



# FLOREAT

MAGDALENA

HILARY 2010

In this issue: Fishy Business • Magdalen Women • The Talented Mr Holdsworth



## De Arboribus Magdalensibus

Magdalen's woodlands and water walks, its perfectly groomed gardens and exquisite quadrangles, are not least among the charms of the College, which attract visitors from around the world and lure old members from every generation back, to wander round their old haunts and to reminisce.

The tranquil precincts alongside the Cherwell, shaded by scores of centenarian trees, give an impression of unchanging, natural serenity. Fallow deer have grazed on Magdalen land for more than three centuries.

The successful maintenance of this timeless and beautiful environment is, the product of extraordinary diligence and vigilance on the part of Magdalen's seven-strong team of gardeners, led by Head Gardener, Claire Shepherd. To maintain these exceptional standards, Claire and her team face a complex range of horticultural, landscaping and logistical challenges.

Members who have visited College over the last 12 months may have noticed the sad loss of the magnificent copper beech (*fagus Sylvatica purpurea Pendula*) which stood for over 100 years in the Fellows' Garden. Sadly, the tree was infected by the destructive *Ustulina* fungus (*Kretzschmaria deusta*) and, despite the most inventive of salvage efforts, the gardeners took the decision that it had to be felled in spring 2009.

Many of Magdalen's other venerable trees are also vulnerable. A number of the majestic horse chestnuts (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) are already suffering from Phytophthora or Bleeding Canker. This infection of the bark is caused by a bacterium, *Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *Aesculi*, which spreads through the cambium layer of the tree. It causes the trunk to bleed a dark, sticky fluid, which may lead to crown-thinning and eventual crown loss. Magdalen has already lost three prize horse chestnuts; seven others around the walks are now at such an advanced stage of decay that they may have to be felled.

The loss of so many of these susceptible specimens has meant a comprehensive rethink of future planting plans, which are now set to include rather hardier species, including



Photograph: Benjamin Spagnalio

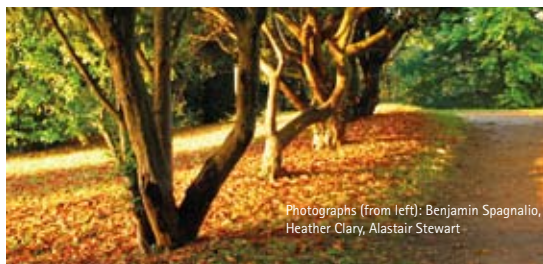
hornbeam and willow. The gardeners have also had to modify projected planting schemes along the vulnerable river banks, such as the brooks and waterways around Addison's Walk. Extreme spring weather over the last few years has seen the Cherwell frequently in spate during Hilary Term, with both the College Water Meadow and Angel & Greyhound Meadow, on the eastern bank, inundated, for weeks at a time.

The myriad challenges of keeping Magdalen's grounds looking their best all year round is down to the Herculean efforts and to the dedication of the College's gardeners. Their crucial attention to detail and comprehensive forward planning are supported by the generosity of old members, who continue to donate generously to the Annual Fund. The College grounds have been immeasurably enriched by the sustained programme of investment provided by the Shusha Guppy Tree Fund. Persian-born singer and writer Shusha (1935-2008), a close friend of President Anthony Smith, generously endowed the fund in 2001, in memory of the joy and pleasure she had derived over many years of visits to Magdalen's glorious grounds.

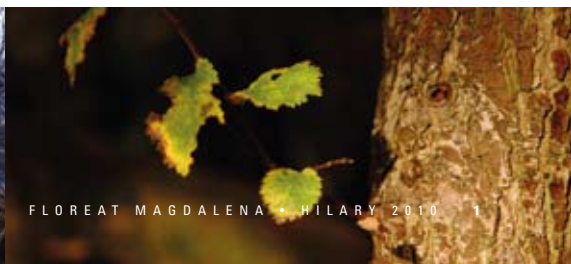
Thanks to this investment and attention, the College grounds continue to evolve. What a pity we will never know quite how Addison, himself a keen landscape gardener, might have pronounced on these changes to his beloved Magdalen landscape.

**Dee Jackson (1980)**

*with thanks to Claire Shepherd, Head Gardener* 🐾



Photographs (from left): Benjamin Spagnalio, Heather Clary, Alastair Stewart



Photograph: Helen Burt

## Looking to the Future with new Development Director Sean Rainey




Photograph: Helen Burt

Sean Rainey arrived at Magdalen at the beginning of November 2009, but he is no stranger to Oxford. He has eight years of fundraising experience here, primarily at St Peter's College, where he was a Fellow and Director of Development. Sean is a graduate of the Queen's University, Belfast and the University of Leiden, and his early career was spent abroad, initially in Belgium and then Eastern Europe.

*"I feel enormously privileged to have been warmly welcomed into the Magdalen community and doubt that there is a more exciting fundraising role in higher education in this country."*

Sean joins the College at an interesting and challenging time. Magdalen has ambitious plans for the future, but as with other educational institutions, the College is working in an environment of reduced government support and economic uncertainty. Student fees and government funding contribute less than 20% of the College's income with the remaining 80% coming from careful management of its endowment, residential income from members, conference business, and fundraising. The College will have to work hard to secure the funds that allow it to maintain its infrastructure and the high standards of teaching and research for which Magdalen is renowned.

Magdalen is fortunate to have generous support from its members, and it is this support which will allow the College to continue to grow and develop. Sean is delighted to have met a number of Magdalen alumni at recent events, including at Luke Johnson's generous reception at the Royal Society of Arts in London, and has been impressed by the passion and pride that Magdalen members have for this institution. Sean is looking forward to meeting more of you in the coming months and hopes that you will join us in working together to secure and advance this remarkable college. 



London Reception 2009. Photograph: Claire Blake

# The Magdalen Society Committee

*We should like to thank everyone who voted in the election online or by post—it was a huge success with an unprecedented level of participation. The newly elected committee met for the first time in November, when they appointed the Chairman and Deputy Chairman and discussed the co-option of younger members as set out in the amendments to the Society Constitution.*

## A Word from the Chairman

It was very encouraging to have such an excellent field of candidates in the recent elections, resulting in a committee which is larger and more representative by age and geography of the alumni body, and thus well-placed to advise and assist the Development staff in planning the College's alumni relations programme. We had the first meeting of the new committee in November, in London, with Chip Holman dialling in from the States. There were lots of fresh ideas and offers of help. We need to ensure that we provide a range of events with appeal, both in content and pricing, to the widest possible constituency. With this in mind we shall be inviting your views on the types of events you wish to see—further details in the next edition of *Floreat* and on the College website.

Meanwhile, we should like to encourage anyone who has access to something they think might be of interest to alumni to get in touch: this could include private views or places not normally open to the public. Magdalen Society events must be self-funding, so free or subsidised venues are helpful. Please get in touch with the Development Office on 01865 286658 or 276082.

**Judith Hibbert (1980)**  
**Magdalen Society Chairman** 



CHAIRMAN:  
Judith Hibbert (1980)



DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:  
Michael Drexler (1993)



Martyn Bracewell (1983)



Paul Campy (1995)



James Cronin (1994)



John Crosse (1975)



William Holman (1975)



Jonty Olliff-Cooper (2001)



Trevor Pitman (1977)



Nick Sayers (1978)



Fiona Thompson (1993)



Glyn Turton (1963)



Sophie Williamson (2005)



Nathan Wood (1989)



Rick and John Stein

# Food for Thought

*Professor John Stein continues his ground-breaking research into diet and human behaviour.*

Professor John Stein, Fellow and Tutor in Medicine (1970–2007), may be officially retired, but the tireless and popular Magdalen medic continues to pursue ground-breaking research—most notably into juvenile reading difficulties.

Professor Stein's interest in the latter subject was triggered by a visit he and R.W. (Bill) Johnson, then college Fellow in Politics, made to the East End of London in 1974. The two Oxford dons gave a series of talks at several of the newly-established 'comprehensive' schools to encourage the pupils to think of applying to Oxford.

During the course of this tour, both men were appalled to discover that around half of the pupils left these new schools at the age of 16—not for Oxford, and most of them not even to a job. Their schooling had completely failed these young people: they had not learned how to read.

The modern world demands a reasonable standard of literacy. Being unable to read is now acknowledged as one of the most common causes of childhood low self esteem and lack of self confidence. The attendant frustrations of illiteracy can drive sufferers into vandalism, violence, and criminality. Of the current United Kingdom prison population, at least 60 per cent are estimated to have serious difficulties with basic literary skills.

Professor Stein is a neurologist by training. He found that many patients with diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis were unable to hold their eyes steady, so that letters appeared to move around and cross over each other. He was able to show that these symptoms were due to damage to large nerve cells in the brain, known as visual magno-cells, which are designed to detect movement. He subsequently discovered that many children with reading difficulties had similar symptoms.

An essential part of reading is the identification of individual letters and their correct order, something which is impossible to do if they are moving around—imagine trying to read when very drunk. Professor Stein showed that many dyslexics—strikingly poor readers who are intelligent in every other way—also exhibit impaired development of their magno-cells. This may be because the cells in question move into the wrong position during the earliest development of the brain; it may also explain why so many dyslexics suffer from unstable vision.

Professor Stein has developed some

simple ways of improving magno-cellular function. He found that yellow filters, which enhance visual magno-cellular input, can often improve the reading abilities of visual dyslexics significantly. Blue filters can be even more effective in a different way: they help to synchronise the body's internal clock. Thus, blue filters are helpful not only with reading, but with juvenile sleep patterns, mood and even migraine headaches.

Magno-cells are not solely confined to vision; they form a complete sub-system within the brain, dedicated to the detection of change. These cells express a unique signature protein, (CAT 301), via which they both recognise and communicate with each other. Professor Stein's research has indicated that magno-cells in the auditory system of dyslexic individuals can also be abnormal. This may explain why these individuals often appear to have a 'phonological' deficit, including difficulty in distinguishing sounds, such as 's', 'sh', 'th', 'f'. Understanding the origin of these problems has led to the implementation of simple techniques to help these children, such as teaching them rhythm and music, which combine to improve their reading skills.

Professor Stein has set up a number of Dyslexia Research clinics. He has been able to collate the records of around 400 families who have at least one dyslexic child. Professor Anthony Monaco, Head of Oxford's Neurogenetics Laboratory, has thus been able to analyse the DNA of the relevant families in a search for genetic linkage.

Two important genes have been identified via this research. The first, on Chromosome 6, controls a surface signature molecule, rather like CAT 301.

When it is down regulated, as it appears to be in the case of dyslexia, nerve cells, particularly magno-cells, fail to take up their proper positions in the developing brain. This failure to form proper networks may explain the abnormalities in dyslexia. The other gene, on Chromosome 18, appears to be involved in omega-3 fatty acid metabolism.

In the years leading up to the Second World War, Dr Hugh Sinclair, another Magdalen medical tutor (from 1937 to 1980), concluded that the diet of London's East End population was dangerously deficient in vitamins, minerals and omega-3 fatty acids, derived from fish oil. In 1942, Sinclair was able to persuade the war-time government to provide these essential nutrients via free supplements of cod liver

oil, malt and orange juice, initially given to all pregnant women and young children. Sadly, the programme was abandoned with the end of rationing in 1952.

Six decades later, the average Western diet is still sorely lacking in minerals from vegetables, vitamins and omega-3 fatty acids from fish. Magno-cellular neurones are particularly vulnerable to a lack of omega-3s, since these are essential for nerve membrane flexibility. Professor Stein decided to see whether giving supplements of omega-3 fatty acids might be of benefit to struggling readers.

The earliest results were spectacular: three months of fish oil omega-3s (compared with a placebo test group) tripled rates of reading progress in a test group of children.

The supplements also significantly improved the children's concentration, mood and behaviour; the number of playground fights fell significantly.

Since this extraordinary breakthrough, Professor Stein has been applying his research in the UK's prisons. A limited preliminary study has established that simply giving young offenders regular supplements containing minerals, vitamins and omega-3s has reduced their propensity for peer violence within prison by around one third, compared with a placebo test group. This is a larger proven reduction than previously achieved via any other social or psychological methods.

Professor Stein is now repeating a similar trial with more than a thousand other inmates and intends to publish the results in 2011.

One unexpected consequence of John's new-found enthusiasm for fish is that he often teams up with his younger brother, celebrity chef Rick Stein, to cook, eat and talk about the health benefits of fish. A recent joint presentation at the Royal Institution was attended by 600 eager foodies and just as many flocked to a similar two-hander at the Willard Hotel in Washington DC. Chef and restaurateur Rick is committed to helping his brother's research and was a recent visitor to Polmont prison in Falkirk, where the Stein brothers launched the current prison study together.

Nutritional pioneer and fellow Magdalen man, Hugh Sinclair, would be justly proud.

*With Sincere Thanks to Professor Stein* 



Photograph: Helen Burt

## Why Parliament Needs Physicists

The Engineering and Physics Gaudy began in the afternoon of 5th September with a talk in the new Auditorium by Group Captain Jayne Millington (1980) entitled 'The Challenge of the Sound Barrier on Land', the story of the breaking of the sound barrier by Andy Green and Richard Noble's team in October 1997. After a champagne reception in Cloisters, we all enjoyed a splendid dinner with engaging companions, at which guest speaker Mr John Hemming MP (1978) explored the importance of a scientific background for Members of Parliament. According to Mr Hemming, there are fewer physicists in the House of Commons than there are MPs who went to Magdalen (of whom there are 10).

'Why does Parliament need physicists and engineers?' Mr Hemming asked, and went on to point out that they have been taught to be numerate, whereas numbers are so often meaningless to others. They are not shocked by the notion that things could change, he added. In the competition between the laws of physics and the laws of economics, the former will always win. And furthermore, said Mr Hemming, most physicists would be very much in favour of nuclear fusion as our principal mode of energy supply, provided—of course—that the fusion source were at a safe distance. Mr Hemming thought 93 million miles about right.

It was an amusing and informative speech. There was much encouragement for younger alumni to consider the attractions of a parliamentary career, particularly since Parliament at present seems to require a goodly injection of the clever and the numerate. He advised all Magdalen engineers and physicists to take note. It was also a pleasure to see Professor

Gail ter Haar (Visiting Professor in the Nuffield Department of Surgery at Oxford); many of us will remember her father, Professor Dirk ter Haar, who was a Fellow at the College for many years. This was but one of the many happy memories reawakened by the evening. Our thanks to Magdalen for such a varied and interesting event.

*Marten van der Veen (1964)* 

## Music Masterclass with Steven Isserlis

One of the musical highlights of Michaelmas Term was the public Cello Masterclass given by Steven Isserlis CBE on Saturday afternoon, 17th October, an event which attracted a full audience of Magdalen students, Fellows, and old members. No fewer than five junior members of College—Chris Terepin, Tim Coombes, Stefan Knapik, Ninfea Cruttwell-Read, and Gavin Kibble—study the cello, and this 'critical mass' of talent gave Isserlis the opportunity to offer fascinating insights into his own interpretative practice. The focus of the class was 20th-century France and Russia, with music by Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Schnittke. Isserlis himself concluded several hours of gripping teaching with his own performance of Prokofiev's Concertino of 1952, accompanied by Magdalen graduate student Ceri Owen. Ceri, graduate keyboardist Jonathan Oddie, and old



Illustration: Helen Burt

member Guy Newbury (1982) accompanied the cellists throughout the class, which stimulated excited conversation among audience members and left an indelible trace on the young musicians who profited from the exacting, if always insightful, criticism of a leading performer. The class was made possible through the generosity of our Annual Fund donors, and it was wonderful to see so many of our supporters on the day. Stay tuned—and in tune!—for the announcement of next year's Masterclass.


*Laurence Dreyfus*  
Fellow and Tutor in Music 

## 16th–18th April 2010 North American Reunion

*Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York*

Magdalen College will once again be taking part in Oxford University's North American Reunion at the Waldorf Astoria in New York over the weekend of the 16th to the 18th April 2010. The University is putting together an exciting programme of lectures and events; more details can be found at <http://www.oxfordna.org/>.

The College will also be hosting its own reception in New York that weekend and there will be a special event for Magdalen lawyers. Further information will appear on the College website and invitations will be issued in due course.

We hope that many of our members in North America will be able to join us and we very much look forward to seeing you there. 



Photograph: Marilyn Bowler

## Magdalen Women Celebrate First Three Decades

The day began with a witty welcome from Magdalen Society Chairman Judith Hibbert (1980) who introduced Dominique Jackson (1980) and Clare Bucknell (2007) who reflected on their rather distinct experiences of life at Magdalen. Dee's contemporaries were among the first to arrive at College and had to adapt to an overwhelmingly male environment, in which female toilets, with locking doors, were considered a dangerous innovation. These recollections were followed by the day's keynote presentation from Junior Research Fellow Miriam Bazan-Peregrino. For her D.Phil., completed in 2007, Miriam studied the development of a new treatment for breast cancer, whereby a virus is genetically modified to enable it to kill breast cancer cells. As the Bellhouse Research Fellow by Examination in Biomedical Engineering at Magdalen, Miriam is working with ultrasound therapy to enhance the delivery of the virus to the tumour, and believes that this radical approach may lead the treatment of breast cancer in a new and important direction.

Following an impressive piano recital by Ruth Minton (2007), the assembled alumnae returned to the auditorium to participate in a panel discussion, chaired

by Fellow in English, Professor Laurie Maguire. Six Magdalen women with diverse career histories exchanged views and took questions from the audience. Professor Elizabeth Cooke (1980) has recently been appointed for a five-year term as a Law Commissioner for England and Wales; Karen Doherty (1987) published her successful book on childcare (inspired by a return to Magdalen for a Gaudy dinner) after a career in American network television; Barbara Domayne-Hayman (1980) currently works as Chief Executive Officer of the biotechnology company Stabillitech; Fiona Thompson (1993) was a member of Prime Minister Tony Blair's strategy unit before joining the Investor Client Management team at JP Morgan; and Lorna Todd (1980) is a clinical psychologist, responsible for the emotional health of young offenders in Islington, North London. Prompted by searching audience questions on the nature of their experiences at Magdalen and thereafter, the six panellists debated how the College had helped them in their success, and how, in its history as a male-dominated environment, it might also have held them back.

The day was a highly insightful event, both confirming the astounding achievements of the College's female alumnae, and suggesting the extent of the struggle required to make those achievements possible. Magdalen women, we concluded, have accomplished a great deal in 30 years. It is now up to the current generation to ensure that we continue to uphold such high standards.

**Clare Bucknell (2007)** 📌



Sarah Carter (1980), Professor Jane Powell (1980) and Lorna Todd (1980).  
Photograph: Marilyn Bowler



## Gourmet Dinner

Photograph: Helen Burt

*In response to tremendous support at the London dinner last year, and in response to members' suggestions, Magdalen organised a gourmet dinner at the Oxford and Cambridge Club in November.*

*We were delighted to have a full house of 55 guests in the Princess Marie Louise Room (named after one of Queen Victoria's granddaughters) where the dinner was almost as lavish as a state banquet. We drank six different wines during the evening, including an excellent Champagne, red Burgundy, and Port. These accompanied a four-course dinner, which featured a lemon sole and lobster mousse starter, beef main course and a delightful champagne and vanilla parfait for dessert. A brief speech was given by Vice President elect Dr Toby Garfitt, who brought members up to date on current college projects. The Floreat toast was proposed by Judith Hibbert, the Society Chairman. One can only hope that demand exists for another gourmet dinner—I, for one, could certainly go another round...*

**Trevor Pitman (1977)** 📌

Photograph: Helen Burt



# The Talented Mr Holdsworth

*Poet, Jacobite, Grand Tourist, Teacher, Classicist, and Architect of the New Building*

It was the idea of Edward Butler, President of Magdalen (1722–1745), to build a quadrangle, starting with the New Building, on the north side of Magdalen in the 1720s. Butler raised the money, managed the project, and sought advice from architects such as Nicholas Hawksmoor and James Gibbs. But the designs were mainly the work of Edward Holdsworth.

Holdsworth was born in 1684, the eighth child of Thomas Holdsworth and Ann Winch. Edward went from Winchester College to Oxford, where he matriculated at Corpus in 1704, and then moved to Magdalen for a demyship. His Oxford career overlapped with Edward Butler's; the two were colleagues and probably good friends—they certainly stayed in touch for the rest of their lives.

Photograph: Claire Blake. Sculptor unknown.



## Poet

Holdsworth found fame in 1708 with *Muscipula sive Cambro-Myo-Machia*, a mock-heroic poem satirizing the Welsh and their love of cheese. His poem was translated into English, and was one of the very few British Neo-Latin poems to be published in Italy. Thomas Richards of Jesus College responded with *Hoglandia*, a satire against Hampshire, Holdsworth's birthplace. Holdsworth was still referred to as 'the author of *Muscipula*' decades later.

## Jacobite

About this time, Edward Butler became a Fellow of Magdalen College and Holdsworth looked set to follow in Butler's footsteps when his turn came for a Fellowship in 1715. But unlike Butler, Holdsworth refused to take the oath of allegiance to George I, turned down the Fellowship, and left Oxford. Holdsworth's Jacobitism would be a theme that ran through the rest of his career.

## Grand Tourist

Holdsworth conducted five tours of the Continent, the first in 1719–20. He returned from his last tour in 1745, the year before he died, having spent 12 years on the Continent, mostly in Italy.

Some of his students were Jacobites themselves, and if they were not of that tribe when they left England, they were often converted before their return. Horace Mann reported that Holdsworth was 'notoriously attached to the Pretender... and is known to debauch the sentiments of the young English.'

His companions on his first tour were the 19-year-old William Craven, 3rd Baron Craven, George Lockhart of Carnwath, and three others. Later tours included Richard Bulkeley, another committed Jacobite; George Pitt, later Envoy to Turin and Ambassador to Spain; William Drake; Thomas Townson, Magdalen Fellow and James Dawkins of Laverstoke, who had to leave his companions under mysterious circumstances.

There was a musical element to Holdsworth's travels that is recorded in his correspondence with Charles Jennens, Handel's librettist.

He reported on musical events and personalities, such as the quality of the castrato Farinelli's singing. Holdsworth was responsible for one of Jennens's major acquisitions, Cardinal Ottoboni's collection, including the music of Scarlatti and Marcello. His most unusual purchase was a harpsichord, which Holdsworth bought for Jennens in Florence in mid-1732. Jennens returned these favours by supplying Holdsworth with Oxford *Almanacks*, plays, and other printed material, as well as managing Holdsworth's money.

## Teacher

Between tours, Holdsworth ran a school in Winchester with five students and a housekeeper he described as too old to fall in love with. This was something of an experiment for him, for he wrote that 'if the youngsters shou'd prove refractory, they will make me crazy, but if they are good natur'd & governable, I hope I shall not repent of my engagement.'

The school continued for a couple of years, during which Holdsworth wrote of the boys having measles and colds and of taking them rambling. Although he was cheerful about this venture, his letters suggest a man who would rather be travelling further afield.

## Classicist

Holdsworth's fame as author of *Muscipula* remained with him, but he was also a noted student of the Classics. Much of his correspondence with Jennens concerned the adventures of Holdsworth's *Pharsalia* and *Philippi*. When Holdsworth diffidently suggested anonymous publication, Jennens assured him that his name on the title-page would help sell the book, for 'where you are known, whether personally or only by Report, you are always consider'd as a Master of Classical Learning.'

Joseph Spence, editor of Holdsworth's posthumous *Remarks and Dissertations on Virgil*, commented that his 'excellent taste for poetry, and his superior talents in classical learning, and particularly in poetical criticism, have been as well known, and allowed as universally, as any person's of the age we live in.'

## Architect

Holdsworth's visits to Italy helped to improve his knowledge of classical architecture, and he managed to become a fairly able architect. Although the earliest evidence for Holdsworth's involvement in the New Building project is in 1724, it is clear that he was involved in the planning work from the beginning. Holdsworth's involvement in the New Building project, which lasted the rest of his life, was critical to its success.

**Christine Ferdinand (Fellow Librarian)** 

Christine's forthcoming book—

## An Accidental Masterpiece:

*Magdalen College's New Building and the People Who Built It*

(OXFORD: MAGDALEN COLLEGE, 2010)

—will be available by subscription.  
Please contact Christine for more information.  
christine.ferdinand@magd.ox.ac.uk



Photographs: Helen Burt

# A Woman's Place...at Magdalen

*Magdalen alumnus John Betjeman had strong opinions of women at Oxford. "Undergraduate" Clare Bucknell (2007) investigates:*

*'A First, a Blue, a husband—is there more to success at Oxford than this?'*

John Betjeman, never one of Magdalen's most diligent students, devotes a small section of his book of sketches about University life, *An Oxford University Chest*, to 'undergraduettes', the name given to female undergraduates when they were still something of an oddity. On the vexed question (still vexed, even at the time of writing in the late 1930s) of whether women should be allowed a university training at all, he is scrupulously fair: 'It is a matter of the equality of the sexes and one on which it seems to me, only a hermaphrodite can give an impartial judgement.' Undergraduettes, according to Betjeman, are mostly 'embryo school-mistresses who take everything literally'; they will 'drive out many good men from the clubs and societies they invade'; and they are more likely to get 'indifferent firsts and sound seconds... than startling firsts or glorious thirds'—this from a man who failed to get any class of degree whatsoever.

*'It is a matter of the equality of the sexes and one on which it seems to me, only a hermaphrodite can give an impartial judgement.'*

JOHN BETJEMAN

I recently saw a poster advertising a debate with the slogan 'A First, a Blue, a husband—is there more to success at Oxford than this?', as if to suggest a lingering impression that Oxford women consider this checklist the zenith of their university achievement. The poster started me thinking about the problem of gender at Oxford. Is getting a First the same kind of success as getting a Blue, and are either of them the same kind of success as getting a husband? Are you more likely to achieve the third if you get the first two? And, most interestingly, would the same thing be applicable to men? Could the slogan 'A First, a Blue and a wife' work just as well? Would it even be conceivable?

The Betjeman argument is that women entered Oxford with a highly focused sense of what they needed to get out of it—highly focused due in part to high pressure and, in part, to awareness of the struggle it had taken to enter the University at all. According to Betjeman: 'Women are vastly handicapped in getting the full value of Oxford life. They think too much about 'work'. So what does Betjeman have in mind when he talks about 'the full value of Oxford life'? What are women somehow missing by concentrating on what they need to achieve from their hard-won right to a higher education?

*'Magdalen... gives women—and men—chances to do things they would not ordinarily attempt.'*

Imagine he means pretty much what people mean nowadays when they talk about the value of an Oxford degree: an experience indefinitely more than the sum of its parts. It is great to get a First, great to get a Blue, great to meet Mr. Right; but ticking the boxes, like regarding Oxford as some sort of package holiday from which you need to derive certain benefits or you've wasted your money, is significantly missing the point.

I have had some pretty glorious moments at Magdalen, and the vast majority of them cannot be said to have been in the service of the First, the Blue or the husband (definitely not the husband). I was part of a blades-winning Eight at Torpids in my first year; not the most dignified of blades victories, and involving one trip to A&E, one smashed rudder, several dodgy decisions

and a lot of luck, but blades all the same and one of the most tremendous weeks of my life.

Other moments that stand out: watching the first nights of the two Magdalen garden shows I produced in my first and second years, in a mood of absolute panic, unsure if the Pimm's would run out or if enough people would come or if everyone would forget their lines, and beyond relieved when all went to plan. I was also part of the organising committee of the Commemoration Ball last year, the extraordinary success of which would not have been possible without some remarkable women: Nikki Emerson, Committee Vice-President, who managed Paralympics training alongside her Finals, and Natasha Martin, Catering Manager, who had spent the previous year juggling her own wedding and her Maths PhD.

Women at Magdalen do some amazing things. And some of them are, it is true, directly bound up with getting a First, or a Blue, or just getting on in society. But a lot of them are not. Magdalen, as I have been lucky enough to see, gives women—and men—chances to do things they would not ordinarily attempt: things that they did not specifically apply to Oxford to do, and that they might not necessarily even connect with the 'Oxford myth'. That is the 'full value of Oxford life' that Betjeman talks about, and you don't, whatever he thinks, need to be a hermaphrodite to recognise that women know how to capitalise on it just as much as men do.

*Adapted from a speech made at the Women's 30th Anniversary Celebration 2009* 🐾

# Events for Members in 2010

## Sat 20 March

Subject Gaudy: Classics.  
All alumni who read Classics and their guests will be invited.

## Fri 26 March

Inter-Collegiate Alumni Golf Tournament, Abingdon.\*

Contact [mickwalker@lyndhurst.eu.com](mailto:mickwalker@lyndhurst.eu.com)

[PLEASE NOTE that the date for this event has changed since the publication of the 'Save the Date' card]

## Sat 27 March

Gaudy for Year Groups 91-92. Alumni only.

## Fri/Sat 16/17 April

Oxford University Reunion at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York  
Magdalen College Reception TBA

## Sat 03 July

Gaudy for Years up to 1951. Alumni only.

## Sat 18 Sept

Annual Alumni Dinner in College (and Magdalen Society AGM).

## Sat/Sun 24/26 Sept

Oxford University Reunion Weekend – for all Oxford alumni.\*

No invitations will be sent. See *Oxford Today* or [www.alumniweekend.ox.ac.uk](http://www.alumniweekend.ox.ac.uk)

## Sat 25 Sept

Gaudy for Year Groups 56-58. Alumni only.

Invitations will be sent for all events except those marked\*. All Magdalen alumni and their guests are welcome at events unless marked otherwise. For all enquiries please contact:

**The Development Office**

Tel: 01865 276082

Email: [development.office@magd.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development.office@magd.ox.ac.uk)

[www.magd.ox.ac.uk](http://www.magd.ox.ac.uk)

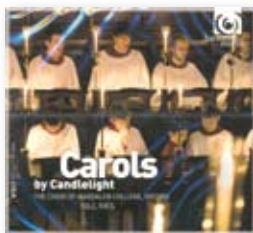
# Classics Gaudy

We are delighted to announce a Classics Gaudy at Magdalen on 20th March 2010. We are thrilled to have two distinguished speakers who will be known to many of you: Emeritus Fellow Oliver Taplin, and Robin Lane Fox (1965), former Junior Research Fellow and currently a Reader in Ancient History at Oxford University.

This will be a chance for all students of Classics and associated subjects to come together for afternoon presentations, followed by dinner in Hall.

**Oliver Taplin, Felix Budelmann and Alfonso Moreno** 

# The Floreat Crossword No. 8



## Prize for winning entry...

The first correct solution received by the Development Office will receive a copy of Magdalen College Choir's latest CD, "Carols by Candlelight", a collection of music for Advent and Christmas, directed by Bill Ives.

The winner of crossword No. 7 was Mr John Pearce (1963).

Please send your entries to:  
**The Development Office,**  
**Magdalen College, OX1 4AU.**

## Solution to No. 7

1	R	I	C	H	A	R	D	T	H	E	T	H	I	R	D
2	O	O	D	E	U	O									
3	M	E	M	O	R	A	B	L	E	B	O	S	I	E	
4	U	M	I												A
5	E	E	W	A	R	D	M	E	D	A	W	A	R		
6	U	M	T	E	A										
7	U	B	M	I	S	I	V	E	C	O	L	E			
8	A	A	C	T	E	A	B	T							
9	U	L	L	R	O	R	O	G	U	E	A				
10	D	L	S												
11	O	P	E	C	H	I	M	E	R	A					
12	E	N	E	T	K	C									
13	M	A	E	A	I	L	O	M	R	A					
14	U	M	C	O	G	L	D	R							
15	T	O	N	E	O	N	A	Z	I	S	M				

1		2		3		4		5		6		7			
8						9									10
						11									
12								13						14	
													15		
16						17									
18		19				20									21
						22									
23						24								25	
													26		
27															
29								30							31

## ACROSS:

- 1 Lines for cinema the writer produced on ruined canal – short of article, but blessed (3,2,10)
- 8 Nymph started when dirty Apollo pursued her, not Eros (6)
- 9 Ratiocination is unlike Henry VIII, say (8)
- 12 Quiet Tolstoy – sad tone (8,4)
- 14 Appeal of computers (2)
- 16 Plead for girl (3)
- 17 Charlie Coot is a disturbed sweet-maker (11)
- 18 A gentile coming back to meditation (4)
- 20 Landlord too late for delivery? (4,6)
- 23 Commander in oven (3)
- 24 Rubbish bed, sir! (6)
- 25 Others sleep (4)
- 27 Rounds south in Newcastle could be ropy (5)
- 28 Has ambition when good about start of set (7)
- 29 Clean bush (5)
- 30 Exploits documents (5)
- 31 Teacher in class I run (3)

## DOWN:

- 1 Drama featuring complex ruler (7,8)
- 2 Take up partner after drug (7)
- 3 Paragon of publishing (8)
- 4 International organisation at heart of feud (2)
- 5 Whip lost head in remains of fire (3)
- 6 Cicero's office, say, does you, say, with funny tale (9)
- 7 Poet talks of instinct (4)
- 10 Label around alternative killer (5)
- 11 Alarm sounded for bishop, say, finished at table (3,9)
- 13 Film about slow man about town (5,6)
- 15 Upsets by cutting hair? (10)
- 19 Beauty in hue and cry beheaded by force (7)
- 21 This goes round either way (7)
- 22 Publicity on poetry born outside Kent shows how it's done (6)
- 26 Sore about love (4)

Address for correspondence:

Development Office Magdalen College Oxford OX1 4AU  
Tel (0) 1865 276082 Fax (0) 1865 286654  
[development.office@magd.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development.office@magd.ox.ac.uk)

Editorial Committee: Marilyn Bowler (Editor in Chief), Helen Burt (Joint Editor), Christine Ferdinand, Sarah Fordham, Simon Horobin, Dominique Jackson, Andrew Lodder, Laurence Mills, & Hadrian Wise