EVENTS & REUNIONS FOR 2009

Lent Full Term ends ............................................. Friday 13 March
Telephone Campaign begins ................................ Saturday 14 March
MA\'s Dinner ....................................................... Friday 20 March
Caius Club Dinner ............................................... Saturday 28 March
Easter Full Term begins ........................................ Tuesday 21 April
Stephen Hawking Circle Dinner ............................. Saturday 9 May
Easter Full Term ends ............................................ Friday 12 June
May Week Party for Benefactors ......................... Saturday 13 June
Caius Club Bumps Event ...................................... Saturday 13 June
Caius Medical Association Meeting & Dinner .......... Saturday 20 June
Graduation Tea .................................................... Thursday 25 June
Annual Gathering (up to & including 1957) ........... Tuesday 30 June
Admissions Open Days ......................................... Thursday 2 & Friday 3 July
800th Anniversary London Concert ....................... Wednesday 22 July
1969 Ruby Reunion Dinner ................................... Sunday 13 September
Annual Gathering (1996 & 1997) ......................... Saturday 26 September
Michaelmas Full term begins ............................... Tuesday 6 October
Please Note New Date:
Commemoration of Benefactors Lecture .................. Sunday 22 November
Commemoration of Benefactors Service .................. Sunday 22 November
Commemoration Feast ......................................... Sunday 22 November
First Christmas Carol Service (6pm) .................... Wednesday 2 December
Second Christmas Carol Service (4.30pm) ............. Thursday 3 December
Michaelmas Full Term ends .................................. Friday 4 December
Caius Foundation Directors\' Meeting .................... Friday 4 December
New York Reception ............................................ Friday 4 December
Patrons of the Caius Foundation Dinner ................ Friday 4 December

Once a Caian...
Caius to China
Building Bridges

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From the Director of Development

This is a rather special issue of Once a Caian... As Cambridge University celebrates its 800th Anniversary, Caius is celebrating its close links with China.

Our current Master served as British Ambassador in Beijing (p.2). We have a Chinese President (p.10), two other Chinese Fellows, Professor Kay-Tee Khaw (1991) and Dr Liana Chua (2007), and many Chinese undergraduates and postgraduates. We now have our first Chinese-American Nobel Laureate (and the first in my own subject, Chemistry), Professor Roger Tsien (1977), who came back to College (p.14) to accept an Honorary Fellowship and to give a highly entertaining lecture on his work and his time as a Research Fellow at Caius.

Neil McKendrick (1958) writes with customary eloquence (p.6) on the life and legacy of Joseph Needham (1918), and his monumental study of science and civilisation in China. As Master, Neil was fond of telling Caiian after-dinner gatherings that the College had won as many Nobel Prizes as Russia. For the benefit of anyone who has lost count, the list reads:

- Charles Sherrington (1880) Medicine 1932
- James Chadwick (1919) Physics 1935
- Howard Florey (1924) Medicine 1945
- Max Born (1908) Physics 1954
- Francis Crick (1949) Medicine 1962
- Anthony Hewish (1942) Physics 1974
- Milton Friedman (1953) Economics 1976
- Nevill Mott (1930) Physics 1977

At a less rarefied level of College life, global financial difficulties mean that fundraising is ever more vital to the College’s continuing success. Last year’s Telephone Campaign raised over half a million pounds, a record for any Oxbridge College: Caiians responded with unprecedented generosity to the new Caius Fund, which provides money for much-needed, immediate expenditure (p.28).

We are immensely grateful to those who have set up regular gifts over 4, 7 or 10 years and we hope that many more Caiians will do so in 2009. Every donation really does make a difference. We are also grateful to the many Caiians who have told us they plan to remember the College in their wills. The fabric of Caius is woven from legacies and built on bequests, from the founding gifts of Gonville and Bateman in the fourteenth century to the legacies of Lord Bauer and Wilfrid Holland in recent years.

Many of you will already know that the founding editor of Once a Caian... Mick Le Moignan (2004), is leaving Caius to take up an appointment at the University of Sydney. Mick lived in Sydney for 14 years and had always planned to move back there. He will be much missed by his many friends and colleagues at Caius and we wish him well in this new venture.

Dr Anne Lyon (2001)
Fellow

"A gift to Gonville & Caius College counts towards the Cambridge 800th Anniversary Campaign"
Crossing the bridge

The bridge that took me into mainland China for the first time was a modest, rickety structure spanning a little river between Hong Kong and Guangdong Province. It was a sunny afternoon in May 1970, and I was a young diplomat interrupting my studies in Mandarin Chinese at Hong Kong University to fill a temporary gap in the small British Office in Peking.

I got off the train on the Hong Kong side and struggled with my suitcase across the bridge to the station and immigration post on the other side. Around the station were paddock fields, and a small group of peasant women were planting out the rice shoots in shallow water. The only other sound was tinny music – a revolutionary opera – coming from a loudspeaker in a village a little way away.

That scene has remained in my mind as a picture of the China I first knew. The country was poor, largely rural, revolutionary and isolated. China had turned in on itself, blocking all contacts except with the Inner Mongolian and Manchurian provinces, Tibet, and the Soviet Union. In 1970 I was the only person on the train a day to the border: in fact my two fellow passengers and I were the only three people entering the country that day.

Decline and revival

Within my working lifetime I have witnessed China’s explosion on to the world stage. Of course China can claim a long history and a glorious civilisation. As recently as the seventeenth century it possessed the largest economy in the world, and arguably the most sophisticated culture. All the other peoples in contact with it were seen as inferior, as “barbarians” fit only to pay tribute.

Then something went wrong. Its culture and technology stagnated; it was subject to invasion, occupation and humiliation by foreign powers; and even after it regained its independence in 1949 it was plunged by Mao Zedong into one disastrous political experiment after another.

After 1978 and Deng Xiaoping’s consolidation of power, however, that long process of decline and demoralisation was reversed. We have since seen one of the great economic achievements in history: a country that started with a per capita income of less than one-fifth of the world average has reached the position of being the world’s second largest economy.

The pace of China’s engagement with the outside world has been no less astonishing. The Communist regime that took control in 1949 had to struggle for international recognition, in part because it was seen externally as a dangerous exporter of revolution. Even after it was admitted into the United Nations in 1971 it remained wary of external entanglements. Again 1978 was the watershed year – “reform” was to be accompanied by “opening”.

In economic terms that has meant progressively opening the economy to market forces, and to investment by foreign companies. The outcome has been a curious hybrid known as “socialism with Chinese characteristics”, where a slimmed-down, toned-up state sector coexists with a flourishing private and foreign-invested sector.

Foreign investment on a huge scale has brought Western capital and management techniques into productive partnership with China’s innate industry and entrepreneurship.

So we have all seen how manufacturing for the multinationals has shifted to China, attracted by low costs and cheap, disciplined labour. China has become “the workshop of the world”, from a vantage-point in the Pearl River Delta I have seen for myself large parts of the total global production of microwaves, sports shoes, Christmas decorations and many other commodities in full swing.

At the same time society has been opened to foreign influences, albeit while remaining under the strict oversight and control of the Communist Party. Western culture, from Hollywood movies to street fashion to the National Basketball Association, has been enthusiastically embraced. Chinese tourists have fanned out across the globe. China has more internet users than any other country, even though Big Brother reads their emails, listens in to their chat-rooms and filters their access to foreign websites.

In foreign policy China is engaged as never before. It has learnt the benefits, in an interdependent world, of joining the clubs – the World Trade Organisation, the G20 of advanced economies, the group working to eliminate North Korea’s dangerous nuclear potential. Chinese leaders travel widely to extend their influence, open markets and secure sources of raw materials. They understand that global problems – climate change, environmental degradation, energy shortages, all afflicting China on a huge scale – need global solutions.

In driving so successfully for growth, China’s leaders have exploited some formidable national advantages. There is a tradition of massive and complex civic works – think of the Terracotta Army, ancient irrigation projects, or the Great Wall. Add to this the ability of a centralised, authoritarian state to focus national energies on a single objective, unhampered by political opposition, planning inquiries or carping in the media. The Beijing Olympics, successfully executed with no expense spared, was just the latest achievement in this absolutist tradition.

Fragile achievements

China has moved so fast that its rise has provoked anxious questioning. Where will it stop? For the rest of us is it a threat or an opportunity?

Its achievements have been great, but they are fragile. I have taken part in many hours of discussion with China’s current leaders, and I have seen how burdened, almost oppressed, they feel by the sheer scale of their task. They like to refer to China’s population of 1.3 billion in mathematical terms: its achievements – say an increase in absolute GDP – have to be divided by 1.3 billion to give a still modest per capita figure, while its problems need to be multiplied by the same factor.

And when we turn to those problems...
it is hard to know where to start. There is the growth in inequality. In economic terms China’s cities have forged ahead of the surrounding countryside, and its eastern seaboard ahead of the western hinterland. From relative equality in poverty China’s population has become one of the most unequal in the world – more so even than the United States. There are problems with the quality of governance. Chinese leaders speak openly of their fear that corruption, if it is unchecked, could bring down the Party. They are uncomfortably aware of the potential for social unrest, often sparked by frustration at maladministration and corruption in local government. To allay their fears they have embarked on a huge exercise to improve governance, unwilling to recognize that some of the problems could lie in the totalitarian system itself, with its absence of checks and balances.

There is the devastation that the dash for economic growth has caused to China’s environment. Air pollution and water pollution are among the worst in the world. Desertification and deforestation threaten the countryside, as does uncontrolled urbanisation. It will be hugely difficult and expensive to reverse this damage. It will be no less so to deal with some of the problems endemic to China’s situation – restricted agricultural land relative to population, a shortage of water in Northern China, a huge population which despite draconian controls is continuing to grow and age as a result of increased life expectancy.

Many times I have heard China’s leaders argue eloquently that their overriding priority has to be to tackle these vast and pressing domestic issues: given this ... international environment to help them, and their engagement with the international community has that as its aim.

Once a Caian... Always a Caian

...Always a Caian

The current global economic crisis will test China’s leaders to the utmost. They are entitled to criticise profligate economic policies in the West. Nonetheless they are not immune from the effects, and they are watching with alarm as their export industries are hit by falling world demand, causing factories to close, job markets to contract and unemployed immigrant labourers to flood back to the country villages from which they came. It is vital for the health of the world economy as a whole that China should continue to be an engine of global growth.

Threat or opportunity? Emphatically an opportunity. But China is simply too big and too proud to be an easy partner. It is determined to protect its own sovereignty, using every weapon at its disposal. To allay their fears they have embarked on a huge exercise to improve governance, unwilling to recognize that some of the problems could lie in the totalitarian system itself, with its absence of checks and balances.

The bridges connecting China with the outside world have thus been rebuilt and strengthened to carry huge two-way traffic of every sort. The area of education is another where contacts have proliferated. Cambridge’s involvement with China goes back over a century: the first Professor of Chinese, Sir Thomas Wade, was appointed in 1888 after a distinguished career as a diplomat (he had served, like me, as Chinese Secretary at the British Legation in Peking).

Until recently Chinese students at Cambridge were a rare and exotic species, but in the first half of the twentieth century a few did manage to leave their war-torn country and come to study. A young poet, Xu Zhimo, was at King’s College in 1921-2, and a poem of his, “On Leaving Cambridge” is known to every Chinese schoolchild. With its romantic evocation of willow leaves trailing in the river Cam it has shaped the dreams of successive generations of Chinese students. Since last year an inscribed marble boulder on the Backs, bearing lines from his poem, has become a new destination for the ever-growing crowds of Chinese tourists.

Over the past few years the trickle of Chinese students coming to study and do research at Cambridge has turned into a flood – they have now overtaken the Americans to form the largest group of overseas students at the University. In Caius we can claim to have anticipated the trend in a number of ways; most importantly, of course, through the work of Joseph Needham, a predecessor of mine as Master. The West owes to Needham the first recognition of the extent to which its scientific and technological discoveries had been anticipated in China, often by hundreds of years. It has him to thank too for the first attempt to address the so-called “Needham Question” about China’s subsequent pause in development – why, despite its rich scientific past, did China miss out on the Industrial Revolution?

Needham brought to the College research assistants and visiting scholars from China who collaborated with him on his monumental work. Others have come on their own initiative – the current President of the College, Professor Yao Liang, as well as young researchers and undergraduates who find in the College a stimulating and welcoming environment. Further articles in this issue tell some of their stories.

After thirty years of China’s reform and opening, Cambridge University is engaged with China in innumerable ways. It oversees collaboration between faculties and departments, offers training for senior officials and business executives and engages in student exchanges. I am delighted to help the Vice-Chancellor with some of the official visitors that come her way: so again, as in Needham’s time, Chinese delegations troop through the Old Courts and Chinese visitors are welcomed to dine on High Table. The visit of Premier Wen Jiabao to Cambridge in February – undertaken despite snowy weather – took these exchanges to the highest level. It would be wounding to remember it solely for the discourteous act of a single protestor who interrupted his lecture by throwing a shoe; that aside, the lasting impression the Premier left was one of evident respect for Cambridge’s achievements and a strong endorsement of the University’s thriving partnerships in China.

There is no doubt that China will continue to play a crucial role in the world of the twenty-first century – in education, culture and science just as much as in global politics and economic management. The partnership that Cambridge has formed with the Chinese government and Chinese partner universities is an immensely promising one, and one that coincides with an important national interest. And as before there is a part for Caius to play as a college with a special sympathy for China and a history of fruitful contacts.

Xu Zhimo’s poem, which is known to every Chinese schoolchild, reflects the deep affection that many Chinese academics feel for Cambridge. An English translation may be found on page 37.
n 1971 I invited Joseph and Dophi Needham and Lu Gwei-Djen to dine with me at home to inspect a portrait drawing of Joseph by Michael Ayton. The artist had recently offered it to me when the College Council declined to accept it. Following the dictum that all pictures are enhanced by a touch of red, I asked Joseph if he would be willing to embellish it with some of his favourite Chinese seals. Joseph brought his collection of seals, tried out sixteen for me to choose from and then added the three I liked best to the portrait. He explained that the common theme to his collection of seals was the letter “J” and the use of the metaphor of the bridge between apparently opposing sides – so there were seals representing Joseph the bridge between Arts and Science, Joseph the bridge between East and West, Joseph the bridge between Capitalism and Communnism, Joseph the bridge between Christianity and Taoism. Revealingly, he explained that his inspiration to act as such a bridge was his experience as an only child living with, and trying to keep the peace between, his warring parents. His father, a successful Harley Street consultant, and his mother, a red-haired Irish writer of popular songs like “Revealingly, he explained that his inspiration to act as such a bridge was his experience as an only child living with, and trying to keep the peace between, his warring parents. His father, a successful Harley Street consultant, and his mother, a red-haired Irish writer of popular songs like “It was, of course, his huge multi-volume treatise on Science and Civilization in China which largely inspired such outstanding tributes, but it is important to realise that there was a Needham B.C. – a Needham before China.

During his lifetime Joseph Needham was the very reverse of a celebrity. Judged in terms of name recognition he would have scored very modestly indeed, even amongst the educated elite. When he died, many among the chattering classes of London expressed amazement that they had remained wholly ignorant of this learned scholar who, they were now realising, was of such towering, almost unrivalled stature. Auberon Waugh wrote an article “in praise of death” in The Daily Telegraph to admit that “before Joseph Needham, the Cambridge don and Morris dancer, died, at the age of 94 this week, I am ashamed to admit that I had never heard of him. Nor had anyone else. I asked. Perhaps he was known only in donnish and Morris dancing circles, especially in Cambridge.” This was an absurd overstatement but it was not an atypical response to his death. The BBC initially reacted in not dissimilar fashion.

Waugh went on to argue that, by dying, Joseph Needham had shown “what a useful instrument the death of a person can be”. His second major work had been published in his late thirties, a reviewer at Harvard, who of course could know nothing of what was still to come, declared that this work, none of which would have heard of him. Now all our lives are enriched.”

The causes of this dramatic ascent to fame and recognition were his obituaries. They were really quite remarkable – so remarkable that a reassessment of his importance was irresistible. The Economist compared him as an archaeologist with Gibbon. The New York Times compared the significance of his work with that of Darwin – as well as that of Gibbon. The Daily Telegraph and The Independent compared him as a thinker (to Needham’s advantage) with Erasmus. Indeed The Independent went further by claiming that he had produced “the greatest work of scholarship by one person since Aristotle.” In the company of such eulogies, the Guardian seemed to be almost restrained in judging him to be simply “one of the greatest Englishmen” of the twentieth century.

Other judgements called him “the Erasmus of the 20th century” and went on to say that with the passage of time “he will be recognised as a greater figure than the scholar from Rotterdam”. Perhaps the most remarkable tribute was the one that included the sentence “With the death of Dr Needham the world of learning has lost one of the greatest scholars of this or any country, of this or any century”. It was, of course, his huge multi-volume treatise on Science and Civilization in China which largely inspired such outstanding tributes, but it is important to realise that there was a Needham B.C. – a Needham before China.

We must not overlook that he had been a brilliant scientist before he became an historian of such highly acclaimed achievements. As a biochemist he published early and prolifically. He was elected into a Fellowship at Caius at the age of 23. He published his first book before he was 25. He published a three-volume magnum opus on Biochemistry and Morphogenesis, “will go down in the annals of science as Joseph Needham’s magnum opus, destined to take its place as one of the most truly epoch-making books in biology since Charles Darwin.” His work as an epidemiologist was later held by some to have anticipated the discovery of DNA by two decades.

Such achievements as a biochemist make his future work as an historian of China all the more remarkable. In the middle of his scientific career, under the influence of Lu Gwei-Djen, he suddenly began his great love affair with the language and history and science and civilization of China. He already knew seven European languages but now he taught himself to read Chinese and taught himself to write it. He was determined to understand its scientific and technological past. So began a study of breathtaking scope and ambition. It now amounts to twenty-four massive volumes. It has succeeded in revolutionizing our assessment of China’s scientific achievements – and, in consequence, has dramatically changed our attitude to the achievements of Western science.

“During his time at Caius, Francis Bacon famously declared that nothing had changed the world more profoundly than Western Europe’s three great inventions – gunpowder, printing and the compass – he and his contemporaries had no idea that all three of these great breakthroughs had been invented and successfully employed many centuries before in China. Needham was to discover far more than this. Sent by the British Government on a diplomatic mission to China in 1943 to help to sustain the universities of China from the occupying Japanese forces, he used his time to amass an astonishing store of research materials. They were to prove the basis of the rest of his life’s work. From these original...
sources, he managed, in Simon Winchester’s recent judgement, “almost overnight and almost single-handedly” to replace “the dismissive ignorance with which China had long been viewed” with “a sense of respect, acquaintance and awe”.

The change in attitude was nothing like so dramatic or so quick. Not everyone accepted uncritically Needham’s initial claims. But, as the successive volumes issued from the press, the weight of evidence (and the range, depth and antiquity of the inventiveness it revealed) gradually assumed a magisterial authority that could not lightly be dismissed.

The Chinese had got there first not only in inventing gunpowder, printing and the compass, but had also done so with nearly three hundred other useful inventions. They included the abacus, asbestos, the belt drive, blast furnaces, ball bearings, callipers, cast iron, the chain drive, the crossbow, flamethrowers, gears, wheels, the harness, lacquer, extended ladders, leeches and centre boards, porcelain, porcelain flight, rotary fans, seawalls, seismographs, silk spinning, smallpox inoculation, the spindle wheel, steroids, the stirrup, tea, tillhammers, and many, many more. Chinese inventiveness also encompassed many light-hearted ideas – chess, umbrellas, wheelbarrows, toilet paper, wallpaper, kites, fireworks, fishing reels, and the weather vane – but the inventions that must have especially lifted Joseph Needham’s spirits were those relating to bridges: the segmental arched bridge, the releasable bridge and the iron-chain suspension bridge. As Needham wrote of these Chinese inventions “The mere fact of seeing them listed brings home to one the astonishing inventiveness of the Chinese people”. It was by then difficult to disagree.

Some had thought it. Voltaire had said it (“Four thousand years ago, when we couldn’t even read, the Chinese knew all the absolutely useful things we boast of today”). Now Needham had proved it. With an astonishing array of detailed scholarship he had systematically charted, dated and evidenced the amazing achievements of Chinese science.

It was no longer simply collegiate pride (“Four thousand years ago, when we couldn’t even read, the Chinese knew all the absolutely useful things we boast of today”) that was driving the change in attitude. It was the knowledge that they had been involved in the production of a majestic work of pioneering scholarship. They had helped to produce one of the scholarly glories of the twentieth century.

Not everyone climbed on to the bandwagon. Astonishingly, Needham was never offered a professorship in Cambridge – neither the Faculty of History nor the Faculty of Oriental Studies ever proposed him for a personal chair. Remarkably, he had to wait until he was in his seventies to get his FBA. Even more remarkably, he was offered no national honours until he was 90. He could not resist saying “And about time too” when he went to Buckingham Palace to collect his CH or what he called his “failed OM”. He should have been appointed to the Order of Merit – I have known several very worthy historians who were awarded that supreme honour who were not remotely as distinguished as Needham.

However, considering how he was virtually shunned at one time in his own country, was at times deeply unpopular in the Department of Biochemistry, was denied admission to the United States for many years and was held in great suspicion by much of the British Establishment, he ended his life perfectly adequately garnished with honours. His College made him first President and then Master, his University gave him an Honorary Degree, which is itself of course have received the Order of Merit – I have known several very worthy historians who were awarded that supreme honour who were not remotely as distinguished as Needham.

It is an poignant footnote to the world of science since Queen Victoria and Prince Albert held honorary versions of that signal honour. It has to be admitted that Needham was not the saintly character that some of his admirers liked to think. Faced with a man who had published over 100 books, who was responsible for putting the 5 for Science into UNESCO, whose scholarship was so original and so vast, it is understandable that many academics wished to cast him as an unblemished hero. Indeed it was difficult not to be so bowled over by his achievements, so humbled by his stamina, so astonished by his photographic memory, so amazed by the range of his gifts and so dazzled by his intellectual accomplishments that one was blinded to his many flaws. But flaws there certainly were.

When he died, many of the yawning divisions that Joseph Needham had hoped to bridge were still very far from being harmoniously healed. He could reasonably claim, however, to have made a major contribution to a better mutual understanding between some of them. His work had already done much to banish centuries of Western ignorance about Chinese science and technology. As the knowledge of his work seeped ever further out into the educated world it promised to build more of the bridges of reciprocal comprehension he worked so hard to achieve.

And the Needham legacy lives on. In K2, Caius Court, the room now occupied by Stephen Hawking (1965) there is a pleasing tribute to the immortality of Joseph’s influence and the survival of his work. On the ancient pavelling there is an elegant four-character Chinese aphorism. It can be translated as “The Man departs – there remains his Shadow”.

Needham’s shadow – his intellectual legacy – will certainly survive in Caius and in Cambridge. Let us hope that it will survive in the world at large and will help to heal some of the divisions that still plague our lives. It would be an apt posthumous exercise in the bridge building to which Needham so ardently aspired.

As the Chinese economy dramatically expands and China moves forward to its seemingly inevitable position as the world’s greatest power, the reputation of Needham and of his ideas will still plague our lives. It would be an apt posthumous exercise in the bridge building to which Needham so ardently aspired.

Like many great men he had what his friends regarded as forgivable petticoadillos and his enemies called unforgivable character flaws. It cannot be denied that Joseph made some major errors of judgement and provided his enemies with ample ammunition with which to attack him, but this is not the place to rehearse that evidence or to examine his many faults.

It has to be admitted that Needham was not the saintly character that some of his admirers liked to think. Faced with a man who had published over 100 books, who was responsible for putting the 5 for Science into UNESCO, whose scholarship was so original and so vast, it is understandable that many academics wished to cast him as an unblemished hero. Indeed it was difficult not to be so bowled over by his achievements, so humbled by his stamina, so astonished by his photographic memory, so amazed by the range of his gifts and so dazzled by his intellectual accomplishments that one was blinded to his many flaws. But flaws there certainly were.
Barack Obama’s rise from poverty and obscurity to the Presidency of the United States is encouraging evidence that talent and tenacity can make anything possible. The story of our own President’s journey from equally humble origins to a position of great academic eminence is almost as remarkable.

Professor Yao Liang (1963) was born at Palembang in Sumatra on 23 September 1940, the fourth and youngest child of a Singapore-born Chinese father and an Indonesia-born Chinese mother. Both were originally teachers but Mr father then worked at the Dutch petroleum refinery at Palembang and rose to become Chief Cashier.

When the Japanese invaded Sumatra in 1943, the Liangs had to escape to Java to avoid internment and almost certain death. On the instruction of the Dutch owners, Yao’s father and others had tried to blow up the refinery, but having never handled explosives, caused only minor damage. The job was eventually completed by another Caian, David Foster (1938), who led the Fleet Air Arm’s bombing raid in 1944 (See Once a Caian… Issue 3, page 12.)

After the War, Yao attended primary school in Jakarta but preferred play to study, regularly failed exams, came bottom of the class and twice had to change schools to avoid being kept in the year below! But in his final year, he met the first of the “protectors” with whom he feels his life has been blessed. Mr Li taught mathematics and chemistry and miraculously inspired in young Yao a liking for “the discipline of thought that is the basis of all sciences”. Mr Li also taught him at Ba Zhong secondary school, where Yao confounded his earlier academic record by coming top of the class for six years in a row!

Ba Zhong was a “leftist” school: successful pupils were expected to go to Communist China, where higher education was free, and to contribute to the development of the motherland. Yao’s sisters and brother were in China already, but he saw signs of struggle, imperfect leaders and cracks in the system and wondered about going elsewhere to study. America was not an option, being far too expensive and disliked for its culture and imperialism. “Materialism was a dirty word and we thought there was no spirit in American life.”

An older school friend was studying at Battersea College, London and suggested coming to England. Yao had a British passport, thanks to his Singaporean father, and his parents encouraged him to go: “Although they hadn’t quite figured out how to find the money, they promised to support me!”

In England, in September 1958, his friend introduced him to a former student at the Portsmouth College of Arts and Technology, who had broken the College record by passing four Science “A” levels with Distinction. Yao’s new friend took him there, the next day, to meet the Head of Physics. Assuming that every educated person could read Chinese, Yao handed over his school papers. The Head of Physics scanned them thoughtfully, then asked his companion: “Is he as good as you?” – “Oh, yes!” came the answer – so Yao was in!

At this stage, he could not understand the lectures, answer questions or write up reports of experiments. “The saving grace was that I had a good grounding from my Indonesian school and I’d brought my Chinese text-books. I taught myself English by translating them!”

Two young teachers had a particular impact on him and protected him, Mr Likey in Maths and Harry Howarth in Physics. Yao was delighted last year to receive a letter from Mr Howarth’s widow, Gill, who had spotted his name in a copy of Once a Caian… that she had been lent by her Caian brother-in-law, Peter Joseph Bulman (1955). In due course, Yao completed his “A” and “S” levels with results that vindicated the promise his friend made on his behalf two years earlier and won a place at Imperial College, London, to read Physics. Yao said “Physics examiners must be generous people: they give students like me the benefit of the doubt when they don’t quite understand what was written in the script.”

At ICL, the pattern was repeated: “I was just not good enough at English to write long reports.” By the third year, it was obvious that he should do Theoretical Physics, since there would be no experiments to write up, and he justified his selection by getting a First. He was delighted to be offered a PhD place at Manchester and went to enrol, but a letter from Philip Bowden (1926), then Director of the Physics and Chemistry of Solids at the Cavendish, changed everything. When Yao told his supervisor-to-be in Manchester that he had been invited to visit the world’s top Physics Department in Cambridge, he said “I know them: you’re not coming back!” And so it turned out. Yao remembers Philip Bowden as “a very slick operator – and very authoritative.” He introduced Yao to...
Always a Caian

several distinguished scientists at the Cavendish, wined and dined him at the Arts Theatre and when Yao mentioned his PhD place at Manchester, simply sat him down. “Dear Dr Bowden, I’m very pleased to accept your offer.” Now write your name. That’s fine.” Yao said. “I thought it was a dictation, a way of testing my English. But then he put his arm round my shoulders and showed me to the door, saying ‘Now you need a College!’” Bowden directed him to “N” staircase, Tree Court, to see Freddie Stopp (1958), the Senior Tutor, then phoned ahead to make sure Stopp would accept this reluctant Caian. After the formalities, Freddie looked out of the window and pointed to K1: “That’s where Dr Needham works.” “Who’s he?” enquired Yao.

Installed at the Cavendish in October 1963, Yao found Caius a very strange place. “I was amazed at how friendly people were and how willing to help. The friendliness gave me the confidence to reach out to people. Hostel life had been very lonely and I had my mind on my work. At Caius, for the first time, I had to try speaking English properly, in a group of ten or twenty people in the B& Room (now the MCR) after dinner. And the most wonderful aspect was getting to know people other than physicists, people from different countries and different disciplines. I found myself invited to tea and sherry by total strangers – who turned out to be my Tutor, the Physics Fellows and the legendary Mrs Roughton (a local lady GP who tried to make sure that Chinese students were not too homesick, especially at Christmas and Chinese New Year). I had a lot to learn, quickly.”

Caius became his spiritual home and has remained so: “I’m not a man with plans, still less ambition: I’m just interested in what I’m doing, and I had everything I needed for my research right here. And those were the golden days of solid state physics, in that so much was yet to be discovered.” In 1968, a chance conversation with John Casey (1964) planted the idea of a Research Fellowship, but first Yao had to ask Abe Yoffe what it was! The Fellowship gave him the financial security he needed to marry the girl he had been courting for four years, the beautiful Choo, who provided him with three lovely daughters. Although he was still doubtful about his English, Yoffe “pushed me out into the world to give papers at international conferences. Abe could have done it much better himself, but he thought it would be good for me.” Then he began to realize I was one of the small group of people at the forefront of semi-conductor physics, trying to develop a better understanding of the materials used in hi-tech electronics, not only transistors for radios but integrated circuits eventually used in miniaturization for computers, mobile phones, digital cameras, etc.”

His areas of research changed over the next four decades: he looked into band structure (how electrons are distributed in different materials to make them a metal, a semi-conductor or an insulator). Then he tried to develop thin film secondary solid-state batteries (rechargeable batteries on chips) – an idea where the physics has succeeded, (i.e. it works in the lab), but which technology has not yet perfected for commercial use. In 1987 came the discovery of “High Temperature Superconductivity”. This meant lab work with liquid nitrogen (minus 196°C) instead of liquid helium (minus 269°C). Only a physicist would consider that a high temperature!

In 1988, Yao was appointed Director of the Inter-disciplinary Research Centre (IRC) in Superconductivity, which began ten years of much pressure and little sleep in a new building in West Cambridge where the lights were never turned off! In 1994, he was appointed to the new Chair of Superconductivity, established for one tenure only. Before he retired from the University in 2007, he headed the Shoenberg Lab for Quantum Matter at the Cavendish, (named after Dr David Shoenberg (1947)) where he turned his attention to materials that change states near the Absolute Zero, the so-called Quantum Phase Transition.

In 2005, the Fellows of Caius chose him as their President. Initially he was unsure but once elected, he threw himself into it with great energy. The President has to represent the interests of the Fellowship. It helps to have a broad knowledge of the College, Fellows, students and staff.

On top of all this, for the past four years he has been pestered constantly by unreasonable requests and demands for photographs from a bothersome Editor of Once a Caian... Yao has responded with unfailing good humour, exceptional skills with both his camera and his computer and total determination to do anything in his power to improve the magazine or benefit the College. The bothersome Editor and Caians at large owe him a considerable debt of gratitude.
Nobel Prize
for Roger Tsien (1977)

C
aians attend Annual Gatherings and other College events are usually delighted to hear that Caians have won as many Nobel Prizes as Russia. Until last year, the score stood at 11-all, but the award of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Chemistry to Professor Roger Tsien (1977) and two other scientists has once again given the College a slender lead in this rather unequal contest.

Roger Tsien spent four years at Caius as a Comyns Berkeley Research Fellow and is still enormously grateful to the College for supporting him at a crucial time and for the opportunity it gave him to work on his own initiative, after completing his first degree at Harvard and a PhD at Churchill College, Cambridge. The essence of a Research Fellowship, he says, is “being given enough rope either to hang yourself or to climb up!” He still has dreams in which he is still a Research Fellow and remembers this personal landmark nearly as vividly as the telephone call in the early hours of 8 October 2008 which brought news of his Nobel Prize. The vital difference between the two, he says, is that: “A Research Fellowship is a promise for the future rather than recognition of the past.” He believes that many of the most important scientific discoveries of the future will be found in the territory crossing between two or more different disciplines. At Cambridge, he was officially attached to the Physiological Laboratory but spent much of his time working in the Department of Chemistry, where he was supervised by Professor Jeremy Sanders:

“Roger decided that it was important to know the concentration of calcium in cells, and he had an entirely novel idea about how to measure it,” said Professor Sanders. “His idea was to design a molecule that could get into cells and change colour when it contacted calcium ions. It was a brilliant conception, combining chemistry and biology. He made the compound in Chemistry, then he went back to Physiology and proved his idea worked. Roger’s original compound and its descendants have transformed our understanding of cell biology. He has continued his work in this area, and is an inspiration to everyone who reads his work or hears him speak.”

After leaving Cambridge, Roger moved back to the USA and is now based at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute at the University of California in San Diego, where he transferred his attention from calcium to the remarkable, brightly glowing Green Fluorescent Protein, GFP.

The Nobel Prize was given to reward the discovery of GFP and a series of major developments which have led to its use as a tagging tool in molecular biology. GFP was first observed in the beautiful jellyfish, Aequorea victoria in 1962. Since then, it has become vitally important to bioscience, allowing researchers to watch processes that were previously invisible, such as nerve cell damage in the brain during Alzheimer’s or the spread of cancer cells.

There are tens of thousands of different proteins in each living organism, controlling chemical processes in minute detail. If this protein machinery malfunctions, illness and disease often follow. So it is imperative for bioscience to map the roles of different proteins in the body. Researchers can now connect GFP to other interesting but otherwise invisible proteins. The glowing marker allows them to watch the movements, positions and interactions of the tagged proteins.

The Nobel Prize was shared with two other US-based scientists: Osamu Shimomura, who first isolated GFP from the jellyfish Aequorea victoria and discovered that it glowed bright green under ultraviolet light, and Martin Chalfie, who demonstrated the value of GFP as a luminous genetic tag for various biological phenomena.

Roger Tsien contributed to the understanding of how GFP fluoresces and extended the colour palette beyond green, allowing researchers to give various proteins and cells different colours, which enables them to follow several different biological processes at the same time.

Professor Tsien came back to Caius on 16 January 2009, for the first time since he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the College last year. He gave a highly entertaining, informal lecture in a packed Bateman Auditorium, completely winning over his audience of students and Fellows with a whimsical, self-deprecating account of his own life and work, reflecting on how things have changed since he was “sprinkled with Swedish fairy-dust”!

He was the first member of his family to be born after his parents moved from China to New York. There was a strong family tradition in engineering: the best-known member was his father’s cousin, who directed the Chinese ballistic missile programme during the Cold War. Roger’s own preference had always been for chemistry: as an allergic child in New Jersey, he recalls watching his father digging weeds by hand from their lawn and says he always enjoyed spraying them with herbicide from sufficient distance to avoid their pollen!

One of his clearest memories of Caius is of his Latin Grace, “Benedic, Domine, nobis...”. He didn’t really understand what it meant, but learned it phonetically. Over the past 27 years, he has enjoyed reciting it from memory as a party trick. It was, he says, “inherited over four years of not comprehending listening while my neurons were still young enough to learn stuff like that.”

He also recalls his first after-dinner visit to the Panelled Combination Room, where, as the Junior Fellow present, it was his duty to record each glass of port, claret or dessert wine taken by himself and his colleagues. After one such evening, he made a conscious decision to say he was “going back to the Lab” after dining at High Table, whether or not he actually did so!

Roger Tsien’s visit and his lecture were hugely inspiring to all who were fortunate enough to attend. He ended with six characteristically practical pieces of advice for aspiring young scientific researchers:

1. Try to put your neuroses to constructive use.
2. Try to find projects that give you some sensual pleasure.
3. Learn to make lemonade from lemons – low – but hopefully not zero!
4. Prizes are ultimately a matter of luck, so sometimes persistence pays off.
5. Gatherings and other College events are usually delighted to hear that Caians have won as many Nobel Prizes as Russia.
6. Prizes are ultimately a matter of luck, so avoid being motivated or impressed by them!

Roger Tsien clearly still feels a great affection for Caius: “The College took a risk on me and I appreciated it!” As a tangible expression of his gratitude, he has generously decided to leave a significant legacy to Caius in his will, to help to give similar opportunities to the brightest young students of the future. So Russia had better look to its laurels!
Tien Chin Ts’ao (1946) – A Beacon of Bioscience
by Yao Liang (1963)

Tien Chin Ts’ao (Pinyin Chinese: Cao Tian Qin) came to Caius in 1946 as an affiliated student to read biochemistry. After obtaining a First class degree, he embarked on research into muscle protein structure. Upon completion of his PhD in 1951, he was elected to a Drosier Research Fellowship, the first Chinese to achieve that distinction at Caius.

He made groundbreaking contributions in several areas of biochemical and physiological research. His discovery, in Cambridge, of the light and heavy chain structure of myosin has developed into a major discipline and he was also responsible for the earliest application of fluorescence polarization technique to study muscle proteins. All this led to him being accredited as ‘Mr Tropomyosin’. His work on the muscle structure of the Han mummy (c. 100 AD), excavated in 1973 at Mawangdui, was an important contribution to bio-archaeological science.

He was also among the first to investigate plant diseases at a molecular level. This led to the discovery of a number of plant disease pathogens and the identification of new domestic plant viruses or strains of viruses. He headed a small team of research workers and started to explore techniques for insulin synthesis in 1958. They succeeded in November 1965 and the full publication of their results took place in April 1966, which was two months ahead of similar work in the West. The synthesis of bovine insulin is one of few scientific breakthroughs to come out of China during this period of extreme social and economic difficulty. Sadly, political interference and the poor communications of Chinese science with the outside world prevented its ready recognition at the time.

Tien Chin and his wife paid a heavy toll during the ‘Cultural Revolution’ between 1966 and 1976. It was bad enough for both of them to have come from long-established, intellectual families and to have held responsible positions before this tragic period. Their association with the West and with Joseph Needham added to their ‘misdeeds’, they were branded as working for foreign spies. He was subjected to physical punishment that produced permanent injuries to his neck and may have contributed to his accident and illness in 1987. His wife had an operation for breast cancer in early 1966 and also suffered from long-term neglect of her illness. It was only after the direct intervention of Premier Chou Enlai in 1972 that Tien Chin was relieved of heavy labour and given the lighter work of packing coal bricks in his own Institute. This continued to the end of the ‘Cultural Revolution’.

Tien Chin Ts’ao is a beacon of bioscience in 20th century China. Despite his untimely illness and the political turmoil he experienced, his research was a most remarkable achievement and he left the world many lasting legacies.

Lord Bauer’s Legacy

Peter Bauer (1934) came to Cambridge from Hungary with very little English and even less money and succeeded in becoming one of the most respected economists of his generation. When he died in May 2002, shortly after winning the first Milton Friedman (1953) Prize for Advancing Liberty, he left a substantial bequest to fund scholarships and bursaries for undergraduates and graduates “to whom funding would not otherwise be available”.

Bauer was conscious of his debt to those who had supported him during his early days at Caius and wanted to do the same for gifted young people in the next generation, even though he himself would never meet them. Unusually, to maximize the impact of his gift, he stipulated that both the capital and the interest should be spent within a few years of his death.

He wished the scholarships to commemorate two exceptional friends and colleagues, Richard Goode (1934), a Spitfire pilot who was killed in action in World War Two at the age of 25, and Sir Ronald Fisher (1909), the celebrated statistician and biologist, winner of the Copley Medal of the Royal Society in 1955 and President of Caius from 1956 to 1959. Lord Bauer’s executors have agreed that a bursary or scholarship awarded from the fund should also bear his own name.

Last year, the Fisher and Goode Bursaries were both awarded to Chinese students of Engineering, Andrea An (2004) and Qi Tu (2004), to help with the costs of their fourth year of study at Caius. Lord Bauer was a great admirer of Joseph Needham and his work at the Institute of Biology in Shanghai and so it was a natural choice to make these awards to Chinese students.

Both students graduated in June 2008 and their parents made the journey from China specially to attend both the College’s May Week Party and their children’s Graduation. Andrea is now working for a foreign media company in London and Qi is still at Caius, studying for a PhD. Andrea and Qi are the latest to benefit from the Caius tradition, begun by Joseph Needham (1918) and continuing to the present day, of welcoming the very brightest Chinese scholars into our community.
Science to China

Professor Stephen Hawking (1965), one of the most widely travelled members of the Caius Fellowship, is greeted whenever he goes by a pack of press photographers and journalists and, more often than not, huge audiences of wildly enthusiastic students.

In June 2006, he attended the International Conference on String Theory and gave his public lecture on The Origins of the Universe in the Great Hall of the People, which seats over 10,000. A team of Chinese wrestlers were on hand to carry his wheelchair up the steep steps of The Altar of Heaven. Earlier they had carried him into a special opening ceremony for the new Scented Garden pavilion in the Forbidden City.

Stephen’s personal assistant, Judith Croasdell, who has travelled all over the world with him, remembers the Beijing press conference. Someone asked Stephen what sort of person he was and he replied: “I am optimistic, romantic and stubborn!” Another questioner asked how his Motor Neurone Disease affected his ability to work. Stephen answered: “Although my body is very limited, my mind is free to explore the universe, back to the beginning of time – and into black holes. There are no limits to the human spirit. I still have many things I want to achieve. When we lose our dreams we die.”

Caius to Hong Kong

E very other year, the Master and the Director of Development visit Hong Kong, where an increasingly loyal and enthusiastic group of Caians who live and work in China hold regular get-togethers. Since 2004, a lunch or dinner has been hosted by the Hong Kong Caians during the visit, at which the Master presents a brief report on current activities at College.

In 2008, there was also a magnificent dinner for all Members of the Court of Benefactors in the region, kindly hosted by Oliver Bolitho (1987). In view of the popularity of this event, it is planned to make a dinner for Members of the Court of Benefactors a regular feature of future visits.

The Caians based in Hong Kong and China are well-known for their strong support for the College and 2008 was no exception. Three particularly generous donations were made, by Nick Salmond-Smith (1969), Raymond Leung (1986) and Paul Rhodes (1996), a nephew of the Senior Fellow, Michael Prichard (1955). Nick Salmond-Smith has pledged to give £300,000 to endow a College Lectureship in Philosophy in perpetuity.

The Master and the Director of Development are planning to visit Hong Kong and Beijing in the Spring of 2010. They would be delighted to hear from any Caians who would like to join in the festivities.

Poetry to China

J eremy Prynne (1962) will always be remembered at Caius for his heroic and uncompromising leadership in transforming the Cockerell Building into what is arguably the finest College Library in Cambridge. He insists that his professional staff did all the serious work!

He has now retired as Librarian and Director of Studies in English but remains a Life Fellow and continues to play an active part in College life as well as pursuing his many research interests, including his connection with China.

He has long been interested in Chinese literature and historical culture, having been encouraged originally by Laurence Picken, the great Cambridge scholar of early Chinese music. Jeremy first visited China in 1986 and since then has made many further visits, chiefly as a teacher of English and American literature. Three of these visits were six-months attachments to major universities there.

He is currently Guest Professor at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou (Canton), and the Curator of their English Poetry Studies Institute (EPSI) Library, which is used by an extremely talented sequence of doctoral candidates in this highly specialised field. He has established numerous friendships with poets and scholars in many parts of China, and a series of Chinese students and visiting scholars have spent study-time here in Cambridge under his guidance.

Of course, they were pleased and proud to be associated in this way with the College of Joseph Needham (1918), Master of Caius from 1966 to 1976 and famous all over China. These contacts have enabled Jeremy to form many insights into China’s recent social and political history, from the inside as well as from the outside, and to study their ancient and modern arts of poetry.

In this way there has been a flourishing connection, over several generations, between teaching and research in the humanities as pursued in some Chinese universities and as extended and developed here in Cambridge, the Caius Library has assisted a regular line of visitors and has earned from them the most devoted admiration.

During Jeremy’s travels in various regions of China he has acquired many works of calligraphy which have nourished his interest in this complex and inspiring tradition. Although modern China is forging ahead with rapid technical advancement, he is pleased to see that its commitment to the study of poetry and ancient text traditions remains as strong as ever.
Mike Richards is a man with a mission. Few people are as closely involved in the delivery of renewable energy resources around the world. His many activities could well deliver him a substantial fortune in the coming years (with a sizeable dividend for Caius, but more about that later). He is a Caius engineer by training, but his life had long before been shaped by his father’s forestry experience in pre-independence Tanzania.

As a child – the youngest of four – Mike could see how his father’s wattle production helped the local communities in Tanzania, by providing an income for the local farmers who grew wattle and sold the bark for processing, whilst using the wood for their family’s fuel needs. Yet for all the international praise heaped upon President Julius Nyerere for his socialist idealism, newly-independent Tanzania showed its nationalist claws by seizing foreign firms, leaving the Richards family almost penniless. They fetched up in Southend, where Mike’s father found work with Securicor.

Undeterred – if anything, inspired – by the pain of upheaval and dispossession, Mike spent his gap year after leaving the local grammar school, Southend High...
Degrees for women?
...see overleaf!

As the "placets" emerge from the Senate House, "yelping fleetly" or so, "big students" bombard them with flour bags.
Curiously, Cambridge University started opening its doors to Chinese and Chinese culture about 60 years before it fully opened them to women: the first Professor of Chinese was appointed in 1888; women were finally admitted to degrees in 1948.

Emily Davies founded Girton at Hitchin in 1869 and moved it to its present site, at a safe distance from marauding male undergraduates, in 1873. By then Henry Sidgwick had established the group of women students who were to settle at Newnham in 1875. St John’s College, owners of the land, prudently stipulated that the new College buildings should be a group of substantial cottages, so that they could easily be converted into private houses if the College failed!

On 24 February 1881 the Senate – then the governing body of the University – voted by 398 votes to 32 to admit women to university examinations. Their results were to be published separately from the men’s and their places relative to the male Wranglers in the Maths Tripos were to be stated in the lists. The women students did rather well: in 1890 Philippa Fawcett was famously recorded as performing “above the Senior Wrangler”. But they were still not allowed to proceed to degrees.

In 1896 a demonstration by Girton students demanded more recognition; it was broken up by young men and the police had to intervene. The University was... the petition presented to the Vice-Chancellor gathered 2,137 signatures against the proposal, with only 298 in favour.

The Council decided that members of the Senate should vote on the proposals on 21 May 1897. The debate raged in the weeks leading up to the vote and, since all MAs were entitled to vote, members were summoned from far and wide. The day itself began as a carnival, with placards and parades, and almost turned into a riot, in which the land in front of Caius and the Senate House was the crowded epicentre. Male undergraduates balanced precariously on rooftops and window ledges; dummies of female undergraduates (one on a bicyclist) swung from ropes between Caius and the buildings opposite. A huge banner over the Great Gate proclaimed: “GET YOU TO GIRTON, BEATRICE, GET YOU TO NEWNHAM. HERE’S NO PLACE FOR YOU MAIDS!”

When the Senior Proctor read the Grace, shouts of “non-placet!” erupted and as the MAs started voting by going through the placet or non-placet doors, it was soon clear that the placets were hopelessly outnumbered. Some of the undergraduates tried to enliven the democratic process by hurling bags of flour at those who emerged from the placet doors (and windows) in the Senate House. The final vote was recorded as 681 placet and 1,707 non-placet; the celebrations continued long into the night and women students had to wait until 1921 for the titles of degrees, until 1947-8 for degrees and until 1979 to become Caians.

The vote of 1881 was enlightened for its time; the vote of 1897 seems to us shockingly unenlightened – but we thank David Childs (1949) and his godfather, Reginald Jeffcoat (1891), for preserving the accompanying photographs, which bring this extraordinary event so vividly to life.

**Sources:**

University Politics (1994) by Gordon Johnson, also published by CUP in a new edition last year, which includes the whole text of Francis Comford’s deservedly famous 1908 satire on Cambridge politics, Microcosmographica Academica.

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A dummy of a “Girton girl” wearing bloomers and riding a man’s bicycle hangs from an upper window of the shop opposite Caius, now the CUP bookstore. Note what may be one of our photographers on a high vantage point on Great St Mary’s.

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Bacon’s Tobacco Warehouse in Petty Cury after the male undergraduates have demonstrated their superiority to a group of impressed younger boys by smashing several windows.
Proctor Peter Walker (1960), a leading expert on orthopaedic implants and biomedical engineering, is a director of the Caius Foundation who regularly organizes gatherings for the Caius community in New York City. Originally from the North East, Peter attended the Royal Grammar School in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where a young schoolboy photographer caught a dramatic shot of his triumph in the school high jump. The photographer was none other than Barry Hedley (1964), later Schuldham Plate winner, Senior Bursar and Fellow Emeritus.

At the start of the Michaelmas Term, Peter and his wife Wuliang made a special journey to Caius to meet the first holder of an Organ Scholarship that has been made possible by his latest generous gift to the College. Peter Walker Organ Scholar Matthew Fletcher (2007) put on a private organ recital of favourite pieces for Peter and Wuliang in the College Chapel, including Bach’s B-minor Prelude & Fugue, Widor’s Toccata and a piece by Sigfrid Karg Elert. Peter said he is delighted that his gift is being put to such good use, in supporting Caius music, and he and Wuliang will long remember the privilege of this very special performance.

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The First Peter Walker Organ Scholar

A future Caiian’s school record high jump is captured by another future Caiian, who would later become the College’s Senior Bursar.

The First 1956 College Lecturer

Matthew Fletcher (2007) and Peter Walker (1960) in the organ loft of the Caius Chapel.

The First 1956 College Lecturer

Matthew Fletcher (2007) and Peter Walker (1960) in the organ loft of the Caius Chapel.

The Master, Sir Christopher Hum (2005) announced at the Feast for the Commemoration of Benefactors in November 2008 the splendid news that Caians who matriculated in 1956 have achieved their target of raising £300,000 to fund a College Lectureship in perpetuity, to commemorate the golden anniversary of their time at Caius.

The College Council has appointed Dr Richard Gibbens (1980) to be the first 1956 College Lecturer. Richard read Mathematics at Caius and went on to take a PhD in 1988. For his PhD, with colleagues in Cambridge and at British Telecom, he developed the Dynamic Alternative Routing strategy now used for routing telephone calls in BT’s main trunk network.

In 1993, he was appointed to a Bye-Fellowship at Caius and a Royal Society University Research Fellowship, which continued until 2001, when he was appointed to a full Fellowship at Caius and a University Lectureship in the Cambridge University Computer Laboratory, becoming a Senior Lecturer in 2003. Unusually, his College Lectureship is in both Mathematics and Computer Science.

Richard’s recent research interests include mathematical modelling of both communication and road traffic networks. When he solves the problem of how to get the traffic flowing smoothly on the M25, he has promised to let Once a Caiian... know first!

All 1956 Caians who have contributed to the Lectureship Fund will be invited to meet Richard at a special Reception to be held in the garden of the Master’s Lodge (weather permitting) during the May Week Party for Benefactors on Saturday 13 June 2009.

As the Master pointed out: “Permanently endowed College Lectureships help to ensure that undergraduates can continue to be supervised in small groups by world class experts. The supervision system is one of the hallmarks of a Cambridge education and we are determined to preserve it.”

The Master went on to express the College’s gratitude to Dennis Levy, the organizing committee and all those who contributed to the fund to make the new 1956 Lectureship possible.
Our annual Telephone Campaign has become a popular part of the Caius year, a chance for Caians of different generations to talk together and discover their shared love of the College. Last year’s innovation, the annual Caius Fund, has proved to be a great success.

Gifts to the Caius Fund from Caians, parents and friends provide funding for immediate use – for a variety of projects that would not happen without such support. The Caius Fund supports initiatives that are vital to the continued health and prosperity of the College.

First, a huge ‘thank you’ to everyone who gave to last year’s Caius Fund. Without your support, so much would not have happened. We were overwhelmed by how keen the Caius community was to help us to achieve our aims.

All of this proves that your gifts really do make a difference.

This year’s Caius Fund projects represent key areas of College life, from buildings to boats and from books to bursaries, so your contribution to the Caius Fund can support the area that interests you most. Our student callers reflect the variety and breadth of subjects that are studied at Caius, from Classics to Land Economy, and they take part in a great range of activities, from rowing and music to peer support and the access scheme. They know, as you do, that a chance to come to Caius is to be seized with both hands. They all believe that our College is worth supporting. Their telephone calls to Caians, parents and friends between 15 March and 2 April will be a chance for them to discover that you feel the same way.

The student callers who will be taking part in the 2009 Caius Telephone Campaign gather in the College Library with the Master.

1. Anthony Ng
2. Sophie Robinson
3. Natasha Brown
4. Sebastian Gertz
5. Amy Brecken Simons
6. Mgawa Mkandawire
7. Mark Pester
8. Mustafa Khan
9. Pranav Khamar
10. Irfan Rahman
11. Ellie Paul
12. Sneha Ramakrishnan
13. Rebecca Tennyson
14. Tanya Kohli
15. Lucy Plant
16. Nicola Di Luzio
17. Derek Ho
18. Di Shen
19. Adam McNally

Rebekah Law and Mushfiqur Rahman are also callers, but were unable to be in the photographs.

The 2008 Caius Fund Choral Scholar, Hannah Crawford (2008), whose award was generously supported by donors to the Caius Fund in last year’s Telephone Campaign.
A gift to Caius counts towards the Cambridge 800th Anniversary Campaign.
Michael Barrett (1955)

Having lived in Australia for the past forty years, I enjoyed coming back to Caius for a few days in September 2008. I stayed in College while doing some research on the papers of my maternal great-grandfather, W T Stead, at Churchill College, and looked up my California paternal grandfather, Dr Sidney Edward Barrett (1888) in the Caius Biographical History. While in England, I caught up with a few old friends from fifty years ago and I was lucky enough to go for a spin in what used to be my pride and joy, a 1932 Alvis Speed 20 Tourer.

Back in 1958, when the black-and-white photograph was taken at 3 West Road by my friend Jan Clark of Clark’s Shoes, the car was pillar-box red, often seen (and heard) around town, very fast and thirsty. It completed a trip to Ischia in the Bay of Naples in great style with myself and two Caius friends, Dr Tony Rubin (1955) and Tim Yarnell (1955). It was successful in competition at Snettenton in Norfolk.

The following year, I sold the car to Paul Garratt, who has owned it ever since. Paul has maintained it in original condition except for a few modifications in the interests of safety and reliability. It now sports British Racing Green livery, probably more appropriate to the age of both the owner and the vehicle. This photo was taken in Cheshire by my nephew Andrew Barrett in August 2008, fifty years on.

It was most exciting to drive in this classic car again. I’m delighted that it’s been looked after so well by a real enthusiast, who has preserved a treasure from the classic age of British motoring.

Jeff Aughton (1970)

“Why don’t we all meet up again in the future on some memorable date – how about 9/9/1999?” I remember saying this to my colleagues very late one night while we were gathered in someone’s College room. Unfortunately, although I thought about it many times afterwards, it seems that I was the only one in a fit state to remember what happened. As the years passed I began to suspect that I might be the sole attendant and a chance meeting at the College’s 650th anniversary celebrations confirmed my fears. However, out of that meeting a remarkable reunion was born.

The original agreement was made in 1971 when we were freshmen and at that time “28 years from now” may as well have been “never”. As graduates we inevitably drifted apart although some small groups remained in touch. Following my meeting with John Robinson we contacted the other members of the group through College and on the evening of 9 September 1999 (though somewhat earlier than my preferred time of 8pm) we assembled in Convivie Court with friends and wives to celebrate.

As most of the participants had not met for 26 years there was a danger that the evening might have been an anticlimax and yet something marvellous happened. It was a stunning success.

We took photographs, caught up on the past quarter-century and swapped stories and addresses (including these new-fangled ‘e’ types). Also, we pledged to meet again but felt that waiting another 26 years was pushing it a bit so quickly decided that 11/11/11 was the most obvious date to reconvene. Look out for the report in a few years’ time!

Siobhan Wall (1979)

One of my favourite memories of being at Caius was going for walks along the River Cam and picking wild flowers to take back to my attic room in Tree Court. Needless to say, the following morning there were numerous small black bugs scuttling around the vase and the flowers had to go, however pretty they were. Perhaps it was the influence of reading the Romantic poets that led to my idyllic country walks or just the fact of living in a very green city, but I sometimes wonder where I got my inspiration for ‘Quiet Amsterdam’, my new book about hidden, tranquil places in my new home city.

In 2000, after a decade of full-time lecturing in London, (at a university which didn’t have a single blade of grass), my husband decided that the only way to stop me working too hard was to take me to another country, and as the internet connections in The Netherlands were excellent, that’s where we ended up. So, after a few hours writing, most afternoons I would pick up a map, get on my bicycle, and just go off in search of all the green spaces in and around Amsterdam. I was entranced by the beautiful lakes, woods and nature reserves but also wanted the book to inspire visitors as well as people who lived here, so also took photos of museums, small hotels, cafes, gardens and ‘hofjes’. Quiet London is my next project, after which, who knows, maybe Quiet Cambridge?

Third Reich Correction

No Caian but two relatives of Caians have spotted a small error on Page 13 of Issue 8 of Once a Caian... Emmet McIntyre, brother of Dr Sarah McIntyre (2000) and Andy Weaver, father of Holly Weaver (2008) both point out that in the photograph captioned “Tiger tanks in production, summer 1943” the vehicle shown is actually a self-propelled gun called the Sturmgeschütz III (Ausf G), Regius Professor Richard Evans (1998) agrees: the incorrect information was supplied by the German Bundesarchiv.

And finally...

In a recent issue of Trinity College’s alumni magazine, The Fountain, Professor Nicholas Wolpert argued that the principal reason for any animal having a brain was to control movement. His observation deserves to be shared with a wider audience.

“Without the need for complex movements we could, as trees have done, forgo the luxury of a brain. Perhaps the clinching evidence for the movement-brain link is the fact that in the human species, the ‘frontal lobes’ of the brain are the largest part of our brains and a significant novelty in evolution. It could be that the ability to plan, to predict, to control, to reason is one of the keys to human success.”

Eaden Lilley McIntyre, brother of Dr Sarah McIntyre (2000) and Andy Weaver, father of Holly Weaver (2008) both point out that in the ninth minute display, including the discoveries by William Harvey (1593) on how blood circulates, Francis Crick (1949) on DNA and Stephen Hawking (1965) on black holes.

The many 800th celebratory events to come this year include a major London concert featuring Cambridge music and musicians on the evening of 22 July 2009. The College hopes that as many Caians as possible will reserve the date so that they can attend. Details of the venue of bell-ringing from Great St Mary’s. Vast images of some of our greatest achievements were projected on to a screen made up of the 800 years of achievement celebrated by Caius. Amongst the 800 years of achievement celebrated by Caius were the discoveries by William Harvey (1593) on how blood circulates, Francis Crick (1949) on DNA and Stephen Hawking (1965) on black holes.

As most of the participants had not met for 26 years there was a danger that the evening might have been an anticlimax and yet something marvellous happened. It was a stunning success.
An Appeal

Four years ago, I adapted Lord Kitchener’s famous phrase to head the editorial in our first issue. After four years of increasing generosity from Caians and friends of the College (and a financial tsunami known as “the credit crunch” in the world at large) the College’s need for the support, wholehearted and supported of those who care about it is even greater than it was in 2004.

No apology is needed. Fellows, staff, students, Caians and friends have every right to feel proud of the College’s achievements and to treasure their own share in its work. Few institutions have had such a beneficial effect on their own members and the world around them for over 660 years.

In this issue, we celebrate the part played by Caius and Caians in seeing sooner than most the significance of the China’s re-awakening and in building bridges of understanding between East and West. We celebrate our twelfth Nobel Prize winner, the first in Chemistry and the first Chinese-American – and we note Roger Tsien’s own warning not to be motivated or impressed by prizes since, he says, they are just a matter of luck!

It is easy to celebrate the high flyers and natural to feel pride in their achievements, as if a little of the “Swedish fairy-dust” might rub off on us, mere mortals. Just as valuable but harder to define is the way Caius nurtures and encourages the life of the mind in all who come here, fostering the freedoms of speech and thought, careful study, wide reading and rigorous intellectual debate. On such fundamental values rest our civilisation’s defence against the ignorance, blind prejudice and bigotry that could destroy it.

The College is much more than our celebrated prize winners: they fly the flag for excellence and inspire the rest of us, but the essence of Caius is more elusive and pervasive: it is in the questioning and reasoning, the intellectual habits learned in youth and practised in maturity by Caians in all walks of life, all over the world.

That is why so many Caians come back to Cambridge 20, 30, 40 or 50+ years after graduating and feeling instantly a sense of belonging, of returning to a vital, formative experience – and helped to shape their beliefs and personalities. The ideal is what Dr Jimmy Altham (1965) calls “the joyfully seeking mind”, always enquiring and enthusiastic but also discriminating, judging, weighing in the balance.

For Caians, involvement with Caius is a two-way process. On the one hand, in order to offer the meticulous attention to individual students that is the hallmark of a Cambridge education, the College needs contributions from those who have benefited from this process in the past (and continue to benefit from it).

Between a quarter and a third of the College’s annual budget of £100 million comes in the form of voluntary gifts from Caians and friends. Without this support, the College would be in a desperate plight with, and with the additional support of the legacies that many Caians tell us they are leaving to the College, there is a real chance of the College’s annual budget of £100 million coming to 20 or 30 years’ time, Caius will once again be self-supporting and able to admit the most gifted students, irrespective of their background, parental income or ability to pay. How liberating it would be, if our students no longer had to take out bank loans to pay for their own education!

I find that I now feel an affection and loyalty for the College that I would not have thought possible, just a few years ago!

The other part of the two-way process is the pleasure many Caians get from renewing contact with the College and their contemporaries, long after their student days have finished. Caians are welcome to come back to Caius at any time and may take up the opportunity. The experience is even more enjoyable if shared with old friends: naturally, cultural events like the May Week Party, the Annual Gatherings, the Benefactors’ Feast and the Caius Club Dinner are tremendously popular. Nostalgia for the past plays a part but it is the sense of shared values and a continuing sense of belonging to an exceptional community that really energises and excites people.

A Valediction

On a personal note, by the time this issue is published, I shall have left Cambridge for the second time, almost forty years after the first. Once again, it will be with a mixture of regret, for the loss of the College’s intellectual companionship and excitement about what the future may hold.

It was a great privilege to launch Once a Caian... and to explore the fascinating world being done by Caians in many different areas, both in Cambridge and elsewhere. Many have asked whether I worry about running out of material: the answer is a resounding “No!” Every Fellow and probably every Caiian has an interesting story to tell, if he or she can be persuaded to tell it.

When the first issue came out, one Caian wrote back “if the College really needs money, stop wasting it on rubbish like this!” A more heart-warming response came from another, after the fifth or sixth issue: “I find I now feel an affection and loyalty for the College that I would not have thought possible, just a few years ago!”

One of the things, my time at Caius has made clear to me is that individuals may come and go but the College has a life of its own. I wrote in that first editorial: “This College is a continuous living channel of intellectual enquiry and expression stretching in an unbroken line all the way back to the Middle Ages.”

I am still fascinated by this notion of a chain of personal connections linking the Caians of today with all the others back to John Caius and even Edmund Gonville. For myself, I shall treasure the memories of creative collaborations with many people here, notably with Lily Ang, Yao Liang, Jimmy Altham, Christopher Brooke, our two great Masters, Neil McKendrick and Christopher Hum, and many others.

I shall recall the pleasure of working with Stephen Hawking, the most extraordinary member of our community, who still lives with us once or twice a week at High Table and whose presence is both humbling and inspiring. For a man to do without so many of the common consolations that we take for granted and still to reach for the stars, to suffer so much and still to keep the sharpest sense of humour, to lose his body and still to put his brain at the service of human understanding – that is courage and dedication of an almost unfathomable order.

In future, if I am ever tempted to complain about my lot in life, I hope I shall be wise enough to think of Stephen – and say nothing.

I am moving to Australia, where I lived for many years, to work at the University of Sydney. I shall always be pleased to hear from fellow Caians, by email, telephone or in person – and happy to offer a cold beer and a conversation to any Caiian who turns up on my doorstep. I hope to take part in Caius gatherings in Sydney and elsewhere and I have a special message for any Australian Caians who have so far resisted the temptation to set up a regular donation (diaminable against Australian income tax) to the Caius Cambridge Australia Trust Scholarship Fund: it may be a big country, but I know where you live! And our College still needs us.

On Leaving Cambridge

by Mick Le Moignan (2004)

In the shadow of the elm is a pool
Not of clear spring water, but a rainbow from heaven
Crushed and crumpled among the duckweed
Leaving only a rainbow-like dream.

Choo Liang and Mick Le Moignan (2004)

The golden willow on the bank of the Cam
Stands like a bride in the sunset.
Her reflection shimmers in the water,
And ripples in my heart.

Sway and glisten underwater.
I'd gladly be a river reed
Tossed by the currents of the Cam.

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