The Master’s message

At this time of year, the apparent transience of much of Cambridge life is foregrounded. No one will need reminding of how fast time itself seems to pass in this most intensive of places. But, more topically, the end of each academic session involves valedictory occasions of one sort or another: for retiring colleagues, for students about to leave, for members of the assistant staff moving on after years of loyal service to Fitzwilliam. Our annual Graduation Dinner, rapidly followed by the ceremony in Senate House (familiar to generations of alumni) and a farewell lunch for students and their families, remains an emblematic occasion in this respect. For it is marked by the sadness of an au revoir and yet sincere expressions of gratitude for everything that our students have received from, and contributed to, the College.

All regular readers of Optima know that they are lifelong members of Fitzwilliam. Our new graduates will gradually realise that this is also true for them. And one of our aims, in introducing this special Graduation issue, is to accelerate that awareness at the very moment they feel most poignantly that somehow they are leaving the College behind.

At the same time, this issue of Optima serves as a reminder that the season of goodbyes is re-inscribed in a cycle which speaks of a reassuring permanence. The current students leave as the Tutorial Office is working on welcoming the next intake of Freshers. And the images and impressions of a particular graduating year-group will evoke in alumni their own emotions at Optima issue 10 • graduation 2006

Graduation. The settings and faces change, but there are perceptions and experiences which are common across the decades.

What is also deeply reassuring is the evidence in these pages of the continuing achievements of Fitzwilliam students across the whole range of academic, cultural and sporting activities, both within the University and beyond it. The resources and facilities of modern collegiate Cambridge allow our students to compete with the very best. But each graduating year-group is increasingly aware of their debt to those who have preceded them.

At the end of my first year as Master, I am more convinced than ever that the College is providing such an outstanding experience for its students, as individuals, that we must collectively find ways of ensuring that Fitzwilliam goes from strength to strength. There is so much at stake, not as an abstraction or a cliché (a famously exceptional education), but in what this context offers to the kind of young people whose faces, talents and potential shine through this special issue of Optima.
In this special Graduation issue, we thought it worth introducing ourselves to the new graduates and re-iterating to those who are familiar with us, what we do.

We have two main functions – ‘friend-raising’ (and keeping) and fundraising. Both are inevitably linked. The very reason our students are able to enjoy College accommodation, relax in beautifully maintained gardens, find solitude in the modern Chapel or stuff their breakfast down hurriedly in the Hall has been the result, indirectly, of both these things. Their fees do not cover the provision of new buildings. Where does the money for travel awards come from? That helpful cheque that comes with a College prize – who funded it? Where does the money for scholarships, studentships and support grants come from?

Some colleges have huge endowments, own vast tracts of land or large portfolios of property, not Fitz. Every advance made here, from the day Fitzwilliam House began in 1869 to the present day, has been mainly the result of the generosity of past students and Fellows, compounded by careful housekeeping, investment and strategic use of available resources. Our job is to keep you involved and ensure you always remain part of the wider Fitz family. Many of you already “put something back” to thank your College or help a current student enjoy the same things that you were privileged to enjoy, and we hope that in due course, our new graduands will do the same.

We maintain a database of all alumni and Fellows. It is a useful tool but only if it is constantly updated with any changes such as a new address, a job move or change in family circumstances. We invite you to regular alumni events and special occasions that may be of interest such as subject dinners or notable sporting functions or concerts. We send you College publications – the Fitzwilliam Journal which comes out annually and Optima, our alumni magazine published bi-annually, in spring and autumn, with this as a special Graduation issue.

We maintain the alumni section of the College web site (www.fitz.cam.ac.uk). Fitz graduates have a variety of entitlements such as the ability to organise private dinners by arrangement, High Table Dining Rights and guest rooms that can be booked when returning to Cambridge, (visit www.fitz.cam.ac.uk/alumni and select ‘Entitlements’.) At the same web address you can select ‘College memorabilia’ and view the huge range of gifts and clothing available to purchase.

We also maintain Fitz Online which is an in-house Friends Reunited with the facility to ‘Find a Friend’ as part of its service and help alumni stay in touch. The Fitz Online homepage can be found at http://online.fitz.cam.ac.uk.

Alumni events

There is a rolling cycle of events that take place each year to which alumni are invited to attend. There is the London Dinner in May, hosted by the President of the Fitzwilliam Society and held at Tallow Chandlers’ Hall in London which represents a chance for alumni to enjoy, not only each other’s company but also that of their invited guests, current students and Fitzwilliam Fellows. This is followed by the ‘Past versus Present’ Cricket Match and Dinner in June where an old boys’ team of past cricketers is invited to play a current team of students, followed by dinner in College.

The Alumni Reunion Weekend in September is the BIG one! It features a three-day programme of events, sport and music with a mega-dinner in the Hall on Saturday evening and coincides with the Cambridge-wide alumni weekend. Every ten years, specifically invited matriculation years receive a special invitation which includes a free dinner and one night’s free accommodation.

Finally, the London Drinks Evening is held at a central London venue near Christmas with the Master in attendance. Other events such as subject dinners, regional reunions, dinners associated with a specific occasion such as a valedictory event (retirement of a Master or farewell to a Tutor) or a sporting occasion are advertised when they occur.

Always remember that we are pleased to hear from you and will try to help with any request you may make. E-mail: alumni@fitz.cam.ac.uk or development@fitz.cam.ac.uk or contact us personally on our individual e-mail addresses: Carol on cel33@cam.ac.uk, Emma on emc26@cam.ac.uk or Sarah on sc266@cam.ac.uk.

Incidentally, this is the first publication when we have been able to publicly congratulate Emma on her recent marriage to Rob. She has left ‘Camps’ behind and become ‘Smith’ (e-mail address remains the same).
Sportsmen of distinction

Under a different flag and achieving in their chosen sport, three Members of Fitzwilliam competed at the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006. Two undergraduates, Alex Hedges (Computer Science 2005) and Harry Leitch (MVST 2004) and one former postgraduate, Michael Hutchinson (PhD in Human Rights Law 1999), represented their countries at this major sporting event. Alex was the only gymnast competing under the Isle of Man flag, Harry played No 2 for Scotland in the squash team and Michael cycled for Northern Ireland.

The Commonwealth Games takes place every four years and is designed to provide an inspiration for youth to strive for excellence. 71 member nations competed in 2006 from Tonga to Tanzania and the Maldives to Malawi, including 10 European nations. To qualify for the games takes dedication, time, skill and a high level of fitness and although none of the Fitz men returned with medals, all benefited from a fantastic experience and were justifiably proud of their achievements.

Alex Hedges: Alex moved to the Isle of Man when he was eleven, where his Russian coach, Gennady Tsyganov, is based. He has competed widely in the Youth Commonwealth Games, North European Championships and British Championships and last year was ranked 6th in the British Vault final. He has been Island Games Champion since 2003, winning 24 medals during the time he has been competing, including 13 gold. In 2005, he took a gap year before coming to Cambridge and went into full-time training sponsored by his physiotherapist. Physiotherapy is an important part of a gymnast’s regime as different muscle combinations are needed for the different disciplines; swinging and hanging on the rings and high bar, strength and whole body support on the pommel horse and parallel bars, jump and rebound on the vault, and balance, flexibility and all-round coordination for the floor routines.

Now at Fitzwilliam, he is torn between his studies and his training but is determined to put his course first. He belongs to the Huntingdon Olympic Gymnasium while here, where a number of other top-level gymnasts train, and he enjoys the support they all give each other. He has competed in the gymnastic Varsity match for the University and won his individual event. In the holidays he returns to the Manx Gymnastics Centre of Excellence where he coaches young gymnasts in addition to training.

At the games 24 out of the 50 competitors went through to the all-around final and he achieved 19th place. He is working on new routines and will work to qualify for the 2010 Games in Delhi. At 19, he has every chance of doing well, as a gymnast is expected to peak mentally at 22, reach their athletic best between 26 – 28 and fully develop upper-body strength by 30.
Harry Leitch: Harry’s mum is a GP and squash player, and both Harry and his brother and sister have carried on the family tradition. He is the current number 1 in the Scottish squash team, is the only student and already has 21 caps for Scotland. He also excels at doubles, which is played on a wider court and requires great physical strength and stamina as a match can last up to 3 hours. At Fitzwilliam he is a high achieving medical student but made the decision to degrade this year as he was picked to play for Scotland in the World Team Championships, World Doubles Championships, European Team Championships and Commonwealth Games all within one academic year. The year out has given him the chance to pursue his squash ambitions but his first priority remains medicine. He hopes to gain entry to the MB/PhD programme in the field of developmental physiology or endocrinology and pursue a career in academic medicine with playing squash as a bonus. While studying, he rises at 5.55 am to train before lectures with sprint, treadmill, cycling and strength and conditioning at a local gym. He is listed in seven different leagues, both county and national, and uses these for match practice. Travelling is a necessity and he is fully supported by his family, with flying to Scotland being a fairly regular occurrence!

At the Games, he partnered John White, the Scottish No 1 and world ranked No 8. Having won all their pool rounds to qualify, they beat Kenya in the last sixteen. In the quarterfinals, they met the reigning champions and eventual winners, Peter Nicol and Lee Beachill, in the closest match the champions had to play, losing narrowly 3–2. Of the 3 players on court Harry was the only one who had not reached a ranking of number 1 in the world! Harry is 21, has three Blues and is the current Blues Captain. He played No 1 in the last Varsity match (75th anniversary of Varsity matches) helping the team equal the record of 9 successive wins for Cambridge. A squash player peaks at around 28, so 2010 in Delhi is certainly on his horizon but it is head down for medicine in the next few years. He loves his present niche with medicine coming a firm first and an understanding Scotland team allowing squash to be fitted in also.

Michael Hutchinson: Michael is slightly different. He finished at Fitzwilliam in 1999 having done the LLM course followed by a PhD in International Human Rights. During this time he had a year out teaching Law at Sussex University and, having tried research and teaching, decided that he preferred journalism as a profession. He is now writing and his first book, The Hour is due out in June and is based around a competition, founded in 1876, to see how far can be travelled in one hour by cycle. Chris Boardman holds the record of 49.4 km. A second book is commissioned for next March.

Michael was a rower when he first came to Fitz, stroking for the 1st VIII, rowing with Cambridge Lightweights and coaching, but stopped in 1996 due to the time involved. He then tried marathon running but wasn’t impressed and got into cycling because his girlfriend’s father was a racing cyclist and lent him a bike. He joined the Cambridge University Cycling Club and his cycling has gone from strength to strength. While here, the University Club won the National Team 25 Championships, a Time Trial over 25 miles with the first three riders’ (Michael and two undergraduates) times added together. He has won over 20 National Championship Time Trial distances, preferring the shorter distances (10 miles or 25 miles) but getting best results for the 100 miles. In 2003 he set a National record of 3h 20 for the 100 mile Time Trial although it was broken soon after. He is now 32 and in the “Masters” class (age band) and has won a couple of World Masters competitions. When he was cycling professionally, he was sponsored by Giant Bikes but is cycling less and writing more now, and his sponsors purely cover his equipment and travelling (In Gear, a Sussex outfitter and Omega Bikes of Brighton). He still trains for 19–20 hours a week, outside when possible on selected routes around London where he lives, and if not, he has a set a rollers in his kitchen onto which a bike is fixed and he can cycle while watching television or reading a book. When he was a full time professional, he trained for 34–35 hours/week.

At Melbourne, he was 6th in the Men’s Individual Pursuit and 4th in the Men’s Individual Time Trial (over 40 km) but is philosophical about being only 15 seconds away from the bronze medal position. His writing is of prime importance now.

Congratulations to all three Fitzwilliam Members for taking their individual sports to such a high level of attainment.
Graduation 2006

Garden parties

Bumps

Graduation dinner

Being with friends

Punting

May Balls

Relaxing in the gardens
Rising rapidly through the ranks

For those whose time at Fitzwilliam has just drawn to a close leaving you wondering what lies in store for you, a short biography follows of one of our youngest successful alumni – to show you just what can happen.

Julia Goldsworthy (History 1997) has just become one of the youngest senior frontbench spokesmen for any of the parliamentary parties. At 27 she is the youngest MP in England and left Fitz in 2000, only six years ago.

Julia came to Fitzwilliam from Truro School in Cornwall and having gig rowed with Helford Ladies (this is rowing in open sea!) she rowed for Fitz; she was also President of the Music Society and co-produced Fitz’s first musical production, ‘Cabaret’. After Fitz she went on the second Daiichi Exchange and returned with honed skills in Japanese and Judo to study at Birkbeck College, London for a postgraduate certificate in Economics.

Her first job was as researcher to Matthew Taylor (Liberal Democrat MP) after which she decided to stand as the Lib Dem candidate for Falmouth and Camborne, returning to Cornwall to mount her election campaign. Campaigning was so time consuming that she gave up her full time job but continued to advise the Lib Dem Party on economics and education. She fought a wide variety of campaigns against the closure of local Post Offices, to scrap students’ tuition and top-up fees, to scrap the unfair council tax and for affordable housing for hardworking families, amongst others. She was elected in the 2005 General Election, taking the seat from Labour with a swing of 9.5% winning from 3rd place.

Since then she has split her time between London and Cornwall. Last year with her salary as an MP, she bought her first house in Cornwall (a cottage within walking distance of the beach) on the north coast while still paying off her student loans. She has recently joined the Shadow Cabinet as Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, helping to promote the Lib Dems’ economic credibility and is also leading their spending review.

On a lighter side, she recently won a silver medal by taking part in the fourth series of the week long Channel Four hit show, The Games. Celebrities competed against each other in Olympic style events such as White Water Kayaking, Hurdling and Cycling to raise money for charity. Julia raised £20,000 for her nominated charity, the Cornwall Air Ambulance.

Julia has a message for the Fitzwilliam Graduands of 2006:

“When I graduated from Fitz, I had no idea what the future would have in store for me. I wasn’t particularly political at university and saw the Daiichi exchange as a way to travel and learn a new language before entering the world of work. Six years later, I’m lucky enough to be in a job that I love – one which I don’t expect any careers adviser would have recommended!

I ended up in politics not by putting together a grand career plan, but by following what I enjoyed. As a history graduate, I found the work of a parliamentary researcher fitted the skills I had gained at college, and was interesting because of the huge range of issues that I covered. I gradually got sucked into the political campaigning side of things, and couldn’t resist trying for my home seat when the opportunity came up. That’s my main message: to those graduands who know where they’re heading – good luck in your future careers; and to those that don’t yet know the path you want to take – there’s no need to panic, just follow what you enjoy!”

They’re off...

A small selection of Fitz graduands tell us where they are going next, their aspirations for the future and recall memories of their time here:

Vicky heads for Hertfordshire

Vicky Robb (Theology 2003) is joining Hertfordshire County Council on their two-year Graduate Trainee Scheme in General Management. The course covers all aspects of Council business – corporate, environment and social services. She is interested in the latter and would like to work on family issues. As part of the scheme she will also study for the MSc in Public Services Management at Birmingham University.

Long term aim? Having a career in local or central government.

Highlights? Being on FitzCafé committee; meeting people from different faith perspectives; being encouraged by excellent Theology supervisors; co-directing a piece of student writing in the first year; working as a project leader and participant on the ‘Big Sibs’ project run by Student Community Action; and most importantly, forging firm and life-long friendships among peers and working in the Fitzwilliam Development Office and seeing the ‘other side’ of college life.

“I am so grateful for the opportunity to study, live and even work at Fitzwilliam College over the last three years. I have been stretched and challenged academically and have grown in confidence and independence. I now feel ready to face the challenges of the working world that await me!”

Fitzwilliam College is an Exempt Statutory Charity (Inland Revenue No. X11732)
Lizzie Radford (MVST 2003) has just completed her pre-clinical three years with straight Firsts and is off to Addenbrooke’s Hospital for the clinical part in the autumn. She has worked in a centre for adults with learning difficulties in Montpellier as an animatrice and assistante every long vac since her gap year and will be returning as a volunteer this summer. She would also like to learn Spanish. She wishes to practice medicine, perhaps academic medicine, if she is accepted on the MB/PhD programme.

**Long term aim?** Teach at a school that is strong on outdoor pursuits (rowing particularly) and eventually become Head of a Geography Department.

**Highlights?** The Boat Club and rowing, especially coaching the lower boats; the trials, tribulations and team bonding when organising the College Ball as President of the Ball Committee; the Geography Society.

“I have enjoyed everything I have done at Fitz and I am currently trying to concoct a plan so that I can come back ... perhaps to do a PGCE?!”

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Lizzie’s working on her bedside manner

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Andy Smith (Engineering 2002) has a graduate post at the Steel Construction Institute, where he has previously worked for three summers as a student engineer. It is a smallish (70 person), independent, research and development organisation, based in Ascot, which takes one or two graduates each year as it expands. Andy hopes to work on a range of structural issues such as writing structural software, improving design codes and specialist consultancy such as vibrations of structures while he works towards becoming a Chartered Engineer.

**Long term aim?** To see where structural research takes him, be it academia or corporate.

**Highlights?** Drumming with ‘Rich Rich and the Moneymakers’, especially their final gig while they were all still at Fitz (St Catz May Ball 2004); his first game of cricket for the 1st XI at Oxford Road and ringing a number of peals with Cambridge University Guild of Change Ringers.

“It has been fantastic being a part of such a great community for the last 4 years. I’m going to miss being able to wander around college saying ‘hi’ to every second person I walk past!”

[Ed: Andy was awarded the 2006 Tutors’ Prize for his all-round contribution to College life]

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Andy’s set to build in steel

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Adam Gilbert (Land Economy 2002) has added a year of Management Studies to his three years of Land Economy and landed an internship with Barclays Capital, an investment bank based at Canary Wharf. After the internship, he has signed up for an intensive Spanish language course in Madrid and then has an open ticket to Lima, Peru to start some travelling. He hopes Barclays will offer him a job when he returns.

**Long term aim?** To become an oil trader in the city.

**Highlights?** Rugby and playing in the Varsity Match in 2004; being President of the Mornie Onions and organising their fiftieth anniversary dinner.

“This has been, without a doubt, the best four years I have ever had in my life. I shall be so sad to leave.”

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Adam’s slipping into oil
Jordan’s talking ‘think tanks’

Jordan Tchilingirian (SPS 2003) wishes to see what working for a think tank is like and has found work experience, three days/week, with Ecclesia, a religious think tank that makes policy comments on rights and poverty issues. To fund himself, he is also returning to nurse geriatric patients at a hospital in Epsom the other days of the week. He has been nursing in his long vats since 2004 and finds it satisfying (and he gets paid!).

Long term aim? Experience think tanks first to see if they are really what he wants to do and perhaps go on to do a Master’s, hopefully back at Fitz.

Highlights? Making good friends, being Vice-President of the JMA (and learning his limitations when the President was taken ill and he had to fill her role); the walk into Cambridge for lectures.

“I’ve really enjoyed being here, I’ve had a lovely time and wouldn’t have wanted to do anything else. It was all a good experience. I would like to see a new library for Fitz but found the current one well stocked for my discipline.”

Seb veers toward volcanoes

Sebastian Watt (NatSci 2002) is off to take up a PhD studentship at Oxford to study volcanoes in Southern Chile. His first appointment will be a summer Studentship, funded by the Royal Society for six weeks, and then he joins Worcester College to embark on his National Environment Research Council (NERC) studentship for the next three years. During that time there will be ample opportunity to travel to South America to work at volcanic sites.

Long term aim? To continue with academic research in the vulcanology field and become a university Geology lecturer or equivalent.

Malcolm’s set on song writing

Malcolm Moffat (Music 2003) joins Graeme on the Daiichi Exchange programme to enjoy the different cultural experience and improve his language skills. He then returns to Fitz to do an MPhil in Musicology for a year in 2007.

Long term aim? To become a professional songwriter.

Highlights? Involvement with the Music Society as both Secretary and Treasurer; winning the Alkan Prize 2005 for his piano playing (although harpsichord is his principal instrument); being the musical director for both Jesus Christ Superstar (2005) and Sweeney Todd (2006) when musical performances had a resurgence with the event of the new auditorium.

“Fitz has been a great place to study for a Cambridge degree and I have been lucky to live on site for all of the four years of my course. It has a friendly, inclusive, down-to-earth atmosphere, ideal as a working environment. It is such a friendly college.”

Giving back

Giving back is about playing your part in sustaining the Fitzwilliam tradition that you have all been privileged to enjoy. It isn’t just about money! Financial support of College activities is, of course, fundamental to the plot, but it is appreciated that new graduates have none at present!

Keeping in touch
Keep us in touch with your career, your families and changes of address. Let us know when you meet other alumni of the College, especially if they are ‘lost sheep’. There is a constant ongoing search to locate and welcome back the alumni with whom we have lost contact. A full list is published at: www.fitz.cam.ac.uk/alumni/ updatelocate/lostsheep/lostsheep.jsp

Support events
There is a rolling programme of events planned for alumni. These are held for your benefit so you can come back to College and see old friends, make new ones and revisit old haunts. Please support them.

Continue to be an ambassador for Fitzwilliam College
By recalling the College warmly, being proud of your education here, disseminating the name of the College to peers, colleagues, employers and would-be students. Students choose Fitz because they hear: “It is a friendly, non stuffy College”, or “Someone they know went there and had a great time”, or “The tutor or subject has a good reputation”.

Someone has said all these things and made an impression. Please continue to make it happen.

Become a career contact
Once you are established in your chosen career, you may like to become a ‘Career Contact’. Informally, Members have helped students in the past by arranging work experience placements on an ad hoc basis. The new initiative is being set up this year called the ‘Career Networking Scheme’ and aims to give current students an opportunity to gain informal and candid careers advice and possibly work experience in a wide variety of fields. The service will operate online and be accessed via the Fitzwilliam web site (www.fitz.cam.ac.uk/alumni) and select “Career network.”

Donate generously to College appeals
It had to come! It is never too soon to say “thank you”. Inside this magazine are the ‘giving pages’ that you will find in every edition of Optima you receive.

Any donation to College funds is received with our heartfelt thanks.