



Two Memorable Days

Remembered by Sir Alan Cottrell, Emeritus Fellow

The first was in 1956. I was then at AERE Harwell and it was the day of the visit by Krushchov and Bulganin with a Russian party. I was in the reception group and we toured the site together, followed 50 yards behind by what looked like the whole of MI5. In one of the buildings was a display of nuclear materials. I held out a bar of uranium to Krushcov to feel its great heaviness. He refused it but nudged Bulganin to hold it. Poor Bulganin obliged. Also on display was a bar of beryllium which Harwell had just produced. Being very light, this metal is also of interest to the aircraft industry, but it is very brittle. Tupulov, the Russian aircraft designer, who was in the party, picked it up, bent it between his fingers and it immediately snapped like a carrot. In another building the Russians were introduced to the AERE trade union leader. He happened to be strongly anti-communist and made a critical remark to Krushchov. Kruschov then immediately went into a rage and had a stand up row with him, through interpreters, in front of all of us.

Later, we all gathered for lunch, preceded by a short drinks reception. Bowls of crisps were laid out before us. Krushchov was greatly taken with these, having never had them before. He insisted on knowing their supplier, so that he could introduce them into Russia. At the lunch I was put next to one of the Russians. He was a giant, rugged, man and had suspiciously bulging pockets. I asked him what he did, and he replied, looking at me hard in the eye, "I am a secretary".

My second memorable day was the 25 March 1980, the occasion of the enthronement of Robert Runcie as the new Archbishop of Canterbury. The University had been invited to send a representative but the Vice-Chancellor did not want to go. And so the Council of the Senate invited me, with my wife, Jean, to go instead. We accepted. The memorable part of the day began at Victoria Station, where a special 'Bishop's train' was waiting to take all the bishops and their wives, to which Jean and I had been added, to Canterbury. The train consisted entirely of dining cars and we were all served lunch during the journey. I can only describe it as a schoolboys' lunch: kedgerie followed by spotted dick, fortunately tempered by a small glass of sherry. And it certainly brought out the boy in the bishops. Bread rolls were soon flying to and fro across the carriage.

In Canterbury buses took us to a robing room and then took the ladies on to the Cathedral, while we dressed up. The plan was that we should all process in formation through Canterbury and process back again, afterwards. We all dutifully marched in this fashion to the cathedral. The service was most impressive, especially the magnificent array of multicoloured robes worn by the many overseas representatives. The plan unfortunately disintegrated into chaos afterwards, as everyone flooded out independently. Other, that is, than the representatives of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The two of us marched back to the robing room, through the streets of Canterbury crowded with afternoon shoppers, in solemn but lonely procession.

Afterwards, there were buses to take us back to the station. As Jean and I waited for one of them a tall, dignified figure approached us. His face was hidden behind an enormous black beard and he was dressed entirely in black vestments, including a magnificent tall round hat. As he approached, he spoke surprisingly good English: "You remember me, sir? I was one of your students!" It seems that he had given up science to enter the church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and had become the Assistant to the Metropolitan of Helsinki.



Photo Competition

The Development Office is running another photo competition.

A small prize is up for grabs and your photo will be displayed in the next issue of @jesus.

All photos entered must be taken within Jesus College grounds and relevant to the theme 'Sculpture'.

Entries (printed or digital) should be submitted to the Development Office (development@jesus.cam.ac.uk) **no later than Tuesday 31 July 2007.**

Once you have submitted a photograph it cannot be changed.

Previous Competition

The winning entry was received from

* **Paul Stearn** - Head Gardener *

with the image below showing the Wisteria in First Court in full flower this spring.



Accounts Office - Puzzle Zone

Teaser

How many legs does an elephant have if you call its trunk a leg?

Anagram

T H E M A R G I N

Countdown

75 50 4 5 5 7

= 581

Farmers Problem

A farmer is standing on one side of the river and with him are a wolf, a goat and a box with cabbages. In the river there is a small boat. The farmer wants to cross the river with all the three items who are with him. There are no bridges and in the boat there is only room for the farmer and one item. But if he leaves the goat with the cabbages alone on one side of the river the goat will eat the cabbages. If he leaves the wolf and the goat on one side the wolf will eat the goat. Only the farmer can separate the wolf from the goat and the goat from the cabbage.

How can the farmer cross the river with all three items, without one eating the other ?

Answers : Available on JNet : <https://jnet/jesus.cam.ac.uk/people/departments/accounts/puzzlezone.html>

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A New Organ

Arriving in a Chapel near you soon.

by Dan Hyde - Director of College Music

If you walked through the cloisters in mid-May, you may have been met by a funny shaped pipe or piece of wood coming the other way, More recently, if you've been in the Chapel, you may have noticed a large open archway on the north side of the Chancel, once covered by the Mander organ. After a number of years planning and fundraising for a new organ, the project is finally coming to life as we eagerly await the arrival of the new Kuhn organ, in small pieces, on 3 July.

Designing and building an organ is a time-consuming business. First, the specification needs to be agreed, and every organ has to be designed for the building in which it will stand. Whilst you may find very similar organs in terms of their overall specification, the acoustic properties of individual buildings can vary hugely (consider a dry, dead acoustic compared with that of a resonant cathedral) and impact on the design and sound of the finished product. Second, most builders will put the organ together in their workshop to see that everything is just so, before dismantling it all and reassembling everything on site. Third, once in situ, the organ has to be 'voiced' to suit the building. This is a very slow process, and involves the meticulous regulation of each and every pipe, to ensure a good, consistent sound; depending on the organ's nationality and provenance, each instrument takes

on its own character, and an experienced player will be able to detect different dialects in an instrument's sound, be it English, German, French or, in our case, Swiss.

The new organ for Jesus College is being built by the Swiss firm Orgelbau Kuhn, based in Männedorf near Zurich. Jonathan Collis and I visited the workshop for the day on 4 June, to see work in progress and agree final details for delivery next month. Most of the framework and casing had been assembled, and some of the pipework installed (see photo, right). The console chassis was up and running and the remaining pipes were all scattered about the workshop. Before the organ leaves Switzerland, the casework will be stained in a dark colour to match the Pugin stalls of the Chancel.

With the installation taking the whole summer, the Chapel will be closed to visitors, allowing space for all the individual parts to be spread over the floor during the first phase. Then, in August the second phase of voicing will start, with a completion date set for 14 September, in good time for the start of term. The organ will be blessed by the



Bishop of Ely at the Advent Procession on Sunday 25 November and an inaugural concert party is planned for June 2008. As one of the few Colleges with a long tradition of training the organists and choral directors of the future, this is an exciting time for Jesus College. If anyone would like to see work in progress over the summer, I would be very happy to show them in.



We would welcome feedback about @jesus - what you like or don't like about it, topics you would like covered in future issues, ideas for future articles.

If you want to write an article yourself, either as a one-off or as a regular contribution, please let us know.

Email :

newsletter@jesus.cam.ac.uk

Mackinnon Bequest

by Alex Perkins - Library Assistant

The Quincentenary Library has recently received the largest bequest in its history – the library of the late Alastair Mackinnon, who studied at Jesus in the 1950s and then became a British Council lecturer in English at the University of Ljubljana. He went on to become a lecturer at Groningen University in the Netherlands, teaching English Renaissance literature, principally Shakespeare. On his retirement, he returned to Cambridge and, on his death last November, he bequeathed his library of some 200 boxes of books to the college.

The core of the collection – as might be expected – consists of literary and critical works, especially ones relating to Shakespeare and Elizabethan drama, but Mackinnon's interests ranged widely, including many books on modern British history and the Second World War, on the history of the Balkans and the Civil War in Yugoslavia, on Scottish history and folklore, and many travel books, books of poetry and contemporary novels. About half of the collection has been or is being added to the library's stock and the Slovenian and Dutch books have gone to the University Library.



What is an Oddfellow?

Janet Nurse, the Provincial Grand Master of the Cambridge District, reports.

On the evening of Monday 12th March 2007 I was installed, with due ceremony, as Provincial Grand Master of the Cambridge District of Oddfellows. This is a position I will hold for twelve months, passing on the title to the Provincial Deputy Grand Master next Spring.

I wonder how many of you know what an Oddfellow is. Here are some words which may enlighten you. It is believed that the roots of the Oddfellows go back way beyond those of other organisations. Since the 18th Century there has been a recorded legend of the Oddfellows which infers that the Oddfellows can trace its origins back to the exile of the Israelites from Babylon in 587BC. As the legend has it, many of those exiled banded together into a brotherhood for mutual support and defence.

The Oddfellows is one of the largest and oldest friendly societies currently operating in the UK. It is a not-for-profit membership organisation with branches across the country that provide social activities, care and support for 100,000 members. Anyone can become a member. Evolving from the medieval Trade Guilds, the Oddfellows began in the city of London in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. There are strong branches of the Oddfellows in North American, the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand and South Africa.

Local groups were established across England and Wales. In 1810 the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows was formed by a number of local social groups joining together. As the idea caught on, more and more groups started up around the country, generally meeting in pubs and church halls and now many branches own their own meeting place or Oddfellows hall as we here in the Cambridge district do. You may have noticed the coat of arms on the window in Newmarket Road just past the Elizabeth Way roundabout on the left hand side travelling out of town.

Today the Oddfellows is a social and care organisation. Every year, thousands of people join the Oddfellows, not just for the range of financial and practical benefits available, but increasingly for the network of social events membership offers and the opportunity for making friends.

During my year in office, I am raising funds for the East Anglian Air Ambulance organisation. I feel that with the A14 in this area and the possible closure of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, the need to support this group is vital. They rely totally on donations as they do not receive any grants for their excellent work.

To find out more, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk.



Childcare Voucher Update

CHILD CARE VOUCHERS **Working Parents – Save Money with Childcare Vouchers**

JESUS COLLEGE employees with children under the age of 16 who pay for registered childcare can make substantial savings by joining our **Busy Bees Childcare Voucher Scheme**.

Childcare Vouchers are exempt from tax and National Insurance Contributions and represent a potential saving of up to **£1196*** per parent, per year on the cost of their childcare. As both parents can request Vouchers, this saving could rise to £2,392 per year.

Parents can request up to **£243 worth of Vouchers per month** to pay for all forms of registered and approved childcare, including all nurseries (not just Busy Bees outlets), nannies, childminders, au pairs, out of school clubs and holiday schemes.

Childcare Voucher schemes are supported by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and offer a genuinely **hassle-free way** to save money on the cost of childcare. The scheme can only be run in conjunction with a parent's employer, as vouchers are exchanged for a part of an individual's salary.

Parents who require more information or want to join the scheme should contact Busy Bees Childcare Vouchers on freephone 08000 430 860.

For more information contact Busy Bees Childcare Vouchers:

Freephone	08000 430 860
Email	enquiries@busybeesvouchers.com
Website	www.busybeesvouchers.com

*subject to individual circumstances



Geoffrey Howe recounts childhood memories of a trip to Histon Station interspersed with recent political mismanagements as this graceful old building awaits its fate.

The Last Bastion

And so it has finally come to this. A few misguided local politicians, whose knowledge of the transport infrastructure is at least limited if not Neanderthal, have now reached their climactic decision to rip up the former railway line from Cambridge to St. Ives and replace it with a road. There is of course no point in referring to it as a Guided Busway any longer as it will undoubtedly fail in this guise and will eventually be converted into a road to at least recoup some of the massive lost investment. I make no bones about the project now. The time for that is long past. What will be, will eventually be and all sane individuals within this locality know that this project will be tantamount only to selling sand to the Arabs.

Sometime during the summer months this year the very attractive if disused village station at Histon on the outskirts of Cambridge will fall victim to the whims of local democracy – if only. Of course in reality, local democracy has been shunted off down a siding from where it will only emerge when the government of the day thinks it can utilize its benefits once again. We all know that the voice of the local community is only worth anything when it actually agrees with that of central government. If it has the temerity to point out that the scheme (whatever it may be) is one of the utmost follies ever created, then I'm sorry but the local government candidate will make any and every effort to disguise this fact as he (or she) wants to be electable. Whatever happened to the 2000 plus letters of objection? Why did the paltry four letters, yes only four in support, gain so much more credence with the powers that be? These will be the questions that will haunt me and many other local people for a good many years to come. But rather than whittle on about these current issues, let me relay to you an episode in my childhood when I went to Histon Station.

Way back in the late 1960s when the effects of the Beeching cuts were yet to fully realise their draconian potential, the St. Ives to Cambridge Branch railway line was still an intact structure. Passenger services were not due to be withdrawn until the early 1970s and one could on balance see the sensibilities in this procedure, as the emergence of the privately owned motor car was far more economical for moving a small group of individuals about than the provision of a fully staffed two carriage train would ever have been. In due course the passenger services were curtailed and the obvious savings in members of the intermediate station staff would have been notable straight away. No Station Masters or Shunting Personnel and an obvious reduction in Signalmen and Crossing Gate Keepers, to say nothing of those employed upon the train itself.

My Grandfather was in this country in the late 1960s. I can't quite place the year now but previously he had taken me in my pushchair down to his local station in Denmark – at Fruen's Bøge in Odense, and had sat with me for a while there while I was indoctrinated on the sensible way to move people and packages about. So it was not at all surprising that during one hot summer while he was holidaying over here, he decided that we should go out for a walk and should in fact walk alongside an existing railway line. It was not illegal to do so in his native Denmark at the time and the probability of a train coming along at any great speed while one was walking in broad daylight was something that would hardly escape one's notice. And so we set off out in good light and walked along the trackside to Histon.

I cannot remember if we returned along the same way or not but I do remember certain aspects of our afternoon stroll.

To start with, I remember the penalty notice displayed on the gates that we first came to at the top of Kings Hedges Road. In those days of course Kings Hedges Road was nothing more than a dead end as a tarmacadamed road with a rough farm track leading off across the railway lines towards Kings Hedges Farm. The notice threatened a fine of £25.00, a considerable sum at the time, for the offence of non closure of the gate after passage through. This was of course directed at vehicular traffic and as I and my Grandfather used the side wicket gate, it did not really apply to us. But this did not stop me many years later in going off to retrieve the sign, particularly when it was obvious that the gates were no longer in use with the demise of Kings Hedges Farm and the sale of the land. Today that very same sign is displayed on the reverse side of my back garden gate. A little inappropriate perhaps, but a good reminder of the days when the railway and its laws were taken very seriously by one and all.

Walking off down the line we must have passed a majestic bracket signal as I can recall seeing (and climbing) the self same structure a few years later before it too befell the fate of the woodman's axe and met the ground in a swirl of dust and cables. The track was dualled and populated with occasional posts, some of them signals, others of a telegraph variety. We totally missed the monument to the woman lost in a snow drift in 1793 (in a field adjacent to the line and obviously long before the line was built in 1847), which is not surprising as the summer crops were reaching their full height. I then recall that we arrived at Histon. We stayed there a little while before returning home. I'm not sure how we got home as I was probably tired by that time being only seven or eight years old. Perhaps by arrangement I was collected by my father on his way home from work. But anyway I did get home and now that the line is to be replaced with a road I can rely only on my memories of this wonderful community serving location.

Recently as a last farewell, I went back to Histon Station. I wanted to see what had suffered from the thirty or so years of neglect that had produced this fanciful idea that a car park (for the Guided Bus) would serve the community better. It was a sorry visit. The station buildings had long since passed their glorious days and despite the valiant efforts of a group of local individuals under the banner of "Save our Station", too much neglect had seen off their best endeavours. But still the buildings were beautiful and indeed functional albeit for the want of a general tidy up and a lick of paint. How sad it is to think now that perhaps by the time you are sitting down in your globally

warmed back garden with your mandatory glass of Chardonnay, this image will be nothing more than a heap of rubble good for nothing other than under core infill for numerous future road building programmes farther afield. I mean anything that has existed for at least 160 years and has served the local community for as much as 130 of those years (before the withdrawal of passenger services) surely deserves more than to be awarded the car park of the year trophy.

Here we are in this day and age worrying about global warming and the proliferation of cheap flights to regularly get bladdered on cheap booze in Prague; yet here locally is a similar abomination which although not on the same scale is replacing the 200 plus people carrying train with a series of "clean green buses" so the political diatribe goes – each one of them just breaking even with four people journeys per trip, and probably not accommodating many more than that.

Of course amid the euphoria of the opening of this "new" service, there will be many who avail themselves of a marvellous opportunity. But I can predict that once the dust has settled and the press reporters and cameras have gone on to news more enticing, the guided bus will limp along its specially laid concrete road before realization sets in that if in fact those who were in authority had spent the government gifted £92 million of our money on reinvigorating the already existing railway line – something which actually links into an already existing transport network, then such a sum of money would never have been wasted in the first place.

So goodbye Histon. Goodbye Oakington and Longstanton. Farewell Swavesey and St. Ives. The pleasure's been all mine, right from those early days when innocently walking the line with one half of one's maternal parentage. Right up to the day that they tore the heart out of The Cambridge to St. Ives line. Service means nothing to these bean counting journeymen. "Done for St. Ives then... let's see if we can bugger up those Wensleydale upstarts now – how dare they make a railway work – and on a shoestring to boot!"





Introducing...

Danielle Feger, Accounts Assistant

Since I started working as Accounts Assistant at Jesus College at the beginning of January, it is about time, I introduced myself. I work part-time (mornings) in the Accounts Office. My main responsibilities include bank accounts, credit card statements, Fellows' academic allowances, Fellows' wine, supervision payments and a lot of other things that come up about once every few months. In the afternoons I work at the Department of Archaeology where I am responsible for the Department accounts as well as for the research project accounts.

It was a long odyssey that brought me to Cambridge. I was born in Austria but grew up in Liechtenstein. After I gained a Certificate in Business Administration in Switzerland I worked for various finance companies in Liechtenstein. Not liking either the kind of work I did nor the country I lived in, I started looking for alternatives. This search brought me to the UK, Spain, Germany and back to Cambridge again, where I intend to stay for a while this time around.

I now live in Chesterton with my husband

who is a scientist. I am sorry I am not able to tell you what his job is because I do not understand a word when he talks about work. Something to do with genes ...

I would like to tell you what I do in my free time but since I am studying for the AAT Diploma there is hardly any at the moment. I am very much looking forward to the long summer vacation after the exams in mid-June, when I will be free to do with my evenings and weekends whatever I feel like ...



Jesus College Postcards

Four new postcards of Jesus College (above & left) have been released.

These are available to buy from the Development Office.

For further information about the postcards contact :

development@jesus.cam.ac.uk



Can you sing?

Dan Hyde is searching for people to fill the Jesus College Choir

I am looking to fill a few places for sopranos, altos, tenors and basses in next year's choir, and would be very pleased to hear from any potential singers asap. The College Choir exists first and foremost to sing regular services in the Chapel, and is open to all members of the College, regardless of religious beliefs. We also enjoy a busy schedule of recordings, radio, television and concert work. If you are interested, please contact me to arrange an informal meeting and audition.

Don't just assume you won't get in - give it a go if you're interested, as we're looking for potential as much as proven ability.

As with all College teams, we try to swell the ranks with Jesus students, inviting volunteers from other Colleges where needed. If you yourself are not interested, though know of someone who is and is not necessarily a Jesuan, please put them in touch with me (director-of-music@jesus.cam.ac.uk).



My Race for Life

by Jen Hawton, Development Office

On Sunday 1st July I shall be swapping my rowing blades for some trainers to run in the race for life and raise money for Cancer Research UK.

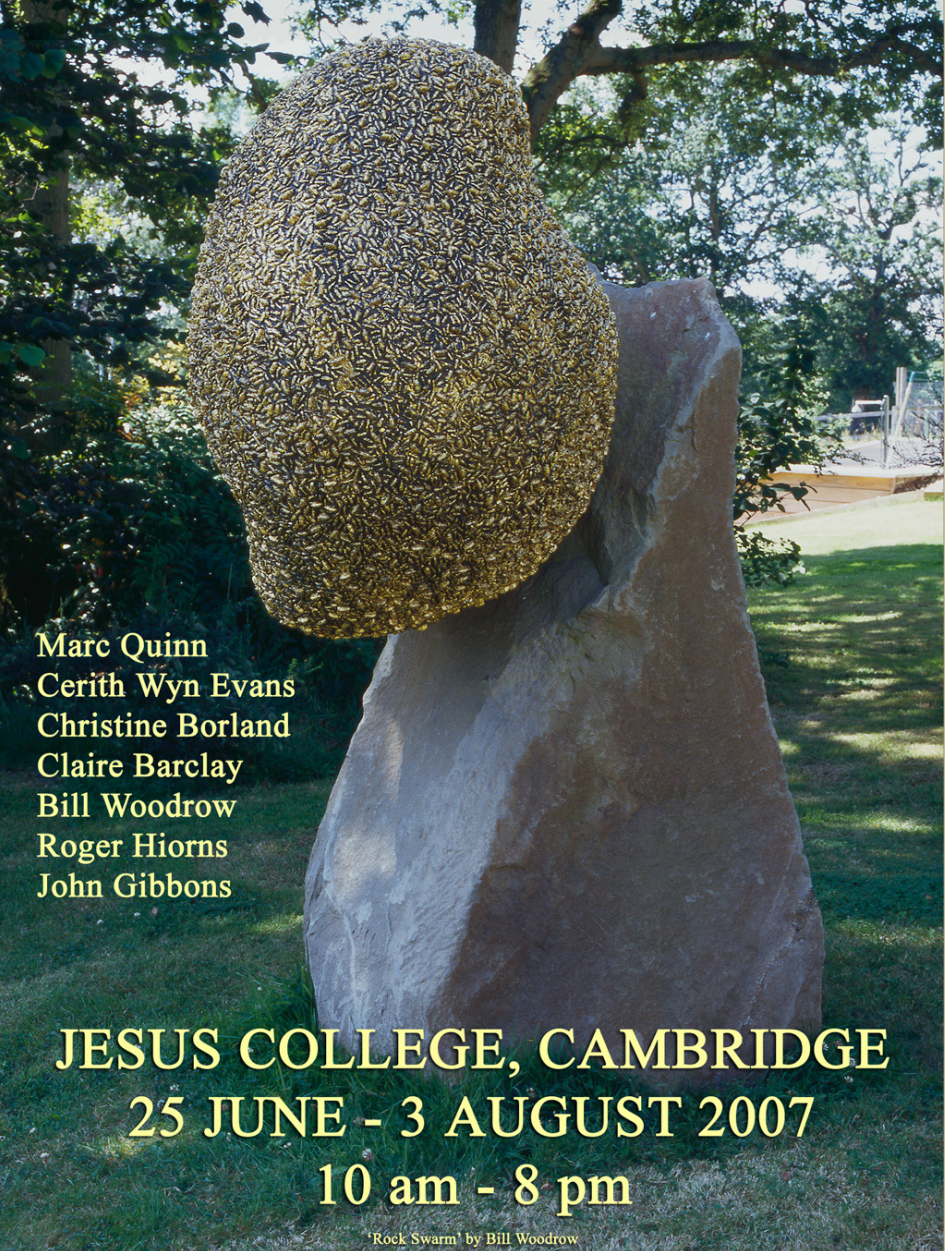
1 in 3 people will get cancer at some point in their life and the work that Cancer Research UK, and other cancer charities, do is dramatically improving their chances of survival from the disease.

The pioneering research of Cancer Research UK is constantly improving the treatments available for those with cancer and with your help they can continue to search for that elusive cure.

I hope that you can spare a couple of pounds to help support this essential work.

www.raceforlifesporsorme.org/jenhawton

SCULPTURE IN THE CLOSE



Marc Quinn
Cerith Wyn Evans
Christine Borland
Claire Barclay
Bill Woodrow
Roger Hiorns
John Gibbons

JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
25 JUNE - 3 AUGUST 2007
10 am - 8 pm

'Rock Swarm' by Bill Woodrow

The MOJITO

by Steve the Barman



This famous Cuban favourite is a highly fashionable cocktail on the bar scene. Whether rum is your spirit of choice or not, on a long, hot summers day, there’s nothing better than sitting in the sun relaxing with a cool glass of Mojito!

INGREDIENTS :

Ice (*preferably crushed but straight forward ice from the freezer tray will do*)
Half a Lime (*cut into 4 wedges*)
8-10 Mint Leaves
Sugar (*easiest is Sugar Syrup or Gomme (equal parts cane sugar & boiling water. Dissolve & allow to cool. If kept chilled will last for a month) or just buy a bottle from local supermarket!*)
50ml White or Gold Rum (*I prefer to use Havana Club Especial (Gold) however a cheap alternative is Bacardi*)
Soda Water

METHOD :

In a clean, nice sized glass, add the mint and 25ml of sugar syrup.
Gently muddle the mint to release the flavours. You can use the end of a rolling pin if you don’t have a muddler. Don’t muddle too hard though. You don’t want to release the bitterness of the mint.
Squeeze in the lime wedges
Add the rum
Add enough ice to fill the glass
Give it a quick stir
Add soda water to the top
Stir again
Serve and Enjoy !!!

Biodiversity at Jesus

Biodiversity is working to its full advantage following the arrival of a pair of pheasants in the early spring whom have since reared 15 chicks. It is hoped they will thrive in the college close and become a natural feature within.

The photo, right, was taken by Paul Stearn in the Fellows’ Garden.

Free time at lunch?

Why not walk the award winning biodiversity trail in College. It runs through the woodland belt in College (commonly known as The Grove). You can start your walk just behind the Houskeeping Department close to the Jesus Lane vehicular exit.



Pavlova Madsen

The following recipe was given to the kitchens many years ago by Professor Waring and the delicious optional version containing the chopped cherries etc is a High Table favourite particularly during the summer months.

INGREDIENTS :

4 Egg Whites (large)
Pinch Salt
1 Cup Castor Sugar
1 Dessertspoon Cornflour
1 Teaspoon Vinegar

METHOD :

Beat egg whites with salt until stiff. Add half the sugar and beat for 5 minutes, then add the remainder of the sugar, a tablespoonful at a time. Make sure the sugar is properly beaten in, then fold in the sifted cornflour and finally the vinegar. Pile high onto oiled tin foil. Bake at 130°C for 1 ¼ hours, then leave in the unopened oven for a further two hours. When cold, fill the centre with whipped cream and decorate with seasonal fruits.

OPTIONAL :

Fold into the unbaked egg whites, chopped cherries, slivered almonds, chocolate pieces, chopped marshmallows, chopped crystalised preserved ginger, dried apricots, and any other dried fruits. When cold, fill the centre with whipped cream and decorate with dried fruits.

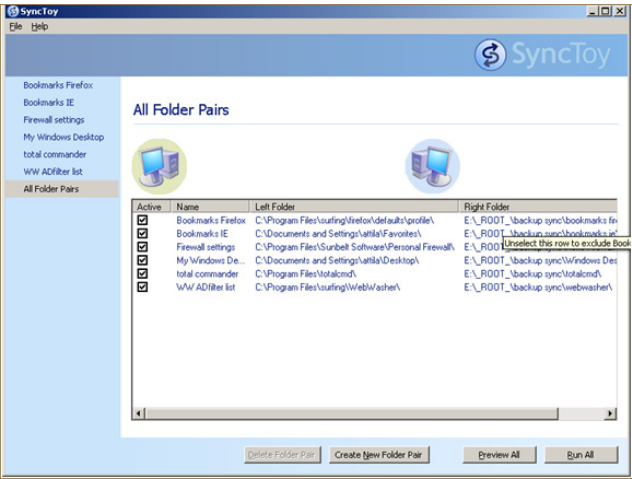


SyncToy

SyncToy: the smart way to copy files.
Rob Spragg reports.

SyncToy v1.4 is available as a free download on the Microsoft Download Centre. The easy to use application helps you copy, move, rename, and delete files between folders and computers: <http://tinyurl.com/7dlru>

There are new sources of files coming from every direction: digital cameras, e-mail, mobile phones, portable media players, camcorders, PDAs, and laptops. Increasingly, computer users are using different folders, drives, and even different computers (such as a laptop and a desktop) to store and retrieve files. Yet managing hundreds or thousands of files is still largely a manual operation. In some cases it is necessary to get copies of files from one place; in other cases there is a need to keep two storage locations exactly in sync. Some users manage files manually, dragging and dropping from one place to another and keeping a mental card catalogue in their heads. Others use one or more applications to provide this functionality for them.



Now there is an easier way. SyncToy is a free PowerToy that provides an easy to use, highly customizable program that helps users to do the heavy lifting involved with the copying, moving, and synchronization of different directories. Most common operations can be performed with just a few clicks of the mouse, and additional customization is available without added complexity. SyncToy can manage multiple sets of folders at the same time; it can combine files from two folders in one case, and mimic renames and deletes in another. Unlike other applications, SyncToy actually keeps track of renames to files and will make sure those changes get carried over to the synchronized folder.

Left is a screenshot of SyncToy in action. I have used this myself and can promise that it is very user-friendly, simple and quick to use. The more adventurous can even schedule it to run unattended at a time of their choosing (see <http://tinyurl.com/2pke4h>).



The wrong mind made me do it. Ashley Meggitt tells all.

Why would anybody in their right mind do a triathlon, and why would they choose to do one that required the idiot to flap around a load of buoys in a lake that was designed by Capability Brown and whose sole purpose is to look stunning from the drawing room window? Well no one would if they were in their right mind, but people who do such things, and I include in this category activities such as sky diving, extreme skiing and rock climbing, are of course not in their right mind, or at least temporarily not in their right mind.

Personally I have bouts of wrong mindedness which make me do such things as triathlons, marathons, and cycling up mountain type events. I’m not any good at them but the Wrong Mind that seems to take control every so often doesn’t seem bothered about either the embarrassment or the pain it inflicts on me. I’m currently in the middle of one of these bouts and so on Saturday 2nd of June I flapped (my version of swimming), cycled and shuffled my way through the Blenheim triathlon bravely threatening the tail enders of my wave (triathlon has a whole vocabulary of its own so you’ll have to bear with me on this) .

The day was hot and the water in the lake cold, the flat course for the bike had a hill in it that no one told me about, and the run was 500 meters longer that I thought it should have been – but hey, the Wrong Minded masochist just didn’t care and left the Right Minded wimp to lie in the shade for quite a while after having crossed the line, contemplating the pros and cons of a lobotomy.

Of course an hour later I was telling everyone how pleased I was that I got around on such little training and that had I trained harder etc. The truth of the matter is that I can’t help but feel good after such an event. The feeling of achievement is addictive, just ask the other 1000’s of competitors at this year’s event. I’m always amazed at the variety of shapes, sizes, and abilities of those that do triathlons. It’s a club all of its own – if you do a triathlon you’re in the club and you get the respect of all other tri-athletes and that includes the elite athletes.

Talking of elite athletes, this year’s Blenheim triathlon hosted the Varsity match which saw a Cambridge man win the men’s race but the team event went to Oxford. The Cambridge woman struggled with Oxford dominating the podium and the team event. I did my bit and shouted breathlessly at any Cambridge person that went past me and received the thumbs up as acknowledgement. I’m pleased to say that even given my lack of fitness and ability I would not have come last in the Varsity match.....not quite.

I’m off now to do the London Duathlon - so I’ll be seeing you at next year’s event?

