From the President

Welcome to the New Year which begins the celebration of the foundation of the College in 1458. In 550 years the College has established and held its position as a world-class institution.

Restoring and maintaining the beautiful buildings of the College is important and we have a major project of this type nearly every year. In 2005, the top of St Swithun’s tower was completely replaced by expert stone-masons using crafts passed down from medieval times. In the last year, we have refurbished the Daubeny Building. This fine building stands across the High Street from the Porters’ Lodge and has a superb view of the College and the Botanic Garden. The building dates from 1848 and is named after the chemist, botanist and Fellow, Charles Giles Bridle Daubeny FRS (1795–1867).

The refurbishment and restoration of Daubeny’s original laboratory, now used as a lecture and music room, was a significant undertaking. Many of the original features of the laboratory were retained, including a most unusual gallery that still houses Daubeny’s library. Daubeny was a remarkable polymath, whose interests covered topics as diverse as the origins of volcanoes, the mechanism of photosynthesis and the role of minerals in agriculture. He corresponded with Darwin and did measurements that showed, not quite so surprisingly to us nowadays, that there is more ozone in the air over Torquay than over Oxford.

Daubeny is best known for pioneering the teaching of science in Oxford during the 19th century. This influence extended well into the 20th century; the building was used in 1940 for some of the exceptional work which led to the discovery of the clinical action of penicillin by the research group of Nobel-Prize-winning Howard Florey, who was once a Rhodes Scholar at Magdalen and after whom the rose garden is named.

The refurbishment of the Daubeny Building has provided much needed accommodation for Tutorial Fellows, Research Fellows, Visiting Fellows and Graduate Students. The College’s fine, French-style, double-manual harpsichord has also been moved from the ante-chapel to a new home in the Daubeny Laboratory.

To celebrate the re-opening of the building on 28th September 2007, Robert Fox, Emeritus Professor of the History of Science at Oxford University, gave a fascinating lecture on the life of Daubeny. This was followed by a superb recital from renowned French harpsichordist Huguette Dreyfus, who was joined for a Bach sonata by our own music Fellow, Larry Dreyfus (no relation), who played the viola da gamba.

Roger Bacon’s inscription above the entrance to the building, *Sine experientia nihil sufficienter sciri potest* (“without experience nothing can be known sufficiently”) remains an excellent motto for our students of the 21st century.

Restoring our precious buildings cannot be done cheaply and the support of the members of the College is crucial. Very generous legacies given by Derek Holmes, who came up to study Daubeny’s subject of Chemistry in 1940, and Gerald Burdon, who studied Literae Humaniores, starting in 1935, contributed substantial funds to complete the refurbishment. A plaque in the building will mark their contributions.

President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan is greeted by President David Clary upon his arrival at Magdalen on 24th October 2007. As mentioned on page 6, President Karzai was in Oxford at the invitation of Magdalen undergraduate Luke Tryl, in his capacity as President of the Oxford Union for Michaelmas Term 2007. It was a busy time for the Afghan President, who fitted in his trip to Oxford between visits to Balmoral Castle, Buckingham Palace and 10 Downing Street.
In its 550 years of existence, Magdalen has acquired an air of timelessness and permanence. But if we look back to its beginnings, what stand out are the hazards and uncertainties of the College’s first years and the heavy odds against its survival.

Let us begin with the founder, William Waynflete. He was a farmer’s son from Lincolnshire who somehow got to study at Oxford and became a Latin teacher at Winchester School. King Henry VI, visiting the School in 1441, noticed him and made him Provost of Eton College. Henry had founded both Eton and King’s College, Cambridge as part of a programme of religious and educational renaissance.

In 1447, he promoted Waynflete as Bishop of Winchester, intending that he should carry this educational programme further, with a college at Oxford, while his newly founded college, with only slender resources and in temporary buildings, could easily have disappeared. Not until 1467 did Edward IV confirm its foundation, and in that year, Waynflete began the reconstruction of the Long Wall to enclose the site of some 20 acres. This took seven years to complete and work did not begin on the College buildings until 1474 with the laying of the foundation stone of the Chapel on 5th May. By September 1475, the Chapel and the College ranges had risen to window level and by January 1479, the whole quadrangle, including the Founder’s Tower, was nearly at full height. In September 1481, Waynflete visited the College, bringing with him books for the Library and the title deeds of the properties of the endowment.

Waynflete had been steadily acquiring lands for the endowment over the previous 25 years. Some he purchased, others were received as religious bequests, and twice Waynflete acquired estates for the College as executor to two wealthy landowners, Lord Ralph Cromwell and Sir John Fastolf. Altogether, Waynflete spent up to £6,000 on the purchase of lands, which provided the College with an annual income of almost £600. That put it on a par with New College, founded by William Wykeham, and well ahead of All Souls and Merton, each of which had only around £400 annually.

This income supported 40 fellows, 30 undergraduate demies, and a choir of 28 clerks and choristers. Waynflete’s statutes closely regulated their common life: their work, worship, dress, food, and behaviour. The Fellows’ lifestyle was quasi-monastic: they were to converse only in Latin and to listen to readings from sacred scripture at meal times; they lived two to a room and could not stay out overnight. They were highly susceptible to plague and some died young.

Waynflete lived to see his college become one of the most prestigious in Oxford, receiving royal visits from Edward IV in 1481 and Richard III in 1483. He also lived to see the return of the Lancastrian dynasty he had served, in the person of Henry VII in 1485. By the time he died on 11th August 1486, he had reached his eighties. The successful foundation of Magdalen owed much to his exceptional longevity. Had he died at any point before 1470, the College could well have ceased to exist. It was through his single-minded commitment—biding his time in adversity, and seizing opportunities as they came—that Magdalen came into being. In celebrating the survival of the College through five and a half centuries, we should also pay tribute to William of Waynflete, the great survivor who made it.

Gerald Harriss

Michaelmas Events (clockwise from top left): The History Gaudy. Photos: Marilyn Bowler; The Headship Dinner. Photos: Alastair Stewart; The Photographic Exhibition and Reception in London. Photo: Sophie Young.
Magdalen’s place in the history of Oxford’s musical life is remarkably distinguished. In previous centuries, composers such as Daniel Purcell, Sir John Stainer and Bernard Rose held the prestigious title of Informator Choristarum and provided our Chapel with a rich legacy of choral music. In recent times, artists such as Dudley Moore and Sir Paul McCartney have subtly shifted the College’s musical profile away from the strictly ecclesiastical, bringing it into dialogue with the popular mainstream. But looking into the College’s history, it is surprising to discover that Magdalen also held noteworthy connections to Richard Strauss (1864–1949), the German modernist composer whom music historians and critics have come to regard as the progenitor of the 20th-century musical superstar.

In the summer of 2007, Strauss’s name was once again connected with Magdalen when the College hosted Strauss among the Scholars: An International Forum, the first ever academic conference devoted to the composer held in the British Isles. As a current doctoral student in music at Magdalen, I was a co-organiser of the event, alongside Dr David Larkin, a fellow Strauss scholar from Christ’s College, Cambridge.

In addition to being a truly bi-partisan Oxbridge collaboration, Strauss among the Scholars brought together academics from Germany and the Americas, though it also welcomed a variety of international delegates from as far afield as Hong Kong. Held in the Summer Common Room, it provided an intimate platform upon which scholars could enter into productive dialogue and jointly explore methodologies to shape future research developments. Once tainted by the composer’s affiliations with the Third Reich, Strauss scholarship has seen radical advances in the last 15 years, the impetus for which was a number of similar conferences in Germany and the United States.

The meeting boasted two inspiring keynote addresses, given by the doyens of Strauss scholarship, Bryan Gilliam of Duke University, Durham, NC and Walter Werbeck of Germany’s Universität Greifswald. Participants also enjoyed a recital of Strauss songs, given by young soprano Kathleen Broderick, the recent recipient of the 2007 Kathleen Ferrier and Guildhall School of Music Gold Medal Awards. But the conference also allowed junior scholars to present their research in a congenial environment. My own postgraduate dissertation considers the political implications of how Strauss appropriated the music of classical composers in his inter-war operas and the conference provided me with a powerful catalyst for future work and career.

Overall, Strauss among the Scholars helped reassess the composer’s place as one of the 20th century’s most important musical figures and it was an honour for Magdalen to play host to the first academic conference in a country which has long held a deep admiration for Strauss’s sublime music.

Matthew Werley
(Music post-graduate)
Celebrating 550 years

Events for Members in 2008

Sat 8 March
Anniversary Event: Waynflete Symposium on Molecular Biology

Sat 29 March
Gaudy for Year Groups 1967–70. Members only. No guests *

Fri/Sat 4/5 April
Oxford University Reunion at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York

Sat 5 April
Anniversary Dinner at the Racquet & Tennis Club, New York *

Sat 26 April
Anniversary Event: Waynflete Symposium on Magdalen Nobel Scientists

Sat 3 May
Anniversary Event: Waynflete Symposium on Anthropology

Sat 24 May
Anniversary Event: Waynflete Symposium on Mathematics

Sat 7 June
Anniversary Event: Waynflete Symphony on Music

Sat 28 June
Anniversary Garden Party, preceded by a Benefactors’ reception & lunch with the President *

Sat 5 July
Gaudy for Year Groups 1971–73. No guests *

Sat 6 September
Subject Gaudy: Modern Languages.*
All Members who read Modern Languages will be invited.

Sat/Sun 20/21 Sept
University Reunion Weekend – for all Oxford alumni. See Oxford Today or www.alumniweekend.ox.ac.uk

Sat 20 September
Magdalen Society Annual Alumni Dinner. Magdalen Society AGM at 3.00 pm in the Summer Common Room *

Sat 27 September
Gaudy for Year Groups 1980–82. No guests *

Sat 1 November
Magdalen College Boat Club 150th Anniversary Dinner for Friends of the MCBC and guests *

Invitations will be sent 2 months beforehand for events marked *

All members and their guests are welcome at events unless marked otherwise.
If you would like to receive an invitation to the Anniversary Symposia please contact:
The Development Office
Tel: 01865 270802
Fax: 01865 286654
Email: development.office@magd.ox.ac.uk
www.magd.ox.ac.uk

Christopher Hook reviews a controversial 18th century gem from the Library archives

In 1709, a recent graduate of Magdalen, Edward Holdsworth, caused a literary furore, almost unimaginable today, with a poem written in Latin entitled Muscipula. Encouraged by Magdalen’s most notorious Fellow of the time, the controversial Henry Sacheverell, and printed by the equally scandalous publisher Edmund Curll, this mock-heroic work ironically lauded the invention of the mousetrap and cruelly satirised the Welsh. Written in the beautifully fashioned Latin readers would have expected from a brilliant Oxford Classicist, Holdsworth’s poem cleverly uses the language of epic to humourous effect. It deals with the theft of a large portion of the cheese of Wales by an unassailable and ingenious mouse. The day is saved only when a man of great heroism devises an elaborate mechanical trap.

Throughout, the work exhibits an erudite playfulness rarely associated with austere Hanoverian England. Holdsworth liberally applies the clichés of classical epic, but with a farcical twist so that, rather than the martial heroism of Hector and Achilles, it is cheese that becomes the ‘pride and glory of our Land’ and, in the place of tragic heroines such as Dido or Helen, it is instead common dairy wives who mourn.

A 1715 edition of the work, containing both the Latin original and the vernacular translation, is held in Magdalen’s Old Library, where I, an aspiring graduate of Magdalen myself, was permitted to peruse it delicately. Sadly, I was obliged to concentrate on the translated version as my education did not leave me quite as well-versed in the ancient tongue as Holdsworth’s clearly did.

On the title page of the edition held in College, the aim at high style to provide comic contrast is underlined by a statement that the verse is translated in ‘Milton’s style’ — cheese is brought into comparison with attempts to ‘justify the ways of God to Men’. Whilst turning the 300-year-old pages with utmost care, I was struck by one passage in particular.

As the innovative solution to the poem’s quandary is constructed, Holdsworth goes into unexpected architectural detail. Regaling his readership with descriptions of ‘two flat thin Boards quadrangularly long’ and ‘a graceful Row / Of...pillars for the mimick house’, the satirical poet reveals a personal hobby that was eventually to result in a significant change in the appearance of his beloved College. These lines jumped out of the page for me—from my seat in the vaulted library, I had a clear view of Holdsworth’s other great achievement: the New Building.

Holdsworth was not merely an accomplished Classicist, he was also a keen amateur architect. When, in 1728, it was decided that the College desperately needed modernising, the Fellows turned to Holdsworth for inspiration and he rose to the challenge, devising comprehensive plans for a dramatic Palladian quad with a vast new library.

Building works started on the northern range in 1733, but despite many significant donations, including a generous £100 from Holdsworth himself, funds slowly dried up and what has become the iconic New Building was left to stand as we encounter it now—majestically unattached.

Holdsworth left Magdalen in 1715 owing to issues of allegiance and died in 1746. The succès de scandale of his cunning Muscipula had been somewhat overshadowed by Alexander Pope’s extraordinary five-canto Rape of the Lock in 1712. Nevertheless, this unjustly neglected 18th-century polymath did succeed in leaving an imposing and indelible mark upon a place close to his, and to our, hearts.

Christopher Hook (English undergraduate)
A walk through the grounds of Magdalen on a crisp and bright December morning holds many delights. As the colourful cascade of autumn finally wanes, it is time for many previously overlooked botanical treasures to come into the spotlight.

As one looks across New Building’s Lawn, two shrubs are the star performers: the bright yellow, poker-shaped flowers of Mahonia x media (Lily of the Valley Bush) and the final flourish of orange-red leaves, displayed by Cotinus ‘Grace’ (Smoke Bush). Clumps of Schizostylis coccinea (Kaffir Lily), with their long stems of delicate flowers in bright colours, start to blossom in the autumn and continue to put on a defiant show through the harshest days of winter.

On Addison’s Walk, many trees already stand almost naked, but numerous dark evergreens, such as Ilex aquifolium (English Holly) and Hypericum flourish in the damp and the cold. The deciduous Corylus avellana (Hazel) already bears its fine catkins. By the banks of the Cherwell alongside Bat Willow Meadow — for many years a source of willow for making College cricket bats — swathes of Typha minima (Bulrush) stand proud.

Winter at Magdalen has an extraordinary beauty all of its own.

Claire Shepherd (Head Gardener)
& Marilyn Bowler
Students of history at Magdalen are the fortunate heirs of a remarkable scholarly tradition in their subject at College, represented by such luminaries as Karl Leyser and K.B. McFarlane, the most renowned British mediaevalist of his time and, in more modern fields, by the prolific and provocative A.J.P. Taylor and the much missed Angus Macintyre. Alongside these redoubtable colleagues, Emeritus Fellow John Stoye has played a significant role, both in the teaching of History at Magdalen and as a prominent personality in the history of the College itself since he arrived in 1948.

John Stoye casts his own formidable academic shadow. His most lauded book, *Europe Unfolding* (1648–1688), exemplifies the breadth of his scholarship, nimbly crossing the borders of early modern Europe. He produced a revised edition as recently as 2000, well into his official retirement. His work on the 1638 Siege of Vienna remains one of the most perceptive studies on the relationship between Islam and the West, detailing the machinations between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, as previously hostile states reluctantly but fruitfully forged alliances to repel the armies of Islam and their fierce Tartar allies.

I walked across town on a crisp autumn morning to Stoye’s north Oxford home and was ushered past magnificent panoramic views of Vienna and Constantinople into his comfortable study, to be treated to his wry perspective, uniquely qualified by long association with Magdalen, on changes in academia and in the life of the College. I found myself well able to imagine him making shrewd criticisms of many a tutorial essay, devoid nevertheless of bitterness and with much laughter along the way.

It seemed fitting to ask one great Magdalen historian for his memories of another, A.J.P. Taylor, whose legendary gift for speaking without notes was evoked when David Cameron spoke spontaneously at the recent Conservative Party conference. Stoye praised Taylor’s great facility as a writer, but added: “Alan had a wonderful gift for speaking without any notes, apart from perhaps a word or two. However, most of the time he had worked out what he was going to say very carefully beforehand. So the impression that he spoke purely ex tempore is partly mistaken.”

For Stoye and his generation, colleagues such as Taylor were very much part of College social, as well as intellectual, life and he fondly recalled parties hosted by them both in Holywell Ford, which Stoye took over from Taylor as his home. “With Oxford houses impossibly expensive now, academics have to live practically in the countryside, so it seems to me as though they are far more remote from college life.” Stoye also regrets the many professional strains on academics working now. “The demand to publish is greater now than 20 years ago, which was greater than 20 years before that, while a tutor in the 1930s could avoid publishing anything. My own generation grumbled about time spent on administration, but my impression is that this is now even more onerous, limiting the time an academic has for research.” He sees the effects of this pressure in the now common practice of academics taking research leave. “I think a man like C.S. Lewis would have jeered at this and said he had enough leisure to think and write as he was.”

Stoye’s humane approach was much appreciated by his students. Roy Avery, one of the first generation of undergraduates he taught after the war, recalls an instance of Stoye’s kindness. Suffering from overwork, Avery found himself at a complete loss with an essay on the East India Company. When the time for the tutorial came, sensitive to his student’s distress, Stoye proposed a trip to the Ashmolean instead, allowing the mentor to share his love of art and giving young Avery an unforgettable experience.

A thoroughly committed Magdalen man, Stoye continues to enjoy many aspects of college life. “I still come in and read the papers or eat meals here and College is kind enough to pay for some of them.

I think this sense of belonging would be more difficult at a faculty university.”

On the subject of former students, he is refreshingly candid: “When I go to Gaudies, I am approached by all these people, with faces I don’t necessarily recognise, who have to remind me who they are. But I love to hear about the diversity of jobs they are doing and to see how some have changed for the better and some for the worse.”

Likewise, asked for enduring memories of Magdalen, he replied: “It may sound a bit trite, but it is the most beautiful place you can think of. One of the greatest pleasures is to sit outside the Daubeney, opposite the Tower when the bells are ringing as they were rung to mark my becoming a Fellow.”

James Goodman
Our membership profile

This report summarises data held by the Development Office on 19 July 2007. The gender, location, and age of 484 undergraduates, 234 post-graduates and 8117 alumni was analysed.

75% of alumni live in the UK. The second largest cohort is in the USA (10%), followed by Europe (6%) and Australia and New Zealand (4%).

Of those based in the UK, the greatest percentage (42%) is based in the South of England, with the highest numbers in Oxfordshire (9%) and London (32%).

Why hold a Free Speech Forum?

Magdalen undergraduate Luke Tryl reflects on his experience as Oxford Union President

It is also patronising to suggest that Oxford students are not intelligent enough to debate with these people and I am consequently very pleased that the debate itself went ahead, despite the extraordinary extent of the media coverage, not all of it accurate. That said, the experience was certainly a daunting one, especially on the evening itself. I was extremely disappointed by the actions of some of the protestors, although I would, of course, defend to the death their right to protest.

Debates remain the life-blood of the Oxford Union Society and this term I was privileged to host debates on subjects as wide-ranging as the 50th birthday of the European Union, the moral issues surrounding adoption, the War on Terror and the US Presidential Election. The first debate of every new academic year is traditionally a no-confidence debate. This year we heard from speakers including Magdalen alumnus John Redwood, Welsh Assembly minister Rhodri Morgan and the Liberal Democrats’ Vincent Cable. The debating chamber was packed with over five hundred students who remained until the end of the debate at midnight. Whoever said students were apathetic was certainly mistaken.

The Union has recently branched out significantly from solely hosting debates. During my Michaelmas Term Presidency, we welcomed speakers including Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand, Labour fundraiser Lord Levy, bon vivant Michael Winner and controversial comic and broadcaster Russell Brand.

For me, our most charismatic and fascinating guest was President Hamid Karzai of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, who talked about the many challenges facing his country. Organising the visits of Heads of State is always extremely difficult, from liaising with the police and sorting out security to the arguably more important setting of table seating plans – which in one particular instance had to be diplomatically amended at least a dozen times.

I have immensely enjoyed my time as President of the Oxford Union and am pleased that it seems to go from strength to strength. My only regret? That we weren’t able to persuade President Bill Clinton to come and speak during my term of office. Perhaps one of my successors will have more luck. I shall certainly be attending if they do.

Luke Tryl

The alumni population is 82% male as compared with 56% male for current students. The higher number of females in the current student population corresponds with the admission of women into the College from 1979.

The largest percentage of alumni are in the 30-39 age group and the numbers in each ten-year age group gradually fall with increasing age.
Magdalen Tipsy Cake

Courtesy of the Magdalen College Catering Team

For one 9” spring form cake mould
3 Swiss rolls

For the Bavarois
6 gelatine leaves
600 ml double cream
8 egg yolks
12 tbsp Cointreau
200 g caster sugar
1200 ml milk
1 vanilla pod

For garnish
100 ml double cream
100 g dark chocolate
200 g apricot jam

Slice the Swiss roll into 1 cm slices. Arrange around the bottom and the sides of a 9” round spring form cake tin.

Method for the Bavarois filling:
1. Melt chocolate and pipe onto greased cake tin. Allow to set in a fridge.
2. Whisk the egg yolks and caster sugar together until light and fluffy.
3. Pour the milk into a saucepan and add the vanilla pod. Bring to the boil.
4. Remove the milk from the heat and pour it slowly over the egg mixture, whisking continuously (don’t forget to take out the vanilla pod!).
5. Return the mixture to the saucepan and cook over a very low heat until thickened enough to coat the back of a wooden spoon (do not boil). Remove from the heat.
6. Slice the gelatine in a little cold water for about 5 minutes, until softened.
7. Whisk the egg yolks and caster sugar together until light and fluffy.
8. Add the gelatine and mix.
9. Whisk the double cream until thick enough to whip the double cream until thick enough to add to the mixture. Stir until the gelatine has completely dissolved.
10. Stir the Cointreau and leave to cool.

Finish:
1. Melt chocolate and pipe onto greased paper into different shapes, put in fridge to set.
2. Heat jam with a little water until runny.
3. Turn cake onto a serving plate and undo the spring. A palette knife may be needed to loosen the top.
4. Brush Swiss roll surfaces with the jam.
5. Pipe rosettes of cream on top and place a chocolate shape in the cream.

Enjoy!

The Floreat Crossword No. 2

One or two of the clues have a Magdalen theme.

PRIZE FOR WINNING ENTRY...
A copy of the latest CD produced by the Magdalen College Choir, William Byrd’s Second Service & Consort Anthem, will be sent to the submitter of the first correct solution received by 1st March 2008.

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

For one 9” spring form cake mould
3 Swiss rolls

For the Bavarois
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600 ml double cream
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1200 ml milk
1 vanilla pod

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200 g apricot jam

Address for correspondence:
Development Office Magdalen College OX1 4AU
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The Floreat Magdalen Newsletter No. 8

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