



Bin Brook

The Magazine of Robinson College, Cambridge

Michaelmas 2008



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Front cover: Robinson graduands walking through Senate House Passage on their way to a congregation.
Photograph taken by Iain Lingwood (2005).

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Robinson is Cambridge's Greenest College

Robinson ranked first amongst 27 of the colleges this year in a survey of green credentials. The table, produced annually by the Cambridge University Environment Consultancy Service is designed to galvanise those colleges not putting environmental concerns high on their agenda into action, and to recognise those colleges who are making a big effort to improve their carbon footprint. Robinson has been in the top 4 colleges for the last three years, and a big push earned the College the top spot.

The survey takes into account college practice in nine areas including lighting, insulation, computer and printer usage, and the extent to which environmental concerns feature in the College's decision-making process.

In keeping with Robinson's green outlook, we have made Bin Brook greener - we are now using 80% recycled paper in its production.



Members of Robinson's Environmental Committee with Domestic Bursar, Peter Milloy, and the Environment Fellow, Dr Steve Trudgill.
Photo courtesy of Varsity.

College Gardens Open to the Public

Robinson has opened its gardens to the public through the National Gardens Scheme. The gardens are open for the NGS from late June to April every year, and a booklet containing information about the gardens, with a map and a list of all the trees is available from the Porters' Lodge for £2.50. All profits from the booklet go to the NGS charities. Opening times can be found at www.robinson.cam.ac.uk/about/gardens/ngs.php.

Robinson Merchandise for Christmas



New Christmas Card for 2008

A new Christmas card, depicting a snowman loyally wearing his Robinson scarf in front of Thorneycreek House is available to purchase at £6.00 for a pack of 10, or £0.60 each.

New CD from Robinson College Choir

Robinson College Chapel Choir have recently rounded off an incredible year by recording a CD of Advent and Christmas music which is available from the Development Office, priced £12.

The selection of music on the CD carries the listener through the build up to the Christmas season and into the celebration of the festival itself. It opens with one of the first British recordings of Kodaly's arrangement of the plainsong-based hymn 'Veni, Veni Emmanuel' and also includes Haydn's 'Little Organ Mass' – utilizing the outstanding crop of string players that Robinson boasts at present. As well as seasonal organ music played on Robinson's fine Frobenius organ, the CD concludes with Britten's 'Ceremony of Carols', sung with tremendous energy and accompanied by the superb harpist, Catherine Porter.

This year the Choir has expanded to include over 30 members under the direction of Dominic O'Connor Robinson and Julian Revie. This has enabled them to explore repertoire from a different angle and highlights of the year include performing a selection of movements from Rachmaninov's 'All Night Vigil', a setting of the Vespers – of which the Choir's favourite movement has been included on the CD. In the summer, prior to recording, the Choir undertook a tour of the La Taha region of Spain, performing in the beautiful and huge Cathedral of the Annunciation in Granada, as well as taking classes in the Alexander Technique. This proved to be fantastic preparation for the recording and the result is a CD of outstanding quality that we are all very proud of, including a variety of music performed with great passion – making it the perfect Christmas gift!

To order either of these items, or any other Robinson College merchandise, please complete the form in the centre-fold of *Bin Brook*, or go to <http://www.robinson.cam.ac.uk/catalog/> to see the full range and to buy online.



Médecins sans Frontières in

BURMA

In May this year, many of us were horrified to hear of the destruction that Cyclone Nargis had caused in Myanmar (formerly Burma), just a few months after the political situation there had taken a turn for the worse.

Alumna **Helen Bygrave** (1988) has been working for Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) in Yangon, Myanmar. Here, she tells us about her experiences.

After being out of the Robinson College news loop for sometime, it seems like 2008 is destined to lure me back to college days. Not only is it our year's 20 year reunion coming up (can't quite believe that one), but Clare in the Development Office recently got in touch with me to put down a few thoughts about my work with Médecins sans Frontières (MSF).

I qualified from University College Hospital in 1995 and after a good few years trailing the hospital wards, I very happily switched to general practice in North London. Eventually though, itchy feet set in and along with an African boyfriend who has an even greater dislike for English winters than I do, we decided to see whether we could put our skills to use overseas. So after trawling the NGO websites we signed up with MSF.

Two years later, working with MSF has taken me from the chaos and 'in your faceness' of Lagos in Nigeria to the suppressive calm of Myanmar where I spent last year as HIV advisor to a project treating 16,000 people with HIV.

In the last six months Myanmar has occupied the number one news story on

two occasions, both for its protests and horrendous natural disaster, so I will skip over the Myanmar – "oh is that Burma" question.

But the daily suffering of the Burmese is another story that is very successfully hidden away. Since 1962 and the start of the military regime, Myanmar has been subject to international

sanctions and is in effect cut off from the outside world. Rates of TB, malaria, malnutrition, and sexually transmitted infections including HIV are high and access to healthcare remains extremely difficult and costly. MSF has now been working in Myanmar for 16 years tackling these major health problems and is the major provider of HIV care there.

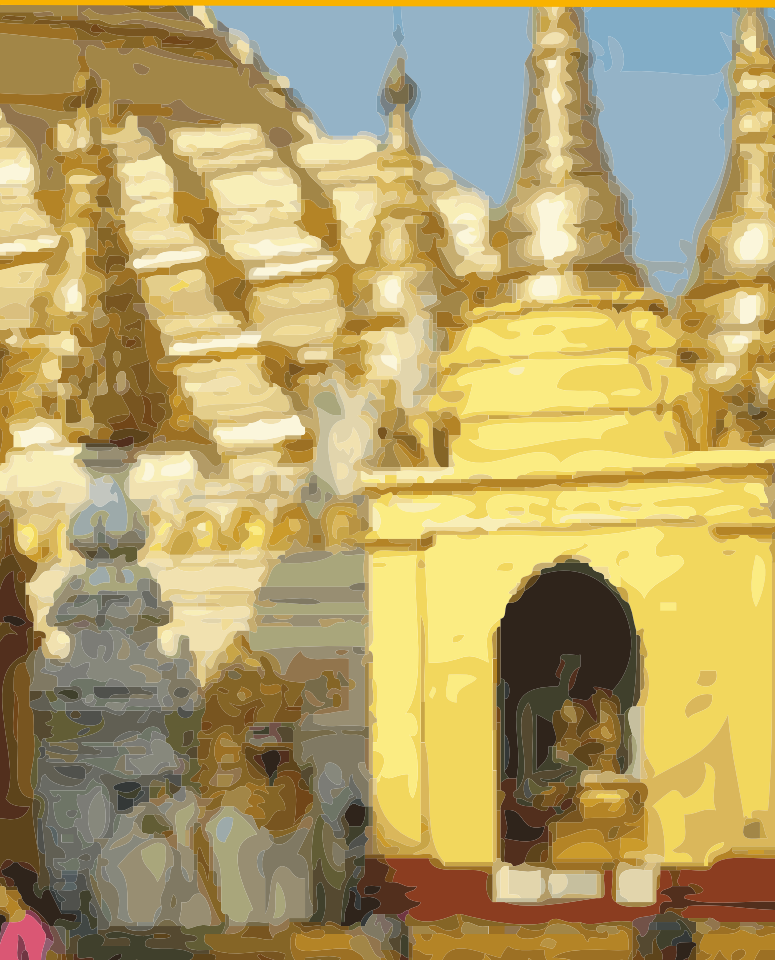
In Myanmar, out of a population of 48 million, there are an estimated



Buddhist novice monks



A home visit in Kachin



242,000 people living with HIV. Of these, 76,000 need antiretroviral drugs. We had enrolled 16,000 patients, 8,000 of whom were receiving antiretroviral treatment and were stretched to our limits.

In Africa, though some would say too slowly, HIV care has expanded hugely over the last five years. Unfortunately, again for obvious reasons, Myanmar has not received the external aid aimed at achieving universal free access to HIV care (nor for that matter for TB or malaria, which are also huge killers) and if you do not happen to live near one of MSF's clinics the outlook is more than bleak – to be frank the outlook is death.



My role last year involved lots of teaching and training, clinical supervision and fortunately not too much report-writing! Our programmes offered HIV testing, treatment and prevention of opportunistic infections, prevention of mother-to-child transmission and provision of antiretroviral drugs. Not to bore the non-medics too much, but the medicine itself presents you with all sorts of weird and wonderful cases and challenges your clinical decision making. At times of course it also sends you into pangs of frustration and disillusionment at what we couldn't do.

To travel to any of the clinics outside Yangon, all the expats had to



A feeding centre in Rakhine

apply for a travel authorisation from the ministry of defence weeks in advance and we would be accompanied from A to B, so some interesting conversations were had on the six-hour car journeys often involving a long discussion about noodles, or how the golf game was developing – certainly nothing to do with health! I was very lucky being able to travel to all our clinics that were spread between four states: Yangon, Kachin in the north, Shan in the East and Rakhine (Arakan) to the west bordering with Bangladesh. I will add here that aside from seeing some dramatic medicine, Myanmar also provides some pretty dramatic scenery. Each area comes with its own specific issues. The border areas with China have a booming sex trade, heroin use is rife in the jade mining areas and the extreme restrictions are placed on the muslim Rohingya population in Rakhine state.

The delta area, which was most seriously affected by cyclone Nargis, was not an area where we were working but, with a huge national staff team and already having logistics on the ground, MSF were able to move into the delta region and provide emergency care quite quickly. I was so relieved to hear that none of our staff had been hurt, but many had damage to their homes and our patients in Yangon who live in very poor conditions simply had their homes swept away. Now the media has moved its attention elsewhere but there are many more people needing assistance with food, shelter, clean water and medical aid and the emergency teams are continuing to run clinics for MSF in the area.



A Fisherman on the Inle Lake

All in all, my experience both in Nigeria and Myanmar has been an amazing opportunity to practice medicine, teach, meet some great new friends and provide an all-important reality check when faced with life back here in the UK. MSF not only needs medics but administrators, project coordinators and logisticians to keep the programmes functioning with vehicles and drug supplies. So if you are getting itchy feet twenty years after leaving Robinson, there may be a job waiting for you...

For more info go to msf.org.uk



Marjorie Coughlan (1987)
is Associate Editor for
PaperTigers.org, a website that
provides information for teachers and
librarians about multicultural children's
literature.

As a student, I used to sneak periodically into Heffer's Children's bookshop to browse through the array of picture books on display. Now I don't need to be quite so surreptitious, even without using my own children as an excuse – indeed there is growing recognition of the quality of books available to children and young adults, which can often vie with writing for "grown-ups". One of the thrills of my role as Associate Editor for PaperTigers is receiving children's books for review from publishers across the globe and I still have to pinch myself as I look out of my study window in rural Kirkbymoorside (North Yorkshire) as to where the wings of the internet can take me: and Kirkbymoorside can take some explaining with an office address in San Francisco!

PaperTigers (www.papertigers.org) is a web-magazine aimed for the most part at librarians, parents and teachers. It comes under the umbrella of Pacific Rim Voices, a non-profit organisation which aims to promote tolerance and awareness of cultural diversity through books and reading. Initially it covered the Pacific Rim and South Asia but over the past couple of years we have broadened our geographical boundaries to include multicultural books from other parts of the world too. Especially where children's literature is concerned, it became evident that restricting our outlook was not only artificial but also went against what we are all about in exploring different cultures while celebrating our common humanity. Indeed, since its first issue in 2002, PaperTigers has evolved and will continue to do so, as we seek to become more interactive and to draw in more young people, as well as continue to provide a wealth of resources for anybody interested in finding quality books for young people.

At the moment we publish a bi-monthly update on our website. Each issue features new interviews and Gallery features, as well as Personal Views and book reviews. Our latest issue, for example, highlights three illustrators from the UK's 2008 The Big Picture campaign; and in the gallery archives you can find an array of different styles and ethnic roots, from both established and emerging illustrators. For example, Australian artist Shaun Tan's gallery contains images from his account of the immigrant experience, *The Arrival*, which has

recently become available in the UK, published by Hodder Children's Books. This graphic, wordless book bowls me over every time I look at it: definitely not "just" for children!

Although I have only actually met one of the authors I've interviewed in person – Debjani Chatterjee, one of Britain's best-known Asian writers – once the emails are flying you do build up a rapport. Gifted Japanese writer and illustrator, Allen Say was particularly noble, since he loathes computers. He has given some fascinating background to his work, all of which I recommend whole-heartedly. One of his most poignant books, *Home of the Brave* (Houghton Mifflin/ Walter Lorraine Books, 2002), was inspired by a Dorothea Lange photograph of the Mochida family awaiting "evacuation" during the Second World War. The fact that in 1942 thousands of American citizens of Japanese descent were interned for the remainder of the war had been largely forgotten and it is only recently that this painful episode in America's history is emerging into the mainstream. Another truly outstanding picture-book for young children, based on the experience of the author's mother, is *A Place Where Sunflowers Grow* by Amy Lee-Tai, illustrated by Felicia Hoshino (Children's Book Press, 2006); and *Weedflower* (Atheneum, 2006) by Cynthia Kadohata, whose father was interned, is a powerful novel for older readers.



Marjorie with Michael Rosen,
Children's Laureate

These books all feature in the Reviews section of the website, which contains original reviews written by us and also draws on other sources, such as the Cooperative Children's Book Center in the US and Books for Keeps from the UK. The Reviews section as a whole highlights some of the quality multi-cultural books available for young people – and if you want to find out about some of the prizes these books have won, for example, or what books are recommended by other organisations, then there are Resources and Lists and Links areas on the website.

We also feature Personal Views, which provide PaperTigers with some of its richest reading material. Different responses to ethnic background and why authors write what they do often arise. For example, in a Personal View by Asian-American author Grace Lin entitled "The Extra Adjective: How I Came to Terms With Being a Multicultural Book Author", she finds herself grappling with the multicultural label and concludes that she is "proud of that extra adjective and of what I am - a multicultural children's book author and illustrator." She is making an important point. At a time when "multicultural" has become so overused in the vernacular, we must not lose sight of what the word actually means: multi cultural - embracing the many different cultures around us, including and not at the expense of our own.

Picking out a few other examples of Personal Views at random demonstrates the range of topics and interest they encompass:

"Literacy: Path to Freedom" by Susan Guevara, children's book illustrator, USA; "Canadian Armchair Explorations in Homegrown Asian-themed Children's Literature" by Andrea Ross of the JustOneMoreBook Podcast (well worth a visit), Canada; "Bilingual Storytime: 10 Best Books to Read to a Young Audience" by Ana-Elba Pavon, Library Manager and REFORMA (www.reforma.org) Past-President, USA; "Drawing from Eco-riches: Australia's Environment in Children's Books" by Chris Cheng, author, Australia; "Three Cheers for Adoption Books - And Why We All Should Read 'Em" by Rose Kent, children's book author, USA; "My all-time favorite Indian stories" by Swapna Dutta, author and journalist, India... and I'll stop there!

Two recent developments, as we seek to become more interactive and to draw younger people to us, have been the introduction last year of PaperTigers Outreach and the PaperTigers blog. Outreach into state schools in America is a way of linking PaperTigers into the life of local communities in different areas. It offers an opportunity for children to interact with a cultural activity they may never have heard of otherwise: for example, author Mitali Perkins was joined at one school by her artist mother to show children how to draw alpanas, the traditional patterns painted by Bangladeshi women at the home's entrance to welcome visitors. Through these activities, we hope to encourage children to read more stories associated with them, and from there to continue on the path to being hungry readers, curious about the world around them and open to it. In this day and age when the tools of communication are seemingly so pervasive but ironically make direct contact so much easier to avoid, the world of books can provide the bridge to greater understanding and deeper empathy between people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Our blog, meanwhile, gives us the opportunity to supplement the main website with news and views linking in to our current theme, as well as to make the site more interactive. Aline Pereira, PaperTigers' Executive Editor, and I are joined by other colleagues for some of the blog fixtures – Corinne in Canada pulls together the Eventful World updates on book events from all over the globe; and Janet, who is living in Seattle at the moment but planning her return to Bangkok, looks after the Tiger's Bookshelf. She recommends good reads for middle-grade and older readers, including the Tiger's Choice, a virtual book club. Aline's posts generally tie in to the theme of the main PaperTigers site and I contribute a weekly "Books at Bedtime" post – books for reading aloud to younger children, and not just at bedtime! In January I launched a reading challenge, which ran till the end of June – and since my two boys decided to do it individually as well as with a family readaloud, it was indeed quite a challenge and great fun too. Their reviews really added to the Blog's voice and I'm looking forward to next year when I hope we'll hear from other young people as well. It is always exciting when a post generates comment and discussion.



Marjorie with
Aline Pereira, PaperTigers'
Executive Editor

The Challenge also really brought home to me that when you read together, you can be quite audacious in the books you choose in terms of relating to children's age and experience: one book we read was Deborah Ellis' *I Am a Taxi* (Groundwood, 2006) (a title I much prefer to its recent UK one *The Prison Runner* (OUP June, 2008) but it's the same superb book). It was a challenging story and with a book like this it does help to have read it in advance so that I know when it needs to shift from bedtime to day-time "book session", as we rather prosaically call the flights into different worlds we share when we all snuggle up with a pile of books to read to each other!

A major event for me this year was attending the Bologna Children's Book Fair for the first time. On a personal level, it was fantastic actually to meet Aline after the past few years of fairly constant email correspondence. And it was awesome to behold the vast array of children's books from all over the world. Highlights included hearing British Children's Laureate Michael Rosen and Argentine-Mexican Jorge Luján discussing children's poetry – and watching the video animation of the latter's beautiful book *Tarde de invierno / Winter*

Afternoon (Groundwood Books / Libros Tigrillo, 2006) - there's a link to it on the PaperTigers blog; hearing how Tara Books (India) created their stunning hand-made book *The Nightlife of Trees* (Tara, 2006); and attending a session organised by the IFLA (International Federation of Libraries Associations and Institutions), which was so lively that we were asked to be quiet...! As I left Bologna, with bags several times heavier than when I'd arrived, I was so engrossed in Sally Grindley's latest book *Broken Glass* (Bloomsbury, 2008), that I managed to miss my train to Rome – well, that, coupled with the Italian railway logic of allowing a supposedly 10-minute-late train to leave unannounced five minutes earlier so that it was closer to its scheduled departure time...

I love my work for PaperTigers and I am very aware of the effects it has had not only on my own outlook and awareness of the world beyond my ken, but on my children's. There is an amazing world of multi-cultural children's books out there and if PaperTigers can continue both to provide a window on to that world; and contribute to an increase in multi-cultural tolerance, understanding and celebration, then we are on the right track.



Treflach Farm



Recently, Tom Welch (1998) left his PhD in Cambridge behind to set up and run Treflach Farm in North Shropshire. What was intended as a year out became Tom's career.

Six and a half years after matriculating I was struggling through a PhD in the department of Social and Developmental Psychology. Over a fairly isolating couple of years I increasingly found my allotment, just down the road from Romsey Terrace, to be a place of community, manageable goals and, perhaps most importantly, tangible achievement in my own terms. It began to dawn on me that, while there were aspects of my PhD that I thoroughly enjoyed and grew through, the nature of the necessary demands that it made, and the lifestyle that it offered, were not things to which I could easily adapt.

It was through Ian, the school-mate of a close Robinson friend, Tom Murray, that I was offered the chance to completely change my life, and to merge my hobbies and my day job: the chance to make a living from the land. The land was Ian's parents' 100 acre farm in North Shropshire, about to be rented out due to the poor health of Ian's Father. The opportunity was timely and too good to miss. Intermitting from my PhD and my funding, I made the move to the outskirts of a village called Treflach, situated in the hills that rise from the Shropshire Plain, nestled underneath Offa's Dyke, twenty miles west of Shrewsbury. I was met with breathtaking views and, in every sense, a mountain to climb.

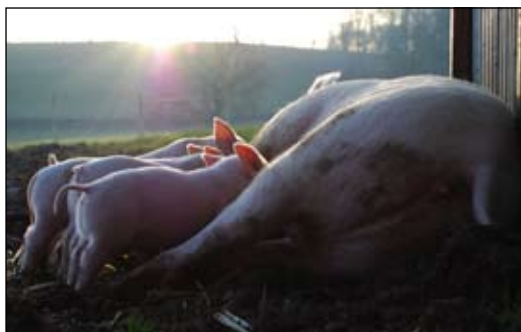
As I pulled up at the end of the farm's extensive drive, the long hot summer of 2006 was in full swing. The long sweaty harvest was also beginning and there was unfathomable activity all around me. Treflach Farm may be small but I understood neither the language nor the machinery of a harvest and was submerged for four months in a world that was entirely alien to me. This was exactly what was required for Ian and me, an opportunity to work for, and with, those who had been 'born into' farming and from whom, through gentle questioning

around the harvest table and more forceful questioning through the relentless throbbing of the tractor engines, we could learn possible ways of progressing our new project. It was almost as if the harvest was designed to empty my mind of what had come before and to reconstruct me as a farmer, like an SAS training exercise aimed at breaking and then rebuilding the recruit to army specifications.

Three things emerged from the harvest-weary conversations we had while attempting to plough a profitable furrow in the land of Treflach Farm. We needed an income stream that came online as quickly as is possible in farming. Secondly, we wanted to work in a way that treated the land, the environment and any livestock with respect and kept their welfare as our bottom line. Finally, we would not be afraid to operate outside of the received wisdom passed down to us from many a harvest hand.

We decided to begin with pigs as they take very little time, just six months, to reach slaughter weight. Farming pigs also seemed like a project that we could really get our teeth into. The majority of pork eaten in the UK is 'factory farmed' to a greater or lesser degree, even that which is free-range or 'outdoor reared', and particularly that which is imported. Our harvest training period had revealed to us a consensus among our immediate farming community that when farming pigs you must accept low margins and therefore 'cram them in', 'keep them lying down' and sell in quantity. We were determined to fulfil our second aim and prove that ethical, small-scale pig farming remained possible in the current agricultural climate.

In order to farm ethically, as we saw it, we had to think and work outside the established models of farming in our area. In raising our stock we deviated from these in four ways. Firstly, we would not routinely use antibiotics. We knew that if we kept a manageable number of animals and ensured that we spent enough time with our stock every day, we could pick up on symptoms of illness or any abnormal behaviour quickly, and isolate and treat the pig as necessary using curative rather than preventative medicine.



Two-week-old piglets at feeding time

Secondly, we wanted pigs to be able to express their natural behaviours. This is largely achieved through ensuring that all of our pigs have permanent access to fields, allowing them to nose up the turf in search of tasty roots and grubs, and to places to wallow and areas of shade, allowing them to keep cool and prevent sunburn in the summer months. We also provide well-anchored scratching posts or trees enabling them to dislodge any

unwanted visitors from their hairy backs and shoulders. We make sure, too, that there is plenty for our pigs to do inside for those occasions when they decide that the weather is just too English to venture outside.

Thirdly, it was our aim to grow and mill all of our pig feed on-site. This ensures a high quality feed and one that is not bulked out with the usual large quantities of soya of ethically uncertain provenance.

We were able to do this for the first year but, unfortunately, lost our crop to flooding in spring 2007 and so have moved to a wheat-based, British-grown feed in the second.

Fourthly, we wanted to find a local abattoir that would allow us to inspect the conditions in which the pigs are kept prior to slaughter and the methods used for both stunning and killing the pigs to ensure that they focused on keeping the animal as un-stressed as possible throughout the entire slaughtering process. We were able to track down such an abattoir within ten miles of our farm.

An ethical farm is no good at all, however, unless it generates an income and our pigs are reared to this end. We were determined that, despite the increasing disquiet, both among pig farmers and, latterly, in the media, about the non-profitability of British pigs, we would prove that the terms 'ethical' and 'financially viable' were not mutually exclusive. Our goal, thinking beyond traditional farming models, was to set the price of our pork ourselves and not to have it dictated to us by 'the market'. This would enable us to price our pork so that, despite our ethical farming model, low stocking density and, ultimately, having only a small number of pigs ready to slaughter each week, we could still operate viably. The resultant price, taking into account the maximum number of pigs we were able to slaughter each week and all associated overheads, necessitated a move away from the traditional methods of selling animals at the local livestock market, direct to an abattoir, or to a butcher. We were forced to think of other ways of marketing and adding value to our pigs. Processing our meat in some way, and selling it directly to the consumer, became our only option and one that we attacked with gusto.

Initially we sold our pork at a number of weekly and monthly market stalls in our region, graduating, after a year or so, to large, national food festivals in Manchester, Birmingham and London. As our pricing and our business model proved viable we extended our methods of direct selling. For example, we now operate a carefully constructed delivery run to London. Initially we offer small or medium sized businesses the chance to 'meet the farmers' and a free tasting session in a communal area within their building. We then begin a fortnightly delivery to individuals within that business, with no minimum order, and charge only one pound per order for delivery. This system establishes multiple orders at a single address, which, in turn, reduces delivery costs for the customer, makes the deliveries easier for us, and reduces the environmental impact of our delivery service as a whole. Lately, we have begun to offer hog-roasts at private functions, and, as recently as August this year, begun to cater at festivals and large public events beginning with the Innocent Village Fete in Regent's Park, London. In fixing our own price for the pork and, particularly, in selling our meat cooked and ready to eat, we maximise the value of every animal that we rear, allowing us to remain small-scale and maintain that crucial focus on the welfare of our stock.



Tom coaxing a pig
across a field

Once this basic business model was in place, and proving economically viable, we were able to look at expanding the farm so that it reached its productive capacity under our criteria. We now rear lamb, produce free range eggs, and have recently slaughtered our first beef animal after two years of fattening. We were also able to develop the extraneous operations that would make up the lifestyle that we wanted the farm to sustain. We are creating a community of similarly minded volunteers on the farm all of whom are passionate about our project and work with us for board and lodging and stay for a few days or a few months at a time. We are also branching out into not-for-profit

areas of business, most recently establishing an outdoor 'forest-school' complete with indoor educational space and compost toilet facilities which we offer, for no charge, to local schools. This allows me to indulge my continued passion for the child's developing mind as I teach groups of six to ten year olds about the origins of the food they eat 'from farm to fork'. We are also able, after a considerable lay-off to establish our business, to indulge again in the hobbies that living on a farm allows. I now have a vegetable growing area twice the size of my allotment in Romsey, and a full height poly-tunnel that runs along side. The hammock I have hung in it is a favourite on the farm.

For several reasons my year off from my PhD has become my career. Some of these reasons are specific to running my own business, and some of them specific to the nature of the business that I run. I enjoy the challenge that our own rigidly defined boundaries of farming style and the need to meet the day to day running costs of the farm gives us. I enjoy the intellectual challenge and problem-solving element of how the two can exist in harmony, and I enjoy the physical nature of the work and what a friend called the 'mud-covered crisis management' that so often dominates our days. I enjoy discussing what we are doing on a day to day basis with the now familiar harvest hands - the pre-existing farming community - and marvelling at how 'times have changed' and I enjoy learning from them the things that don't change - for example how to assist a sow in a problem birth. I enjoy the variety that my days offer me - whether stuck in front of a computer updating the website or straining through the accounts; or 'rowing up' on the Massey Fergusson or shovelling pig shit, I know what I am doing, why I am doing it and what season it is while I am doing it! I feel no awkward schism between my 'home' life and my 'work' life: the two meld into a happy unity that I find particularly comforting.

All of this said, my time at Treflach Farm is coming to an end. The farm and the business will continue but my active involvement will cease in September 2008. My heart, and my partner's, is in the South East, and we will wave goodbye to the mountains and hope to be farming again at some point very soon. If anybody is interested in talking to me about Treflach Farm, about farming in general, or perhaps knows where my partner and I could be farming next, please do get in touch: mail@tomwelch.co.uk

Fellowship Profile: Dr Isabella Alexander Beachcroft Fellow in Law

After having qualified as a Solicitor in Sydney, Dr Isabella Alexander came to Cambridge to do a PhD and now is a College Teaching Officer at Robinson, a post sponsored by Beachcroft LLP.



Why did you choose to study Law?

In Australia, it is not generally possible to read Law (as an LLB) on its own; it needs to be combined with another degree, which could be a Bachelor of Arts, or Economics, Commerce, Science or even Fine Arts or Music. I had not decided on what career I wanted to pursue when I finished high school, so I chose to do a Law degree alongside an Arts degree to give me more career options at the end. In my Arts degree I studied History and French.

In the fourth year of the degree (which normally takes 5 years) it is common to do a summer clerkship with a law firm. I was offered a place at Clayton Utz Lawyers in Sydney and enjoyed that, so I decided to take up their job offer and became a solicitor when I graduated.

What made you leave your career as a solicitor and return to University?

Although I enjoyed a lot of aspects of working as a solicitor, I did not really see myself doing it in the long term. As part of my History degree at university I had done an extra honours year, which involved writing a

long dissertation. I had really enjoyed the research involved in that task and so I decided to apply to Cambridge to do more research, this time in the law. I chose my PhD topic based on my two main academic interests: history and intellectual property law.

How did you find leaving Australia and coming to Cambridge?

Like (I suspect) most Australians, the thing I have found hardest to come to terms with in England is the weather! However, aside from that I love living in Cambridge. It is such a beautiful town and very easy to get around. It is easy to integrate into the university world because there are so many people from other parts of the country and other parts of the world living here.

Are you enjoying your work at Robinson?

Yes, I am. The Fellowship at Robinson is friendly and welcoming and it is a very stimulating intellectual environment. I teach Criminal Law to Part IA students and Intellectual Property Law, which is an optional paper for Part II students. Criminal Law is fun to teach because the facts of some cases can be quite bizarre and students also enjoy Intellectual Property Law because it raises issues they can identify with, like downloading music from the internet. I find the teaching rewarding, and I am also a tutor, which I like because it brings me into contact with students from disciplines other than law.

What are your current research interests?

At the moment I am still working on the material that made up my PhD dissertation, which was on the history of copyright law in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I am particularly interested in the construction of the notion of the "public interest" and how it operates in copyright law.

My book, entitled *Copyright and the Public Interest in the Nineteenth Century*, will be published by Hart Publishing in 2009.



Dr Alexander giving a supervision in College

We asked Dr Alexander's sponsor, Beachcroft, to provide an insight into the life of one of its Cambridge trainees



Dilani Gooda	Trainee, Beachcroft LLP
Departments to date:	Real Estate; Injury Risk
University:	Selwyn College, Cambridge
Degree:	English

7:40 I leave home and catch the train to Manchester.

8:40 I arrive in the office; check my emails and voicemail. I've been asked to attend an Inquest in Caernarfon next week so set about making my travel arrangements. The client has given instructions for a watching brief only but I'll need to take notes in order to report back to the client.

9:15 I'm asked to do some urgent internet research into a major road incident which occurred in the early hours of the morning. We're acting on behalf of the insurer of one of the drivers. I draft a memo of my findings and hand it back to the partner.

9:45 I'm on my way with a colleague to attend a meeting with a client and Counsel in relation to an ongoing case. We're discussing our strategy for the Settlement Meeting scheduled for the end of the month. We consider strengths and weaknesses of the expert evidence, surveillance footage and witness statements.

12:30 We're back in the office and I dictate the notes of our meeting straightaway.

13:00 I break for lunch and meet up with some of the other trainees for a sandwich and a chat.

13:45 I return to my desk a little earlier than usual as I'm due to telephone a witness at 2 pm. I use the time to review the file and make some notes to which I can refer during the conversation.

14:00 I call the witness. He's driving at the moment and asks me to call back around 3 pm.

14:10 I receive a fax. It's a signed defence which I drafted last week and now need to serve and file by 4 pm today. I check it before drafting letters to the Court and Claimant solicitors and faxing it off.

14:30 My witness calls - he's free to speak to me now. We go through the incident in detail. He sounds very credible and his evidence is certainly favourable to our case.

15:00 Using my notes, I draft the witness statement and note a couple of areas where we need clarification. I diarise a follow-up call.

16:00 It's our monthly Charity Committee meeting. I oversee small donations made by the Manchester office and update the Committee on our latest donations.

16:30 Back at my desk, I review my 'to do' list for Monday. I'm out of the office all day at a site inspection in Oxford. I also have a telephone Case Management Conference on Tuesday. It's a file I know quite well so decide to review the file and draft directions now. I make a few notes so that I'm well prepared should the Judge ask me anything awkward.

17:15 I decide to call it a day - it's Friday after all - and I'm meeting some friends from my first department in Real Estate for drinks.

Alumni Announcements

Lola Adesioye (2000) relocated to New York where she is currently working as a writer and a singer/songwriter. She is writing for publications such as *The Guardian*, where she contributes to their election coverage particularly in terms of looking at how race intersects with politics. After graduating from Cambridge, Lola spent 4 years working in the music industry. She has now moved over into the creative side of the industry, and is using her business experience to start her own music company.



Chris Baker (1997) and Catharine Mullen (1998) were married at Grafton Manor in Worcestershire on 26th April 2008. Many Robinson friends celebrated the day, including Alastair Ingall and Andy Kidd (both 1997) as best men, and Caroline Furness (1998) as bridesmaid. After a relaxing honeymoon, Catharine and Chris have now moved from London to West Yorkshire, and would love to hear from anyone who is in the area.



Tracy Bonham (1986) married Ian Mitchell (left) on 12th January 2008 - they had been going out for over 12 years. They shared the day with many of Tracy's Cambridge friends - in fact it was quite a reunion!! Nicola Morgan (née MacDonald, 1987) sang beautifully during the ceremony - and took the prize for the furthest travelled having come all the way to Glasgow's winter from Australia's summer! Jane Filby (1986) did a sterling job of rounding folks up for the photos and Jonathan Tallon (1985) said the Grace before the reception meal. Others joining the celebrations included Tom & Rachelle Sanderson (née Ducker, 1986), Karen & Simon Stocks (1986), Paul Marshall & Cath Jenson (1987), Nick & Jenny Cole (née Rhodes, 1987), Mark & Jo Lillicrap (1986, and née Daley 1987) and Selwyn Richards (1985), plus several from Tracy's course and time at Student Community Action.



Helen Chiarenza (née Dixon, 1996) and Emiliano proudly announce the arrival of Sara May (left) on May 15th 2008. Sara was born near Venice in Italy. She was 3.3kg and 54cm.

Joo Ching Chua (2002), currently reearching her PhD at Robinson, and **Peter Lloyd (2002)** were married at the Church of St Andrew the Great, Cambridge.

Paul Corthorn (1995) and Katherine Borthwick (2000), pictured right, were married by the Revd Dr Maggi Dawn in the College Chapel on 22 June 2007. The ceremony was followed by a very enjoyable reception in the College and its gardens.





James Hartley (1992) and **Sarah Davis** (1996) (left) were married in Cambridge on 3 November 2007 with the help of their daughter, Tanith, who was an adorable bridesmaid. Many friends and family shared the day with them with several old Robinsonians amongst the guests.

Sarah MacDonald (1992, right) is having a busy year: as well as her normal job as Director of Music in Chapel at Selwyn College, she is spending 2008 as Acting Director of the Girls' Choir at Ely Cathedral. The Girls sing Evensong in the cathedral twice a week (conveniently on non-Selwyn Evensong days), and they rehearse every morning at 8:00am, so Sarah is "enjoying" the life of a commuter.



Ruth (Manning) 1998) and Miles Norris (left) married at Keble College, Oxford, on 29th March, 2008. We were joined by many Robinsonians, including Thea Sherer (née Lee, 1998) who was bridesmaid and Josh Sherer (1998) who gave a reading during their service.

Lyndsay Markham (1983 and an Alumni Representative) was delighted to announce the birth of her daughter, Tamsen, on Sunday 30 December 2007.



Milt Mavrakakis (1998) has released an album called "Testify" with the band Harambe. Tracks from the album can be bought on Itunes. Milt also completed his PhD at the London School of Economics.



Neil Mullarkey (1980, left) has a spoof business/self-help book out in November, published by Profile. It is called *DON'T BE NEEDY BE SUCCEEDY: The A to Zee of Motivity* and is published under his nom de plume L. VAUGHAN SPENCER.

Matt Nouch (2002) and Kleberson Ricardo Raymundo de Souza (right) entered into a Civil Partnership in January 2008. Michael Smith (2002) attended the ceremony along with other friends from Matt's time at Cambridge. Matt continues his studies at Cardiff, commuting between there and their home in Bournemouth.



Mark Plane, 2001, (left) , married Elizabeth Plane (née Galloway) on Sat 8th September 2007 in St Mary's Church, Amersham. They enjoyed a honeymoon in Hawaii and San Francisco. Elizabeth is an alumna of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.



Daniel Pollard (1997) married **Caroline Furness** (1998) (left) on 14 June 2008 at Minsteracres in Northumberland. The best man was Robinsonian Daniel Workman (1997). Also in attendance were Robinsonians Caroline Symonds (1998), Andrea Pasquill (1998), Catharine Baker (1998), Chris Baker (1997), Michael Colgan (1992), Wendy Colgan (1991), Kelly Markham (1998), Andrew Kidd (1997), Camilla Kidd (1998) and Jeni King (1999).

Sam Sanders-Hewett (1999, right) married Fiona Womack (Downing 2000) on April 19th this year at Maidwell Church, Northamptonshire. Several of Sam's fellow college engineers were in attendance as ushers (and one as best man, Martin Paton), and some of Fi's Downing colleagues also attended. They honeymooned in Mauritius and are now back into working life at home in Ely.

Richard Sargeant (1999), has moved from HM Treasury to Google to lead their UK Public Policy team.



Hamel Shah (1994, pictured left) recently married an American girl, Meredith de Paolo in Cape May, New Jersey.

A number of Robinsonians were in attendance at the wedding From top left to bottom right: Pindi Ganda (1994), Tom Lambert (1994), William Santer (1994), Rishi Shah (1994), Ashok Gupta (1994) Lydia Heilmann (née Breen, 1995) , Hamel Shah (1994).

Marcus Tomalin (1991) is a Fellow and Tutor of Downing College. In the past few years he has published numerous articles and monographs, including "Linguistics and the Formal Sciences" (CUP 2006) and "Romanticism and Linguistic Theory" (Palgrave Macmillan 2008). He continues to play the lute and sing tenor.

Joseph Witiiti (1991) and his wife Rumbidzai now have 3 beautiful kids, a boy named Takundanashe who is 14 years old, a girl named Ruvimbo aged 9 years and a boy aged 15 months. Rumbidzai is in the teaching profession, and Joseph is in the human resource development heading a big institution which is tasked with developing and training public sector personnel. Joseph was at Robinson in 1991-1992 doing a diploma in Development Studies, and wishes to greet fellow Robinsonians of that time particularly those who were staying in Thorneycreek cottage. He may be contacted on wititijoseph@yahoo.co.uk.

Sue Woan (1993) is now Principal of the Norwich Diocesan Ministry Course and Vice-Principal of the Eastern Region Ministry Course (and spends a large part of her time in travelling all over the East of England as a result!) She has also just successfully completed her PhD (part-time) through the University of Exeter. The title of her thesis is: "The Use of the Old Testament in 1 Peter with especial focus on the use of Psalm 34". Sue travelled to Exeter to graduate in July.

News from the Fellowship

Dr Christos Markides (2005-2008; Engineering Fellow and Director of Studies, pictured right), is leaving Robinson College this September. He will be moving to the Department of Chemical Engineering and Chemical Technology at Imperial College London, where he will be taking up the RCUK-Foster Wheeler Fellowship and Lectureship in Clean Energy Processes. He wishes to express his gratitude toward the Warden and Fellows of the College for the wonderful time he has had here, and assures his friends and colleagues that he will be returning to visit them from time to time.



Dr Paul Smith (Fellow 2000-2005) and Dr Aileen Fyfe are delighted to announce the birth of Lucy Katherine Fyfe Smith, born on 24 March 2008 weighing 2.86kg. With her parents living in Ireland, but family and friends in the UK, she's already quite the little traveller.

Another two of **Sandra Smith's** translations are coming out on 2 October - both by Irène Némirovsky - one is called *All our Worldly Goods* and is virtually a prequel to *Suite française* and the other is called *The Courilof Affair*.

Sandra will be signing books in Heffers in Cambridge on Monday, October 27th, 2008 at 6.30pm. Tickets are free, but must be reserved in advance by calling Heffers on 01223 568568.

Dr Weiss's latest book is another translation from the Anglo-Norman of two early and popular romances, *Boeve de Haumtone* and *Gui de Warewic*. Her first book, *The Birth of Romance* will be reissued later this year.



Lyndsay and Anne at their retirement party.

Staff News

There has been quite a lot of change amongst the College Staff in the last few months. In June, **Lyndsay MacDonald**, the Finance Bursar's Secretary, and **Anne Bowsher**, the Domestic Bursar's Secretary both retired. They are succeeded by Judith Rickards, who is the Bursars' Assistant.

Thomas Leng, who has been the College's IT Manager for nearly two years left Robinson in July to become an IT Manager at Nature Magazine. Bridget Kenyon succeeded Tom on September 1st 2008.

Clare Jarmy, who is known to many readers as the Alumni Relations and Events Officer in Robinson's Development Office for nearly two years, is returning to her College, St Catharine's, to do a PGCE in Secondary Religious Education, with a view to being a teacher in the future. Clare has overseen the organisation of events for alumni, students and their families and guests with efficiency and cheerfulness and has been responsible for the recent updating of Bin Brook, which has drawn many approving comments. We wish her all the best in her new career.

Peter Baker-Smith, who worked in Robinson's Kitchen for 28 years took early retirement in June.

The College wishes Peter, Lyndsay, Anne, Tom and Clare all the best for the future.



Peter Baker-Smith with Jo Truszczynska

Forthcoming Events

November

2nd Commemoration of Benefactors Service and tea.
By invitation.

December

6th 11:30am: Christmas Concert given by Robinson musicians in the Chapel.
Mince pies and hot drinks will be served from 11am, and the concert will begin at 11:30am.

1:00pm: Freshers' Parents' Lunch. Parents and guardians of Robinson undergraduates who matriculated this year are invited to join the Warden and Fellowship for lunch in the Hall.

January 2009

10th 1:00pm: Graduands' Parents' Lunch. Parents and guardians of those graduating from Robinson this year are invited to join the Warden and Fellowship for lunch in the Hall.

February

TBC Law Dinner. Open to all alumni who read Law, and those who now work in the field. Further details will be available in due course from the Development Office.

March

5th Champagne Concert, given by Robinson musicians. During the interval, champagne and canapés are served in the Hall.

21st Pegasus Society AGM and Dinner. Members of the Pegasus Society are invited to return to College for the Society's Annual General Meeting and Dinner.

September

26th-27th Reunion Weekend for those who matriculated in 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994 and 1999.