Welcome to the second issue of Optima and thank you to those of you who made gifts or pledges in response to the appeals in our first edition of this newsletter. Fitzwilliam values each and every one of your donations and your commitment to the future of the College. I would like to offer my particular thanks to members who responded to the Legacy Campaign in the first edition of Optima. On behalf of the Fellowship, I have invited these members to join The 1869 Foundation. Membership of the new Foundation will be exclusive to those who have made the most personal of commitments: to include a bequest to Fitzwilliam in their Will. Some prefer to remain anonymous. I was delighted, however, that many 1869 Foundation members joined other donors, friends and well-wishers of the College at this year’s Commemoration of Benefactors Dinner.

Did you know that despite being one of the less well-endowed Colleges, Fitzwilliam remains true to this principle and currently admits 70% of students from state schools, with 30% coming from private schools? That is the same as the UK average of those who get three ‘A’ grades at A Level. In this edition of Optima, Dr Rosemary Horrox, Admissions Tutor, outlines the issues of the access debate. Fitzwilliam’s key founding principle was to champion access for the brightest and best students irrespective of their financial background. In the past, undergraduates from a state school background who have had the opportunity of access to a Cambridge education through Fitzwilliam have gone on to achieve great things in their careers that have benefited society in this country and abroad. May they continue to do so! Many congratulations to Sarah Asplin (1982), for example, who has just become the first female graduate of Fitzwilliam to be appointed a Queen’s Counsel.

For today’s generation of gifted applicants to Fitzwilliam, the decision whether to study for a degree at all, as state funding and student grant support are concurrently reduced, is by no means as straightforward as it may have been for some of us years ago. Often, undergraduates from poorer backgrounds who achieve a place at Fitzwilliam can find themselves in genuine financial difficulty at critical points later on in their studies. Fitzwilliam has established the Student Hardship Fund to ensure its students can achieve their full potential and concentrate on their academic work without the worry of where their rent or next meal are coming from. The Fund received a significant boost recently from a bequest by the late Michael Kingston (1950). Mr Kingston’s generosity will help us to tackle today’s problem of student hardship, which has never been more acute.

In this issue of Optima, we will launch our Chaplaincy Appeal Fund and provide you with an update on the New Buildings Programme. Our series of interviews with distinguished members around the world continues. To coincide with my visit to America later this year, there is an interview with Anthony Ley (1956). I look forward to meeting Tony and other American members, and of renewing friendships and thanking members personally for their regular support of Fitzwilliam when I see them this autumn – they are truly an important part of the College’s worldwide community. I am aware that my visit to the United States will follow the first anniversary of the World Trade Center Disaster. Many of you may know that Fitzwilliam had the tragic distinction among the Cambridge colleges of losing an alumnus on September 11th. It was with great sorrow that Fitzwilliam learnt that Christopher Jones (1966), who worked at Cantor Fitzgerald’s New York office, had perished during the collapse of the twin towers of the World Trade Center. I know from our American students currently at Fitzwilliam that so many Americans have suffered a private loss. I’m sure I speak for everyone at Fitzwilliam who has admired the spirit of courage and unity that the American people have shown when rebuilding their lives in the months since that disaster.

Finally, may I encourage you to call into Fitzwhenever you have the opportunity. It would give me great pleasure to welcome you – and, of course, how could you resist a Fitz lunch or dinner!
The Master’s Message
Professor Brian Johnson, FRS, thanks readers of Optima Issue I for their tremendous response in support of the College and briefs readers of this edition on progress with Fitz’s development plans and his forthcoming visit to the USA in 2002.

Sam Toy OBE (Geography, 1946)
“In appreciation, I suspect, of my contribution to the Fitz Appeal of the 1980s I was elected an Honorary Life Fellow of the College that has over the years become a much-loved part of my life.”

The Access Debate, Dr Rosemary Horrox, Admissions Tutor writes ...
“In the current climate of ‘targets’ Fitzwilliam has a head start. Each year about 70% of our applicants come from the maintained sector.”

Anthony J Ley
(Mechanical Engineering, 1956)
An interview with a courageous Fitz man who created Harmonic Inc, a company based in the USA, which pioneers fibre optics in the cable television industry.

Fitz Appeals: The Chaplaincy Fund Appeal 2002
Today, perhaps, the Chaplain’s work is more vital to the Fitzwilliam community than it has ever been.

Christopher Martin Jenkins (History 1964)
“If I developed one consistent quality while at Fitzwilliam, it was a capacity for hard work, so any success has been rewarding for the fact that there has been some sweat expended on the way.”

How to donate to Fitzwilliam
Carol Lamb, Development Administrator, has created a new, 4 page pull out section for Optima to explain the various ways you can support Fitzwilliam.

Fitz Appeals: The New Buildings Programme Appeal: Latest news on the Theatre Project
The new Theatre represents a real chance to show even more people in the University and the local community the considerable dramatic talents at Fitzwilliam and to continue to make our productions professional, fun and inclusive. (Catherine Hartley (2000) President FitzTheatre)

Fitz Appeals: Can Fitz’s rich tradition for music-making survive in the 21st Century?
The pool of musical talent in Fitzwilliam and the extent of the involvement in musical life of the College on the part of its members at all levels have never been greater.

Dr Susan Done (Medicine, 1982)
The sharp fall in the number of junior doctors entering the medical profession is an issue frequently in the media spotlight these days. Fitzwilliam is committed to nurturing the finest doctors and medical research specialists like Dr Susan Done, who talks to Optima about her days at Fitzwilliam.

Graeme Purdy (Chemical Engineering, 1984)
Graeme, now Director of Avantium Technologies, B.V., describes memories of a fine summer evening at Fitzwilliam back in 1987, from his office in Amsterdam.

Judith Oliver (History, 1979)
An interview with one of the first female students to gain admission to Fitzwilliam in 1979 who was described then by her tutor, Dr Edward Miller, as “one of the outstanding personalities among our 450 undergraduates and one of the nicest people in College.”

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Reverend Alan Cliff (Theology, 1958)
Alan has generously agreed to donate half of the royalties from his latest children’s book, Jack the Station Cat and the Space Aliens and Other Stories to the Fitzwilliam College Appeal. For more details, turn to page 9.
Sam Toy OBE (Geography, 1946)

When I look back over the 78 plus years of my life, I realise that its almost continual good fortune has been, in almost all instances, influenced by individual men in the field of education.

It all started back in the early thirties, at the local Council school in a little Cornish village called Ponsanooth. Our Head Teacher was a dedicated man who gave up countless hours of his own time if he felt that individual coaching could produce results. He gave me many of these hours and, as a result, I was fortunate enough to win a scholarship to the Falmouth Grammar School, in 1935. There I was soon to benefit from the inspired teaching by Norman Pounds (now Professor Pounds) of his beloved Geography (he was also our rather powerful rugby master). Our Headmaster, who took over the school shortly thereafter, was again a dedicated educator. His name was T. L. Morris and he was directly responsible for my RAF sponsorship to Selwyn College for a “short course”, before undertaking my pilot training in 1941.

At the end of the war in Europe, the RAF was suddenly faced with the problem of finding work to occupy the many, many pilots no longer required for operational duties. I was posted to a three-month Senior Administrative Officer’s course at the RAF College at Cranwell – a part of my life’s training from which I benefited greatly in later years of civilian life.

Lo and behold, I quickly learned that Norman Pounds, was the Tutor at Fitzwilliam House. As a matter of courtesy, I therefore called on him and his wife, Dorothy. While discussing what my new job entailed, Norman learned that undergraduate members of the Squadron were not available for flying training on any mornings and only some afternoons. I therefore had a great deal of free time during the day and, except for two evenings each week lecturing on aero-dynamics, most evenings.

Being the man that he is, and with the encouragement of the then Censor, Bill Thatcher, I was persuaded to spend that time reading Part I Geography and graduated in 1946.

I was demobilised in 1947 and started job-hunting. It was then that I learned from the University Appointments Board and, separately the RAF Officers Appointments Board, that six years of RAF service and a degree meant that I had “nothing to offer” the world of Commerce. Once again, my future was indicated by an educator, a Group Captain (whose name I cannot recall) who recalled that ‘between the wars’ the Ford Motor Company recruited graduates to train for a future with that company. He recommended I write to the company to enquire whether the programme had been resuscitated.

I did, and along with three other ex-service graduates, formed the vanguard of Ford’s subsequent graduate training programme early in 1948.

Another ‘educator’ then helped shape my future in retirement. Professor Jim Holt, (now Sir James) Master of Fitzwilliam College, recruited me onto its Appeal Committee. One of my undertakings as a member of that committee was to drive up to Cambridge each day, over several days, to “top and tail” and write the envelopes to contain our appeal letter to the over 2000 Fitzwilliam ‘old boys’ of which the College had a record.

This programme was only a partial success I have to confess, but the overall appeal was. The result, New Court, was opened by Edmund Dell, who had chaired our Committee.

And so, in appreciation, I suspect, of my contribution I was elected an Honorary Life Fellow of the College that has over the years become a much-loved part of my life.

20 years after the College Appeal of the 1980s that Sam Toy OBE did so much to support, the Development Team must compete on a daily basis with the 32 other Cambridge College Development operations and those at the Oxford colleges and at Universities across the UK to locate fresh sources of private funding for Fitzwilliam’s key development projects.

Are you able to help the Development Team to identify new trusts, foundations, companies and individuals that might realistically support this or other College projects? If so please contact the Development Team.
The Access Debate

Dr Rosemary Horrox, Admissions Tutor writes...

As all readers of Optima will know, the question of access to Oxbridge is a hot topic with government and media these days – but also, which often gets overlooked in the rush to judgement, something which the universities themselves have high on their agenda. All admissions tutors are conscious that there are candidates out there who would do very well at Cambridge and who aren’t applying. For some pupils the whole idea of going to any university may be alien, but of course Oxbridge is also labouring under the additional problem of being imagined as stuffily elitist and ‘not for people like them’. Nor is it only potential candidates who think in this way. Teachers and parents may need convincing too.

In the current climate of ‘targets’ Fitzwilliam has a head start. Each year about 70% of our applicants come from the maintained sector, and when we do the sums at the end of each admissions round we find that we have made offers more or less pro rata. That does not mean that we are complacent. We see our track record as a reason to play a full part in university access initiatives rather than as an invitation to rest on our laurels. The emphasis on the University in that sentence is deliberate. Of course we as a College will continue to nurture links with schools throughout the country who know us and who have sent us candidates in the past. Such relationships allow both sides to build up valuable shared experience and trust. But as far as broadening access is concerned, most admissions tutors see their job as encouraging good students to aim high and apply to Cambridge, rather than as trying to cream off the best from the maintained sector.

The commitment to access has undoubtedly intensified the load on everyone involved in admissions. If it is to succeed it has to be proactive and not just reactive. Recognising this, a number of colleges have moved to appointing a full-time director of admissions, or designating an additional schools liaison officer. Fitzwilliam retains the traditional model of admissions tutors who combine the role with university teaching posts. But whatever model is adopted, admissions is always a team effort. The Fellows of Fitzwilliam cheerfully help with interviewing candidates, many visit schools, or meet with visiting groups. Our students help on open days and return to their schools to talk to pupils. They play a crucial part in the CUSU Shadowing Scheme, which brings pupils to Cambridge to sample the experience of being a student.

Does all this hard work and enthusiasm pay off? It is hard to quantify, but on an individual level there are undoubtedly success stories: the candidate whose inner city school rarely sends candidates on to HE and who wowed the interviewers; the pupil told not to bother by his school ‘because Cambridge isn’t interested in state school candidates’ and proved them wrong. We naturally take great pleasure in such cases, not just on the individual’s own account but because every such example encourages others. But there is another side to all of this. Places are limited and competition is fierce. The more people we encourage to apply, the greater the number who, in the end, won’t get in. Most admissions tutors have had the experience of turning down the candidate whom their school rated the best in years. Especially if the school is not one which normally sends candidates to Oxbridge, and perhaps only encouraged that pupil to apply because they seemed exceptional, that is a real kick in the teeth.

Feelings can run high in such cases. Somehow, more seems to ride on an application to Oxbridge than anywhere else because it is perceived as ‘special’. This has other consequences. For some people it is a deterrent, and this is the aspect that, quite rightly, has received most attention recently. But others, conversely, will apply to Cambridge just because it is Cambridge and not because it offers the right course for them. Most of the admissions tutor’s time goes on getting fuller information to schools and the candidates themselves about what Cambridge has to offer them and what it is that we are looking for. This needs to be done before candidates make their decisions – whether by visiting schools and HE fairs or encouraging pupils and their teachers to visit college. But it is also important to give detailed feedback to schools on why individuals were unsuccessful – something which is now Fitzwilliam policy.

As our open day visitor realised, one aspect of this is insisting on our ordinariness: on the fact that potential candidates ought to evaluate us on the same basis as other universities. Is the course content what they want, is the style of teaching likely to suit them, etc? Does it offer them and what it is that we are looking for. This needs to be done before candidates make their decisions – whether by visiting schools and HE fairs or encouraging pupils and their teachers to visit college. But it is also important to give detailed feedback to schools on why individuals were unsuccessful – something which is now Fitzwilliam policy.

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Anthony John Ley
(Mechanical Engineering, 1956)

Tony always knew that he wanted to be an engineer. The son of a designer, he applied for a State Scholarship to read Mechanical Engineering at several of the Oxbridge colleges. “I was fortunate to meet Dr R W Haywood, who admitted me to Fitzwilliam. In retrospect, it turned out to be not too bad a decision for either of us.”

As a schoolboy, Tony was an outstanding pupil. At Fitzwilliam, he soon fulfilled all the promise expressed by his Headmaster, Dr A R Simpson: “Of the many senior pupils who have passed on from this large school during the last several years to the two Old Universities, none to my mind has been more deserving on the all-round basis of really first class qualities in character, personality, scholarship and co-operative spirit than A J Ley.”

Tony’s initial impression of Fitzwilliam House in 1956 was of the buzz of activity: “a great deal of talking and laughing in a very confined space, and everyone appeared to know everyone else and of course, at the start I felt rather alone.”

As a fresher, Tony soon settled in, as his contemporary Michael Evans remembered in 1999: “In our first year Tony and I enjoyed membership of CUOTC, the general arrangement being, as members of the Signals Wing, that he did most of the radio bit and I did the driving. We burned many a gallon of petrol together and lost a few good feet of aerial in passing trees. We also shot service rifle at Barton Road together as members of CURA but from the second year onwards, he found academic work more fun than such diversions.”

At the end of the 1957–1958 academic year, his Tutor, (now Life Fellow of Fitzwilliam) Dr Ray Kelly wrote to him saying: “Congratulations on your First Class in Part I. Now you can go and blaze away on the academic work more fun than such diversions.”

Tony returned to Fitzwilliam in the autumn of 1958 and continued to flourish academically. Writing recently, Michael Evans (1956) remembered: “I recall the pride Fitzwilliam House, as it then was, took when Tony Ley and Tony Johns shared the Charles Lamb Prize in the 1959 Mechanical Sciences Tripos. Other colleagues wondered how Fitz turned out the best engineers.”

Tony left Cambridge on his 21st birthday to begin a two year graduate apprenticeship with the Aviation Division of Smiths Industries in Cheltenham, followed by a year designing auto-pilots, including some of the first applications of transistors to flight controls. However, he still had a leaning towards the academic world and he spent the next year in America at MIT acquiring a Masters in Electrical Engineering. Tony had just got married “This was also my honeymoon, a marvellous way to start one’s married life.”

On returning to England in the 1960s, Tony joined the Solatron Electronic Group, at that time an innovator in several fields of electronics that had just been acquired by Schlumberger. He knew, he says, “absolutely nothing about Schlumberger, but I ended up staying with the company for 24 years, until 1987.” Tony described his distinguished career there as “an exciting experience”.

First he put in 11 years in the UK, progressing from Design Engineer to General Manager of the Instrument Business. Next he moved for two years to join the Head Office in Manhattan, where he had staff responsibilities for the technology of the electronic companies of Schlumberger in the USA. He moved next to France and remained there for seven years, as the President of the Schlumberger Research Centre in Montrouge near Paris. Finally he spent five years (1983–1988) as the Vice President of Research and Engineering at Fairchild Semiconductors in Palo Alto, California, which was acquired by Schlumberger in 1979. Tony described Schlumberger as “an environment where I could be very creative over many years, (filing 28 patents) operate internationally and work with some outstanding people in a well-managed company that had a passion for technology, people and success.”

At a time when many would be considering early retirement, Tony had other plans to achieve even greater success in his career. In 1987, Fairchild Semiconductors was sold and he took the brave step to leave Schlumberger. Tony spent the next year consulting, eventually for venture capitalists and through this work he was introduced to a number of ‘start up’ companies. In 1988, he joined as President, four people who had started Harmonic Lightwaves with a plan to develop a new type of solid state laser. “After being in a large corporation in the types of positions I held for many years, it is tough to sit in an office with four other people and no money. You can’t help wondering if you are a little crazy.”

Harmonic Inc. as it is now known, is pioneering fibre optics in the cable television industry and has grown to be a major supplier of Broadband Systems for the transmission of voice, video and data, including video compression systems used by satellite and cable companies.

“Although I had a marvellous career with Schlumberger, there is little to match building a company from nothing to one the current size of Harmonic. The nature of this challenge has changed constantly, from raising money at the beginning, to the great technical difficulties involved in the design of our first product, to building a management team that was capable of growing with the company. Then I had to learn how to do an IPO, to manage relationships with Wall Street and to survive in economies heading for recession.”

What would he say to today’s undergraduates at Fitzwilliam about beginning their careers? Answer: “Get involved completely, in whatever you decide to do, and when faced with the really difficult decisions, have the courage to do what you believe is right, rather than follow other people or current, accepted wisdom.”
Fitz launches an Appeal Fund for the Chaplaincy

We all know that Fitz has a strong reputation among the Cambridge Colleges for its welcoming and friendly community. This is currently made up of 450 undergraduates from around the world, representing different faiths and cultures, as well as 150 graduates and over 60 Fellows, including the College Chaplain, the Reverend Vanessa Herrick.

Fitzwilliam is also at the centre of Theology in the University of Cambridge. There are four Fellows in the subject, all of considerable seniority, including the holder of the oldest Chair, Professor Graham Stanton, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity. Other Fellows are: Professor Graham Davies, Professor of Old Testament Studies; Dr Markus Bockmuehl, Reader in New Testament Studies and Dr David Thompson, Reader in Modern Church History and Director of the Centre for Advanced Religious and Theological Studies. Dr Thompson is also President of the World Convention of the Churches of Christ for 2000–2004 and was Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church for the year 1996–1997.

Fitzwilliam has a long and precious history of providing for its ‘attached houses’ (Wesley House, Ridley Hall, Westcott House, Westminster College and the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology) the opportunity for their students to matriculate for degrees of the University. It is therefore, in a very real sense, the major theological focus within the University as a whole.

In recent years, Fitzwilliam has had a half-time Chaplain, the remainder of whose time has been spent working for (and being paid by) one of the Theological Colleges in Cambridge. There is a great amount of goodwill in Fitzwilliam towards the Chaplaincy, but also many demands on the College’s limited resources. Fitzwilliam believes it must act now to safeguard the Chaplaincy for the long term and to increase the proportion of the Chaplain’s time allocated to the College to three-quarters of full-time. At present, the Chaplaincy Fund is largely made up of a gift in honour of a former Bursar and Acting Censor of the College, W. W. Williams and has an annual income of just under £1,000.

With the launch of the Chaplaincy Appeal in 2002, Fitzwilliam aims to endow the Chaplaincy in perpetuity and thus build up the Chaplain’s hours in the long term. In order to augment the Chaplain’s hours to a three-quarters time post and to cover the annual costs of the Chaplaincy, the College must achieve an ambitious target of £450,000.

Today, perhaps, the Chaplain’s work is more vital to the Fitzwilliam community than it has ever been. Many of the present generation of students are under unprecedented pressure, not only to perform academically, but also to survive financially in the face of rising costs and stringent cuts in Government funding.

Here are some of just some of the many valuable duties that the Chaplain (who also acts as her own administrator) can be called upon at any time to perform today at Fitzwilliam:

- To conduct two services in the College Chapel on Sundays in full term, with additional services on major festivals and other weekdays and at certain special occasions in the College’s life.
- Supervision of Ordinands, three at present, who assist the Chaplain in a variety of ways, both in Sunday worship and in mid-week College activities, such as study groups in scripture, prayer and meditation.

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Fitzwilliam College is an Exempt and Statutory Charity (Inland Revenue No. x11732)

• The pastoral care and personal welfare of students and staff, thus helping to maintain and develop the positive and friendly atmosphere that the College values.
• To act as a focus for the College community’s spiritual life.
• At times of personal crisis, to offer a listening ear and comforting and confidential support to members of College who occasionally bring problems or practical issues that they are not prepared to divulge to any other member of College.
• Pastoral and liturgical duties are frequently inextricably linked, e.g. on the baptism, marriage or death of a student. In these instances, the Chaplain is responsible for the pastoral care of those involved and, liturgically, for organising and leading the service.
• To help members of College who wish to contact others who share their beliefs or require information about places of worship in Cambridge and elsewhere.
• Services in the Chapel are normally held in accordance with the usage of the Church of England. However, the Chaplain’s ministry is ecumenical in its focus, something reflected in the wide range of visiting preachers from Cambridge and beyond.
• Liaising closely with the College Organ Scholar regarding music in Chapel.

Giving to the Chaplaincy Appeal Fund

Please help to make a difference to the success of the Chaplaincy Appeal. You can make a single gift or spread your donation over one, two or any number of years of your choice. By signing a Gift Aid Form, you increase the value of your gift even further!
Christopher Martin Jenkins (History, 1964)

When I think of my time at Fitzwilliam, I recall three very happy years of my life, culminating in a May Ball in June 1967. On that night my partner for the evening was a teacher-to-be from Homerton, whom I got round to marrying four years later, when I had finally got a few pennies in the bank.

I remember the terrific buzz there was in the newly-established College and the wide mix of fellow-students who generally worked hard, played hard and had tremendous fun. In my time at Fitzwilliam we had great sporting success, winning both rugby and cricket cuppers, the latter for the first time under my captaincy, which was some consolation for missing a Blue. The great spirit, around what was then a much smaller block of buildings along Huntingdon Road, had much to do with the enlightened attitude of the Tutor for Admissions, Norman Walters, who, sadly, died soon after I heard that my history degree was the same as David Starkey’s (1964). I had no right to be deemed to be on a level with him but sometimes you get lucky!

If I developed one consistent quality while at Fitzwilliam, it was a capacity for hard work, so any success has been rewarding for the fact that there has been some sweat expended on the way. I have enjoyed all my main jobs, editing The Cricketer, becoming cricket correspondent of both The Telegraph and The Times, but the greatest fun – and the least like hard work to me perhaps – has been commentating on Test matches for BBC Radio. There is a tremendous affinity between listeners and performers on radio and I think this was probably what I was destined to do. The good Lord certainly gave me plenty of hints and the occasional miraculous open door.

The other good fortune I had during my Fitz days was to find a wife prepared to put up with what has often been a very anti-social career, involving long absences. We have three children and although I saw less of them in their schooldays than I wanted, I might have been luckier than some, in a profession that is often inimical to family life.

The history course taught me, under Dr Leslie Wayper’s kindly eye, how to argue logically and many of the friends I made inside Fitzwilliam have been friends for life. It is a true privilege to have been at Cambridge and the great majority of those who do learn civilised values for life.

I was also influenced greatly both morally and spiritually by the Right Reverend Peter Nott (1958), Chaplain at Billy in my day and now the former Bishop of Norwich. Referred to by a certain royal, I believe, as “that bloody bishop”!

After Fitz, in my career I learned much from Jim Swanton, as Telegraph correspondent and my predecessor as Editorial Director of The Cricketer, the doyen of cricket writing for many years, and from John Woodcock, a master of concise, interesting, careful writing for The Times. Perhaps the most difficult decision of my career whether to take up an offer to switch to The Times after several happy, albeit exhausting years at the Daily Telegraph. I felt I needed one last challenge before hanging up the laptop but it was hard because the two newspapers are such strong rivals.

To today’s generation of undergrads at Fitz I would say do what really interests you if you possibly can and if you feel you have a talent and a vocation, work hard until you fulfil it. A man’s reach should exceed his grasp, or what’s a heaven for?

My hopes for Fitzwilliam’s future is that it should be a College for rich and poor, man and woman (no choice there anymore anyway!) brilliant academics, brilliant musicians, brilliant actors, flannelled fools, muddied oafs, oar-wielders, beer-swillers (intelligent ones) teetotallers….. all sorts and conditions of man.

Also that the College should retain the sense of fun that all should feel as students, and pursue excellence in all fields with a balanced intake of undergraduates.

The good news is that, having recently had lunch with the Master, Professor Brian Johnson, I believe he would agree with those sentiments!
The Reverend Alan Cliff was born in Morecambe in 1936. He came up to Fitzwilliam in 1958 and spent much time as a student at Wesley House, while training for the Methodist ministry. Alan enjoyed the opportunity to preach in churches around East Anglia and to explore the local countryside, so unspoilt in those days. His style, he says, was influenced greatly by the Reverend Dr James Stewart, whom Alan believes was the finest preacher of his generation: "He used a formal style, with classic sermons and a strong expository and didactic elements. In other words, he made three clear points and drew a conclusion.”

From his early days of preaching, Alan admits that he has hated writing. All his sermons and talks were made from brief notes. Looking back at his career as an ordained Methodist minister he intimates: “Mrs Cliff used to write the Minister’s letter.”

In 1987 Alan’s life changed forever when he was told that he could die of a serious heart condition. His doctors insisted he slowed down completely and he was forced to take early retirement from the ministry he loved. Having been active all his life, Alan could not bear to have nothing to do. “Mrs Cliff”, he says from his home in Wales, “enrolled on an arts course by correspondence and I was a sort of ghost student on the course”.

“I had always been a model railway enthusiast,” he says. Twelve years ago, he wrote his first monograph on the British Makers of O Gauge, 1890–1990 which sold 1,200 copies. He never looked back and has written some 200 articles to date for the model railway press. The Chronicle of Lock’s Siding published in British Railway Modelling has since become the longest running continuous monthly series by any freelance writer, in the history of the world’s model railway press.

The Chronicle of Lock’s Siding inspired Alan to create the character of Jack the Station Cat, who has appeared in three of his six children’s books. The Jack series, including 'Jack goes to School', 'Jack lends a Helping Paw' and 'The Mice at Much Purring', was an immediate hit with children, parents and school teachers. Alan then wrote a further series of books for young children based on the adventures of two cats, Grabbit and Skoot, and a number of woodland animals. The Queen’s English Society described Alan’s style as “clear, simple and appropriate for children to read, or be read to” and these charming stories have sold in thousands.

Alan has generously agreed to donate half of the royalties from *Jack the Station Cat and the Space Aliens and other Stories*, his latest children’s book, to the Fitzwilliam College Appeal.

To obtain your copy of *Jack the Station Cat and the Space Aliens and other Stories*, (ISBN: 1-903264-32-4)
Contact: Wendy Webb books, wwbuk@yahoo.co.uk
TEL: 01603 262665
Priced £4.95
The New Buildings Programme Appeal: Latest news on the Theatre Project

The eagerly anticipated Theatre Project, which forms Phase II of the New Buildings Programme, gets underway in the summer of 2002. The project will provide Fitzwilliam with a stunning new building that can also fulfill a variety of functions: dramatic performances, musical concerts, lectures, debates, exhibitions and even indoor sports such as badminton will all be accommodated within it. Students will also be able to make use of it as a venue for discos, bops and balls.

Fitzwilliam has made do with the Reddaway Room as its principal venue for concerts and lectures for many years. Put simply, the Reddaway Room is just a large ‘room’ with inadequate acoustics and sight lines that were never ideal for dramatic or musical performance. Often the Chapel is used for musical concerts and its acoustics are somewhat better than the Reddaway Room’s. However, like the Reddaway Room, the Chapel is also very limited for space, seating less than half the number that the new Theatre will accommodate.

Given the constraints of suitable areas for Fitzwilliam’s dramatic, music and other performing arts societies to meet, one might expect little cultural and artistic activity among the student community. On the contrary, Fitzwilliam has developed a strong reputation for great drama, musical concerts and artistic performance. The purpose-built Theatre and Auditorium will enable students to build on Fitzwilliam’s musical and dramatic successes of old and to attempt more ambitious projects on a larger scale.

One of Fitzwilliam’s current undergraduates, Jack Ashby (2000), who produced last year’s College musical, Godspell, explained the benefits to the present student community: “I think that it would be brilliant to have a new theatre because so many people at Fitzwilliam were involved in Godspell, either on stage, behind the scenes, or even just coming to watch. The musical is always popular at Fitz and this year so many people wanted to come to Godspell, but we had to turn them away because we could not seat more than 100 – even at a push. We sold out two performances. The new Theatre could accommodate an audience of 250 comfortably and would enable more and bigger productions to take place. The choice of productions available to perform at Fitz at present is extremely limited by the rooms on offer to us due to their small size and the fact that they are constantly in use for a variety of other functions. A location dedicated to stage productions and musical performance would be excellent.” Catherine Hartley (1999), President of FitzTheatre added: “The new building represents an exciting opportunity for the growth of all forms of drama in the College and a real chance to show even more people in the University and the local community the considerable dramatic talents at Fitzwilliam and to continue to make our productions professional, fun and inclusive.”

The architect for the project is Allies & Morrison, founded in 1984 following success in the open competition to design a public square in front of the new National Gallery of Scotland, in Edinburgh. Since then, the practice has won much critical acclaim and eight RIBA awards. To ensure that the Theatre blends in sympathetically and in order to reduce the scale of the building within the scale of the gardens, one storey
is below ground and a sunken garden will add to the all-year colour of Fitzwilliam’s existing gardens. The impressive new building will be open to the gardens and the wildflower meadow, where it is to stand, will be re-created beside the Lime Tree Avenue.

Wherever possible, the project will use materials from sustainable and local sources. The bricks, for example, have been chosen to match exactly the yellow Cambridge stock used to build The Grove nearly 200 years ago. Environmental and thermal aspects of the Theatre’s space have been analysed, with particular attention to the control of solar gain by louvres around the glazed foyer. Natural lighting will be maximised by the large windows. There will also be an option for full blackout when required for dramatic performances.

The new Theatre will be a first class modern, multi-purpose facility, which will greatly enrich the cultural life of the College and the local community. Moreover, the new facility will significantly increase Fitzwilliam’s power to attract the brightest and best students and Fellows in the future.

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**New Buildings Programme: Funding Summary (in £m)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal Target</th>
<th>College Reserves/Property Sales</th>
<th>Donations</th>
<th>Balance Required</th>
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<td>12.20</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>1.36</td>
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Fitz is 89% of the way to achieving its ambitious total of £12,200,000 to fully fund the New Buildings Programme, thanks largely to the tremendous generosity of its donors. However, we must raise a further £1.36 million to realise the Programme in full.

If you would like to contribute to any element of the New Buildings Programme, please turn to the giving section at the centre of Optima for further guidance about the Buildings Fund.

For further information about any aspect of the New Buildings Programme, please contact:

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Email: clp24@cam.ac.uk
Can Fitz’s rich tradition for music-making survive in the 21st Century?

The musical life of Fitzwilliam College has been long and distinguished. Several prominent figures in today’s musical world, such as David Atherton and Humphrey Burton CBE began their careers at Fitzwilliam and the College was proud to number the world’s most famous violinist, Sir Yehudi Menuhin among its Honorary Fellows until his death, aged 82, in 1999. The very name of the College is enshrined in that of the Fitzwilliam String Quartet, started here by undergraduates three decades ago as the prelude to an illustrious international reputation.

You could argue that College music is similar to computers. Provision for both is essential to the academic progress of some students, but is for others only of recreational use. In reality, the adequacy of this provision is in both cases something many applicants for admission check up on when they are deciding whether or not to apply to Fitzwilliam. Our Director of Music, Dr Peter Tregear, added: “A strong musical life in Fitzwilliam is precisely one of the things that lifts the College experience out of the level of being merely a residence, a place to live between lectures and the local pub. Cambridge as a whole is justly famous for the range and quality of the music-making that is undertaken, but this has only been possible because of the continuing generosity of individuals and institutions. This is nowhere more true than at Fitz, where College members can participate in a wide range of recitals and concerts, as well as hear world class performances such as those given by the Fitzwilliam String Quartet, for as little as one pound!”

Over the years, a substantial number of our undergraduate members – often students who did not read the Music Tripos at Cambridge – have gone on to professional careers as vocal or instrumental soloists, or as orchestral musicians, (and, in many cases, have returned in recent years to perform in College concerts). Above all, the number of students who can sing or play to a standard high enough to take part in public musical events in the College has always been impressive. Today, the pool of musical talent in Fitzwilliam and the extent of the involvement in the musical life of the College on the part of its members at all levels have never been greater.

In recent years, Fitzwilliam has mounted some spectacular orchestral concerts in the dining hall and will soon have a new theatre in which to perform. While these concerts meet a real desire for large-scale music-making, they are also demanding upon financial and logistical resources. Members have been enormously generous and thanks to them Fitzwilliam has recently been given a grand piano and a harpsichord.

We have specific needs for example, we require three upright pianos (£2,000–£3,000 each) for the new Theatre building. Perhaps you own an upright that is now redundant and you would like it to go to a good home, if so, do, please, let us know. At present, the College also lacks a collection of basic orchestral percussion instruments, including bass drum (£2,000) and clash cymbals (£400). The acquisition of these would greatly enhance what musical life Fitzwilliam can offer to its members and the local community alike.

Dr Peter Tregear, describes the present situation: “We hire these instruments, but this is both expensive and difficult in terms of transport. Furthermore, if we were to have them on site, we would become instantly more attractive to local schools and community groups that might wish to use Fitzwilliam for rehearsals and/or concerts.”

If you are able to support Fitzwilliam’s Music Fund or contribute specifically to the cost of the much-needed instruments, please turn to the giving section at the centre of Optima for further guidance.

Dr Peter Tregear, Director of Music
Dr Susan Done (Medicine, 1982)

Dr Susan Done has progressed from school days in Lancashire to a degree in Medicine at Fitzwilliam to a career as a cancer research specialist working in the Division of Experimental Therapeutics at the Ontario Cancer Institute in the University of Toronto’s Health Network Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology, within the Faculty of Medicine. You can log on to www.uhnres.toronto.ca/donelab to find out more about Susan’s work. Optima recently asked Susan about her ground-breaking research:

“As one progresses in training, it is natural to develop an area of special interest. I gravitated towards the study of breast cancer during my pathology residency. The study of the causes and potential treatments for cancer is one of the most challenging areas of medical research today. My current work, characterising early molecular alterations in breast cancer, mutations in the p53 tumour suppressor gene are identifiable before invasion occurs. Further study of the genetic alterations like this will probably have therapeutic implications in the future.

It is impossible to predict what opportunities will arise during the course of your career, but it is essential that whatever choices you make do so because you have a genuine enthusiasm for them. It is this that will sustain you when there are setbacks or other difficulties. Sometimes the choices I have made have been difficult, one of the most difficult being the decision to commit to undertaking studies for a PhD after completing my pathology training. It was a daunting prospect, but I felt in the long run, it would enhance my capability to do research. I certainly don’t regret that decision now.

I came up to Cambridge from grammar school in Blackburn to read Medicine in 1982. I chose Fitzwilliam because someone from my school had been there and had a great time. I enjoyed my years at Fitzwilliam very much, sometimes maybe a little too much. It was a time like no other in my life and I am sure that many people who reflect on their time at Fitz feel the same. Mainly I remember the enduring friendships I made, as well as the unique and amazing people I had the opportunity to meet.

I feel the medical education I received at Cambridge was excellent. The faculty was world class and we were able to do rotations at smaller hospitals around East Anglia so there was a nice mix of cutting-edge high-tech medicine and more community based practice. My training in Cambridge has given me the skill and confidence to successfully pursue my career in Canada as much as it would for anywhere else in the world.

Beginning your time at Cambridge can be an intimidating experience; new people, new experiences, new demands and everything coming at you at a thousand miles an hour. Angst and elation in double measures.” As for today’s Freshers at Fitz, Dr Done advises: “Relax. Whether you see it or not everyone there for the first time has the same inchoate bundle of conflicting concerns you will be prey to at the start. Follow some simple guidelines and you’ll have the best time of your life: 1) Be yourself. Being yourself helps you make the best choices for yourself. 2) Go rowing at least once in your life. 3) Try to remember occasionally why you are actually there and do the best you can.”

The sharp fall in the number of junior doctors entering the medical profession is an issue frequently in the media spotlight these days. To qualify as a doctor takes six years of dedicated study. Fitzwilliam is committed to nurturing the finest doctors and medical research specialists like Dr Susan Done.

If you would like to support the Medicine Fund, named the Cuthbert Fund as a tribute to the former Master, Professor Alan Cuthbert, then please turn to the giving section at the middle of this newsletter.

Jim Knight (SPS, 1984)

Another Fitz Alumnus at Westminster

In the opening edition of Optima, Fitzwilliam congratulated Labour MPs Andrew Burnham (1988), Michael Gapes (1972), Conservative MP, David Wilshire (1962) and Liberal Democrat MP, Vincent Cable (1962) on their victories in the General Election of June 2001. In the second issue of Optima, we offer our congratulations to Jim Knight (1984) who was also elected as a Labour MP for South Dorset at the last General Election.

Jim is the production manager of a West Country publishing company. He is married to Anna who he met while a student at Fitzwilliam and they have two children, Ruth aged 12 and Fergus aged 10. Jim is now works closely with the Foreign Secretary and other cabinet ministers on developing the Party’s foreign, European, defence and international development policies.
1987: It’s a fine summer evening and all the windows in College are wide open. Some students are lying semi-comatose on their beds, staring at the long-neglected texts, others are leaning backwards precariously on their chairs, hands folded behind their heads, lost in contemplation. Almost all Fitz students lucky enough to have been allocated rooms in the brand new accommodation wing (New Court) are sitting at their desks, hard at work for the approaching exams. Halfway along the ground floor of the new wing, four fairly typical students are sitting in their rooms. Ian “George” Fitzsimons (1984, Natural Sciences), future distinguished Geology academic, is wrestling with the identification of a particularly elusive sub-species of trilobite. Richard “Captain” Hooke (1984, Chem. Eng.), future successful IT entrepreneur, has just squared away a particularly taxing heat exchanger problem from first principles, set by Dr David Scott, (now Senior Tutor) for a supervision which Richard slept through in the previous Michelmas Term. John Driscoll “O’ Toole”, (1984, Chem. Eng.) future oil executive, has just speed-read a post-doc-level text concerning recent advances in partial differentiation equations.

What typified life at Fitz then, and I am sure it typifies it now, is the friendliness of the Fellows and their closeness to the students. The Fellows were a colourful bunch and could be relied upon to put up with even the most inappropriate behaviour. During the bar activities following one particular Boat Club dinner, I vividly recall the late Dr Kenney unblinkingly congratulating Colin Pritchard (1986, Chem. Eng.) on the first boat’s performance in the May Bumps. Meanwhile Colin sheepishly held on to an inflatable doll, with which he had been presented for services above and beyond. That closeness of the teaching staff and students helped to get almost all of us over the academic finishing line and out into the brutal big wide world.

Just about everyone I know has had a full and exciting life since leaving Fitz. I chose an international career with Shell to start with and worked in Europe, the Middle East and the Americas in a variety of technical and commercial roles. I took a break from Shell for a spell at business school in France, subjected myself to the rigours of the one-year INSEAD MBA course. After INSEAD, the lure of an entrepreneurial venture proved too much to resist. Last year I became a Director of Avantium Technologies B.V., a newly-formed company based in Amsterdam which deploys high speed screening technology for process development for the pharmaceutical and chemical industries. (http://www.avantium.nl).

Granada TV recently got in touch with the Development Office to try to make contact with the winners of the 1973 series of University Challenge: David Wurtzel, David Curry, Philip Bassett, Michael Halls and Simon Tuite, in connection with a possible rematch. With the exception of Philip Bassett, we have been able to bring the original team back together for the special episode, to be aired provisionally on BBC 2 on 29th July. For further details contact Sally Payne at Granada TV Audience Relations Department on 0161 832 7211.

Looking back at the picture we uncovered from our archives, the Development Office has confidence that the rematch will be a less hairy encounter than the first.
Judith Oliver (History, 1979)

Judith was among the first of 30 female students to gain admission to Fitzwilliam in 1979. Until then Fitzwilliam was an all-male student community with a strong reputation for both academic excellence and sporting ability. Judith’s first impressions of Fitzwilliam were that it was a surprisingly warm and friendly place. “We (female freshmen) could have been characterised by our ability to look after ourselves and there seemed to be no problems with fitting into the College community. Many of us were accomplished sportswomen and despite being few in number, we formed College rowing, hockey and netball teams.” Judith’s Tutor, Dr R M Smith, described her as “an exceedingly adaptable personality who helped Fitzwilliam enormously in implementing its smooth transition to a co-educational institution.”

Prior to Fitzwilliam, Judith was Head Girl at Sunderland Church High School in Tyne and Wear. Coming up to Fitzwilliam to read History, Judith said as a fresher she was “filled with terror that her academic ability would not match up to her peers”. She admits to many preconceptions about her northern background and how it would isolate her from what she expected would be her ‘posher’ contemporaries. But Fitzwilliam was unstuffy and relaxed (it still is) and Judith soon overcame her initial insecurities. She enjoyed supervisions with Dr Edward Miller, the Master of Fitzwilliam, a medieval historian who encouraged her to have confidence. “He always made me feel at ease and that the opinions I put forward were valuable – which I am sure they weren’t!”

Judith achieved First Class honours and in 1982 was made a Senior Scholar of the College. She was awarded the Walters Prize, a Research Scholarship together with the Isely Prize for Fitzwilliam’s most distinguished result in the Historical Tripos. She played a full part in College life, being JMA Vice-President from 1981–1982 and was instrumental in establishing women’s sports at the College. She also ran the student magazine. Dr Miller, describing her in 1981 said “She is undoubtedly one of the outstanding personalities among our 450 undergraduates and also remains one of the nicest people in College.”

After her degree, Judith stayed on in Cambridge to begin a PhD and relished the responsibilities of her new role as a History Supervisor at Fitzwilliam, finding the teaching element to be deeply rewarding. However, she confessed to hating the research work for her PhD, as this meant so much time alone. She took the decision, some might say the risk, not to finish her PhD studies. Instead, she decided to embark on a different career path as an apprentice racehorse trainer in Newmarket.

For three months Judith pestered trainer Ron Sheather who had stables in Park Lane, Newmarket, to take her on as a trainee. She said it was curious to go from “being vaguely respected in one career to being nothing in another – although”, she joked, “I was good at mucking out!” Judith worked with Sheather for two years before her career took another interesting turn, this time into horseracing journalism.

In London, Haymarket Publishers were about to launch a magazine and were on the look out for young writers who knew a lot about horses, if not necessarily much about journalism. The publication was *Pacemaker* which is aimed at thoroughbred owners and racehorse breeders around the world. For Judith, it was an adventure to be in on *Pacemaker* from the beginning. “We would work long hours, living on take-away pizzas to keep us going.” Although she ran the magazine at Fitzwilliam, Judith had no formal journalistic training. So, with the help of editors at Haymarket, she honed her writing skills through ‘on the job’ training. Before long she was travelling worldwide to cover international horseracing and bloodstock stories.

In 1990, eager for a fresh challenge, Judith applied to Cranfield to read for an MBA. But this was to be no easy time for her. She describes the year at Cranfield as a period of personal “melt down” during which she suffered serious doubts about her ability to pass the exams. Judith sought counselling and attended personal development courses, which taught her to “reframe” her experiences and eventually led her pass her MBA exams and to train as a counsellor for Relate.

Today Judith works as a freelance journalist from her home in Newmarket. She is also heavily committed to her work as a voluntary Relate Counsellor in Suffolk. She is currently working on an article for the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), who ironically had sponsored her PhD about the history of marriage years ago, about a huge ESRC research initiative into the economic and social repercussions of September 11th.

Judith’s advice to the current generation of undergraduates at Fitzwilliam for their careers is to “follow your heart and have a go at what you really want to do. You will always get some kind of job, but do something you really want to do, even if it means earning little or nothing to start with. If you get an interview for a first job and it does not feel right, don’t take the job. Remember, an interview is a two-way process; you must trust your judgement to turn the job down if necessary. You made it to Fitzwilliam and to Cambridge, this shows future employers that you are good enough to put your mind to anything.”

Judith is passionate about the issue of student hardship: “I feel very strongly that the current generation of students should not have to work during term times to make ends meet. Its fine and often great experience for their careers to work during the vacations, but they don’t need this kind of pressure, when they are expected to study at such a high level and take important exams that will affect their futures. Their undergraduate experience should be a whole one. They should meet and socialise with new people from different backgrounds and cultures. Just having time to sit and talk to fellow students outside of supervisions and seminars is hugely important to dispel prejudices and increase understanding between people, who may in later life have the opportunity to have a positive impact on society.”

“I want to see Fitzwilliam continue to be a place where all candidates of all backgrounds feel comfortable and secure, as I did during my time at the College.”

Do you like Judith feel strongly about the Student Hardship issue? If you can support Fitz’s Student Hardship Fund, please contact the Development Team.
Fitzwilliam Women’s Dinner

I am pleased, first of all, to report that the Fitzwilliam Women’s Dinner on March 8th was a great success. We invited back as our Guest of Honour Cressida Dick (2000 MSt), who took time out of her police career to return to study. Now a Commander of the Met, Cressida gave a thoughtful and amusing speech after dinner, charting the changing attitudes to women in the police over the last 30 years. My thanks go to all those who were able to make it, and to those who wrote in after the dinner to express their enthusiasm for future such dinners!

Reunion Weekend 2002

Women, Fitzwilliam College needs YOU!

Speaking of sports fixtures, I am very keen to introduce a women’s fixture at this year’s Reunion Weekend (27th–29th September). Soccer and rowing look like the most probable, but all suggestions gratefully received. Anyone wanting to play in the men’s or women’s fixtures in September is encouraged to come out from wherever they’re hiding and make themselves known to us!


We hope the 2002 Reunion Weekend will be an even bigger success this year. This year we are inviting back specially the matriculation years 1953–1958, 1972, 1982 and 1992 and these members are entitled to receive one night’s accommodation and the dinner of their choice (space permitting) for free. Invites have now been sent out – do get in touch if you’ve not received yours.

Fitzwilliam’s Lost Sheep

Finally, a special plea to anyone who knows the whereabouts of any of their contemporaries who appear in our Lost Sheep page (in the Alumni section at www.fitz.cam.ac.uk). Please drop us a line, or give them a nudge, and hopefully we can re-establish contact. Currently, we are looking for around 4000 missing members, so we really do need your help to bring this number down. Year lists of lost sheep are available on request.

Thanks again for all your support and kind comments over the last few months. We are always pleased to hear your suggestions about how we can make our events and alumni programmes better still.

News & Events at Fitzwilliam

This time of the year is a busy time for events. From when I write, there are two days to go until the Fitzwilliam Society London Dinner, which has again been held in the impressive Tallow Chandlers’ Hall. Numbers are up from last year and I am very pleased to note many new names, and a good uptake from younger alumni. The usual toast to Absent Friends is particularly pertinent this year, in the light of the very sad death of Andrew Skinner, who organised the dinner for several years.

Last month saw the mailing for the Past v Present Cricket Match on 22nd June. We invite everyone who played sport at Fitzwilliam – Do let us know in advance if you would like to join at Oxford Road one sunny day in 2003.

Fitz Online – Get Connected!

The first stage of Fitz Online has now been launched and is doing well, though we have exciting changes in the pipeline to come over the next few months.

Why not go and take a look at online.fitz.cam.ac.uk right now and add your name to the Members’ Directory.

Your details will be not be available to anyone else viewing the site, but it will allow old friends to make contact (through a computer-forwarded e-mail) with you.

Returning to the Fold: Fitzwilliam’s Lost Sheep

Fitz Online – Get Connected!