

# the brick

<http://www.keble.ox.ac.uk/> the newsletter for Keble alumni issue 28 —trinity term 2003

## 130 YEARS ON...

After much deliberation, the decision has been made to start the cleaning of Hall – a huge task.

For many years the College has put off the long-overdue work on account of cost and the inevitable disruption to College life. But the launch of the *Talbot Fund*, and the encouraging level of conference business, has convinced Governing Body it's now time to act. And it does seem entirely appropriate that one of the first achievements of the *Talbot Fund* will be to help restore the ceiling to the state that Talbot, our first Warden, would have recognised.

In Hilary Term conservators spent six weeks assessing logistics and cleaning methods. They concluded that the work could be divided into two phases. So, from October 2003 to March 2004, the ceiling will be cleaned. A movable scaffold incorporating two towers and a bridge will enable the work to proceed whilst allowing life in Hall to continue as normally as possible.

The second phase of cleaning - the walls, fireplace, wood panelling, tables and benches, windows and tiled floor - may start in October 2004 (through to March 2005), but the decision to proceed with this phase has not yet been taken. The division of the project into two parts does allow for a pause in proceedings should that be judged appropriate. (No doubt the resplendence of the ceiling will dictate that the second phase should proceed with all deliberate speed!)



The exposure of a portion of the ceiling (on the left of Hall door) back in the early 1990s, thanks to the generosity of Peter Rawlins (1969), and the part which has recently been exposed by the conservators has given a taste of what is anticipated. The enthusiasm generated for the project at a Dinner for the pre-1945s last September and the response of those who

have contributed to this project through the *Talbot Fund* since its launch earlier in the year have been convincing – the cleaning should be tackled as soon as possible.

The contract for the first phase has been awarded to Hirst Conservation at a price of just under £425,000. The Development Office is busy preparing applications to Trusts for funding support. But many Old Members have suggested that the College should break down the costs involved in cleaning the differently sized sections of the ceiling to illustrate what any donation could achieve. So we counted them all and came up with a plan.

There are 280 square panels in the main ceiling, with 32 squares in the bay sections; there are 218 bosses and there are 5 primary trusses with 10 secondary trusses and 2 bay trusses.

A donation through the *Talbot Fund* of £5 per month for five years will clean two bosses; £10 per month for five years will clean a square panel or one of the secondary trusses; £20 per month for five years will clean one of the primary trusses and their supporting cups.

Many people have indicated that this project is particularly close to their hearts, and the names of all who contribute will be recorded on a commemorative vellum displayed in the Hall.

Others have identified different areas of College life, such as bursaries and graduate scholarships (which can also be supported through the *Talbot Fund*), to which they would prefer to contribute. But whatever their priorities, few would deny that it is a ceiling of which we should be proud and restoring it is something that should be done for future generations.



# DIARY

Jul

12

**Family Day,  
Keble Association AGM  
and Summer Dinner**

*A day of fun and games  
for all the family, with  
Summer Dinner in the  
evening.*

*KA AGM, Pusey Room,  
5.30pm.*



19

**Barbecue  
for 1993s**

*Please contact  
the Development  
Office for details.*

Aug

2

**MA Degree Day for  
1995 matriculands**

*If you have not  
received an  
invitation and feel  
that you are eligible,  
please contact the  
Development Office.*

Sep

20

**Retirement Dinner for  
Dr Larry Siedentop**

*All Dr Siedentop's former  
students should feel  
included in this invitation.  
If you have not received a  
letter of invitation, please  
contact the Development  
Office.*



Oct

11

**Ghosts  
Football  
Match**

12

**Michaelmas Term Begins**

Nov

14

**Richardson Lecture**

*5.30pm Pusey Room.*

*'Boys will be boys':  
the childhoods of Charles I  
and Oliver Cromwell in  
context*

*Dr Diane Purkiss, Fellow  
and Tutor in English  
Language and Literature*

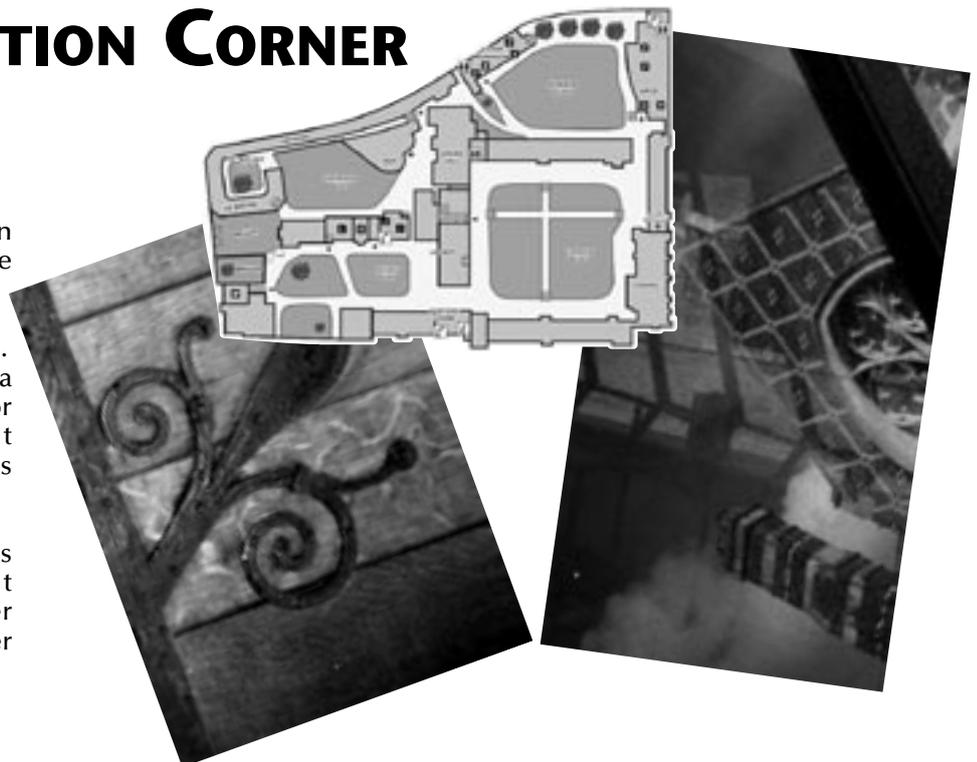


## COMPETITION CORNER

### X Marks the spot!

Place a cross on the plan to indicate where the photographers were standing when taking these two pictures. The usual prize of a High Table Dinner for two and overnight accommodation awaits the lucky winner.

Please send answers to the Development Office, to arrive no later than the end of October 2003.



# THE BRICK INTERVIEW: MONICA ESSLIN

3

Emily McLeod interviews Monica Esslin (1979), Year Group Rep, former KA Committee Member.

## Do your strong ties with Keble reflect your time as an undergraduate?

I was very happy at Keble, rowing, making music, balancing work and extra-curricular activities. Keeping the connection going over the last twenty years is about wanting to give something back to the College, whether it be as Rep for my year; running interview training sessions for undergraduates; taking part in the Family Day or working with the Keble Association.

## You were one of the first cohort of women admitted to the College...

For Keble, I would say, the admission of women was a natural and much desired change. I have memories of un-segregated loos and open showers with girls and boys rushing up and down corridors in towels. Of course, that first year, there were only 30 of us, so we were pretty exotic!

## Can you elaborate on your role as Year Group Rep for the 1979s?

I was happy to volunteer for this role and it has been great fun so far. I have particularly enjoyed being involved from the start of the initiative and have attended the YG conferences which helped to set plans in motion. I found it good to keep in touch with my contemporaries afterwards and I never fail to be amazed by where they end up – both on professional and social levels. The real driving force behind it all is the Development Office and Isla and her team deserve a huge vote of thanks for their efforts.

## What job are you doing at the moment?

I run a training consultancy offering media training, communications consulting and change management to companies, primarily outside the UK as our offering is strongly multi-lingual. One of my contemporaries, Jeremy Smith (1979), works with me on many projects. The job is challenging, involving quite a bit of travel and a lot of thinking on my feet in front of CEOs and senior managers.

## How did *The Martin Esslin Society* come about?

My father, Martin Esslin, former Head of BBC Radio Drama, Professor at Stanford University and a noted author of books on the theatre, died early in 2002. During his lifetime, he had collected an extensive library. In his memory, I decided to put it to practical use by offering the College the 'pick' of his books. In addition we thought that an annual dramatic production could be staged

in the O'Reilly Theatre with a link to the *Theatre of the Absurd*, his most famous work.

## Tell me a bit about the *Theatre of the Absurd*?

The first edition was published in 1961, the year I was born. It examines the trends which emerged in theatre post-war and through the 1950's. Most importantly, my father explains, for example, how to approach works like *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett, the works of Ionesco, Genet and Harold Pinter. It's now in its fourth edition and still seems to be a 'must read' for many A Level students and undergraduates. For example, an Absurdist playwright, Eugène Ionesco wrote in *La Cantatrice Chauve*:  
MME MARTIN: Quelle est la morale?

LE POMPIER: C'est à vous de la trouver.

I fully agree with this sentiment. Morality exists within each human being, conditioned perhaps by the society in which he or she lives.

## Why did you want to stage such a controversial play as *Pre Paradise Sorry Now*?

*Pre Paradise Sorry Now*, by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, is just the kind of play which my father would have liked to produce when it was written, in the late 1960's. However, as it deals with the Moors Murderers, he could not do so. Interestingly, when I produced some scenes for BBC Radio Drama in 1983, I was also told that it could not be broadcast. Producer Sam Brown (2001) did wonderful work with his cast and staged a breathtaking production in the Theatre which would have thrilled my father as much as it excited me.

## Can audiences cope with a play like this?

Judging by the comments I heard after the performance, the play provoked the audience into thinking hard about relationships, violence and murder. That, in my opinion, is a good thing. The answer may not be in the play but the audience can formulate their own conclusions.

## What are your future aspirations for the Society?

I hope that we could bring my father's colleagues and associates to Keble to produce/direct/lead workshops on playwrights like Beckett and Sam Shepherd with the undergraduates, culminating in a series of performances. That way the link between the past, present and future will have real meaning. I secretly hope that someone will stumble on a play in Keble Library that inspires them to put on a production, or take up a career in the theatre.



# CHOIR IN CATHEDRALS

4

Southwark Cathedral in Michaelmas, Westminster Abbey this term — Keble Choir has enjoyed a programme of cathedral singing. The Choir sang a setting by Stanford, in C, and also Parry's *My Soul There Is A Country*, by coincidence the presiding Canon's favourite anthem. The congregation was swelled by a large delegation from Sierra Leone whose Deputy Commissioner read a lesson. Despite the great size of the building, the Choir managed to fill the Abbey with their singing and felt honoured

to add to the liturgy in a place like Westminster. Next year they have been invited to sing at St Paul's.



## THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD UNDER SCRUTINY

The College was approached recently by the Tate as they wished to use the *Light of the World* in a book on the use of infra-red as a technique for detailed examination of paintings. For the College, this was a great opportunity to learn more about the painting and the frame, its overall condition as well as discovering if there was any need for restoration. It was interesting to see the 'bones' of the picture, in particular the re-alignment of the hand which is knocking at the door as well as the light round the head. This is definitely 'work in progress' — the Tate Gallery is working on the final image.



David Lambert and Rod Tidnam

## WANTED

Please could the Development Office borrow any mug-shots or Year Books from the early 1980s. We have 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989 but there is a gap in College pictures in the years prior to that. We will undertake to scan and return any treasures sent!

## NEW VICE-CHANCELLOR FROM OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY



Dr John Hood, currently Vice-Chancellor of the University of Auckland, has been nominated, subject to approval by the University Congregation, to succeed Sir Colin Lucas from October 2004.

Dr Hood is the first person in the 900-year history of the University to have been selected from outside the institution. A graduate of Auckland University, he spent 2 years in Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar at Worcester College in the late 1970s, where he obtained an MPhil in Management Studies.

# PRE PARADISE, SORRY NOW

This challenging play was chosen as the inaugural production of the *Martin Esslin Society* (see p3) and was directed by Sam Brown



and staged in the O'Reilly Theatre in 4th week.

The subject of the play was the Moors murderers Ian Brady and Myra Hindley. The posters were intended to arouse people's morbid curiosity. And morbid the play certainly was, creating tension and evoking emotion in the process. The acting and the production were superb but the play was very disturbing — such a display of human evil needs a redeeming feature but this was hard to find.

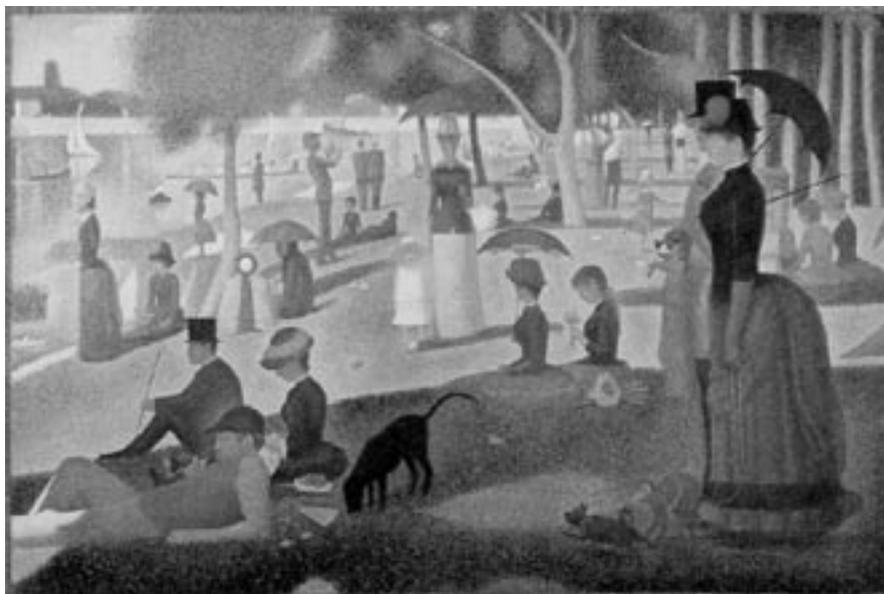
The constant background sound reminiscent of a shifting submarine was unsettling, creating an unnervingly claustrophobic atmosphere, from which there was no escape as there was no interval — an interval would have broken the tension so effectively created. Particularly disturbing was the use of tape-recorded voices coupled with the background sound. One was forced to draw the obvious parallel with the real tapes made by Brady and Hindley. Having been confronted with some of the very worst aspects of human nature; sadism, Nazism and torture, one was left nauseated, searching for consolation, a message, hope. But in this bleak, clinical study of psychosis, there was none. That in itself was a measure of the Company's ultimate achievement.

# SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE

*Sunday in the Park with George* became the second musical co-written by James Lapine to be performed in the O'Reilly Theatre — the first was the inaugural production, *Falsettos*. With music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, *Sunday in the Park with George* is a fictionalized story based on the pointillist artist, George Seurat. As a result of his decision to pursue art at the cost of the relationship with the woman he loves, Seurat dies a lonely man before his work is fully appreciated. But his legacy lives on, demonstrated in the second act which moves forward to the next generation — a feat accomplished by costume, speech and body language. Particularly poignant

was when the entire company recreated a tableau of Seurat's *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. The image echoed the message of the play that the quest for, for example, self-expression

remains constant through time and that it is individuals that constitute the whole, just as it is the separate dots that create the overall picture. Once again the O'Reilly Theatre provided a wonderful setting.



# SPORTS

6



## Division One Divas

Keble's 1st boat of Robyn Farmer, Jennifer White, Gabrielle Cadbury, Chanda Kapande, Natalie Banner, Sarah-Jane Mulryan, Melanie Shaw, Rebecca Malcolm and Natasha Phillips (cox), coached by Nathan Williams, stormed into Division One, earning blades in the process. Congratulations to them and to all Keble rowers for the hard work put in over the year!



## Dancesport Cuppers



Keble's four full teams were up against about 30 from other colleges. From the outset, it was clear that the College had fielded the largest, loudest, best-groomed, most professional and ultimately best dancing team on the floor. To cheering from 'Keble Corner', the couples demonstrated the talent, elegance and energy for which Keble is renowned. In the four disciplines of Jive, Quickstep, Waltz and Cha Cha, 75% of our couples made the

semi-finals, with two in each dance reaching the finals! In the end, Keble scooped 1st, 5th, 7th and 11th places. The A team pairings of Ross Clegg and Charlotte Woolley and Helena Jones and Alex Hobbs were overall winners in the Waltz and Jive respectively.

## Croquet

Anyone spending more than a day in Keble this summer term will have been amazed by the popularity of croquet, so much so that kits had to be booked three days in advance to avoid disappointment!

Ten teams entered University Cuppers, a Keble croquet ladder was set up for the first time and the Club's annual black tie dinner was reborn. Playing against the backdrop of the Chapel is quite something. The greatest success this year came from the 3rd IV, captained by Fasal Hussain, who reached the last 16. Star players Aly Kassam (Captain for 2004) and John Aldis went on to represent the University.



Jacqueline Clifton-  
Brown

## The Oxford RAG Jump



Of the 28 University students who took part in the 13,500-foot tandem jump in May, twelve were from Keble. Fortunately, each participant was strapped (very securely!) onto the front of a professional skydiver. After leaving the rather cosy plane at altitude, there was an initial free-fall for about 2.5 km, reaching speeds of 130 mph. Everyone arrived safely on the ground, having floated through the clouds and done thrill-spins and sharp turns for the last 1.5km descent – an amazing experience! The jump raised in excess of £4,000 for Oxford RAG, which supports an annually nominated selection of local, national and international charities.



Brett Thebault, Fasal Hussain, Ian King  
and James Meekings (on the tarmac)

## Spanish Steps

Gordon Reece (1982) writes.



In 1999 I was a solicitor being slowly worked to death in a small personal injury firm in Maidstone. Unable to face thirty more

years of catching the 0725 from Watlingtonbury, I persuaded my wife to run away with me to Spain. I'd always wanted to write and illustrate for children but had got nowhere in England. I decided to try my luck in Spain and to my amazement the first book I wrote was accepted by SM, Spain's largest children's book publisher. Four years on I'm still writing. My next book is to be published in Australia in 2005.



## Under Cover in Yemen

Over the last seven years, Lucy Vigne (1979) has been venturing into the souks of Sanaa's old town in Yemen in an attempt to persuade the traders to cease trading in rhino-horn decorated crafts. This is a difficult mission as, for many Yemenis, a rhino *jambiya* (dagger) is a most prized possession. When the material, which commands a price of \$1,300 per kilo, is carved it develops a beautiful translucence similar to amber.

Her secondment to this project has brought her into contact with government ministers and smugglers alike. None of the hostility which she encountered along the way has dampened her enthusiasm for the cause and she is greatly encouraged that the demand for new rhino horn has declined in recent years. As she says, 'We are winning the battle'.



David Cruickshanks

## The Most Beautiful Man in the World

There was a lot of excitement surrounding Hugh Welchman's (1993) new production, *The Most Beautiful Man in the World*, although it did not win the short film Palme d'Or at Cannes last month. However, it did win the short film award at the Hamburg Film



Festival this year. Only five minutes in length, with almost no dialogue, the film follows a girl's encounter with a mystery stranger. One critic wrote that it had a 'delicate, dream-like wonder, full of warmth' about this simple moment of human contact.

## Old Members' Publications

*Clouds of Glory*, by Bryan Magee (1949) Published by Jonathan Cape, ISBN 0 224 06979 9

*Perverse Subsidies*, by Norman Myers (1954) Published by Island Press, ISBN 1 55963 835 4

*The Lock*, by Frank Egerton (1985) Published by Smaller Sky Books, ISBN 1 903100 09 7

## Reunion dates for 2004

Please note these dates have been revised

19–20 March 2004 for years 1987–91

25–26 June 2004 for years 1992–7

# AND FINALLY...

## Keble Bridge

Tony Moore (1950) drew our attention to this lovely 'clapper' stone footbridge, known as Keble Bridge, over the River Leach which connects the Cotswold villages of Eastleach Martin and Eastleach Turville.



## The Acropolis, Venice, Keble ...

Thanks to Franklin Cardy (1957) from Fredericton, New Brunswick, for sending this offer from the Canadian Automobile Association magazine along with a message:

'Congratulations! That's what I call product placement!'

## Nostalgia on the River



At the March Reunion for 1976–81s, some of the late 70s relived happy memories of Eights and messing about in boats.

## Mods and Rockers

Thanks to all those who tried to identify the culprits pictured in issue 26. The accumulated wisdom seems to be:

- 1 Peter Small (1961)
- 2 Elizabeth Mitchell ?
- 3 Michael Goodacre (1961)
- 4 Teddy Hutton (1961) on the *List of the Lost*
- 5 Amanda McConnell (St Anne's)
- 6 Clive Garton (Ch. Ch.) *deceased*; likely owner of the Roller
- 7 Alan Winstanley (1961)
- 8 Evelyn Matthews (1960) *deceased*
- 9 Sally Cattell
- 10 Anthea (surname unknown)
- 11 Elizabeth Gough-Cooper
- 12 Trisha Evetts (Somerville)
- 13 Jaishankar Kala/David Smyly (1960) ?
- 14 Mystery Man
- 15 Diana Thomson
- 16 Felicity Irons
- 17 Tim Hughes (1960)
- 18 Jeremy Scott (1959) ?
- 19 William Westmacott (1962)

