

## MR BROWN AND MIS-INFORMATION

*Edwin Peel, Tutor for Admissions responds to the criticisms levelled recently by Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown.*

The recent comments by the Chancellor of Exchequer about the decision by Magdalen College not to offer a place to read Medicine to one particular student from the state sector have certainly given a higher profile to the question of admissions to Oxford than at any time in recent memory. There is, of course, room for a proper debate on this topic based on the facts – a debate which has been conducted in recent editions of *the brick* (issues 14 and 15). However, it was quickly established that Mr Brown's comments were based on incomplete information and one is left to despair at the irresponsibility of a government minister who can read into *one* case all the evidence he needs to conclude that Oxford operates on the basis of the 'old boy network' and the 'old school tie'.

Perhaps the greatest disappointment lies in the fact that Mr Brown's comments were so ill-timed and may deflect attention from the many initiatives which are being taken to make Oxford more open and accessible than at any time in its history.

I write this article at the end of a day when we have acted as host to teachers from 50 schools in the state sector, including the North East, for a conference on admissions. We will shortly open our doors, as we do every year, to as many as seven hundred Year 12 students as part of our Open Day.

These initiatives are already producing the sort of results which the Government should welcome. Last year, 64% of our UK candidates were drawn from the state sector, and those candidates received 64% of the offers made. The most recent figures for A-level performance indicate that approximately two-thirds of those students who obtain three A grades are educated in the state sector. On that basis, the figures for Keble are very close to those one would expect to see, and the figures for the University as a whole are not far behind.

One constant criticism of our admissions process is that it is more complicated than those of other

Universities and that some advantage is gained by private schools who 'know how to play the system'. The principal difference between our process and that of other Universities is the individual attention that we are able to give to each application. This may involve the submission of examples of work from the candidate's school or college, or a short written test, and, of course, the interview. If this means that our process can appear more complicated, the answer is not necessarily to introduce wholesale change, but to provide the information which candidates and their advisers need to give them the fairest opportunity to succeed.

In particular, there seems to be some misunderstanding of the nature and significance of the interview. The performance of a candidate in interview is just one factor, among many, which are taken into account in making our decisions. It provides an opportunity for tutors to take candidates beyond their A-level (or equivalent) studies and test their potential for their chosen course. In that sense, it is an aptitude test and, while the University has piloted a number of projects to look into the feasibility of written aptitude tests, the interview must remain as *one* basis upon which tutors can differentiate between a large number of very well qualified candidates.

Now is not the time to be complacent. We remain absolutely committed to recruiting the best students whether they are from the private or the state sector. We continue to welcome applications from the former and, along with other colleges, are redoubling our efforts to encourage applications from the latter, particularly from institutions and areas of the country which may not previously have submitted candidates and are, understandably, not familiar with our admissions procedure.

It would be extremely unfortunate if the remarks of the Chancellor were to undermine those efforts, but we hope that, by continuing to work as tirelessly as we have always done on this issue, we may prevent any serious and lasting damage.



Mr Edwin Peel,  
Fellow and Tutor  
in Law, Admissions  
Tutor for the last  
△ two years.

# DIARY

SEPT

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### Drinks at the Athenaeum

*John Grieves ('55) is kindly hosting a drinks party for Old Members at the Athenaeum. The cost is £10 per person. See Booking Form enclosed with this issue.*

### BA Degree Day

*For this year's Finalists*

BA Degree  
▷ Day 1999



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OCT

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Michaelmas Term Begins

### Third Year Group Organizers' Conference

*Interested in helping out with your Year Group? Email the Development Office – alumni@keb.ox.ac.uk or ring on (01865) 272794 / 282338.*

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### Ghosts Football Match

*Old Members take on a team of current members.*

Nov

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### Richardson Lecture

*5.30pm, Pusey Room. Lecture by Dr Artur Ekert, Tutor in Physics Tomorrow's Enigma – the quantum world. All Old Members welcome.*

MARCH  
2001

16–17

### Quinquennial Reunion

*Quinquennial Reunion for Old Members who matriculated in the years '60–'64 inclusive. Invitations will be sent out in November.*



JUNE

29–30

### Quinquennial Reunion

*Quinquennial Reunion for Old Members who matriculated in the years '55–'59 inclusive. Invitations will be sent out in March 2001.*

## COMPETITION CORNER

Identify the people in this picture taken during Eights Week in 1959. The winner will be the person who, in the opinion of our panel of judges, names the greatest number of people correctly. If you would like an A4 copy of this photo, please contact the Development Office on (01865) 282338 or 272794.

In this form, the competition will only be of relevance to a comparatively small group of our Old Members. So, a second prize will be awarded to the person who comes up with the best caption for the photograph.



Both prize-winners will win a dinner for two at High Table.

# THE BRICK INTERVIEW: KEN LOVETT

Guy Collender interviews Ken Lovett, the Bursar, as his retirement approaches.

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## What did you do before you came to Keble?

I used to say that I was a wind surfer on the Costa del Sol. In fact, I was the Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander at Gibraltar, which was a Joint Service appointment. My mission was to change Gibraltar from a set of single organizations (Army, Navy, Air Force, Foreign Office), responsible back to London, into a Joint Command, thereby reducing operating costs. Prior to that I had been in Moscow with Military Intelligence.

## Did these experiences help you in your role as Bursar?

I learnt to maintain harmony in the face of potentially conflicting interests. I feel that it has proved particularly invaluable when dealing with the SCR, JCR, MCR, staff and even different subject interests.

## What does the Bursar actually do?

It's really looking after things. Firstly, I have the responsibility for the material, as distinct from the academic, running of the College. I look after the 'stabling' so that your 'trainers' can equip you to pass the finishing line successfully. Secondly, the financial aspect has become increasingly important. I have to ensure that the money comes in and that the College is solvent at all times.

## What has challenged you most at Keble?

Solvency. We've had to take on tremendous challenges during my time as Bursar. The great advantage of this College is that it anticipated what was going to happen and therefore we were able to keep the finances in good shape. The effective reduction in real fee income

started a long time ago, so we took steps at a very early stage to enter the conference trade — we don't have a large endowment to compensate for the downturn in fee income.

## How has Keble changed in the last decade?

The biggest change from the individual student's point of view is the great transformation in the quality of accommodation, particularly with the ARCO building. When I first got here there were no *en suite* facilities whatsoever. My first examination of the College horrified me because there were toilets and bathrooms of a standard which would not have been accepted in any community I have known — very communal, smelly and quite nasty.

## What are the best and worst things about Keble?

The best is the fact that one is involved with young people, in such a dynamic community. One of the great pleasures of life here has been working with successive JCR and MCR Committees. The responsibility of maintaining solvency has to be the worst feature of this job — that is the lie-awake-at-night factor. The University is under no legal obligation to bail us out.

## Which historical character do you relate to most?

Manneheim. A Finnish general, born in Russia, a military officer of great distinction, who served many political organizations by virtue of the numerous state boundary changes. He always gave absolutely independent advice to whoever his political master might be. He executed his wars to the best of his ability — perfectly balancing the political advice given with the execution of his military duties.

## What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I enjoy gardening. If I'm in London, then I like to go to an exhibition or the theatre. I do like to keep up to date with what is going on in the Arts.

## What will you do when you leave your post as Bursar?

I want to go and spend some time in Germany and France to improve my ability in both languages. Then I will be better able to enjoy those countries by participating more fully in their cultural life.

## I understand that you are not leaving Keble completely.

Indeed, I am the project manager for the new building. Even at the moment, it is taking about a day and a half a week of my time. So, I will be back where I started nine years ago, with early plans for the ARCO building!

## What are going to be the best features of the new building?

Enhanced facilities. It's going to give us much needed new seminar rooms; a large multi-purpose lecture and drama theatre; a good music room with soundproofing; a buffet sitting area for meals, as well as additional study bedrooms. So, the College community will benefit from a lot more public space.

## What will you miss most?

Undoubtedly I will miss the sense of community which makes Keble what it is. In my working life, I have always belonged to an organization; be it a squadron, a wing, an embassy. Here, one is surrounded by a great variety of people and these people form a great team. Once you leave, you are inevitably distanced from that community, even though you are still technically associated with it.



# GREAT FUN DAY

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JCR President, Ewan Morgan, and Chairman, Alexis Wain, were the main organizers of the Fun Day for teams drawn from the JCR and MCR. Sack races, egg and spoon, tug of war — to name but a few — evoked happy memories of junior school for the ten teams who competed enthusiastically for the coveted first prize of vouchers for an Indian meal. Well done to *The Ace and his Spades!*

Thanks must again go to the Keble Association for their generous sponsorship of this event.



# MEDIAEVAL MAN

Bruno Luse (2nd Year Geography) has become President of the Wychwood Warriors — a society with a difference. Dedicated to Dark Age re-enactment, they recreate the lifestyle of the people who lived between the resumption of Viking raids on England (c.759) and the Battle of Hastings.



Bruno, who comes from Singapore, says that he had no idea that such societies existed before coming to Oxford. He visits historic sites around Britain, where he stunt-fights with replicas of Dark Age weaponry, sings, plays traditional games, and competes in ancient contests of strength, reviving himself with traditional food and ale afterwards.

In October, the Wychwood Warriors will be joining other enthusiasts at 'Hastings 2000', recreating the exploits of William the Conqueror, although as Saxons, we don't fancy their chances!



All good things must come to an end! Keble's run in University Challenge finished in the semi-finals when our fearless foursome was knocked out by Oriel College (Keble Women's 1st VIII bumped them in Eights though — revenge is sweet!).

# TRANSATLANTIC TRIO

Three undergraduates will travel to Dartmouth College this summer, as part of the successful exchange scheme. Tracy MacBeth (English) will pursue her interests in Irish history, American fiction and filmmaking, John Elford (PPE) intends to study military decision-making, international relations and game theory and Lindsey Pickup (Engineering) will study astronomy, philosophy and comparative literature.

# MELODY MAKERS

An impressive performance of some very challenging music (after only one week's rehearsal) at the Commemoration of Benefactors Service on St Mark's Day in 1<sup>st</sup> week was just one of the highlights of this term for Keble Choir. Next term looks to be equally busy, with new singers auditioning and the arrival of a new organ scholar. Mark Laflin will hand over the running of the choir to Gavin Plumley in order to concentrate on playing and singing in his final year.

The choir is continuing its hard work by recording another CD with Priory Records. Funded by the Sullivan society, the CD will feature the complete choral works of Sir Arthur Sullivan on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. Gavin believes that recording a CD 'puts the singers, conductor and organist under a healthy amount of pressure to produce the best performance that they can'.



It is clear from the rehearsals and performances that this is a group of people who have become a really unified group of singers with a wide repertoire, rightly recognized as one of the best Chapel Choirs in Oxford. The highlight of next term promises to be the candlelit Advent Carol Service, and, with a planned international tour next summer, the future looks bright for Keble Choir.

## Letter

Dear Sir

I was most interested to read the article in *the brick* (issue 18) on Eton Fives. What a difference from 1938! When I went up in that year, I think I was the only Eton Fives player in the College. I used to cycle down to the courts off Abingdon Road and was eventually rewarded with a place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> pair against Cambridge — played at Queen's Club in April '39. But a Blue! Oh dear no, not even a Half Blue — a point that has rankled with me ever since and made me ineligible for Vincent's!

Returning to Keble, the College was then the bastion of Rugby Fives. It possessed the only (as far as I was aware) Rugby Fives court in the University and was much used. It was behind Hall near to Blackhall Road. How a Rugby Fives court came to be built in the poor old Keble of those days remains a mystery to me. Is it still there? An article on its provenance and use would be interesting. I tried the game a few times but swiftly came to the realization that it was not a patch on Eton Fives — all that bending and slogging — and none of the subtleties of Eton Fives which you describe — indeed more subtleties when you include also the Step and the Dead Man's Hole!

Patrick Shovelton ('38)

## FRINGE BENEFITS

Four from Keble are off to Edinburgh this summer to take part in Festival Fringe, one of the world's biggest and best-known arts festivals. Members of the University Writing Society *SIAS*, are staging two shows. Vikki Martin (2<sup>nd</sup> Year, Modern Languages), has co-written, co-directed and will star in the shows, which will run for the whole of August in one of the Fringe's premier venues, The Gilded Balloon. Edinburgh audiences traditionally look for new comic writing at affordable prices, and Vikki hopes that her talents will be spotted.



The cast of six will be performing the shows on alternate nights; one is a mainstream 'sketch' show featuring the best material from the high profile *SIAS* shows here in Oxford. The other is an original production, with a darker, more adult humour. Keble historian, Joe Hervey, will be stretching his comedic muscles on stage. Engineer Alastair Smith (lighting and sound) and linguist Christine Sowden (marketing) are also working on making the venture a success. There is a long tradition of Oxford comic writers and actors starting their careers at the Edinburgh Festival. Watch this space!

# SPORT

## 'Keble women rock'

Emma Bullard, Women's Captain, summed up Eights Week for Keble Women — blades, 5 bumps in 4 days, and an invitation to the OUWBC trials for the whole crew.

Trained by a Canadian International, the Women's 1st VIII, boasting two Blues, one Osiris and a junior GB rower, began their successful campaign bumping Exeter before the Gut. Bumping Balliol, before Donnington Bridge, concluded a great first day.



Cox Emma Bullard with her victorious crew

The crew were awarded blades after bumping Trinity, Linacre and Oriel on the remaining days. Their ability to bump early on denied the crowds at the boathouses a display of full pressure rowing.

The Men's 1st VIII, after bumping Univ. and being bumped by Lincoln, rowed over to maintain their position at the top of Division 2 while the Men's 2nd VIII raised themselves into Division 3 bumping St Catz II and Linacre and nearly getting overbumps.

## Eights and Bumps

*Trevor Peterson gives an outsider's perspective on a uniquely English experience*

The last time I lined up to cox an eight in a multi boat event, it was for Canada in the Men's Lightweight Eight. Two weeks ago, I found myself hanging onto a wet piece of rope on an incredibly unfair course, waiting for a cannon to fire. With the exception of the 'other place', I know of no other rowing contest where the object is to physically hit the boat in front of you. Add to this rowing against a stream, on a winding river, and the fact that every boat rows a race course that differs in length relative to its starting position on the river, and you have a competition that no 'serious' rower would remotely want to be involved in. My conception of racing has always been six boats across on a buoyed, flat-water course — he who gets to the finish line first is fastest — pretty simple.

But, I found Summer Eights to be some of the most fun competition I've had in years.

Summer Eights has a strategy all its own. It's not about who's the fastest necessarily, but rather who is faster quicker and can catch the boat in front before being caught by the boat behind. Good steering can make up a length in a few hundred metres. But, what I found most appealing, is that it is an event full of people who love to row, who are fiercely competitive for themselves, their teammates and college.



This is the first year in recent memory that a Keble Men's 1st VIII did not contain a single university athlete. The fact that this boat produced some of the best speed of recent Keble eights is a testament to what a group of committed college athletes can achieve. I thank the Keble Men's 1st VIII for letting me be a part of their preparations and racing, and I'd also like to extend warm congratulations to the Women's 1st VIII on their achievement of blades.



## Oke strides out

Success for Keble students in the 126th Athletics Varsity Match. The Oxford Men beat Cambridge 110-102 with Keble's Oke Odudu (PRS, Law) earning a Blue after a storming performance in the 100m hurdles. Women's Blues Captain, Elizabeth Goodwin (3rd Year Geography) achieved a valuable second place in the

200m and Emilie Giles (1st Year Law) also came second in the 1500m. Unfortunately Cambridge won the Women's competition 96-83 but not without a spirited performance by the Oxford Women. All three Keble athletes will compete in the Americas Match against Harvard and Yale in June.

## Spare us!

Sam Spare (2nd year Classics), was this year selected for the Oxford University Men's Basketball team and has recently been elected President. The highlights of the team's season came with a record Varsity Match victory (118-71) and a win against National League Division 1 Oxford Devils (95-79).

Sam also assembled a strong Cuppers squad within the College which was unfortunate to go out to St Peter's in the semi-final (55-67).



# OLD MEMBERS' NEWS

## Veterans bring home an Oxford Triple



With the Boat Race and the Veterans' Boat Race on the Thames in the bag, the Veterans went off to Rome to take up a 'friendly' challenge on the Tiber against crews from Cambridge and the Aniene Club of Rome.

Congratulations to two Keble men, Bill Fink '64 and Jerry Dale '68, who were in the winning crew.

## American Friends

The New York Reunion was held on the weekend of 31 March and 1 April provided a great opportunity to meet up with old friends from across the Atlantic. The welcoming Reception on Friday was in the Grand Ballroom at the Waldorf-Astoria. There was an interesting programme of presentations on Saturday and in the evening the Warden hosted a Keble dinner at the Café Centro. There was a good turn out for a lively evening during which The Warden was also able to report on what was going on in College and to answer a wide range of questions.



## 1957 Boathouse Reunion

Mike Binnie, Robert Brown and Robert Rowland were the prime movers in assembling this impressive line up from 1957.



A lunch was held on the roof of the Boathouse on the Saturday of Eights Week. For many, it was the first time they had re-visited the river since their undergraduate days when the boathouse was a barge. Many will mourn its passing, particularly as no one seems to know exactly what happened to it.

## Reunion Dates for 2001

**Friday/Saturday 16–17 March**  
for the years '60–4 inclusive

**Friday/Saturday 29–30 June**  
for the years '55–9 inclusive

## Old Members in Print

*Bears and Bulls* by David Cohen ('65). A study of the psychology of stock markets. Published by Metro 2000. ISBN 19005 12769.

*Professional CDO Programming* by Daniel J Mitchell ('91). Programming for Microsoft's Exchange mail system. Published by Wrox Press 1999. ISBN 1 86100 2068.

## Mastermind

Stephen Follows (English, '85) has reached the final of Mastermind on Radio 4, by virtue of his knowledge of the life and operas of Britten and the poetry and plays of T S Eliot. His chosen subject for the final, which will be broadcast on 31 July, will be the life and operas of Janáček. Stephen was part of the University Challenge team in 1987 which went on to be national, international and inter-collegiate champions and was also a semi-finalist for BBC Radio's *Counterpoint* for which he remains the all time points record holder.



# AND FINALLY...

## Letter from the Clocktower



### Greetings

Taxi (or Metaxa for short), the Warden's cat, is stretching lazily in the summer sunshine, lying in wait for anyone with the time to stop and say hello. This is in direct contrast to the Warden herself, whose schedule at the moment is enough to make you dizzy.

There is great activity down there as rooms are being made ready as the College acts as host for the forthcoming Conference of Teachers. Ed Peel, the Admissions Tutor, tells me that it's a means of encouraging state schools, particularly from the North East, to consider sending their brightest and best to Oxford. Fifty teachers out of the 200 invited took up the offer to come. An invitation was sent to Laura Spence's school. Clearly they were too busy talking to the press to reply.

The finalists are finally finishing, with levels of euphoria mounting daily as each batch reaches the end of their exams. The local off-licences are doing brisk trade in champagne – of very varying quality. I have to say.

I see that the doorways around the quads are peppered with posters, exhorting Junior Members to vote in the second round of the JCR Presidential elections. The first round turned in a decisive vote for Ron (Re-open Nominations). Thank goodness, the second round has produced a winner in Anna Pruetzel-Thomas. Let's hope that she fills the position as brilliantly as Ewan Morgan has done.

Earlier, I saw a group of 70 or so arriving at the Lodge. Could they all be mathematicians? But then, I did hear speak of a special lunch to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the arrival at Keble of John Gittins and David Acheson. Hark to the strains of John's voice with a song: 'If you give me your attention I will tell you what I am, I'm a genuine mathematician, also something of a ham...'. Gilbert and Sullivan, humble apologies!

What an apparition now appears! Good gracious, it is our Editor dressed in luminous pink – he looks uncommonly like a Barbie doll. Yet more! One of our male medics looks rather too good in a nurse's uniform. They are both raising money for Rag Week. I'd give them a quid.

### Rapunzel

## Dennis Nineham 'visits' the Summer Exhibition

Dennis Nineham's is the first of a series of three portraits of Keble Wardens painted by the late Norman Blamey. It is currently on loan to the Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy in Piccadilly. Its inclusion in the Exhibition was requested as it was felt that it was one of the finest examples of the artist's work. Blamey, who died in January, though known primarily as a religious painter, saw himself first and foremost as a painter of the human figure and after his election as an RA in 1975, took on a small number of official portrait commissions. The Summer Exhibition runs until Monday 7 August.



Dennis Nineham (Warden

△ 1969–79)

## Crossed blades in BVI

Soper's Hole, Tortola, British Virgin Islands — hardly on the beaten track! These crossed Keble blades dating from 1912 were spotted above a bar by Nicki Sheard '94. Sadly, we have no knowledge of how they got there.

