04
Outreach
Making Corpus accessible

06
Research
Effects of Empire

08
Tradition reigns
Corpus on Parade

12
Corpus Hebraica
Stunning Hebrew Manuscripts Catalogue launched

14
Corpus 500 Campaign
Breaking the £10 million barrier
I have just returned from the University’s North American Reunion. This year we met in Washington DC, where I much enjoyed meeting a good number of Old Corpuscles at our College drinks reception and brunch. The Oxford event overall was particularly well attended (the numbers rather caught the North American Office on the hop) and gave alumni the chance to meet the new Vice-Chancellor, Louise Richardson.

Professor Richardson reflected on what has struck her most forcefully during her first three months in office. Amongst other observations, she had been surprised not that Oxford attracts press scrutiny, but at how much attention there is. I can second that. A daily digest of Oxford-related media reports reaches my inbox every morning and it’s striking just what a broad range of subjects they cover. Of late the policy over a particular statue of Sir Winston Churchill has generated more heat than light. Of late the policy over a particular statue of Sir Winston Churchill has generated more heat than light.

Lucia Zedner works on criminal law and criminal justice. She is particularly interested in the ways in which demands for public protection and the pursuit of security have led states to expand the scope of criminal law and policing powers. Her recent research has focused on security-driven laws and measures that permit state action ahead of any wrongdoing. New legally-defined laws extend liability back in time in order to prevent crimes of: preparatory conduct, possession of innocent objects, concealment, association and collaboration with outlawed groups. Controversial preventive measures include ‘suspicions’ of police stops, arrest and detention powers, civil preventive orders (like the former ASBO), and indefinite detention of ‘dangerous’ offenders.

Of course, there are good reasons for the state to intervene early to protect the public from harm. Paradoxically, however, although such laws and measures are justified in the name of security, they tend to undermine the security of the individual from the state itself. So a central objective of Lucia’s recent work has been to develop an account of principles and values to guide the growing number of coercive preventive laws. It is one thing to say that the state has a duty to protect people, but quite another to accept the eminent 18th-century jurist Sir William Blackstone’s claim that ‘preventive justice is, upon every principle of reason, of humanity, and of sound policy, preferable in all respects to punishing justice’. In an increasingly insecure world in which the boundaries between policing and counter-terrorism are blurred and governments face overwhelming pressure to prevent serious crimes and avert terrorist attacks, criminal laws risk becoming overly extensive and state measures unduly intrusive.

Our recent reform strikes particularly close to home. Since 2013, universities, schools and even nurseries are subject to a legal duty ‘to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’. The ‘Prevent duty’ responds to real problems. Some universities host speakers who promote extremist views or express religious or racial hatred. Young people are especially vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist groups and are disproportionately and unwarrantedly risk assessed as ‘suspects’. Prevent duty opponents argue that the Prevent duty diverts resources away from the genuine security threat. They also worry that Prevent duty will lead to overly intrusive intervention into life on campus.

In Oxford, the Prevent duty has been seen as unduly intrusive. In 2014, a group of students and staff jointly decided to challenge the Prevent duty at Oxford.

Lucia Zedner joined the College in 1994. She was Tutor for Women for many years and has been Tutor for Graduates at Corpus since 2014.
Brendan Shepherd
Outreach Officer and Admissions Administrator

Reaching out

Brendan Shepherd has been Outreach Officer and Admissions Administrator at Corpus for two years. We asked him to describe his role and the challenges he faces in his outreach work.

What is Outreach?

Outreach is the umbrella term used by the Colleges to describe their student recruitment, in particular, open days, access work and especially encouraging students from non-traditional backgrounds to consider Oxford, and working to widen participation more generally by speaking about higher education with students, teachers and parents.

Can you describe the Corpus outreach programme?

In addition to the University Open Days, the programme at Corpus is dominated by interaction with schools in our regional link areas of Derbyshire and Greater Manchester (the University having divided England and Wales into such areas and shared them between the colleges). This splits my work into two parts. The first involves school groups visiting Corpus, and the second involves my visits to schools; both seek to engage with groups of students from Year 9 upwards and often their teachers and parents too. Through workshops on higher education, I aim to address preconceptions – which can often be misconceptions – students may have about just how accessible Oxford now is. I aim to encourage all students who fulﬁl our academic and admissions criteria to consider applying to Oxford and, ideally, to Corpus.

To support a continuation of the themes of our work beyond events directly involving Corpus, I also run an annual conference for secondary school teachers. The conference takes the staff who will have most to do with prospective applicants through the university application process and ensures that they are sufﬁciently well informed to be able to support their students effectively.

Finally, three years ago, Professor Petre Nellist, Materials Science Tutor, initiated the North West Science Network (NWSN), offering students in the North West opportunities to attend lectures, master classes in a range of sciences here in Oxford. Two specific areas we aim to address though this scheme are: (a) that students often do not explore the broad range of subjects offered by universities, and (b) that outreach work with an element of sustainable feedback from schools. A number of schools with which I have worked are starting to see an increase in Oxbridge applications and this has translated into students with whom we have made early contact coming to Oxford as undergraduates. It is encouraging to hear from teachers that a visit to Oxford, with the opportunity to meet and talk to our current undergraduates, does dispel many preconceptions. Praise for our outreach work which can often be misconceptions – students may have about just how accessible Oxford now is. I aim to encourage all students who fulﬁl our academic and admissions criteria to consider applying to Oxford and, ideally, to Corpus.

What challenges face an outreach officer?

My biggest challenge is breaking down preconceptions. Students from underrepresented groups, areas and regions are often put off applying to Oxford because they think it is posh and expensive, or too academic and elite. I attempt to encourage them to aim high and to seek to take advantage of the education opportunities Oxford, and Corpus speciﬁcally, have to offer. I aim to increase our number of well-qualiﬁed applicants and to do so from a broad range of education backgrounds.

What impact does outreach have?

Impact can be measured in two ways: applications to the university and qualitative feedback from schools. A number of schools with which I have worked are starting to see an increase in Oxbridge applications and this has translated into students with whom we have made early contact coming to Oxford as undergraduates. It is encouraging to hear from teachers that a visit to Oxford, with the opportunity to meet and talk to our current undergraduates, does dispel many preconceptions. Praise for our outreach work which can often be misconceptions – students may have about just how accessible Oxford now is. I aim to encourage all students who fulﬁl our academic and admissions criteria to consider applying to Oxford and, ideally, to Corpus.

What are the attractions of Corpus?

Corpus is attractive because of its welcoming atmosphere, its lack of pretension, its strong sense of community and its attention to pastoral care, seen particularly in the supportive relationships that the student have with their tutors. All of these things make the transition from school to university a less daunting prospect for young people most of whom have spent very little time away from home; this is great for all prospective students but particularly for those who might otherwise feel out of place at Oxford. A daunting idea. The door is open, my role – and that of my fellow outreach ofﬁcers – is to make this as widely known as we possibly can.
Reflection on these alternative models of empire were fascinated by the extension and recasting of ideas have gained much from this trend. Where literature, to its influence in less familiar areas life: from the space it occupied in mainstream culture. We now have studies of the impact of the Empire affected domestic politics, society, and intellectuals thought about the extension, the history of Victorian politics used to be written the time of its conquest in 1850, France’s efforts to render Algeria a successful and profitable colony was a subject of extensive comment among British politicians, journalists, and travel writers. Britons produced serious poems, plays, and paintings about the country, while images of Algerian landscapes, costumes, architecture, and battles were common sights in illustrated periodicals. The tone of this was purely picturesque, but much of it dealt with a more serious question: why was Algeria such an abysmal failure as a colony? The notion quickly took hold among British commentators that Algeria was an immense drain on the financial and military resources of the French state, without being productive of any political or economic advantage. To the mother country or to the nation, the series of explanations for this state of affairs was proposed. Yet often these related to the excessive violence and cruelty of the French conquest and regime. Unjustified imperial violence, British writers argued, generated much distrust between colonial administrators and the natives. Furthermore, the French obsession with centralisation, was generally thought to render successful colonisation all but impossible. To British observers it seemed that France’s passion for political uniformity, and the pursuit of this uniformity through excessive state supervision, was a recipe for disaster when it came to the highly sensitive task of governing conquered peoples. Underlying all this was a conviction that the French national character, which lacked humility and enterprise, was simply unsuited to the complex demands of modern colonisation. These reflections on French failure helped throw into relief what it was that (supposedly) made British efforts at empire-building so much more successful. The salutary role assumed by the French state in the government of Algeria was contrasted with the British government’s relatively hands-off approach, which commentators claimed encouraged the British colonies to be more self-reliant; the harshness and perseverance of British administrators was contrasted with the enthusiasm and short-sightedness of their French counterparts. More specific comparisons were drawn with India, where the success of the British regime was put down to the fact that it had not sought a social revolution, instead protecting important elements of native society and declining to interfere with religious customs – this marking a sharp contrast with a regime which blindly sought to impose French laws and institutions. All these arguments about French Algeria were based on limited information, were highly coloured by more general assumptions about French character and politics, and were in some cases straightforwardly inaccurate. But their significance lies in showing us that the Victorians’ conceptions of themselves as an imperial people were not formed only through responding to events in their own empire, and by reading about which had taken place in the empires of ancient Greece and Rome. Nineteenth-century commentators, in fact, were fully aware that the contemporary world was a continent of empires plural, many of which faced similar problems and possibilities to Britain’s own. Analysis of other empires was not always about pointing out why British practices were superior (though it very often was); even in the Algerian case, some writers found ways in which Britain could learn from France, or used analogies with Algeria as a means of criticising British colonial policy. But this only serves to reinforce the central point: in order fully to understand the place and significance of empire in nineteenth-century British politics and constructions of national identity, we need to pay far more attention to the comparisons the Victorians drew with contemporary empires.
The Proctor’s Progress
The Corpus Fellows process to the Sheldonian

The Proctors are the two most ancient offices in the University, dating from at least the early thirteenth century. Like the consuls of ancient Rome, new Proctors are elected each year, following a cycle that means a Corpus Proctor emerges about once every twelve years. Traditionally entrusted with representing the University on formal occasions and maintaining discipline (two Proctors have been killed in the course of duty), that is still part of the role. More importantly, they act as a combination of ombudsmen and tribunes of the people. Liaising closely with the Vice-Chancellor and sitting on all important committees, the Proctors act as a crucial link between the central university and the academics in colleges, faculties and departments who actually do the teaching and research.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Pro-Proctor Professor Robin Murphy, Senior Proctor Dr Mark Whittow and Pro-Proctor Dr Anna Marmodoro
Drama

Francesca Baretta

First appeared in the Oxford Culture Review on 26 October 2015

Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus can be hard to render on stage without slipping into pantomime. Thankfully, the production currently running at Corpus Christi College manages to avoid this pitfall, creating a dark, gothic, and gruesome atmosphere in an utterly compelling way. Minimal stage and costume designs are effectively contrived with sinister splashes of red: blood on black and white clothes, red fabric in Tamora’s Empress costume, and red lighting that bathes the entirety of the stage at the play’s climax. The relentless deluge of violence and murder was helplessly captivating, despite—or perhaps partly because of—the disturbing content of some scenes.

Despite a shaky start (probably due partly to the play’s dialogue character of the first scenes, and partly to the time it took for the cast to warm up), this is a powerful production of Titus. Mia Smith’s portrayal of Lavinia is certainly the most mesmerizing performance of the first half, succeeding in expressing the innocence and purity of this character. After she has been raped and mutilated—her hands and tongue are cut off so that she cannot tell what has been done to her—by Tamora’s sons, Diemutus and Chlorin, her expressiveness becomes even more transfixing: hammering, sobbing, and crying are the only sounds she now is able to produce, and Sinn’s performance is moving and full of pathos. Titus and Aaron—played by Joseph Stephenson and Gerard Krasnopolski—are similarly enthralling, especially in the second part of the play. Titus’s contradictory lucid madness was successfully conveyed by Stephenson, particularly in his vengeful acts against Tamora and her sons. The combination of a Tamora-like violence (the play never slipped into parody, but did not try to tone down the goreiness) and Titus’s madness created a black humour to which the audience seemed to respond very actively, with Alex Hills’ Marcus providing a foil for Titus’s madness. Krasnopolski’s powerful portrayal of the devilish Aaron would be fit for a Mephistopheles in Dr Faustus, articulating the contradiction between his utter evilness and his love for the illegitimate child he has with Tamora Uesica (Elizabeth). The performance of the latter started promisingly, but did not succeed in conveying Tamora’s darkest and most evil traits, with the exception of the compelling love scene with Aaron.

The stark simplicity of the set and costumes were reflected in the staging. The space—Corpus Christi’s Auditorium—was left quite bare, but the stone architecture serving as the backdrop provided ample decoration. In combination with the relatively small size of the venue it gave the effect of a medieval prison, particularly as the stage cover was slowly bleached crimson. Shakespeare’s text is slightly altered—without giving spoilers, the play ends on an unexpected note. The curtain falls on a final, murderous scene bathed in red light, the epilouge of utter despair and hopelessness. The cast did not come out to bow for the final applause which, through leaving something of a soil, amplified the desolation of the final scene. The actors themselves seemed transformed by the experience of acting, emphasising the human impact of the tragic fall. This production is powerful and disturbingly enticing, much like the play itself.
At first glance, it is hard to imagine a college less likely to be intimately connected with Jews and Jewish learning than the college devoted to the Body of Christ, Collegium Corporis Christi or Corpus Christi College. And yet, Corpus (as well as the University of Oxford more generally) has been closely linked to Hebrew and Jewish studies since its inception. For both the Founder Fox and Claymond had an acute interest in what was then called ‘the third language’. During the Renaissance and the Reformation, scholars propagated a return to the sources which, for many, included the Hebrew Bible. Likewise, Jewish traditional learning seemed to hold the key for understanding the universe, and Pico de la Mirandola and others eagerly studied the Talmud and the Kabbala. It is in this climate that Corpus was founded, and it therefore comes as no surprise that Erasmus, himself a competent Hebraist, complimented the Founder for his foresight in establishing Corpus’ trilingual library (trilinguis istius bibliothecae spectaculum).

This early interest in Hebrew is well reflected in the manuscript holdings of the Library, for Corpus has the most important collection of medieval Anglo-Jewish manuscripts in the world. Like the College itself, it is small, but of breath-taking quality and interest. It also reflects the early history of the Jews in these Isles better than any other collection. Its core consists of seven Biblical manuscripts (MSS 5-11), given to the College by Claymond at a time when he was a student at Oxford and had an acute interest in classical languages. A Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, was published in 1963 by Bertram H. Polley. Corpus recently published the first catalogue of its Hebrew Manuscripts, arguably the most important collection of medieval Anglo-Jewish manuscripts in the world. Peter E. Pormann tells their story.

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

The majority of the Hebrew manuscripts will feature in a major exhibition of Corpus library treasures to be held in Washington and New York in the first half of 2017.

Peter E Pormann, Director of the John Rylands Research Institute and Professor of Graeco-Arabic Studies, University of Manchester

This manuscript, as well as others in the collection, was produced in collaboration between Christian and Jewish scribes. One can clearly see how the two Latin versions were written first by a Christian scribe, and then a Jewish scribe went to great length to align the Hebrew original with the Latin. In fact, he used a sort of chess board pattern to fill the space. Then, in a final step, a Christian Hebraist offers word-for-word translations of the Hebrew. For instance, the opening of the first psalm (‘כָּלַה הָאֱלֹהִים, blessèd’), the interlinear translation renders ‘כָּלַה הָאֱלֹהִים’ as ‘beatus (blesséd)’, ‘וָאֵין (whence)’ as ‘in’ (man)’. MS 135 (top right) contains the only extant Judaic-Arabic document (that is Arabic written in Hebrew characters) written in England before the expulsion of the Jews in 1290. And finally, Corpus’ collection of Hebrew manuscripts boasts an early modern commentary on the book of Job, written by Robert Burhill, a fellow of Corpus Christi College for his Greek and Hebrew learning. This is MSS 34-5 (middle right), a momentous commentary – even monstrous in its size, one might say, comprising more than 750 pages – that brims with philological and theological learning. Finally, the Corpus (’Corpus’ or ‘the College’?) has an item from the so-called European Geniza, namely the fragments of a Florentine pawnbroker’s account book in Hebrew, dating to the early fifteenth century.

Burhill’s commentary is just one of many items that attest to the study of Hebrew at Corpus from the mid-sixteenth century onwards. Yet, although many Corpus men studied Hebrew and excelled in this area throughout the early modern period, it is probably fair to say that this subject became less and less important over the last two centuries or so. And yet, Corpus welcomed Jewish students and scholars. The first President John Claymond, who left the College in 1647, flourished not only in Germany and on the continent, but also in Britain. Our most famous Jewish alumnus was arguably Sir Isaiah Berlin (1909-97), the great philosopher and historian of ideas. But Corpus also gave shelter to a significant number of German academics fleeing Nazi persecution. They include Eduard Fraenkel (1888-1970), who had to leave the University of Tübingen and found refuge at Corpus in 1934, later becoming Corpus Professor of Latin. Rudolf Peiffer (1889-1979), another German classicist, received support from the College, notably as a member of the Senior Common Room from 1938 onwards. Heinz Cassirer (1905-70), the son of the famous German Neo-Kantian philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945), had to flee to England with his father in 1934, and came to Corpus in 1937, where he stayed until 1946, lecturing in philosophy. The Cassirers had to escape from Germany, owing to their Jewish origin. Ernst Cassirer is closely connected to the Warburg Institute, which he himself, had to move from Hamburg to England in order to be rescued. And one could name others such as the art historian Paul Jacobsthal (1889-1957) and the classical philologist Kurt von Fritz (1900-1985), whom the College assisted, if modestly, after they had to leave Germany.

I sincerely hope that the publication of the Hebrew catalogue will galvanise our energy to revive the study of Hebrew at Corpus. It should not just have a ‘trilingual library’, with holdings in Greek, Latin and Hebrew, but also be a ‘trilingual college’, where Hebrew takes its pride of place among the classical languages.

Peter E Pormann, Director of the John Rylands Research Institute and Professor of Graeco-Arabic Studies, University of Manchester

This new catalogue was published by Boydell and Brewer for the College and is available at a discount to Old Members. Please email Sara Watson at sara.watson@ccc.ox.ac.uk for more information. A Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, ed. Peter E. Pormann (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2015).
Fundraising

Corpus 500 campaign

Breaking the £10 million barrier

The Corpus 500 Campaign, to raise £30 million, broke through the £10 million barrier in March. The wide-ranging campaign which aims to provide funding for a new library and special collections centre, the endowment of academic posts and support for undergraduate and graduate needs, began at the end of 2010 with a “quiet phase” of campaigning. Since then many hundreds of Corpuscles have played their part with gifts ranging from regular monthly donations of a few pounds to major gifts in seven figures.

So far the campaign has been able to:

- Endow tutorial fellowships in Philosophy, English, History and Latin,
- Fund a new Junior Research Fellowship in History in memory of the late Michael Brock,
- Endow research studentships in Policy, Studies and Economics,
- Provide bursaries for students from the least advantaged backgrounds,
- Restore several of the ancient book presses in the library,
- Fund an outreach project in Manchester to encourage more young women to read science subjects,
- Provide coaching for the college choir and record a new CD.

The big challenge remains to raise the £18 million necessary towards our goal.

On the £10 million raised so far, Development Director Nick Thorn commented: “This is a scientific achievement – more than the College has ever raised in a single campaign. It has been made possible by all those Corpuscles... we are immensely grateful to every single one of them.”

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Tutorial Fellowships

Thanks to the generous legacy of the late Professor Robin Nisbet, we have secured the Latin tutorial fellowship in perpetuity. As we enter the next hundred years, we look forward to developing the teaching of the Latin language and Roman culture that have remained a constant throughout the College’s history.

New Arrivals

Professor David Russell

Fellow and Tutor in English

David Russell arrived in Michaelmas term 2015 as Tutorial Fellow in English and Associate Professor in the English faculty. He has previously held a lectureship at King’s College London, and postdoctoral fellowships at Columbia University’s Society of Fellows in the Humanities, and the Humanities Center at Harvard University. He completed his PhD at Princeton University. David is an alumnus of Oxford, where he read Modern History and English at Merton College, and he is very happy to return to the university with a post at Corpus. “You can tell immediately that Corpus is a rare and wonderful place, from the vibrancy of its plant life to the quality of its library.”

David’s research is concerned with the relationship of literature to the ways we live our lives. Specifically, he has just completed a book on tact and the essay form, to be published with Princeton University Press next year, about the reflections of nineteenth-century essayists on how people handle one another and form commitments to their worlds. He is currently working on a project called Learning from Experience, about education, the history of literary and cultural criticism, and how writers like John Ruskin, Alfred Tennyson and George Eliot sought to change their readers through essays, poems and novels. As part of this project he recently published an essay on how Tennyson’s 1850 poem, In Memoriam, explores the experience of feeling stupefied. David teaches widely at Corpus, on British and US literature from 1800 to the present day. He is very pleased to be able to collaborate in teaching with Helen Moore, and, following Val Cunningham, to have joined a college with an excellent tradition of writing and thinking about literature.

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Corpus Christi College
Alumni events

May 2016
Saturday 28 May
Eights Week Lunch
Bring the family and enjoy lunch at Corpus. President Hardie’s new portrait will also be unveiled. Then, down to the Boathouse and watch the Colleges battle for Head of the River. Please book through the Development Office.

June 2016
Thursday 23 June
The Hardie Golf Tournament
The annual competition against St Edmund Hall at Huntercombe, near Henley. All golfers—whatever your standard—are very welcome. Please contact the Development Office.

Friday 24 June
Gaudy for 1935-1958
Invitations are on their way.

September 2016
Friday 30 September
The Biennial Alumni Dinner
This popular event is open to all alumni and their partners. Invitations and further information will be sent out in July. Save the date for this annual event.

Offer
The Corpus discount offer has now been supplanted by the scheme open to all Old Members via the University’s Alumni Card. Among the many offers are substantial discounts at the following establishments in the Oxford area:
- Blackwell’s
- OUP Bookshop
- University of Oxford Shop
- Shepherd and Woodward
- The Varsity Shop
- Walters of Oxford
- Gees
- Macdonald Randolph Hotel
- The Old Bank Hotel
- The Old Parsonage
- Quod Brasserie and Bar
- Rewley House
- University Club
- University Rooms Oxford
- Blenheim Palace
- Oxford Philomusica
- Oxford Playhouse
- Sheldonian Theatre
- University Club
- Botanic Garden/Harcourt Arboretum

Did you know that we regularly send out College news and invitations to events by email? Please be sure to let us have your current email address if you want to keep in touch.

Careers Connect
Calling Old Members

Sarah Clarence-Smith (PPE)

Last September, I took part in the Corpus annual Telethon Campaign and spent a thoroughly enjoyable two weeks chatting to Corpus Alumni, many of whom were willing to offer me careers advice. I received multiple offers of work-shadowing days, of help with CVs and cover letters and one alumnus even took the time to conduct a mock interview over the phone with me. There are so many alumni in such a wide range of careers, with a wealth of experience, seemingly ready to advise and help, and I know that so many of my fellow students would find this invaluable. It made me think that there must be a way of creating these links within the Corpus community.

With this in mind, I spoke to the University Careers Service and it appears that such a system already exists on Careers Connect, the Oxford University Careers Service website. Alumni of Oxford University can register online at the www.careers.ox.ac.uk/join-the-oxford-careers-network. The website offers a brief description of their sector and advice for students going into it, indicating whether they are happy to be contacted by students and whether they are happy to be a mentor. Currently, there are fewer than twenty active Old Members and it would be great if more were willing to sign up. I hope this would be of help and value to students who find themselves in the position I was in last summer, slightly overwhelmed by the idea of their time at Corpus ending and unsure as to what might follow!

A portrait of President Hardie

Bill Morris (1964) writes: Prior to the Biennial Dinner of 2014, I was with Brian Sedgemoor (1958), admiring the portrait of Val Cunningham by Colleen Quill. Brian, who sadly died in 2015, remarked to me that the college lacked a portrait of President Hardie (1950-69) and that it would be fitting if we could commission one by the same artist. This was not going to be an easy task, because Frank Hardie was a famously shy man and there is only one black and white photograph in the College’s possession. Nonetheless, we managed to secure donations from a number of our Corpus contemporaries and Colleen Quill rose to the challenge magnificently and produced a very convincing rendering of the photograph in oils. The finished portrait now hangs beside that of Bishop Fox in The Hall. I would like to thank all those who have so far contributed to the cost of this work. It is a wonderful likeness, which also captures the thoughtful character of this much loved and respected President and I do hope that many of you will be able to appreciate it when you come to our Eights Week Lunch in May.