. The atmosphere was one of romance and even sparked a surprise marriage proposal from one of Catz’s own JCR members. As the band sang ‘Bridge Over Troubled Water’ and the other diners applauded, the newly engaged couple re-entered the Ball to make more memories.

Catz was unrecognisable. The iconic architecture was perfectly complemented by the artistic decoration of the production team. The quad had been filled with marquees, creating an open space and ensuring that guests would not feel the chill of the February evening. The red- and yellow-striped style top provided a focal point, and this would later become the main stage for the headline acts. The JCR itself had been transformed into a St Valentine’s beer tent with the walls draped with white silks and curtain illumination. The JCR bar became known as the ‘Stables’, encouraging a festival atmosphere. As the guests wandered deeper into the Ball they were confronted with more and more surreal elements, as if they had entered a world away from Oxford.

All ball ticket holders had access to unlimited high-quality food and drink for the entire evening. The food was provided by several local businesses: from burritos to doughnuts, flapjacks to hog roast – no guest was left unfed. And, of course, a wide variety of drinks was available.

The range of acts meant that each guest, whatever their taste, could not leave disappointed. Those with a competitive streak could try their luck at the arcade games in the Stanleys or the laiquepont, whilst others, more inclined to watch and chat, could indulge in chutney in the cuban tent, surrounded by break-dancers, sumo and circus acts. Photographers and film crews lined the Ball capturing moments to be remembered for a lifetime.

As for musical entertainment, it would be impossible to mention the highlights of each set. To fit with the festival vibe, the Stables hosted chilled folk music followed by some of Oxford’s best DJs. And for those inferring the St Valentine’s weekend with their partners, the Love Nest was filled with the acoustic sounds of guitar and a cappella. The headline acts took to the stage in the big top, each being set up and centre band hoping for big success. After the Big Band and the Wild Emergency Sound, the Little Comets were one of the top names to take to the stage. Frequently played on BBC Radio 1 and regularly touring the country, they entertained a large crowd with their hefty indie beats.

But don’t just take our word for it. Students and alumni agree that the Ball was an incredible success, choosing Catz’s location and suavity of its best. This was the first Ball in seventeen years to be held on site at the College, and despite the huge amount of work that was required to make this possible, and one or two sound complaints, nothing could dampen a Catz party on home soil.

Catz was unrecognisable. The iconic architecture was perfectly complemented by the artistic decoration.

Aidan Clifford, JCR President.

JCR report

About to celebrate its fiftieth year, St Catherine’s shows no sign of losing its characteristic essence, ambition and vitality. This is manifested by the sheer joyfulness of the anniversary Ball as well as achievements spanning sports, the arts and student politics.

The College teams have been a constant source of pride. In football, the 1st XI came third in the premier division and the 2nd XI is the unbeaten league winner of the 2nd XI league. In rugby, despite dropping to the third division, has also provided moments of victory. In hockey, Catz was more than up to the challenges faced at second division and now look to secure a promotion as a division one side. Promotion was also hopefully won by the Catz 1st I1 post team, now in the second division. The running teams spent a rainy evening of celebration in the JCR after the men’s 2nd boat received Blades in Torpids.

This has also been a good year for the arts. Catz Music Society has been working hard to showcase the talents of the JCR through formal recitals and

Jenny Wood (2009, Engineering) and Vicky Noble (2009, English Language & Literature)

Cellist Grace Chatto, from the band Clean Bandit, at the Ball.

‘Catz was unrecognisable. The iconic architecture was perfectly complemented by the artistic decoration.’
Trinity Term started with a new focus on sport and healthy living, seeing the introduction of new MCR circuit training and core exercise classes with Kate Hodgkinson (2010, Nature, Society, and Environmental Policy), yoga classes, and the MCR cricket team captained by Joachim Steinberg (2010, Law). We’re continuing our academic focus with the Graduate Seminar Series, which has seen many MCR members present their work across the College.

Reflecting upon what living and working at St Catz has meant to me, I feel that staying in the College, being connected by College borders (if not in myriad other ways) to the years above and below, and living surrounded by the familiar faces of College life provides a strong basis for attachment to Catz and ensures that the JCR remains an energetic, friendly and supportive community.

I have too many people to thank to fully express my gratitude here. A special note of appreciation must be given here to the Master and the Honorary Bursar who have been ever-patient and helpful and have always made time for me. It has been a wonderful, testing year to be President and I look forward to contributing to the committee’s successors.

Aidan Clifford (2009, History), JCR President

We’ll wrap up the year with the Week 8 Black Tie Dinner and then the annual Garden Party, where we will say goodbye to many of the members who have helped make the St Catz MCR one of the most friendly and active graduate communities in Oxford.

We say goodbye to Christoph Haase (2007, Computing) and Theresa Kevorkian (2009, Oriental Studies), our Co-Presidents, and welcoming in a new committee. Christoph and Theresa did a great job working tirelessly for the MCR, putting on many social events and effectively organizing college life. We also say the departure of Hugh Taylor (2006, Materials Science) and Christina Fair (2006, Sociology), who aided in the effort as Social Secretary and Secretary respectively. We would all like to thank them for doing such an amazing job with our MCR and for all the time they put in.

As Co-Presidents we are both very proud to be an integral part of the graduate community and we will continue to maintain its social ethos, and anticipate another exciting year in the St Catherine’s College MCR.

James Anderson (2010, Statistics) and Mark Curtis (2010, Mathematics), MCR Co-Presidents

2011 Boat Race

Graduate student and cox, Zoe De Toledo (2010, Experimental Psychology) steered the Isis crew to a six length victory over Cambridge’s Goldie in the 2011 Boat Race.
Catz Fellows

Dr Eleanor Stride

Dr Eleanor Stride studied for a BEng and PhD in Mechanical Engineering from University College London. Following the completion of her doctorate in the UCL Ultrasonics Group she was appointed to a Lectureship and a Royal Academy of Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) Research Fellowship. During this time she co-founded the Nanoscale Ultrasonics Research Group which focuses on developing new methods for fabricating bubbles, capsules and other nano- and micro-scale layered structures for a range of biomedical and other applications.

What will you work on when you come to Oxford?

Where to start? I will be taking up a University Lectureship and a Non-Tutorial Fellowship at the College and continuing my research into ultrasonic and bubbles as well as some other areas at the Institute of Biomedical Engineering. In particular, under a new award from the EPSRC Challenging Engineering Scheme I’m going to be developing systems which integrate medical imaging and therapy, for example, for targeted drug delivery.

What are the highs and lows of your work?

As in any lab, it is rewarding when something works! From a teaching perspective it is also great to have an impact on a student, as clichéd as that sounds! It is exciting now to be seeing the work I have been doing translated into medicine - the fact that it is working is so rewarding. On the other hand, it is very frustrating to be doing the same thing again and again if it is not producing good results.

What are you most likely to be found doing away from your research?

That’s very easy! Dancing! Mostly ballroom, Latin and swing to which I’m hopelessly addicted. I also enjoy painting in the tiny amount of spare time left over.

Publications

JC Smith is co-editor of Morphological Autonomy: Perspectives from Romance Inflectional Morphology, which will be published in July 2011 by Oxford University Press. 

Dr Ben Bollig

Dr Ben Bollig, who joins the College from the University of Leeds, is a Latin America specialist whose work concentrates on the poetry and poetics of the region. He studied first at the University of Nottingham and then gained an MA and PhD from King’s College London. He published Néstor Perlongher: The Poetic Search for an Argentine Marginal Voice in 2008. His second book, Modern Argentine Poetry, will be published by University of Wales Press this summer.

Dr Bollig has worked on translations of poetry; his versions of post-1950 River Plate poets have been published in the journals Calque, Callaloo and International Poetry Review; his translations of poetry from the 2000s have appeared in Rattapallax and Janus Head. He has recently published a bilingual collection of the poetry of Cristian Aliaga, in the Manchester Spanish and Portuguese Studies Series. He is an editor of Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies and also a joint-coordinator of the Poetics of Resistance project which is a network of researchers and cultural producers who examine the contemporary relationship between political resistance and poetic creation in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking worlds.

In his spare time he plays football and cricket to no particularly high standard.
Alumni news

London Party 2011

This year’s London Party took place in the spectacular location of the Great Hall of the Inner Temple on 12 May. His Honour Judge Nicholas Jones (1966, Physics) hosted the event which saw 150 alumni catch up with old friends and meet new people. The Master updated alumni on the highlights of College news and the progress of the Catz |fivezero Campaign. Interested guests were also treated to a talk on the Temple Church by the Master of the Temple, Robin Griffith-Jones.

Society Gaudy

May also saw the College host a special Gaudy for alumni who matriculated before 1962, during the time of the St Catherine’s Society. Alumni from as far away as New Zealand enjoyed the event, the first of its kind for some years.

Ground-breaking electric car visits St Catherine’s

Steve Groves (1985, Engineering) demonstrated the world’s first mass-market electric car at the College in May. Steve had returned to Oxford to give a lecture at the Department of Engineering Science on Nissan’s ‘Green Prophecy’ and the technology behind the new Nissan Leaf launched earlier that year. His lecture works as the Vehicle Development Manager for Electric Vehicles at Nissan Technical Centre Europe in Cranfield.

The Nissan Leaf, which has a top speed of ninety miles per hour and range of around one hundred miles per charge, is the result of a global collaboration between Nissan’s Technical Centres in Japan, the USA and Europe. Steve told Catseye that those who went out for a spin found the most impressive features to be the acceleration and quietness compared with a traditional vehicle.

Leading botanist returns home to new role in New South Wales

It was announced in April that Professor David Mabberley (1967, Botany) has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the New South Wales Royal Botanic Gardens Trust in Sydney, Australia, taking effect from 22 August 2011. Professor Mabberley, an Australian citizen, will be returning home to New South Wales from his current position as Keeper (Director) of the Herbarium, Library, Art and Archives at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London. An Executive Director of The Botanic Gardens Trust he will be responsible for the management of Sydney’s Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain, The National Herbarium of New South Wales, the Australian Botanic Garden at Mount Annan near Camden and The Blue Mountains Botanic Garden.

In taking up the post, Professor Mabberley builds on a distinguished career which has led to his being recognised as an eminent botanist, historian of science and an authority on botanical art. He is the author of the internationally acclaimed Mabberley’s Plant-Book, which gives an overview of the world’s flora and is currently in its third edition. He has written fifteen other books, including biographies of figures such as Robert Brown, the naturalist on Matthew Flinders’ circumnavigation of Australia (1801-03). He has also written books on botanical artists such as Ferdinand Bauer, who accompanied Flinders and Brown.

On the announcement of the appointment, Professor Mabberley said: ‘The opportunities are fantastic... so I can hardly wait to get back to New South Wales!’

‘The opportunities are fantastic... so I can hardly wait to get back to New South Wales!’
News in brief

In March, Alan Bolesworth (1971, Modern Languages) released a CD of ten original songs under the title *Twitching*.

Self-adjustable glasses designed by Professor Josh Silver (1964, Physics), Director of the Centre for Vision in the Developing World, have been voted the idea most likely to make the biggest impact on healthcare by 2020 at the Healthcare Innovation Expo 2011.

Rowan Joffe (1992, English) directed Helen Mirren in a big-screen remake of Graham Greene’s *Brighton Rock*.

David Taplin (1961, Engineering) received the title of Emeritus President from The International Congress of Fracture. The ICF is an international body for promoting worldwide cooperation among scientists and engineers dealing with mechanics and mechanisms of fracture, fatigue and strength of solids.

In April, Peter Goult and Kane Moore (both 2004, English Language & Literature) undertook an eleven-day charity cycle ride from John O’Groats to Land’s End. The pair raised over £2,500 for two good causes: the Anne Frank Trust and the Save the Children Libya Appeal. While they were barely able to stand by the end, the trip was well worth it.


Dr Raghubir (Raj) Prasad (1957, Botany) has just retired as a scientist and, at one time as Adjunct Professor in Forestry from the Canadian Forestry Service in Victoria, British Columbia. He had a very productive career in plant physiology and is an internationally recognised weed scientist.

He obtained his MSc from Allahabad University, India and entered St Catherine’s Society in 1977. After his DPhil in Oxford, Raj worked in the USA and in Africa. Raj leaves the Forestry Service after thirty-five years of research, training students and winning honours and awards. He is now happily retired with his wife and has three grown-up children. He feels grateful to St Catherine’s for the nurturing and training he received.

Appointments

Richard Killis (1970, Law), Rob Thomas (1990, Law) and Martin Hutchings (1978, Modern History) were named in the QC list earlier this year.

Malwina Luczak (1994, Mathematics) is leaving her current position as Reader at the London School of Economics to take up a Professorship in Mathematics at the University of Sheffield in September. Her research covers various aspects of probability and random graph theory.

Publications

John Phillips’ (1970, Modern Languages) seventh monograph, a book on the films of Alain Robbe-Grillet, has been published by Manchester University Press in its series on French Film Directors.

Vladislav Bevc (1962, Engineering) has written *The Energy Primer for Kids: With a Primer for Grown-Ups*. He hopes that the book will arm both children and grown-ups with simple, rational, and science-based facts which point the way for them to form independent opinions, and make their own decisions, about energy matters.

Alumni news

Shaped by contributions from alumni, this richly illustrated book covers the history of the College from its beginnings as a Dispensary to the present day. The book will be a fitting commemoration of this landmark centenary and we hope that as many alumni as possible will enjoy the volume.

To view sample pages from the book and find details of how to take advantage of the special pre-publication subscription offer visit: www.ric1stox.ac.uk/stkates/development or contact the Development Office.

St Catherine’s 50th anniversary book: (£35.00, hardback)

For further information, contact

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 St Catherine’s College
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Extra Virgin!
Learning to be an olive farmer the hard way


It's a crisp February day in Tuscany, and I've spent the morning up a tree pruning. If someone had told me when I was an undergraduate at St Catz that I'd end up as an olive farmer I would have laughed like a drain! When I graduated, I started in medical publishing then moved to television production, sailing up and down the BBC. Along the way, I met my future husband, Fabio, who had moved to London from Rome, and we had a happy urban life with busy careers.

But tucked away between the work schedule, city life, friends and family, I had a secret fantasy - a country life in Tuscany! And for all I know, my fantasy Tuscan life would have remained just that, a fantasy, if my life hadn't turned me mobility-in-fact, two abilities. The first was when our department at the BBC was closed and all the staff made redundant. The second, much more pleasant, was when I discovered I was pregnant - with twins!

With my life suddenly turned upside down, the prospect of finding work in the cut-throat world of television production, with two babies in tow, seemed a lot more fantastical than being an olive farmer in Tuscany Betrue, Fabio and I began to consider this seemingly crazy idea, and the more we thought about it, the more we liked it, and the more it seemed a real possibility.

And so it was that one spring morning I found myself driving along a sunny hillside of olive trees in Tuscany to view a house for sale. The road ended at a large pair of beautiful old iron gates. As I stepped through them, my heart seemed to stop. San-draped stone, aged wooden doors, a garden with huge trees, and a spectacular view over the valley and the medieval village of Massa. I wanted to cry. It was so beautiful. The owner showed me around. A vaulted room with terracotta floors, a huge wood-fuelled bread oven, a chronological house, and endless views over the valley. We stroked around olive groves planted centuries ago. Through a chestnut wood where he showed me the spring that fed the house.

That was six years ago, and the look the owner gave me when we should hands on the deal, has stayed with me. He asked me, rather dubiously, if I really wanted this sort of life. I thought, what a silly question, who wouldn't? Now, I understand. There's the back-breaking strimming in the olive groves, five times a year, to clear the high hedge, shoulder-high hedges, cutting the machine-driven strimmer on your back up and down the terrace. There's pruning old trees, twice a year, and the two-month long harvest collecting the olives by hand, de-stoning the dead wood to clear from the chestnut wood, chip, haul to the toaster, clear to the house, unlock, chip, sell and stack for the central heating. We've seen our custodians lent be plucked up by the wind, discovered we're allergic to olive flowers, and we've been chased out of the house by hornets in the chimney.

We've learnt it all the hard way. But then there are the rewards. Seeing the first trickle of oil emerging at the mill - and the taste! In England, I always bought the cheapest olive oil. I always bought the cheapest supermarket idea oil - bitter, greasy stuff that's a million miles from the real thing. Our oil is light, fragrant, fruity with a peppery tang.

So now, six years later, when I look out over the valley of olive trees to Massa, and hear the wild boar crunching on our pears below the house, I know it was all worthwhile. We have brought the pleasures of all of this with us - people who come to stay in the self-catering apartments that we've made out of the annex to the house. When they first arrive, they usually say, ‘It’s so much more beautiful than the photos!’ And it’s true, it’s hard to capture the beauty, the tranquility of this place. I hope you’ll come and visit us one day and see for yourself.

Marinella is offering a ten per cent discount to all St Catherine’s alumni and staff (excluding July and August) and a free bottle of her own extra-virgin, organic olive oil on arrival.

www.casalebozzo.com
SEPTMBER 2011

Saturday 10
Oxford Open Doors 2011: guided tours of the College will take place at 2.30pm and 3.30pm.

Friday 16 – Sunday 18
Oxford Alumni Weekend

Saturday 19
Balcony Dinner

Friday 23 – Sunday 25
the Ladies Cadbury Lecture

OCTOBER 2011 (date TBC)
Cameron Mackintosh Lecture

Friday 14
Autumn Golf Tournament (with Pembroke and Worcester) at Southfields Golf Club, Oxted

Saturday 22
Degree Day

Saturday 29
Bettehams’ Day

NOVEMBER 2011

Saturday 5
Degree Day

December

Friday 14
Autumn Golf Tournament (with Pembroke and Worcester) at Southfields Golf Club, Oxted

Saturday 22
Degree Day

Saturday 29
Benefactors’ Day

DECEMBER 2011

Thursday 1
Carol Service

Further details available on the College website: www.stcatz.ox.ac.uk/alumni-development

To book your place on any of these events please contact Frances Ritholz.
E-mail: frances.ritholz@stcatz.ox.ac.uk
Tel: 01865 281596

CLUES ACROSS

1. Retire Fellows to a backstreet in branches of the University (11)
7. Amphitheatre—it’s huge (9)
12. & 13. Milder onion soups for Biannual College meal (10, 6)
13. See 12 ac
14. It comes between her and a singer in the altogether (3)
16. This sort of game is a bit hit or miss (8)
18. Etymologically it’s a salt maker: e.g. iodine (7)
19. Down under bird or fruit (4)
20. “The father named his ranch—’cos that’s where the sons raise meat” (old joke) (5)
22. Massaging thus is a tonic (7)
24. Sir Cameron—; he’s associated with Cats— and Catz! (10)
25. A. E. Housman’s was from Shropshire (3)
28. First degree for the jailbird philosopher (5)
29. Mythical princess placing money before father (6)
32. Home of CERN (6)
34. Halt! Get in shape in the spring (9)
35. Atheist GP makes pasta (9)
37. Garment torn in romantic literature from library—chilling stuff! (6)
39. Gambler seen on the Cherwell (6)
40. Flares or topees could be this (5)
42. Body of water at heart of research (3)
43. Oxford Theatre— it makes dons inhale (10)
47. & 55. No laughing matter? On the contrary— it’s a gas! (7, 5)
50. The Royal Navy leaves Bernard a facial growth (5)
52. & 53. Pastime involving clue for buried treasure (4, 7)
53. See 52.
54. Posh shop (8)
58. The atomic number of 5 down (3)
59. Uplifted—yet flattened by the sound of it (6)
60. I’m—and he’s—at uni, mixed up in the liberal arts (10)
62. “I respect you days, but—!” by the sound of it, it leads to divorces (9)
63. Presses ties badly with sacerdotal women (11)

CLUES DOWN

1. Do wise men take such measures? (7)
2. Early victim of volcanic ash (7)
3. Painted they were used to get a quorum to the forum (5)
4. Quality of Chopin’s “Funeral March”? (12)
5. Light gas? (4)
6. Thus this with 61 could give first course for 12 & 13? (2)
7. Helicopter producing warm downdraft? (7)
8. The Poles learnt badly—they lit the way in times gone by (8)
9. Type to give an order? (4)
10. The kind of dog that produced this crossword? (7, 6)
11. Manic tutorial disturbed entry to University (13)
15. What they do is rocket science (4)
17. Leave game (2)
18. What bees do when they don’t know the words (3)
21. Mandelson’s white elephant? (4)
23. Old historian having abandoned us is silent (5)
26. What Monsieur would say to a TV repeat? (4-2)
27. Restored and reinstated (13)
30. Man to swap words with (5)
31. Artists’ models— they’re such a tease! (6)
33. Courses and resources (4, 3, 5)
36. Tati...and an agenda (8)
44. "The — of Virtue"—by Matt Ridley (7)
45. Capable—even hatless (4)
46. Born a Frenchwoman? (3)
48. "The — of Virtue":—by Matt Ridley (7)
49. Food parcels from shipwreck on Samoa (7)
51. It’s all about religious education (2)
55. See 47
56. A little bird tells me he’s the architect of 43 (4)
57. Mount for Hokusai picture? (4)
61. The opposite of the sort of clue this is (2)

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For your chance to win a copy of Mark Simpson’s CD Prism (page 5) and Alan Bolseworth’s Twitching (page 10), have a go at this edition’s prize crossword by College Enigmatist Chris Maslanka (1973, Physics).

To enter the draw send your completed crossword to: CatzEye Development Office St Catherine’s College Manor Road Oxford OX1 3UJ by 15 August.

To the Editor:

An annual competition is held for students of the College to solve our prize crossword. The winner will be announced on the College website www.stcatz.ox.ac.uk and will receive a copy of Mark Simpson’s CD Prism.

The Examining Committee

Catherine Ede

‘The — of Virtue’—by Matt Ridley (7)