

Milton at 400

Sarah Howe, graduate student in the Faculty, writes about the ongoing events celebrating the 400th anniversary of the birth of John Milton.

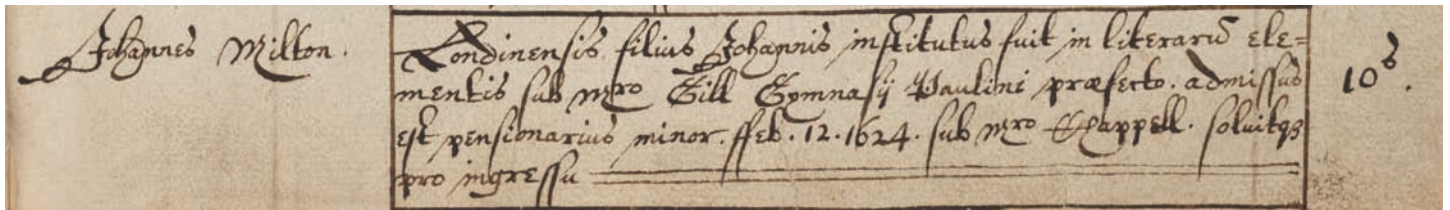
‘Dear son of memory, great heir of Fame. . .’ With these words the young John Milton saluted his great predecessor, in his epitaph ‘On Shakespeare’ (1632). It was the first poem Milton would ever publish, at the age of twenty-four. Nearly four centuries later, Milton’s tribute could equally be applied to his own achievements: ‘Thou in our wonder and astonishment / Hast built thy self a live-long Monument.’ This has been Milton’s year in Cambridge, marking the 400th anniversary of his birth in 1608, and the University, the Faculty and his own college, Christ’s, have all seen a wide variety of Milton-related events, while others are taking place around the globe. As befits the university where Milton studied and produced some of his earliest works, Cambridge has played a central role in organizing and hosting many of these celebrations. The resulting programme of lectures, exhibitions, performances, and concerts honours Milton’s immense range as a poet, dramatist, and political thinker, while bringing his works alive for a wider public. Milton’s actual birthday is not until 9 December, so many of the festivities are still to come. Among these is an all-day marathon reading of *Paradise Lost*, on 23 October, as interpreted by members of the Faculty in the Drama Studio at 9 West Road, with live internet relay.

As I write this in September, we have already been treated to several months of Milton-driven activity. The year kicked off in January with the opening of ‘Living at This Hour: John Milton 1608–2008’, a six-month exhibition in the University Library. Taking its title from Wordsworth’s famous sonnet to Milton, the exhibition brought together a wide selection of the university’s Milton treasures, many of

which have not been seen on public display for a century. The exhibition’s curator John Wells juxtaposed rare early editions of Milton’s works with the productions of later centuries, from the Romantics to Philip Pullman, in order to tell the story of Milton’s continuing influence on our culture. Of particular local interest were the various university records tying Milton to Cambridge, including his autograph ‘supplicat’ of 1629, in which he petitioned to proceed to the degree of Bachelor of Arts. On a rare outing from its home in the Wren Library came the celebrated ‘Trinity Manuscript’: the extraordinary notebook in Milton’s own hand that contains drafts of several of his shorter works (including ‘On Shakespeare’ and ‘Lycidas’), together with early jottings on the theme of *Paradise Lost*. A parallel exhibition, ‘Citizen Milton’, curated by Oxford Miltonist Sharon Achinstein and concentrating on Milton’s political legacy, took place at the Bodleian Library until April. If you missed those exhibitions, or

Engraving after Francis Hayman’s illustration to ‘Samson Agonistes’ (1749 edition).





Milton's entry in the Christ's College matriculation book (Christ's College archives, courtesy of the Master and Fellows).

were tantalized to see more, a smaller exhibition based around the impressive Milton collection at Christ's (Milton's own college) continues in the Old Library there until mid-December.

In Milton's day, the Cambridge tripos was examined not with written papers, but by a series of lively debates, an exercise in which the teenage Milton revelled. Continuing in this spirit, this year's five Lady Margaret Lectures have a distinctly Miltonic flavour. Faculty lecturer Gavin Alexander, who has worked tirelessly to co-ordinate the Christ's College Milton celebrations, organized a simultaneously stellar and challenging lineup of speakers. Earlier this year, Quentin Skinner, Colin Burrow, and Sharon Achinstein spoke to packed audiences in the Mill Lane lecture theatre. Each took on a different aspect of Milton's significance, from his concept of liberty, to his self-styled solitude, to his legacy as a prose writer. Still to come in Michaelmas is the turn of eminent poet Geoffrey Hill, uniquely qualified by his recent collections to speak on the role of 'Milton as Muse'. The series will be brought to a close in November by Christopher Ricks, whose *Milton's Grand Style* (1963) is still one of the most engaging and influential readings of Milton around, speaking on 'Milton and "the best criticism of any work"'. (Downloadable podcasts of the earlier lectures and details of the upcoming ones are available on the Milton 400 website: www.christs.cam.ac.uk/milton400.)

The theme of Milton as Muse to later creative artists continues into winter with a performance of Handel's Milton-inspired oratorio, *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato*, in Trinity College Chapel on 7 December. John Milton senior was a respected amateur musician and composer, so music played a central role in the young poet's upbringing. Milton's *Comus* was the product of his friendship and collaboration with the composer Henry Lawes, while Milton himself was frequently praised by contemporaries for his 'excellent Ear'. 'Milton at Christ's', a

concert on 6 December, aims to explore this crossover, bringing together music from Milton's time with readings of his works by the actor Sam West. This medley will be performed in the Hall at Christ's College (where, fittingly, Milton delivered his undergraduate oratorical showpieces). In London, the church of St Giles Cripplegate, where Milton is buried, is also playing host to a series of Milton-related musical events throughout the year, as well as a semi-staged reading of *Samson Agonistes*.

If you were lucky enough to be one of the blanket-bearing throng padding through the sylvan byways of the Christ's Fellows' Garden on an evening in late June, you would have seen a superb performance of *Comus*, Milton's rarely-staged masque of 1634. The production, by Christ's Amateur Dramatic Society under the supervision of emeritus Fellow Richard Axton, made imaginative and affecting use of Lawes's original music. Milton's drama of imperiled chastity was then revisited in the second half of the evening by an 'anti-masque' newly commissioned from Australian poet John Kinsella. In a sensuously energetic performance by the Marlowe Society, Kinsella's response reworked and deformed the dark energies of Milton's original, transporting the Lady and her brothers into a neon-spandex world of pole dancing and genetic modification. Both productions were acted by current Cambridge students, but benefited from the professional input and design of Faculty alumni Simon Godwin, Annilese Miskimmon, and Lachlan Goudie.

One of the great successes of the Milton anniversary celebrations has been their commitment to make use of the talents of current students, to amazing effect. *Darkness Visible* (www.christs.cam.ac.uk/darknessvisible) is a web resource designed to help A-level and university students in their early encounters with *Paradise Lost*. However, the site also has much to offer seasoned

travellers of Milton's poem. It contains a wealth of material for students and teachers to explore at their leisure, including a biography of the poet, essays on subjects ranging from Milton's religion to his influence on Hollywood and Heavy Metal, a gallery of illustrations, and an interactive tour of the poet's Christ's. *Darkness Visible* is the latest in a series of exemplary online learning resources to emerge from Cambridge. More than a study guide, it aims to entice students beyond the bounds of their A-level syllabus, encouraging sixth-formers thinking of studying English at university. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the project is the fact that its creators were a team of undergraduates and graduates studying English at Christ's College. For many of *Darkness Visible's* contributors, reading *Paradise Lost* at A-level was a relatively recent memory. Consequently, they tried to keep some of this freshness and approachability in their writing about Milton. Let's hope that they, and the wider 400 anniversary celebrations, inspire a new generation of Milton lovers to renew his 'live-long Monument' for today.

For more details of the Cambridge 400th anniversary events mentioned here, and of upcoming events nationwide go to www.christs.cam.ac.uk/milton400

For *Darkness Visible*, a web resource for school and university students studying Milton's *Paradise Lost* go to www.christs.cam.ac.uk/darknessvisible



Portrait of Milton in the collection of Christ's College, courtesy of the Master and Fellows.

The Alumnus Interview:

Martin Rowson – Doing Satirical Business

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Martin Rowson (1975–8) read English at Pembroke College. He is now one of Britain’s most renowned cartoonists and political satirists. His cartoons appear frequently in *The Guardian*, among other publications, and he has also produced comic-book versions of *The Waste Land* and *Tristram Shandy*, as well as a novel (*Snatches*) and a memoir (*Stuff*). Robert Macfarlane talked to him about satire, sputum and being ‘a very, very bad English student’.

RM: Gillray is one of your inspirations, I know. Which other satirists are in your genealogy, or pantheon.

MR: There’s an obvious difference between a ‘genealogy’ and a ‘pantheon’, and if you did a biopsy on my satire gland, I’m sure you could tease out strands of satirical DNA from forebears I’d rather forget about, like Gerald Scarfe, who was a great influence when I was about fourteen but who I now can’t stand – either personally or professionally. And of course different aspects of different artists influence and inspire in different ways. In the way one does I sometimes wonder whether I’d prefer to have a drink with Gillray or Hogarth, and it would have to be Hogarth: Gillray was a morose neurotic, whereas Hogarth was mischievous and fun, at least until he became corrupted by fame and ambition. But both of them are firmly there in the genome, along with David Low, Ronald Searle and my mates Ralph Steadman and Steve Bell, in as much as they’ve all been enormously influential, both stylistically and temperamentally. As far as writers are concerned, I’d plump, in no particular order, for Swift, Sterne, Evelyn Waugh, Flann O’Brien (and Myles na Gopaleen, thank you very much) and, thanks to his

brilliant memoir *My Last Breath*, the surrealist film maker Luis Buñuel, whose method I pinched in my book about my parents, *Stuff*. And on that subject, I shouldn’t forget to thank my late father for saying to me, at a very early age, ‘Never obey orders, including this one.’

RM: Satire in contemporary British fiction seems to be passing through a lull at present. Martin Amis, Will Self, Jonathan Coe have all written their best works (and all were published in the 1990s). Instead we’re in the era of the state-of-the-nation novel, the sudsy saga (cf. Blake Morrison, Philip Hensher, Richard T. Kelly). Er, yourself excepted naturally, how far do you agree?

MR: Satire is notoriously slippery to pin down. Is it simply jokes about politicians, or the subtle use of pastiche and metaphor to point to a higher truth about the failings of humanity, or (to use the most pompous phrase in the English language) purely about ‘puncturing pomposity’? In other words, how do you cram *Have I Got News For You* into the same pot as Alexander Pope? As far as satire in literature is concerned, it’s just one, small area where it operates, and not particularly well at that. As far as the metaphorical, parabolic strand

of satire is concerned, I can only really think of *Gulliver’s Travels* and *Animal Farm* fitting the template. But if you widen it out, where do you stop? How about *Paradise Lost*? Or *Piers Plowman*? Maybe it just comes down to the jokes, which means that Coe is ‘satire’ and Morrison isn’t, although *What a Carve Up* and *South of the River* have far more in common with each other as being state-of-the-nation novels than with anything else, as far as I can tell. As to Little Mart being a satirist, he’s always struck me as being far better suited as a target rather than a practitioner. Then again, as far as I’m concerned Sterne got it right about what an absurd construct the novel actually is. It’s just that none of the rest of us have yet wised up and moved on.

RM: Your work shows a great pleasure in scat, blood, cholera, sputum, death. The humour of the humours, as it were. Where did this derive from, and is it – as Michael Heath suggested – a new turn in British satire?

MR: It’s always been there. About the only part of *Piers Plowman* I can remember is the description of Gluttony puking up a pool of vomit so foul that not even a Hertfordshire dog would eat it (I can’t now recall why dogs from Hertfordshire should

be so notoriously indiscriminating in their nosh, but there you go). But it's also all about that wonderful, terrible cultural stew of disgust, taboo and laughter which helps us navigate our way through our lives. And of course Hogarth and Gillray (and Swift and Sterne) were rolling gleefully around in the gutters brimming with shit that flowed through the streets of the Enlightenment.

RM: On which note, I also find pollution, toxins and discharge everywhere I look in your work. Are we living through an unusually poisoned era of politics (or beyond)?

MR: No more than usual, although I think the political class in particular are more disconnected from the people they presume to govern than at any time since before the Great Reform Act. That's probably because we now have a professional political class, serviced by an obsessional media and various industries of lies, like pollsters, ad-men and the rest of that sorry crew.

RM: Have you ever felt mercy towards one of your targets, before or after you've worked your voodoo? Or once selected, are they beyond forgiveness?

MR: About five years ago I went to Michael Foot's 90th birthday party at 10 Downing Street, where my wife and I had a nice conversation with Tony Blair about where he buys his ties from. It so happens (and this was five days before Dr David Kelly died) that I'd produced a cartoon for that morning's *Guardian* of Blair going through the various 'Stages of Intelligence Failure', which showed him, in eleven frames, suffering from hero-worship, neurotic fixation, religious mania, violent psychotic interludes and so on. Two days later Foot had another birthday party at the Gay Hussar restaurant in Soho, where Peter Hain came up to me and, between clenched teeth, asked me how I'd dared to 'stand on that man's lawn and enjoy his hospitality after that absolutely disgraceful cartoon you did?' I referred him to the concluding scene of *The Godfather*, where Michael Corleone's hoods wipe out his enemies while he's at a baptism, and as one guy is being led out to a car to be garotted he says 'Tell Michael I always liked him.' To which one of the hoods replies, 'Yeah, he knows. This is just business.' Which is the whole point. In seeking and accepting power, Blair and his ilk are becoming something far more than they are as individuals. They become symbols and signifiers, which is why caricature works,

when it reduces someone from a flesh and blood human being to a mad staring eye and some snaggly teeth (I once proved the point to an entomologist on High Table at Trinity Hall by caricaturing Blair with a plate, some cheese and some broken biscuits). In that regard, they deserve no forgiveness. But it's a game as stylised and ritualised as Noh Theatre, and no blood is ever spilt in the production of my cartoons – unless I accidentally stab myself with my pen.

RM: You've produced graphic versions of *The Waste Land* and *Tristram Shandy*. Why?

MR: I produced *The Waste Land* comic book (retelling the poem as a Chandleresque film noir) specifically to take the piss out of this revered totem of Modernism, on the basis that nothing should be sacred and I hadn't, at that stage, had a crack at Literature yet. The Eliot Estate was suitably – and for the book, almost fatally – outraged, but I understand that my little canard is now a set text in many universities, which just goes to show the power of satire (it has none, or gets cuddled to death by its intended victims). After that, I vowed never to do another graphic novel, until Antony Farrell of the Lilliput Press in Dublin suggested *Tristram Shandy*, which I then took three and a half years to produce, as a love letter to Sterne and his great anti-novel.

RM: How, and how far, has your career been influenced by your time as an English undergraduate at Cambridge?

MR: Although I was a very, very bad English student, my time as an undergraduate served me well in several areas. First, I've been doing cartoons for the books pages of *The Independent* on Sunday for seventeen years, so a firm grounding in the subject has been very useful (I'm currently summarising the whole of World Literature in a weekly series of limericks). But I also kicked against the pricks (probably far more than the pricks in question deserved), as well as spending far too much time drawing stupid pictures for various two-bit student rags, which helped me develop as a cartoonist. Also, like most English graduates, I came out the other sides with an almost indestructible aversion to the idea of getting a proper job. I also remember a supervision with the terrifying [late] Ian Jack on *Tristram Shandy*, and I managed to ever so slightly impress him for the first (and last) time by observing that *TS* could be read

with as much profit backwards as well as forwards, and that we ought to consider the geo-political implication of Lillibullero, Uncle Toby's choice of tune to whistle in moments of confusion, disapproval or crisis, also being the call sign of the BBC World Service. In this I detected the very first inkling of the kind of Shandean literary criticism I developed in the comic book.

RM: You lived through L'affaire MacCabe as an undergraduate, going so far as to occupy University premises on his behalf. Why was that?

MR: I was Cambridge in the late '70s, and though what came next was far worse, it was clear that the whole country was ossifying and coming to the end of a particular era, not least of all the English Faculty. I'd rapidly fallen out of love with the Tripos anyway, and to be honest I thought the wonderful row about MacCabe and Structuralism was very funny. Not so much angels dancing on a pinhead as professors fighting on a punctuation mark. Another era that was stumbling to an end was the afterglow of student radicalism, wheezing its last asthmatic breath, but I've always been up for a bit of direct action, so MacCabe was as good a lost cause as any other. We finally got chased out of whichever lecture theatre we'd occupied, so a few diehards marched off to the University Library where someone decided he was our tribune and, in that studiously inarticulate way middle-class lefties seek to disguise the cadences of Winchester, he announced that we were going to have a totally non-violent sit-down occupation of the UL. Wondering how we'd achieve this with about twenty-five people, or how we might have a violent sit-down occupation, I hung around for about ten minutes and then sloped off to the pub, mourning the death of hope.

The whole MacCabe business also inspired me to create a psychotic literary critic called Damien Sykes-Wolsey in *Snatches*, who, through rigorous analysis and close reading, concludes that everything is actually true, fiction doesn't exist and all literature is merely documentary of differing standards of competence, according to the skill of the documentarian. Any similarity with any real persons, living or dead, is of course purely co-incidental.

Martin Rowson's new book Fuck: The Human Odyssey was published by Jonathan Cape in October.

Dress and Truth

University Reader John Harvey discusses the divided feelings we may have about what we wear – the theme also of his new book *Clothes*

We may think of clothes as an outer surface, a husk or soft armour, but we can also dream about having them or losing them, which suggests that our clothes are inside us as well. And in our dreams they can destroy us, if for instance if they suddenly vanish. But in life too we may depend on them. They cover our shyness about our bodies, and our shyness about who we are. They can spring bad surprises on us, if we are suddenly made to feel in company – by a tactless remark or, even worse, a tactful one – that some item we are wearing is wrong both for us and for the occasion. In an extreme case, clothes can cost us life. In Iraq or northern India a woman may be killed if she wears western dress. And in Lancashire last year a young Goth couple were attacked by the youths they had been chatting with, and trampled and kicked so the young woman died. Their Goth outfit was the reason for the attack.

In various ways clothes are dangerous companions – perhaps the more dangerous because they touch us so closely, because they touch our skin. And if one looks at large at the way clothes have been represented through history, one finds a recurring mistrust. In philosophy, for instance, clothes have a negative value. We wear them but they are not us: the important ‘us’ is hidden by them. Wittgenstein said that language disguises thought as clothes disguise the body. Kierkegaard said that as one takes off one’s clothes in order to swim, so one must strip oneself mentally naked in order to know the truth. In literature also one finds mistrust, though with a different emphasis. Time and again Shakespeare and his contemporaries will contrast fair but false appearances – gorgeous clothes, in other words – not with hidden truth but with the hidden corruption of the wearer: ‘Robes and furred gowns hide all,’ cries King Lear.

Clothes cannot win: either they show what should not be shown, or they hide vice or they hide the truth. Yet also clothes can help us, or save us. They can work like a lens, and bring different sides of us into focus. Also, clothes can change the face of life. The philosopher George



Benjamin West, 'King Lear in the Storm', 1788.

Santayana said that before beautiful clothes, one was ‘in the presence of something good’. Artists, like philosophers, prefer Truth to be naked, but still Titian may paint a blue leg-of-mutton sleeve with not less loving care than he gives to the wearer’s face. A painting by Antoine Watteau may centre on the fragile grace of the rose and silver-blue satin *robe à la française* worn by a woman whose face we cannot see. In baroque art and sculpture – and again in contemporary films, like Zhang Yimou’s *Hero* – overlong clothes may dance on the air like rolling emotion.

Literature, too, may touch the value of clothes as well as their vanity. One of the stories, woven through the fabric of Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, concerns ‘the Old Prince’. He lives alone in the country with his unmarried daughter, Princess Mary, who is to marry, at the novel’s end, one of the male leads, Nikolai. Relations between father and daughter are strained, partly because of the exorbitant demands the ageing tyrant lays on her, and at times the reader may be reminded of the old King Lear, when he is tetchy with his daughter Cordelia. Both authors faced the problem of how best to crack an entrenched aged wilfulness, so that father and daughter may come together again. In Shakespeare Lear raves, exposed on the heath, and strips off his clothes in a raging storm – for clothes are always important

in Shakespeare, as we know from Hamlet’s black. In the end Lear sleeps – a healing sleep, and wakes into tender recognition of his daughter.

Tolstoy disliked *King Lear* and he does things differently: he makes the Old Prince have a stroke. This sounds an unglamorous option, especially when Tolstoy describes, painfully well, the ugly awkwardness of the old man’s efforts to speak to his daughter. She cannot understand his muffled noise, while he starts to cry, like a child, with frustration. It is only later that she realizes why she had misheard him: it was because she had expected him to say the kind of peremptory thing, which he always used to say. But the stroke has got his ego out of the way. He is different now, and she finally realizes that what he has been trying to say is ‘Put on your white dress, I like it.’ When she realizes this, she herself bursts into tears; a little later, he has another stroke, and dies. We are not told precisely why he liked the white dress: it may be he liked its innocence, and the effect would have been different if he had said, ‘Put on your red dress’. In any event, the words are simple and central. They speak from and to the heart of love in father and in daughter: and they manage a loving reconciliation simply by naming a dress.

Clothes is published by Acumen, £9.99.

A Faculty Library for the 21st

The Faculty Library is our chief material resource, and the first port of call for most students reading English. Recently-appointed Librarian Libby Tilley reflects on the new challenges and opportunities of the coming years.



Photo: Sam Dean.

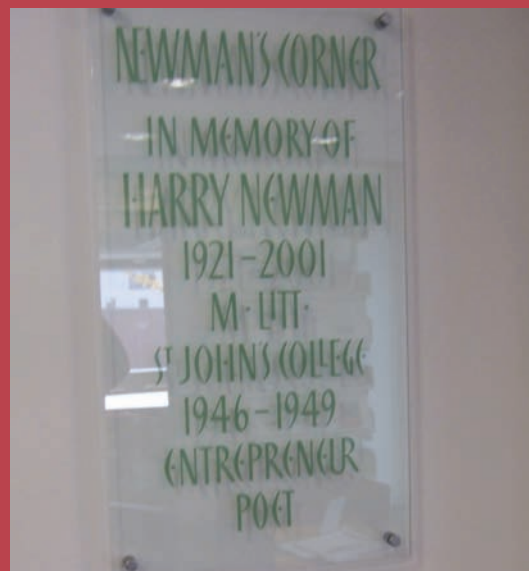
It was an inspired decision that allowed the English library to be a fully integral part of the new Faculty building, for it is by its very proximity to much of the academic and administrative activity of the Faculty that the collections, the space itself, and the library services have been allowed to come into their own and be used as never before. Factors that contribute to this development include the ease of use, the serendipity factor of its availability and accessibility between lectures and seminars, and the overall atmosphere. We are also fortunate that Faculty alumni have played a part in establishing the Library's presence: for example, we owe the recently-furnished Newman's Corner (periodicals, new books, DVDs) to the generosity of the late Harry Newman (St John's 1947-9), who founded *Varsity* in 1947 before going on to a career in entrepreneurship. The light, airy, study space draws many more than just English students into the Library, and the services provided reflect the increasingly hybrid nature of collections and variations in learning styles. It is perhaps not at all surprising that the Faculty Library has seen a doubling in use (both in terms of users coming through the door and in the circulation of books) since moving from the Raised Faculty Building into its new home. Originally, the Library was focused essentially on undergraduate needs and the Tripos in terms of both collections and

services; but it is now having to adapt to an increasingly large graduate clientele, with varied research interests, as the Faculty develops more one-year M.Phil. courses. This has been an exciting time to be involved in the English Faculty Library: any service that sees such an increase in use is clearly successful and busy.

But at the same time we need to be especially wary of allowing our current set of good 'busy-ness' statistics to blind us to the challenges that are facing many libraries in Cambridge as well as elsewhere. Our response to future challenges to the library service needs to take account of the rapidly changing nature of the users themselves. In an attempt to discover what readers think about the resources and services provided, and, importantly, to evaluate our service in the light of their opinions, the first-ever Library survey took place in the Lent Term 2008. Questionnaire-weary students were enticed to respond with prizes such as Heffers vouchers, and the new English Faculty Library bear. Mini Easter eggs were handed out to all prepared to participate in the print survey, and we were delighted with a 50% response rate (high by survey standards), from both graduate and undergraduate constituencies. This gave us not only positive quantitative and qualitative evidence for the use of many aspects of the service, but also some clear pointers to areas that we needed to

consider changing. Change is always a challenge, as for the most part it will come down to hard economics: more flexible opening hours (Sundays are now in demand) require more staff; multiple copies of key texts in the collection and extended IT resources require hard cash to fund, and so on. Ultimately, cost benefit analyses will assist in determining the priorities that we can give these factors, the object always being to provide the best possible service with the funds we have available.

In a rapidly changing information environment where digital increasingly competes with analogue (traditionally known as print), where social networking whilst working on line is becoming the norm, where the library as a physical space is changing, and above all where the expectations and skills levels of students have changed, it is crucial that we constantly reflect upon and evaluate our services. Perhaps one of the most obvious changes has been in the users' behaviour. A recent briefing paper by the Centre for Information Behaviour and the Evaluation of Research at University College London, referred to what were perceived as worrying trends in the current 'Google generation'. Many are multi-taskers, using Facebook, and MSN at the same time as writing an essay; they may often be happy with what their supervisors might regard as 'shallow' or less than reliable research retrieval results; and they may be apt to use Google or Wikipedia as the default starting-point when they begin work on a topic. It might be thought that Cambridge students would be different, but our own survey shows that 77% of respondents



begin the research process with Google. This may or may not be worrying, but it vividly demonstrates one of the greatest changes that has taken place since many readers of *9 West Road* first set foot in the English Faculty Library themselves.

As Librarian, I have spent some time formulating a new strategic plan for the Library. This allows for a clear focus on the changing needs of our students, while celebrating current successes and giving equal emphasis to both analogue and digital worlds. It also allows for a clear statement about the ‘added value’ factors: for example, we recognise that in Cambridge we exist within a superb tripartite system of libraries (UL, Faculty, college), and it is almost certainly true that students in Cambridge have the best library staff/student ratio in the country. As an individual library we can tailor our circulation policies, our opening hours, and our collection development to our users’ needs. We can be subject specialists who understand and know about the wealth of genuine research possibilities available, in particular the growing number of good and reliable web resources; and we also have the expertise to promote them and teach users how to make the most of them. Building upon all these bonus features is important, and a modern library needs to be able to market itself and its resources in this way. Not all of our students will be aware that they are in a situation that others elsewhere would probably regard as intellectually privileged, and nor are they likely to be conscious of the costs.

The challenge in the Library is to continue to provide the same excellent service, but with increasingly varied resources, and a greater need for staff assistance in accessing those resources, all within a climate of (at best) static funding. It is an opportunity for great creativity, drawing upon all the skills at our disposal, and keeping in mind the need for our focus to be on our ultimate mission – that of keeping the Faculty in the highest international echelon of teaching, learning and research in English.

The following reports of news have come in. Information for inclusion in next year’s edition of *9 West Road* is always welcome, and should be addressed to The Editor, 9 West Road, Faculty of English, 9 West Road, Cambridge CB3 9DP.

Charles Boyle (St John’s 1969–72) narrowly avoided having his novel *24 for 3* (Bloomsbury), written pseudonymously as Jennie Walker, entered for the Orange Prize. It was however awarded the 2008 McKitterick prize for a first novel by an author over the age of 40.

Norman Buller (St Catharine’s 1950–3) writes that his poems were published alongside those of Thom Gunn and Ted Hughes in *Poetry from Cambridge*, 1953 and 1954, and other literary magazines of the time. He began to publish work again in the 1980, and recent collections have included *Travelling Light* (2005) and *Sleeping with Icons* (2007) (both available from Waterloo Press, 126 Furze Croft, Furze Hill, Hove BN3 1PF).

Jane Falloon (née Goddard, Girton 1948–51) has published a literary and biographical account of George Herbert, *George Herbert: Heart in Pilgrimage* (Authorhouse, 2007)

Brian Fewster (Jesus 1961–64) recalls studying under Raymond Williams and J.H. Prynne, and has recently published a collection of poems entitled *Sympathetic Magic* (2008).

Damian Flanagan (Magdalene 1987–92) has written a critical introduction to *Natsume Soseki’s* masterpiece *Kokoro* (Peter Owen, 2007) and has published (in Japanese) *Natsume Soseki: Superstar of World Literature* (Kodansha International, 2007).

Dominic Hibberd (King’s 1961–64) has edited (with John Onions) *The Winter of the World: Poems of the First World War* (Constable, 2007)

Sir Christopher Lever (Trinity, 1950–54) has, since 1977, written ten books on introduced alien animals world-wide, and contributed to as many others on the same subject. His first book was a series of biographies of English silversmiths.

George Miller (Corpus 1959–61) published *Richard Jeffries: a biographical study* with Scholar Press in 1993, but continues to work on Jeffries, and would be pleased to hear from anyone with original letters, documents or new information (10, Upper Church Street, Oswestry, SY11 2AE). He has also written poems, stories and a novel, and runs the letterpress Hedge Sparrow Press.

Michael T.R.B. Turnbull (Gonville & Caius 1961–64) has recently published *Rossllyn Chapel Revealed* (Sutton Publishing, 2007), the latest of a number of books about Edinburgh and its environs, which include *Buildings and Landmarks of Edinburgh* (1989) and *The Edinburgh Graveyard Guide* (2006).

Christopher Whitby’s (Sidney Sussex, 1971–74) sonnet collection *Hand Luggage Only* (available from www.openpoetry.org.uk) was shortlisted for the 2007 International Sonnet Competition prize (£2,800).

The Revd Canon **Alan Wilkinson** (St Catherine’s 1951–57) has published works on church and society which gained him a Cambridge D.D (Doctorate of Divinity) to add to his Ph.D on Victorian novel reviewing.

Events 2008–2009

Distinguished literary lectures and other events in the Faculty and elsewhere in Cambridge have included the following: The Judith E. Wilson Poetry Reading 2008, given by Geoffrey Hill on 31 January 2008; the Tom Henn Memorial Lecture (St Catharine's), 'How old do you have to be to have a "late style"? Lateness in literature art and music' given by Professor Gordon McMullan (King's College, London) on 29 April 2008; the inaugural Graham Storey Lecture, 'Containment: the Fiction of Ian McEwan', given by Professor James Wood (Harvard University) on 30 April 2008; a lecture given by Professor Gayatri Spivack (Columbia University) on 9 October 2008, 'An Aesthetic Education', accompanying a colloquium

on his work, 'Post-Colonial and Other Pedagogies' run jointly by the Faculty and Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH). International conferences taking place in the Faculty have included Manuscripts and Miscellaneity, 1450–1720, 3–4 July 2008; The Sixth International Conference on Middle English, 24–26 July 2008; and Contemporary Poetry and its Geographies, including talks and readings by Ciaran Carlson, Stuart Calton, John Kinsella, Alice Oswald and Iain Sinclair, 11 October 2008.

For information on events please contact the Faculty Office (01223 335070) or e-mail: english-events@lists.cam.ac.uk.

Of special interest to English alumnæ/i:

A Literary Day at the British Library

Venue: British Library, London

Date: Saturday 17 January 2009

Time: 10:00am–5:00pm

Speakers:

Dr Robert Macfarlane (Pembroke 1994), Dr Michèle Mendelssohn (King's 1999), Martin Rowson (Pembroke 1978) and Dr David Starkey (Fitzwilliam 1964) along with fellow alumni for the first alumni event of the University's 800th anniversary year.

For more information, please visit the University's alumni web site, www.foundation.cam.ac.uk.

English alumnæ/i who also read all or parts of the Anglo-Saxon Norse and Celtic Tripos may also wish to know of the ASNC Department's *Anglo-Saxon Norse and Celtic Newsletter* available via www.asnc.cam.ac.uk, or through the departmental secretary, Victoria Lever, Department of ASNC, 9, West Road, Cambridge CB3 9DP (tel. 01223 335079).

Appointments 2008–2009

Dr Elizabeth Rowe was appointed to a University Lectureship in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, with effect from 1 October 2008.

Dr Christopher Burlinson was appointed to a college lectureship at Jesus with effect from 1 October 2008.

Dr Thomas Charlton was appointed to a college lectureship at Girton with effect from 1 October 2008.

Dr Neil Pattison was appointed to a college lectureship at St. John's with effect from 1 October 2008.

Dr Edward Wilson was appointed to a college lectureship at Sidney Sussex with effect from 1 October 2008.

Dr Helen Foxhall Forbes was appointed as a Temporary Teaching Associate in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic with effect from 1 October 2008.

Dr Adrian Lashmore-Davies was appointed to a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship with effect from 1 October 2008.

Dr Catherine Nall was appointed to a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship in English with effect from 1 October 2008.

Dr David Woodman was appointed to a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic with effect from 1 October 2008.

Dr Sebastiaan Verweij was appointed as Research Associate on the Scriptorium project with effect from 1 October 2008.

Dr Angus Vine was appointed as Senior Research Associate on the Scriptorium project with effect from 1 October 2008.

Resignations 2008–2009

Dr Christopher Cannon resigned his Senior Lectureship to take up a post at New York University. Dr Juliet Fleming resigned her Lectureship to take up a post

at New York University. Dr Deana Rankin resigned her College Lectureship to take up a Lectureship at Royal Holloway College, University of London

Obituary

Alumnæ/i will be sad to learn of the deaths of two distinguished senior members of the Faculty during the last year: Professor Ian Jack, on 3 September 2009, and Professor Derek Brewer, on 23 October 2009.