

# IN LOCO PARENTIS

A light-hearted look at  
the role of a Cambridge Tutor

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April 2013

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**To all my Tutorial Pupils,  
without whom this book  
would not have been possible**

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# In Loco Parentis

reduced from twenty one to eighteen'<sup>1</sup> nearly all university students have been 'technically' at least' if not always in their behaviour' grown ups and there has been no reason for Oxbridge Tutors to take on quasi parental roles. However' I have had this erudite sounding title in mind for a book such as this for well over twenty years and am extremely loath to give it up despite the fact that it was well past its sell by date by the time I thought of it

Nevertheless' even though the strictly parental aspects of a Tutor's job may no longer exist' his or her role as a student's guide' mentor and' if the worst comes to the worst' friend at court' remains as important as ever. Within any one college' and at any one time' up to about ten of its senior academic staff<sup>2</sup> agree to take on the role of a Tutor for' typically' some fifty students of that college' officially known as their *proff*. These tutorial commitments' which carry largely nominal monetary reward' are undertaken as an addition to the Fellows' normal duties of teaching' examining and research associated with his or her University appointment. Perhaps I should explain that nearly all Cambridge academics have two allegiances' one to their College and another to one of the University's departments' however' the balance between the two varies significantly from person to person

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<sup>1</sup>In 1970. Footnotes such as this one are added both to provide relevant background and to give the impression of a scholarly piece of work, rather than a simple collection of reminiscences, some accurate, some perhaps less so.

<sup>2</sup>Collectively, and officially, referred to as the Fellows of the College.







When it comes to recollections concerning students or senior academics' in most cases there is nothing to be gained by naming them – and quite often I do not know their true identities – but if several are involved' and have to be differentiated' I have given them fictitious names. However' in order that credit should be given wherever it is unequivocally due' all names given in footnotes are genuine ones – apologies to all those totally blameless University Members' both Junior and Senior' who appear only in the main text' and therefore only as suspicion arousing pseudonyms.

My period of office as a college Senior Tutor came to an end in the late 1970's though I did continue to serve as a Financial Tutor' for a further ten years. However' I intend these reminiscences to reflect mainly on my time as a Tutor in the sense in which the word is normally understood. Consequently' whilst passages aimed at helping the reader to understand background that is still relevant today are usually written in the present tense' those relating to specific events that occurred during my time as a Tutor are set in the past.

# Chapter 1

## Jack of All Trades

May I may start with the ending. Of my twenty two years as a Cambridge Tutor, all but two were spent as Clare College's Senior Tutor, and so it is largely from my experiences in that post that these reminiscences are drawn. Why begin at the end? Well, when I was first approached by the Master of Clare about taking over this role from another Fellow of the College, who himself was due to take over the post of College Bursar, I thought of it only as a single part time job. And it was only when I came to relinquish it, and my immediate successors note the plural, were appointed, that I properly appreciated just how many sides there had been to it.

At the time I was asked, my main occupation was as a Uni

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versity Lecturer in the Department of Physics' having previously been a Research Fellow at Clare and a Physics Demonstrator<sup>1</sup> I

change of Bursar and no change of Senior Tutor

Nor was there much change in the composition, activities or level of achievement in the College as a whole. Clare remained the college with the male to female undergraduate ratio closest to one to one. We were outside the 'rst six in unofficial academic league tables only once. The College's music, and in particular the Choir, continued to have an international reputation. The pitches and courts at the Sports Ground continued to be amongst the best in Cambridge.



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a person could be re elected to the post' their maximum total tenure should be limited to ten years

My own point of view' though I did not voice it publicly' was that the recommendations were not internally consistent' or at least they did not chime with the University's view of a Senior Tutor's post. All of my predecessors had also held University Teaching posts' as I did' with no reduction in University teach

against the absolute age limitation imposed by Clare's Statutes

In the remaining chapters of this book I have tried to give a picture of the various roles played by a Tutor and in particular

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College Council continuously for a total of forty three years' which works out at just over three hundred meetings

The wide ranging role of the College Council is probably best made clear by quoting two of the relevant Statutes

**The Council shall arrange everything relating to the instruction of the undergraduates.**

**The Council shall perform all such duties in the administration of College affairs as are not in these statutes expressly assigned to the Governing Body or the Finance Committee; . . . . .<sup>8</sup>**

It will therefore come as no surprise to the reader that the Council' having such a wide remit' appears in many different contexts in the remaining chapters of this book. For this reason' I will not attempt to give here a more specific list of all the ways it impinges on College life. In any case' as a result of the second quoted Statute' this would' in principle' be impossible' as the list would be endless.

The Finance Committee was much less demanding so far as I was concerned' although it met with about the same regularity as the Council. Before my membership of the Committee became automatic' I was a member of it for only two three year stints. Further' unlike for the Council' at which the Senior Tutor is likely to have to present papers on two or three items of

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<sup>8</sup>There are provisions for the Governing Body, the ultimate authority in the College, to require the Council to refer any specified matter to it, but they are very seldom used.





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Easter Term<sup>9</sup> by the Senior Members. It had no executive powers but was an informal discussion group where concern about what was or was not happening could be aired in theory saving time at the more formal meetings of the Council and Finance Committee. In retrospect I suppose it did in that members went to subsequent meetings better informed and sometimes better armed with relevant evidence but it did not always feel like that at the time.

There is one further Committee of which Senior Tutors have automatic membership and that is the Senior Tutors' Committee (STC). It is neither a University nor an individual College committee but is one of the three main channels of communication between the Colleges and the University the other two are The Colleges' Committee consisting of the Heads of all the Colleges<sup>10</sup> and The Bursars' Committee with an obvious constitution. None of these three committees is even mentioned



• *CHAPTER 4 AC OF ALL TRADES*

duty' as most times I was not called upon to act' and' when I

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being able to increase the availability of Cambridge places' the Colleges collectively were faced with a reduction

Clearly' this was a major problem from both the educational and financial points of view. But equally clearly' the existing Colleges could not turn their backs on the potential new addition to their ranks. Concessions had to be made on all sides: the Bursars and the Financial Board had to accept the loss of income and do their best to seek other ways to replace it. Senior and Admissions Tutors had to give up' on average' about six<sup>13</sup> undergraduate places in their annual intake. and the General Board had to try to find ways of reducing or recovering the cost of University teaching (lectures' practical classes' examinations' etc. without getting rid of Staff. Colleges could try to help in the latter by making up their numbers with overseas students' who were charged higher University fees. College fees were the same for both types of student' as the college facilities available to them were largely independent of their residential status.

Just a few years later' the University was told to restore the number of UK based students to its original level' but with no increase in the now reduced block funding grant. Thus the DES' whether by accident or design' and' naturally' I suspect the latter' had effected a reduction in the per capita support it gave to UK students' without ever having to call it that. Because historically many of their buildings have been endowed' and therefore have no need to show a return on investment costs' Cambridge University and its Colleges probably absorbed this

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<sup>13</sup>To allow the new College to have roughly its planned-for UK student numbers.



of the medical applicants as 'money' the next available place in a group's allocation went to the College that could put forward the strongest candidate amongst the remaining contenders. As there were seven or eight Colleges in each group and about seventy places to allocate within it, fluctuations tended to average out, and by and large Colleges felt that they got the number of places they deserved. Before the DES intervention, overseas students were not differentiated from home students in the selection process.

However, after the change of rules, this system could not include overseas applicants. Neither could it be applied to them as a separate operation, with an average of less than one overseas place per college; injustices would be bound to arise. Taking the view to which I think all Colleges actually subscribe, and which is summarised by

- From the candidate's point of view, it is more important to get a place somewhere, than to get one at a particular College.
- From the Colleges' point of view, we want the best possible collective intake of students to Cambridge, whilst, within that, giving as many of them as possible their 'rst choice College.

a small 'c' committee consisting of the Secretary of the STC and a representative from each of the three groups was given the task of considering all the overseas medical applicants that

the Colleges wished to take' and drawing up a batting order long enough (actually' short enough' to match the few available places. These were then allocated without regard to the numbers going to any particular College or group.

The principles set out above guide the admissions process in general and are covered much more fully in the chapter that deals with that topic.<sup>15</sup> The reason for mentioning them here is that implementing them calls for a lot of inter college cooperation and the STC is the channel through which it is provided.<sup>16</sup>

My final example of the serious and important work carried out by the STC is concerned with examinations that were used to assess the academic ability of those seeking entry to Cambridge. The traditional method of doing this was through the Cambridge Scholarship Examination' which was used not just to decide who should be awarded a scholarship or exhibition' but also to select some of those without such an award who could be offered 'commoners places'.<sup>17</sup> There were also Ordinary Entrance Examinations' run by the individual Colleges' that did not have entrance awards attached.<sup>18</sup> I have been given to un

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<sup>15</sup>See chapter 3.

<sup>16</sup>Or, for those who advocate the University's adopting a more business-like approach, 'is the process for onwardly progressing the delivery of this mission objective, going forward'.

<sup>17</sup>The offers of places were sometimes conditional on later achieving particular A-level grades, but these were not infrequently set at a nominal level. Under Government regulations, two A-level passes were required as a qualification for state financial support.

<sup>18</sup>I don't suppose that it is strictly true, but it used to be said that a former Master of Clare, who was also in charge of admissions to the College,



derstand that prior to World War II the latter was the normal mode of entry for most 'average' students

The Scholarship examination was held in Cambridge in early December for entry in the following October' or sometimes in the October after that. Over the years some changes in its format were made. Papers were sat in Schools rather than at Cambridge' some less demanding questions were set for those in the second' rather than the third' year of the Sixth Form' provision was made for those taking 'new' A level courses' e.g. Nuclear Physics' but' with the timing of the examination remaining unaltered' it continued to be the general perception in the educational sector that pupils from those schools that could run a third year Sixth Form had an unfair advantage

As a result of the abolition in the late nineteen seventies of state funded places at Direct Grant Schools' and of most state Grammar Schools'<sup>19</sup> the schools able to run a 'seventh term' class' as preparation for the Oxbridge Scholarship Examination' were confined to the independent sector

The Colleges' as the bodies that decide on who should be admitted to Cambridge' were faced with a difficult decision. The Entrance Scholarships had a long tradition' encouraged ad

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**had the only three copies of the Ordinary Entrance Examination papers in his pocket, and that they never left the examination room except in his pocket!**

<sup>19</sup>Those that escaped closure, over 150 spread throughout England, but with concentrations in Kent, Lincolnshire, and Buckinghamshire, continued to attract academically able boys and girls, and they still secure high rankings in academic league tables.

vanced study at schools' and in the past' had been awarded to many of those now responsible for deciding their future. However, it was accepted that there was an overwhelming case for trying to produce a level playing field when it came to whatever criteria were used to determine Cambridge admissions, and a demanding level for the written papers was certainly one of those. The only solution was to abandon the seventh term examination and replace it with hurdles that could be tackled during a normal two year A level course.

This historic step was taken for the ' would be entrants' and I recall the calendar year ' as the only year in my time as Senior and Admissions Tutor when there were no written examinations with a decisive bearing on Cambridge admissions. A subcommittee of the STC was set up to consider the implications of trying to move to a sixth term examination that would not interfere with a school's A level programme and would provide suf

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their 'first choice College' also naming their next two choices - they would be interviewed in early December' and a letter indicating whether or not they would receive a conditional offer would be sent out in January. Any conditional offer they received would require reaching stated standards in three A levels and so called STEP papers<sup>21</sup> in one or two specified subjects.

The STEP papers were to be ones that would require knowledge of no more than the topics contained in the corresponding National Cores' which were the compulsory bases for all A level syllabuses. All such material would therefore have been covered by all candidates' whichever Examination Board or optional extensions they had taken. If questions were to be set on any topic not in the Core' the topic also had to be outside the extended syllabuses of the Examination Boards. The difficulty of the papers was' of course' to be greater than that of A levels' and the questions were to be framed so as to require deeper thought and more 'joined up thinking' than had by then become the norm.<sup>22</sup>

It was further recommended that STEP should be a public examination run by one of the Examination Boards' so that

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<sup>21</sup>I say 'so-called' because, for want of a better working title, they were prosaically called



majority of Cambridge applicants' the wheel had come pretty well full circle and had taken about seventy years to do so

The activities of the Senior Tutors' Committee weren't always quite so heavyweight as the previous examples would suggest' and occasionally the STC became involved in a storm in

The Clare races to which reference was being made are known as the Clare Novice Regatta it was' and still is' a competition that is restricted to VIIIs comprised of members who have had at most three month's rowing experience' or have never coxed in a race before' as appropriate. It is open to crews from

damage that would be done to the University' if a HEFCE<sup>26</sup> teaching quality assessment panel paid a (surprise) visit at the time of the races

The Secretary of the STC asked me if the matter should go on the agenda for the next meeting. I think that I said it should' even if it turned out to be no more than reporting something that had died a death. Of course' this was all too late to affect that particular year's Regatta as Prof McIntosh's original letter was sent out only days before it took place

The Master of Clare sent me a copy of everything he had received and I wrote to the Captain of the Clare Boat Club asking him to supply factual information about what had actually happened at the Regatta. His helpful reply formed the basis of my letter to Prof McIntosh' who also happened to be a long standing colleague of mine at the Cavendish Laboratory. The Captain also assured me that' even though he was a scientist' he had not missed any lectures or practicals as the result of rowing. I repeat here the main thrust of the original letter' so that the reader may refer to it when reading my response

**'run all day, starting at 0900 on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday of this week.'**

The response' which perhaps was a bit too laid back' read as follows

**Prof B L McIntosh  
Faculty Board of Physics and Chemistry**

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<sup>26</sup>Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Dear Barry

#### Rowing Races during Lectures and Classes

Now that the admissions season and the Christmas break are over, I have been able to consider the information I have gathered on the above topic and respond to your letter to the Master of Clare. I will confine my observations to the Clare Novice Regatta, as I cannot comment on the other events.

On the one hand, your letter overstates the time involved; the Clare Novice regatta was run on two days only, from 12.30 pm (not 9.00 am) on Wednesday and all day Saturday (though half of the crews were eliminated by 10.00 am). On the Wednesday each crew raced only once, and clearly only a small fraction rowed before 1.00 pm. On the other hand, you have underestimated the total number of people involved at some time or other; there were 109 novice crews, about 100 marshals and some number of spectators – an estimated total of 1300 people.

Saturday rowing is necessary because, it appears, a Sunday Regatta is not allowed.<sup>27</sup>

You might also wish to know that, so far as training is concerned, Novice crews are only allowed on the river before 9.00 am or after 3.30 pm, and so the impact of this on morning lectures should be minimal.

In summary, the impact on lectures of the Clare Novice



**Regatta is not as great as that implied in your letter, and in practical terms affects only one Saturday morning. And it does give over one quarter of Cambridge's annual intake something to work towards in their first term!**

**Yours,**

**Ken**

**cc  
Secretary General  
The Masters of Clare and Another College  
Secretaries of the Councils of the Schools**

I don't remember the issue ever being discussed at the Senior Tutors' Committee' though I think that it was reported

Before leaving the topic of the Senior Tutors' Committee' I should add that it had a number of more permanent subcommittees' and that most Senior Tutors served on one or two of them at some time or other. Amongst them were subcommittees to deal with the admissions assessment system' student welf

undertaking placements at hospitals away from Cambridge' and Veterinary students seeing practice on farms around the country were also supported by the Fund

As explained earlier' the post of Senior Tutor in Clare used to incorporate several others' that were later separated out. The task of 'being in charge of discipline' later defined as being the Dean Of Students' comes into play in several of the chapters that follow' and for that reason I will not elaborate on that particular aspect here. Similarly' the role of an undergraduate Admissions Tutor' which is treated in some depth elsewhere (chapter 3 ' will not be further discussed at this stage.

When I started as Senior Tutor' the role of Financial Tutor was largely restricted to the College's part in the administ

funding body<sup>29</sup> ought to have made things easier. But it didn't because of all the other mechanisms that had to be set up.<sup>30</sup> By the time I retired from the Senior Tutorship, the financial support of students had become a major administrative load and it probably did merit a post of its own.

One of the other duties that falls to the Senior Tutor, though I have not previously mentioned it, is that of being the appropriate College Spokesperson when one is needed. Such a need does not arise often, as most queries from the media are addressed to the University rather than to a specific College. But if events of general interest relate to specific people, and those people are in some way connected with a particular College, then questions come its way. Thus, during my period in office, I contributed the occasional sound bite to television or radio, but was once on air for a more protracted interview.<sup>31</sup>

Many academic textbooks, including some of my own, end each chapter with a summary of the main points, results and conclusions in that chapter. For most chapters in this book that would be either impossible or excessively repetitive, but for this

introductory chapter' which aims to give the reader some idea of the scope of a tutorial post' it may perhaps be justified. So' for someone holding the dual posts of a University Teaching Officer and a College Senior Tutor some thirty years ago' the roll call of the areas of responsibility was something like Lectures · Practicals or Classes · Examining · Departmental administration · College Education Officer · Personal Tutor · Admissions Tutor · Financial Tutor · Dean of Students · College spokesperson · College Committees · some University Committees · and perhaps a little research

Pretty well 'Jack of All Trades' but

## **Chapter 2**

# **Spreading the Word**

a result of the Colleges' collective endeavours to allow every school leaver in the country with the appropriate ability to consider Cambridge as a possible next step

For most of my time as an Admissions Tutor it was the second of these three scenarios that was the norm. The timing of the various Colleges' Open Days' about seventy in total was included in the University's prospectus for the following year: they covered the period from March to September. Normally they were for prospective students in all subjects, but most Colleges held one that was restricted to would be Arts students and one that was specifically for potential Scientists. If a University Department was also planning an Open Day' as Classics and Engineering did regularly, the college programme would be arranged so that the relevant students could also visit the appropriate department on the same day.

If the Open Day fell during a University vacation, the College would be able to offer accommodation for the previous night to those who came from furthest away and requested it when they booked their place. On the day itself, a typical programme would consist of: a reception organised and manned (peopled by current undergraduate volunteers); a general introductory talk by an Admissions Tutor; a subject based discussion with a Fellow, who would explain what is expected of a candidate in that subject; a (free) lunch in the Buttery<sup>3</sup>; a second subject based discussion; go to a Departmental Open Day; wander round the College grounds and compare notes with other

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<sup>3</sup>Love Lasagne, love Clare – our wonderful Kitchen Manager was Italian!

attendees reassemble for an open question and answer session with both Admissions Tutors optionally answer a questionnaire about what you got out of the day and how it could have been improved set off for home loaded with pamphlets' information sheets' and (we hoped enhanced aspirations

As I'm sure Admissions Tutors in all Colleges did' my fellow Admissions Tutor and I kept records of how many of those who came to an Open Day at Clare subsequently applied to the College' and' for those that did' how successful their applications were' statistically speaking In most years about 75% of those who attended the Open Days did apply' and it nearly always turned out that they had a better than average success rate But there was no obvious reason for this most of the College's Fellows who carried out the interviews had not met any of the candidates before' and' even for those who had' it was typically six months ago and in a group setting Perhaps enthusiasm for their subject' a quality most definitely sought by interviewers' is reflected in a similar enthusiasm for 'finding out' before deciding where to apply' as much as possible about where it can be studied most effectively

College Open Days were not the only way in which Admissions Tutors attempted to 'spread the word' events away from Cambridge formed an important part of the process Participation in these was undertaken by small groups or by individuals' not as representatives of particular Colleges' but on behalf of the Colleges collectively' synonymous in most people's minds with Cambridge University Visits to schools by invitation were

A rather more unusual event was one organised by the Bedfordshire Education Department in which I took part several times. For this, about a dozen Oxbridge Admissions Tutors would be asked to assemble in Bedford and then, after a pep talk by the County's Chief Education Officer, would be dispersed in pairs to Schools or Sixth Form Colleges throughout the County. There they would be asked to sit in on, or even



The latter were often mistakenly encouraged in this by the Con

mixed' in the 'rst wave' should not do so until a further three years had elapsed. Two other Colleges' Churchill and King's' joined Clare in taking in their 'rst mixed group of Freshers in

• 2 That we had made the right decision was overwhelmingly

hundred and fifty years later<sup>6</sup> In case there is any doubt in the mind of the reader these twinning arrangements are not ancient traditions and do not go back any further than the start of the Twentieth Century

The decision to open the doors of most and ultimately all of the Cambridge Colleges to women was one that aroused interest way beyond those directly concerned with secondary education and not least amongst former members of the University and of course most of them were men The Master of Clare wrote to all alumni of the College to explain the decision and the reasons behind it Those alumni who had able daughters or granddaughters were naturally delighted and wrote to tell us so Those who had able sons or grandsons were not so delighted and also wrote to tell us so I'm sure that a similar scenario was played out in every other College

One channel for letting Cambridge Alumni know what is happening in the University is the Cambridge Society an informal network of former students with branches organised largely on a County basis in the UK or on a more national basis overseas The local volunteer organisers as well as arranging events for its members based on what is happening in their area would sometimes ask the Secretary of the Society if someone from the University could visit them and give a talk on recent develop



implied should be read out to the assembly Here goes “Ladie

rejecting some candidates from the private sector whose results are predicted to exceed this level <sup>9</sup>

Almost needless to say' from my point of view' and I think

available' i.e. only about 1% of all potential applicants could be offered a place at Oxford or Cambridge

If the 1% of A level subject entries graded A were randomly distributed amongst the candidates' and all of them were

alleged biases' in both directions



as it takes no account of impressions made at interview' the individual university choices made by the highest performing sixth formers' the non random distribution of A grades amongst candidates' and' as already noted' the effect of the selective maintained sector. However' it does show that the actual admissions are not too far from what a reasonably objective estimation would indicate as fair' given the identification of the realistic field of candidates and their achievements



*CHAPTER SPREADING THE WORD*

apply' he or she cannot be made an offer' however compelling  
the case for receiving one would have been it's as simple as  
that

## Chapter 3

# Leading the Way

The somewhat arrogant title of this chapter applies rather more to the distant past than to any current claim, though it has to be said that it was Clare's then Senior Tutor who first proposed to the Cambridge undergraduate Colleges in general the notion of becoming a mixed College, and Clare was in the group of three Colleges that were the first to take that step. Earlier, when in the 1970s there was a need for new Colleges that would accept graduate students,<sup>1</sup> Clare was the only College to establish one unaided, using part of its own endowment and financial support

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<sup>1</sup>These Colleges were Cambridge's response to the Bridges Report, which considered the assimilation of researchers, both pre- and post-doctoral, into the College structure.





recognised university community; and when its pupils have acquired it and tasted its sweets, it sends them out well qualified to rise according to their merits to different ranks in church and state. But so many men have been swept away by the ravages of the plague<sup>4</sup> that learning has lately suffered a sad decline in numbers. We, there-



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nance' could be gained through competitive Open Scholarships and Exhibitions' but these were relatively few in number and potential students who did not attend one of the major public schools were unlikely to receive appropriate preparation for the examination involved

However' that situation changed radically soon after the Second World War with the introduction of potential state support for all would be undergraduates. Since then' it has been



number of applicants became almost too large to handle. For each of the one hundred and twenty or so freshman places available at Clare each year, there were about six strongly supported applicants. Further, in order to yield a balanced assessment, it was felt that a potential student should be interviewed by at least three people, and they should include a Tutor and two Fellows who might become their supervisors if they were admitted. These considerations, together with the examination schedule, largely determined the associated pattern of interviews.

The competition for places was sufficiently fierce that any one to whom a place might be offered would have to perform at least 'quite well' in the written papers. On this basis, the pattern that was adopted was to pick out from the submitted applications<sup>7</sup> the very strongest candidates and interview them in late September. Then, after the written papers had been marked in early December, to call for interview in mid



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so the number of candidates who merited consideration in the Pool was about the same as the number to whom we were able to offer places

All application files that were going to be placed in the Pool had to be internally organised according to a common scheme supplied with a full set of interview reports and summarised on a standard cover sheet. With more than a hundred files to deal with in this way neither Admissions Tutors nor Directors of Studies had much time for Christmas shopping.

So that the reader can be assured that the Pool largely achieved its aim as described earlier I should record that each year about half of Clare's Pool Candidates were made offers by other Colleges. As might be expected with all subjects considered about one third of the Colleges were net donors to the Pool about one third were net receivers and the remaining third were broadly neutral accepting roughly the same number of applicants from the Pool as they passed on to other Colleges through it.

There was one further quite important aspect to the admissions procedure that I haven't yet mentioned and that was the music of the College both formal and informal. Quite apart from admissions for those wishing to read the Music Tripos there was the question of Organ Choral and in the later years Instrumental Awards. All of these offered their recipients some professional coaching to enhance their performance but some

CHAPTER LEADING THE WAY

Many of Cambridge's Colleges hold regular services in their Chapels<sup>11</sup> and nearly all Chapels have an organ to accompany the services. Consequently, nearly all Colleges offer Organ Scholarships and normally aim to make an appointment every other year, so that when the Senior Organ Scholar is in his or her third and final year, there is a freshman Junior Organ Scholar learning the ropes and preparing to take over as the Senior Scholar for two years.

Because of the commitment to services, appointing the best Organ Scholar available at the appropriate time is a virtual necessity, and in practice, the Directors of Music in the various Colleges consider the whole field of potential Organ Scholars. Almost

This was certainly so in Clare where it seemed to me that in some ways the Organ Scholar was a rallying point for the Chapel Choir generally agreed to be one of the best if not the best SATB<sup>12</sup> choir in Cambridge. Although I have no musical skill whatsoever and was relegated to handing out and collecting in the hymn or song books as my contribution to music lessons when I was at school I attended many of the Organ Trials not only to keep an eye on how things were going but also to enjoy the music. Despite not being able to read a note I heard the Bach *cc n n n* the compulsory element for every candidate so often that I could sometimes tell when a mistake was made.

I did not attend the Choral trials which were held immediately following those for Organ Scholarships and therefore before any academic results were available. Here the numbers involved were much greater and there was no absolute need to find somebody with the appropriate talents. Of course the Director of Music didn't see it quite like that with respect to the make up of the Choir though he readily accepted that any awards that Clare made had to be to students who merited an academic place.

My contribution to the trials was to mark his card' either before or during the trials and in particular to indicate those candidates who appeared to me on academic grounds to be non starters for a place. He would then make his selection from those amongst the remaining candidates who displayed the necessary

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<sup>12</sup>Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass

vocal talents after that it was a matter of hoping that they made favourable impressions on the relevant Directors of Studies' and subsequently on the CJE or STEP examiners

The Instrumental Awards looked after themselves as only students who were just about to start their 'rst year were involved all academic questions had been favourably settled by that stage As a College' Clare had rather more than its fair share of Instrumental Award Holders Theoretically' this' and the Choral awards' could have been a worry for the College's Bursar' as each one involved an (admittedly modest monetary award' and the professional teaching had to be paid for as well Even outside the various musical award schemes and the Music Tripos' there was plenty of musical talent I recall remarking one year that' based on Grade or better' the Natural Scientists in the College could' by themselves' put together a very respectable orchestra

Not all of a year's intake came straight from school as indicated briefly in the opening chapter' there was a direct exchange scheme of new graduates between Clare College and Yale University' (r 22 (e 2 ( k Td (x 2 2 2 (

.. f f(g 2 f3 · (e 23 · (t 3 f f(u

ing from Yale in the late '20s. Both Clare and Yale' to say

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approval so far as matriculation<sup>15</sup> is concerned I have to say  
that receiving a response to such submissions often took rat

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standard way. Appearing unannounced and in person usually results in a polite but relatively brief discussion with an Admissions Tutor or a member of the Admissions Office Staff and being given copies of the University and College Prospectuses. Occasionally this is not so, and the table tennis playing Chinese student mentioned in a later chapter did appear in the Admissions Office unannounced. He finished up sitting two three hour written examination papers.<sup>16</sup>

Non standard applications usually come in the form of a letter, and the reply usually consists of a copy of the University's Admissions Prospectus together with a covering personal note, or, in more recent times, an email and the web addresses of the College and the University. I have kept only two of the dozens of application letters I received over a period of twenty years.

One of them is a hand written request from Iran that was, at the same time, both endearing and hopeless. It was also impossible to answer, as it was not laid out in conventional lines of text, but covered with arrows pointing from one block of text to another. It asked for a full list of all possible degrees and for the names (written perfectly) of every subdivision of every subdivision of every subject available. It also requested the

CVs of every Clare Fellow and wanted to know what could be studied by correspondence, by television, and by moon (sic). One complete sentence that did appear read, 'Please send for me a good dictionary.' As if that were not enough, the letter included

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<sup>16</sup>It was also the case that a future Nobel Prize winner became a Clare



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with a previous degree from another University<sup>17</sup>

Robert Andrewes' application included photocopies of certificates showing that he had AAA at A level and a first class degree from London University and that he had attended a degree level course at the Vatican. His references from London were very encouraging and he impressed the medical inter

Once it was realised that Robert was capable of forgery and false pretences' everything had to be checked. I got in touch with London University and' yes' there had been a student called Robert Andrewes on their books' but he had withdrawn early in his course. The A level Examinations Board' when asked' reported his grades had been two Ds and an E' rather than A' A' A. We never got to the bottom of the certificate from the Vatican' but suspect that it was not even a standard certificate and that the signature of the Secretary to The Pope had been forged. The A level certificate appeared to have been genuine apart from the alteration of D'D'E to A'A'A. When questioned' Robert more or less admitted that the degree certificate he submitted was a copy of a copy of someone else's certificate' but with the name altered between making the two copies' an alteration that was covered up by making the 'nal copy. He had to go.

Some time later The Master received a phone call from a commercial 'nance company based in the City of London asking for verbal confirmation of something appearing in his reference' for Robert Andrewes. What was known' and what was suspected was conveyed to the company' and at that point the Police were called in.

The other most memorable episode connected with admissions happened to involve somebody with a second name very similar to Andrewes' namely Prince Andrew<sup>18</sup>. I'm not sure exactly where the story begins' but it may have been when HRH Prince Philip became Chancellor of the University. Clare's Statutes decree that the Chancellor of the University shall also

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<sup>18</sup>For this particular saga, the names used are genuine.

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demanding as it has a high academic reputation." Andrew, studying for "A" levels in English, history and economics with political science, already has six "O" levels. Dr. Ken Riley, senior tutor at Clare (founded in 1326 and suitably co-educational), has no official notification of the royal arrival. "About 50 per cent of our undergraduates have two A grades and a B at A level," he tells me. ....

I don't know whether The Queen reads either of the *My* *M* or *My* but a few weeks later a press release from The Palace declared that "My Husband and I are pleased to announce that Prince Andrew will attend the Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth. Well, that was the end of that and of course Clare had never been involved



## Chapter 4

# Tutors who Lunch

It will be apparent from many of my recollections that Clare's 'Tutors' as well as undertaking their roles as guides and mentors for their own particular pupils' collectively form a body that has a significant influence on the way the affairs of the College are conducted. There are enough of them that any one's' perhaps' individual view does not unduly colour that of the whole group' whilst there are not so many that getting them together to consider proposals or observations from other College Fellows' is a major undertaking. In short' 'The Tutors' form a convenient sounding board for the College and' in practice' that is how they are used.

So as to make this informal' i.e. non statutory' arrangement



the Council' but sometimes the Governing Body or the Finance Committee

When matters are referred to the Tutors' perhaps by the Master or Bursar' they are normally accompanied by papers setting out the issues to be discussed' sometimes generated within the College but more often originating in a University Office. In these cases copies are circulated to Tutors before the meeting and discussed at the Tutorial Lunch in a rather more formal way. As all such issues are further considered by one of the three main College bodies' the tutorial viewpoint is reported to that body' or' if there is no consensus' the variety of individual tutorial views is made known at its next meeting.

So far as this account of the work of Clare's Tutors is concerned' major issues such as the award of academic prizes on the positive side' and the control of unauthorised garden parties on the negative' are dealt with elsewhere' and I will restrict myself in this chapter to less weighty matters. Even here' there were both pluses and minuses' not so much in terms of good or bad' but more in terms of amusing and serious. The 'amusing' incidents were ones in which some tutorial action was called for' but for the majority of the Tutors little more than an inward smile was required. Just as they came to the Tutors over a period of some twenty years' my almost arbitrary selection from the various incidents will mix the serious with the amusing in no particular order' though' not surprisingly there tended to be rather more of the former.

Perhaps an appropriate place to start is with two incidents

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that occurred before the Tutors had even met for the first time in the relevant years' one of them before the student in question had even come into residence in fact' it was his failure to do so that led to the problem. He was a student who had been accepted for an Engineering degree' a course in which the first Freshman week is very important because of the general and safety instructions given' and the practical and drawing class allocations made. When his failure to arrive' without any notification to the College' was reported to me by the Porters' an urgent phone call to his home had to be made.

The response was along the lines 'Well' yes' he will be a few days late in arriving' probably a week or so' because for religious reasons he is in Ireland to observe the Feast of Tabernacles' Feast of Tabernacles' Ireland'. Time to call the Chaplain and inform the student's intended Tutor. Having established that the Feast is an important event in the Jewish Calendar' the Tutors could appreciate what had happened' but felt that the College should have been given due notice. In addition' I felt that being sent to Ireland to experience the discomfort of living for a week under minimal shelter was a bit excessive' particularly as Ireland in October could hardly compare with anything the Israelites might have experienced at any time during their forty years of wandering in the desert.

The second incident was in many ways just the opposite. On this occasion' a Freshman medical student from the Home Counties disappeared almost as soon as he had arrived. I don't

and revealed to his Tutor that he had booked himself into what was at that time the most expensive hotel in Cambridge. I don't suppose that his father was too pleased to receive the not insubstantial bill for the two day stay' but at least he persuaded the student to return to College. The rest of his time at Clare passed without incident.

To complete a trio of 'runaways' I also recall the case and I use that word deliberately as the Police were involved of the second year student who was reported by one of her friends as missing from her room in the Colony. This happened at a weekend and only her Tutor and I were involved in trying to determine what had happened. Naturally the first place to contact was her home' but when it was revealed that she was not there either' all we had succeeded in doing was to add three more people to the list of those very worried by the situation.

The Tutor' the Master' and I decided that we had to call in the Police' and I have to say that they performed exceptionally well. With the cooperation of the relevant card company' they established that the missing student had used her credit card in Jersey and' further' that she had purchased a ticket for a passage to Sark. Supplied with this information' her parents were able to suggest where she might be and' to their great relief' and not only theirs' they proved to be right.

It turned out that the student had learned that a close friend living in Sark had become depressed' and on the spur of the moment had decided to go there to try to cheer her up. This

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she had done without telling anybody' not least her Tutor<sup>2</sup> As the student later acknowledged' all she had actually done was to make a lot of people very worried and given her parents an extremely anxious time

Incidents that never needed a vote by the Tutors when they came to discuss them' were those in which students showed any form of contempt or disregard for members of the College Staff As I used to point out in my speech to each new intake of Freshers' the College Staff are not only dedicated but sometimes doing a very difficult job All members of the College are expected to cooperate with them and no level of disrespect will be tolerated

The two groups of College Staff members most likely to experience non cooperation from Junior Members were the Porters and' perhaps surprisingly' the Catering Staff Problems with day to day catering were rare' and to the best of my knowledge' there was never a problem with the self service cafeteria operating in the Buttery nor with the self service Salad Bar that ran in the Main Hall at lunchtime Ironically' the worst behaviour was nearly always associated with Formal Hall' which nowadays offers the opportunity to entertain guests to a special meal in a historic and dignified setting<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the most serious incidence of unacceptable behaviour during my time as a Tutor occurred at a Formal Hall at which I was present' in the sense that the normal evening meal for resident Fellows and those on duty was taking place in the Hall at the same time. The unofficial<sup>4</sup> drinking society known as the Clare Crabs had' because of its previous antisocial behaviour' been largely responsible for the Council laying down guidelines.

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**All of the Junior members mentioned [in a list provided] are members of the Crab Society, but on Thursday came as individuals. I strongly feel that it is quite degrading for me and my staff to clean up all the mess that was made, not to mention ...**

Now, as the reader may already have gathered, Tutors try to see all the good they can in the students assigned to them as pupils. But in this situation, and in all others involving established abuse of College Staff, there could only be one outcome. It is exemplified by the letter I wrote to the six a few days later. It is somewhat lengthy, but to omit any of it could lead the reader to misinterpret the Tutors' response to this kind of situation. It reads as follows:

**Dear Xxxxx**

**I recently received a letter from the Catering Staff of the College which complained about repeated episodes of rowdy, disruptive, and generally unacceptable behaviour in the College Hall by a number of undergraduates, including yourself.**

**As you will probably recall, I was on tutorial duty on Thursday, 27 February, and saw for myself some of the consequences of the sickening behaviour of a group, who, although booked into Formal hall as individuals accompanied by guests (most, if not all of whom appeared to be from Another Named College), came in practice, to hold what was effectively a Crabs dinner.**

**The College of course has no objection to groups of friends dining in Hall, and indeed encourages it, but only on the understanding that it is recognised that it is a**



formal meal, and their behaviour is correspondingly disciplined. However, it was apparent, even before things got out of hand, that the amount of alcohol brought to Thursday's meal was far in excess of what would be allowed at a properly booked club dinner – and could even be viewed as a deliberate attempt to circumvent the rules approved by the College Council for officially-booked occasions. What happened when the dessert course was served was altogether as deplorable as it must have been disgusting to others dining in Hall, some of whom were visitors to the College. Some College members who were present have written letters to me expressing their revulsion.

The Tutors have discussed the reported events and the letters received, and, in some cases, spoken to those involved who are their tutorial pupils. I have enquired further of the Catering Manager. The sum total of the evidence indicates that your presence at any event in Hall (except the normal lunch-time salad bar) where al-

**treated by this decision, you may, after consulting your Tutor if you wish, appeal to the Court of Discipline by giving written notice to the Master. My advice to you is that you should certainly consult your Tutor before considering any further action.**

**Needless to say, it is with great regret that I find it necessary to write to you in this way.**

**Yours sincerely,**

**K.F. Riley**

**cc The Master, [The relevant Tutor], the Catering Manager, The Steward.**

At this point the incident rather fizzled out the students apologised to the Staff did not contest the ban kept out of trouble and the three of them who were in their final year graduated in June

A somewhat similar situation came before the Tutors after a bonding meal held by two newly formed rowing crews got out of hand It took place in the room of one of the members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Novices Eight and left it in such a state that when the Housekeeper was called the following morning she felt it necessary to organise additional cleaners to tackle the mess Some of the novice rowers had left early after one of them had felt unwell but there were eight who remained and who ultimately accepted responsibility for meeting the clean up and damage bill of more than £





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Sunday opening hours of the Bar as previous such jazz events had been well organised' well attended and well behaved' the Tutors supported the application and the Council duly agreed

However' the football team let their celebrations get out of hand' drank too much' and invaded the Cellars' seriously disturbing the jazz gig. The Porters were called and most of the trouble makers left the Cellars' but headed for Clare Bridge and there made matters worse by throwing bottles' a chair' and a bicycle into the river

The first I knew about this was the following morning when I received a curt letter from the Master urging the Tutors to take prompt and effective action against members of the Football Club for the rowdy kept us awake until 2 a.m. served drinks until 3 p.m. Since the Tutors supported the extended hours' I am sure

I wrote to the Secretary of the Football Club' pointing out that what had happened had achieved what few other College events ever managed' namely to draw adverse criticism from all sides' the Master' the College Staff' the Students. I listed the various grievances and indicated all of the apologies and explanations that were needed to their credit' it turned out that members of the XI had already done some of those things

In his reply the Secretary said that the Clare team took collective responsibility for the unacceptable events' but pointed out that' uninvited and unexpectedly' members of the team they had played in the final had just turned up in the Bar. As none of the Clare side had ever met any of the opposition before that

afternoon' they were unable to persuade their uninvited 'guests' to moderate their behaviour' further' it was the visitors who had thrown things off the bridge. As do all such letters of contrition from students' it 'nished with an assurance that this was a one off incident and will not happen again. In this case I was' for once' inclined to believe it' as I felt it likely that by the time the Football XI next won another 'nal' I would be long retired.<sup>6</sup>

As indicated earlier' amongst the items that the Tutors had cause to discuss at their lunchtime meetings' the serious tended to outnumber the amusing' and even the latter nearly always had a serious origin. This was certainly so in the case of the student who literally brought a piece of Old Court crashing to the ground. The piece in question was part of one of the stone pillars<sup>7</sup> supporting the balustrade that runs around the inner perimeter of the Court's roof. There is a similar balustrade running around the outer perimeter. Fortunately' nobody was hurt. Though significant expense was incurred in restoring that

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Now as anybody who has ever tried by pulling horizontally on its loose end to straighten an anchored rope that has even a modest load attached at its mid point will know the force needed is many times the weight of the load. Conversely to support a student in a hammock even one of modest weight requires very high tensions in the anchor ropes then as absolutely everybody knows<sup>8</sup> action and reaction are equal and opposite and the balustrade and its supporting pillars just couldn't take it. And the really ironic part? The student in question was reading Engineering.

Another episode involving the Old Court balustrade that I think the whole College and not just the Tutors found amusing was one perpetrated by an undergraduate prankster Dave Nicolls who in academic terms was a bit of a butterfly flitting from one Tripos to another but always within what is allowed by the rules for the B A degree. But it was a spider rather than a butterfly that was the centre of this particular happening. Those living in Old Court woke up one morning to find a giant spider's web covering a large part of the open space enclosed by the Court an area of perhaps four hundred square yards. And from the middle of the web hung a giant spider nearly six feet across.

Subsequent enquiries seemed to indicate that the web was constructed by Dave and several helpers at the College sports ground and then transported well over a mile to Old Court. Presumably it and the spider were then secreted in an attic room.



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tion. As it was for a period of several months the pillar box mystery gave us something to talk about whenever the more serious business of the meeting was completed uncharacteristically quickly.

Before returning to that more serious business, I think I should record another tutorial storm in a teacup. It was reported to the Tutors via one of the cleaners and the housekeeper in charge of servicing the College's graduate housing that the three graduates sharing one of the houses had acquired a snake. They were seeking permission to keep the snake in the house as well as mice to feed it.

Naturally, this request did not get much of a welcome and the Tutors asked me to write to the graduates pointing out that the disadvantages of such an arrangement heavily outweighed any perceived attractions and that their request would have to be refused. It was with a certain amount of egg on one's face feeling that I read their reply which pointed out that the snake in question was a harmless, toothless, non-venomous grass snake (*naja*) and that far from feeding on live mice, it could just about manage small frozen fish. I was also invited to call round to inspect the snake and its accommodation, an escape-proof cage designed with the help of a local veterinary surgeon.

Now for that more serious business. Clare, like every other College and University, takes a positive view of entrepreneurship, but sometimes has to appear not to. Two incidents come

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the Long Vacation term<sup>10</sup> notionally to work on his third year project' was found to be going to London' rather than the laboratory' on most days

Something was wrong' and when the Long Vacation Duty

gave Clare College as the address of the company

After the situation was brought to my attention by the University's Careers Service' consultation with the Master' a lawyer' confirmed the tutorial view that this had to be stopped. The student had to be told that he could not use the College as a business address' because' if nothing else' it might appear that the College endorsed his activities' and so could be saddled with legal problems. There was also the question of the effect on his academic work. Best advice' cease trading' failing that' get an accommodation address.

Most of the rest of the specific problems that exercised the Tutors as they inspected the contents of their sandwiches fell into the serious category' but were all similar in that they were concerned with irresponsible behaviour' they could really be summarised by the two phrases 'climbing where they shouldn't be' and 'causing a 're risk'. Several students had to be reprimanded' or in one case sent out of residence<sup>11</sup> for a period' following climbing on temporary scaffolding or the College buildings themselves.

In one of the climbing incidents' two female students were so frightened by the appearance of faces at their 'rst door window that they called the Police. They came promptly and 'were excellent' despite being insulted by one of the two rather drunk male undergraduates involved.

The decision that the Tutors took to send a (different) student out of residence is explained by the following extract from

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<sup>11</sup> Generally referred to as 'rustication'.

my formal letter to him

**The Tutors take a very serious view of what happened, and in particular of your blatant disregard of the consideration shown, and the advice given, to you by the Head Porter. To deliberately climb on the College buildings is**

by Tutors who lunch' I come to the only case I can ever remember of their taking up the cudgels on their own behalf rather



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that mattered<sup>14</sup> but the principle that retrospective decisions should not be made without prior consultation with anybody who might be affected one way or the other. Again I was deputed to write to the Finance Committee and

Well it shouldn't have happened but it did. Perhaps I

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ever' there may well be some good practical reasons behind the decision to explicitly include this particular provision

Nowadays' not many of the Fellows actually live in the College' as they used to do before the Statutes were changed to allow the College's Senior Members' all male at that time' to get married and live in their own private houses whilst retaining their Fellowships. But' I can well imagine that' before that change took place' there would have been many conflicting views on which Fellows should occupy which sets of rooms. But laying down a specific procedure involving the Master for settling matters' and putting it in the Statutes' effectively tied the hands of those who' on their admission to a Fellowship' had pledged to be obedient to the Master in the exercise of his statutable powers' a cunning piece of legislation



However, dealing with the allocation of undergraduate ac

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buildings. Naturally the termly rents reflect what the different rooms have to offer, though the variation and hence the range of rents is relatively small. When the College first admitted women in 1872, one of the preferences that they could express was for an all female staircase, but there were so few takers that this rapidly became an all female landing within a staircase, and not long afterwards the question was dropped altogether.

For the second, third, and in some cases fourth year un-

of some of its staircases still have to cross the Court to use the washing and toilet facilities that have been installed on others but this doesn't seem to deter students from wanting to take rooms on these staircases<sup>3</sup>

The first type of accommodation to be allocated is that available to groups of students who have expressed a positive wish to share accommodation. Typical group sizes are six for sets of rooms on one or two floors of a house with a shared sitting room and kitchen, three for self contained flats within a house or hostel, and two for 'double sets' in Old Court or the Memorial Court Block; such sets have larger than average sitting rooms and one large or two normal sized bedrooms.

Where there are competing groups for the same set of rooms, priority is determined according to the aggregated ballot numbers of each group. In most years there are one or two groups of undergraduates who miss out on the particular type of accommodation that they have applied for, and they have to go into the normal singles ballot. Occasionally, the reverse is true and some particular multiple occupancy set of rooms goes un



But by far the most difficult situation to deal with from a tutorial point of view is that in which two people, usually a man and a woman, opt to share a set of rooms and then during the course of the following year fall out with each other. Fortunately such cases were relatively rare during my time as a Tutor, but when they did happen they took up a considerable amount of time for those whose job it was to try to find a satisfactory solution. The latter would typically include two Tutors, the Senior Tutor, the Rooms Tutor, the Chaplain or Dean, and the

year. Within each Term, a particular period, covering at least three quarters of it, is defined to be Full Term and this is the period during which virtually all formal teaching, i.e. lectures, teaching seminars and practical classes, takes place.

In length, Full Term also represents the minimum period that students must reside in Cambridge for the term to count towards the residence requirement of the B.A. degree. Most spend at least a week longer, and some aim to come as early and to stay as late as possible, sometimes to use college and university facilities whilst writing a dissertation, sometimes to get 'value for money' from their rent, and sometimes because, rather sadly, they 'don't get on at home'.

The College does not distinguish between the various reasons for opting to stay throughout the full period covered by Term.





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The first I knew about this matter was some three days later when I received a highlighted copy of the Newsletter with a brief note from the then Master attached. I read the note as being deliberately phrased in a distanced way, intending to pass on the Staff members' complaint, but not necessarily endorsing it. With the substitution of fictitious names for the Housekeeper and Conference Organiser, it read:

**The Senior Tutor  
Clare College**

**My attention has been drawn to this notice by Harvey about rooms in vacation. I am told that this is exactly what Alison Bradshaw and Wendy Akhurst moan about. It might be helpful to have a very clear written statement of the rules and, as agreed with Alison and Wendy by the Tutors, published to all students so that there are no misunderstandings.**

**Henry  
cc College Bursar**

My reply to the Master's and subsequent letter to Harvey are reproduced below. Composing them was not without its problems. Telling it like it was to the Master was relatively straightforward, but writing a letter to Harvey which hopefully would keep everybody happy without misrepresenting my own view of his intentions was difficult. Re-reading it now, I think that it was phrased more severely than the facts justified. He probably gave me a  $\beta$  for it.



**The Master  
Clare College**

**Dear Henry**

**Harvey Tinbergen Notice**

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taken as implying that some Fellows play a part in making such appointments a new Representative' elected by the undergraduates' would take over at the start of the Easter Term' but the relevant election had not been held by the time of this incident

**Harvey Tinbergen  
Clare College**

**Dear Harvey**

**I am writing to complain of the tone and ill-founded implications of your notice in last Friday's Newsletter about the possibility of students occupying their room over some or all of the Easter Vacation period.**

**work as smoothly as possible.**

**Yours sincerely**

**Ken Riley**

**cc The Master, The Rooms Tutor,  
Housekeeper, Conference Organiser,  
College Bursar**

Far more serious' but far easier to know which side was in the right' was a series of events that took place several years earlier' and which' statutorily at least' was a problem for an earlier Master of the College. It involved three undergraduates'



pressed their belief that this was a matter that should not involve the Senior Tutor' let alone the Council' they thought that the bedmaker should have taken the initiative and asked them nicely to remove the offending material. The reply went on to complain about the 'peeling plaster' on the ceiling' the 'many large cracks in the stained walls'' the alleged inadequacies of the poster hangers' and the general 'poor quality and taste' of the decoration. The letter concluded with a statement which accused me of being unreasonable and over confrontational' and the Domestic Bursar' with his 'random spot checks and unreasonable threats'' of having caused them far more distress than they had inflicted on the bedmaker.

As promised' I took their reply to the other Tutors and' after further consultations with the Domestic Bursar and the Rooms Tutor revealed that the three had gone some way towards putting matters right' wrote them a further letter. In it' I pointed out that the Domestic Bursar would not have visited the flat at all if 'his' behaviour had not brought the bedder near to tears' it was his duty to investigate anything that upset any member of the College Staff. I also accepted that some things are simply a matter of taste' and that I too would not like an entrance hallway that was painted orange' and' subject to one non negotiable condition' and a written assurance that they have both apologised to the bedmaker and rearranged their decorations in accordance with the agreed code' I was prepared to consider the matter closed. The condition was that 'no matter carrying offensive or obscene messages may be placed where the bedmaker' carrying out her normal duties' may come across it'.

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Naturally I hoped to receive an assurance from them that would close the affair but when I came into College on the following Monday there was no sign of it. Rather the House keeper as her immediate line manager<sup>8</sup> came to see me to tell

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a supervision would be explained to the inconvenienced Supervisor

Because by now the affair was threatening to become really serious I felt that what nowadays is widely described as a yellow card had to be shown. Consequently the final paragraph of my letter read as follows

**It hardly needs to be stated that this is very much your last chance to prevent the matter going further – if this letter too is ignored, I will have little option but to bring your non-cooperation to the attention of the Master and College Council. However, since it is a required part of the College's procedure to give written warnings, I am doing so and you may take this letter as notice of the likely consequences of continued failure to respond to the situation.**

This letter did bring an immediate response – written and delivered on the same day – and implying that Sean and Richard would attend as requested but that George Avery had a commitment to sing Evensong with the Choir of another College at that time. At any other time I would have considered this laudable but in the circumstances it made me wonder whether he appreciated the gravity of the situation. However I did not pursue it and at the appointed time Sean and Richard came together to my office in Old Court as did their respective Tutors. As Tutors always do the latter tried to elicit anything that might reflect favourably on their pupils' behaviour in this affair.

However' what emerged from the meeting' in which I asked most of the questions and the two students provided most of the answers' was that George had at least apologised to the bedder





with the students denying some of the complaints made by the Housekeeper and her Staff and my setting out the scheduled timetable for cleaning the flat every Tuesday beginning no later than 8 a.m. So as to ensure that the three messages would not be delayed over the weekend I had to resort to photocopying a hand written letter. But the hoped for outcome was not to be the irppant tone of one reply I received can be summed up by a couple of extracts taken from it “ we will make further arrangements with the Domestic Bursar as time and studies permit and “ we consider this endless letter writing to be unproductive and is an unnecessary intrusion into our studies. We therefore think it unlikely that we will reply in detail to any more unconstructive letters

Well I agreed with them that the letter writing had been unproductive but didn't see how it could have interfered with their studies nearly as much as lying in bed until nearly noon each day must have done

By now the die was cast at least in my mind the matter have to be referred to the Master and then perhaps to the Council<sup>10</sup> On the Tuesday six days before the Council was due to meet a further escalation took place. The Housekeeper ne

confirmed that, as requested, electric cables on the floor of the lounge had been removed. However, it also confirmed that it was not until 7.15 a.m. that the 'first of the three' Sean had got up.

All of this was reported to the other Tutors at their weekly meeting later that day, and on Thursday morning I wrote a formal letter to the Master. This was the only time during my twenty years as Senior Tutor that I had had to write in this way about anything other than strictly academic matters.

As such formal letters have to be very carefully drafted, it would not seem right to try to paraphrase it. So, apart from the usual false names and hidden dates, it is reproduced here as it was written.

**The Master  
Clare College**

**Dear Michael**

#### **Occupancy of the Wilflete Flat**

**At their meeting yesterday the Tutors considered the series of events and the correspondence relating to the occupancy this term of the Wilflete Flat by George Avery, Richard Anderson and Sean Akhurst. I am sorry to have to tell you that their conclusion was that the totality of the conduct of the occupants, in their attitude to the College Staff, and in their written and practical responses to reasonable requests by the College Officers,**

• *CHAPTER LITTLE ROOM FOR MANOE RE*

was that happened during those three days' the outcome was that at the end of the Council meeting (at which nothing was said about the problem the Master gave me an envelope that had been opened and contained a sheet of paper on which was written

**WILFLETE FLAT**

Telephone Number 0223 350791

**The Master  
Clare College  
Cambridge**

**25th November 19xx**

**Dear Professor Roberts, CBE FBA**

**We would like to see you at 6pm on Tuesday, 27 November, in Wilflete flat. Should you have any other engagement at this time, kindly rearrange it.**

**We think it would be best if the invitation you have sent us for the following day is cancelled.**

**Yours sincerely,**

**S J Akhurst**

**Sean Akhurst**

**Richard Anderson**

**Richard Anderson**

That was it o with both their heads. Actually' it was more a matter of using the Master's statutory duty to assign College rooms to send them into exile' i e out of Clare housing' until at least next October. I imagine that they were not too unhappy

with this outcome provided they could find an approved non college property and afford the deposit and rent for it<sup>11</sup> Rooms and lodgings for undergraduates have to be approved either by the University or by the College on its behalf because nine terms of residence in such accommodation is one of the requirements for qualifying for the B A degree it's not just a matter of exams I can't remember whether or not George Avery went with them

Finally in a far less serious vein was the correspondence that took place between myself and Marcus Stewart an undergraduate member of the cast of the May Week Play This was an outdoor production staged in the Fellows' garden by Clare Actors at the end of the week in which the May Ball was held Because both events used the part of the garden known as the Sunken Garden<sup>12</sup> the Play could not start public performances until a couple of days after the Ball was over Consequently its cast members needed to stay in Cambridge beyond t

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potential problems and I gave permission for all of them to stay for three extra nights' with the usual daily rent charges' one sixtieth of the termly charge per day' applying. These charges would be added to the college bills that were sent out to all students by the Bursary<sup>13</sup> in the month following the end of each term. As I recall' all went well' the Play was well attended by the public' and the umbrellas that they were always advised to bring to such outdoor productions proved unnecessary.

No doubt' if either of us had ever anticipated that our letters may be reproduced later' both Marcus and I would have been more careful in our phrasing' more measured in our claims' and more succinct in our attempts to be humorous. However' though it is rather long' I have copied his original letter almost verbatim' just the usual changes of name' other than my own. I would have liked to add that I have corrected his spelling mistakes' but there weren't any. It was sent to the Bursary and read.

**Dear Sir/madam**

**Please find enclosed a cheque for £71.22. This is a cheque for my amended college bill, and excludes the £11.00 for the "missing undersheet" and the £11.34 for "residence outside term".**

**With respect to the former; the sheet was indeed missing though not, as no doubt you had suspected, through**

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<sup>13</sup>The traditional name for what is now more commonly called the College Office.

student absent-mindedness brought about because of important university exams and a May Week play to produce, but rather as the result of cold, brutal and calculated acts of theft and deceit carried out by me. Now that you have found me out I am forced to confess that I am driven by an evil kleptomania for Clare College undersheets, an obsession I can no longer ignore, as I am now a central figure in a sophisticated Latin American "undersheet ring".

Before your agents uncovered this international plot – which at one time spanned all five continents (including Leeds Market) – I was in the habit of flying to Rio at the end of every term and, unbeknown to the Housekeeper, taking often hundreds of undersheets, drying-up clothes and buttery table-wipes. Once there, a group of local tailors would turn what you may admittedly view as a plain old undersheet, into a highly elegant albeit somewhat unusual tuxedo.

In this present state of shock (similar to the one you are no doubt experiencing at this moment) I am returning the latest bedsheet with this letter, though I'm afraid the other 342 sheets, 12 cloths and 56 wipes are probably wandering around somewhere on the back of eminent world politicians and their friends. While I may be able to provide a rough list of names and addresses, I trust this one bedsheet is adequate for the time being.

I am deeply sorry for the trouble I have caused, and for the bedsheet-less conference guests who have suffered miserably these past two weeks, though I would like to point out that a rather exciting knitting trouser pattern for a Clare College duvet is available on request (how-



...

ever, it's in Brazilian).

The £11.34 for "residence outside term" seemed as though it was someone else's mistake – I had permission from Dr Rawby, Dr Riley, Commander Turner and the House-keeper long before the final application date, and confirmed Anne Lucas's application on my behalf twice afterwards!

Have a nice summer and I hope to receive a reply and/or knitting pattern in the near future.

Yours faithfully

**Marcus Stewart**

The letter was passed on to me by the Bursary. As this was hardly a grave matter, I sent him a hand written reply, as follows

**Dear Marcus**

**Thank you for your informative letter about the interna-**

would be described as an 'artistic activity'. I hope that this mystery is now solved as well – and that the sum of £11.34 will be winging its way into the Clare College Co-ops; no doubt it will be ear-marked for additional undersheets.

Yours sincerely

**Ken Riley**

If only all room problems could be solved so easily





in demand<sup>1</sup> was booked at least one day each weekend as the venue for a student organised gig or disco' and' at the other end of the noise spectrum' the Chess Club met in the Buttery<sup>2</sup> on alternate Thursdays evenings

Less regular requests might be for a room in which to hold acting auditions' or for permission to hold a staircase party with up to sixty people attending' or a more restricted room party for no more than two dozen. Whilst trying to respond favourably to all properly presented proposals was the major aim' making sure that none of the three Porters Lodges was going to have to look after more than three simultaneous events was always part of the equation. To try to ensure that applicants had thought through what they were proposing and planned accordingly' each booking had to be made at least a certain number of days before the proposed date. The bigger the event' the larger the lead time' and the more detailed the proposal had to be.

The Cellars'' or' to give it its everyday name' the JCR (Junior Common Room)' was the major source of potential problems so far as conflicting events were concerned. Ironically' the

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<sup>1</sup>As the College Officer in charge of bookings, I once estimated that if it had been possible to agree to all the requests made by non-members of the College to rent the Cellars, it would have produced about a quarter of my salary. In fact, no term-time outside events were ever allowed, as the room was the students' principal social centre.

<sup>2</sup>Originally the name for a room in which liquor was stored in butts, and where the butler buttled, it came to mean a more general food and drink store within a college. Nowadays it is the name by which the College's self-service cafeteria is known.



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*CHAPTER BRO GHT TO BOO*

air raid shelter' had been the venue for the party. For the last two or three years it had been held in the JCR' but not without a significant number of complaints from both non CBC members who were in the room at the same time and the College's cleaning Staff who had had to deal with the aftermath. In addition' the conditions under which alcohol could legally be served in Cambridge Colleges<sup>4</sup> had been made more stringent by the

..

and' as designated Junior Members are on the Council' the letter' together with a reasoned case' should be presented there

This the Social Secretary did' and put to the Council a well presented argument outlining the licensing difficulties and saying that' of all the possible venues in the College' only the JCR would be large enough to accommodate all the ninety plus CBC members who wished to attend. After some discussion' and perhaps influenced by the experiences of recent years (mentioned above) the Council decided that on balance the Senior Tutor's view was the right one and should stand.

..

*CHAPTER BRO GHT TO BOO*

The possibility of so many students' in various stages of inebriation' trying to negotiate the streets and tra<sup>h</sup>c of Cambridge late at night' was one I didn't want to contemplate. As might be expected' my emailed reply was written to express my dismay at receiving Luke's request. This is a copy of it.

**Dear Luke**

**I can hardly believe that you have sent me this.**





another College. They sought permission for the Room to be used for the production, saying that they would make sure that the rules governing the use of public rooms were followed. Given the general underuse of the Blythe Room at that time, and the fact that two of our own students were being given a chance to increase their acting experience, I agreed that the room could be used for the production. And almost immediately wished that I hadn't

as I know' that particular acting group has never asked again  
it certainly didn't during my remaining time as Senior Tutor

As became all too apparent to me that morning' the fault  
was almost entirely mine. Whenever an outside student group  
seeks to use facilities within a College' almost the 'rst question  
that the Senior Tutor should ask is 'Why can't (or won't' their  
own College provide them?' on this occasion I had failed to do  
that. If I had contacted their Senior Tutor before' rather than  
after' the event' I would have been warned that this particular  
acting group had a reputation for behaving irresponsibly. As  
it was' my failure to ask at the time of the booking led to an  
unwelcome situation for several of our students and an article in  
the student newspaper. y tes wroawt

girls from another College trying to remove one of the drums' claiming to have been told by a Clare student that they could. The same student had already helped them to remove one drum on site of how they did it' and where they took it' I unfortunately have no record. The missing drum was returned' and the non Clare miscreants gave their names' and that of their Tutor' to the Porter.

It subsequently appeared from my enquiries' made of the Clare student and the named Tutor in the other College' that the three students were involved in a play supported by the University's French Society' and it required two people to sit in buckets<sup>5</sup>. Plastic buckets were not up to the task' and they wanted to try the drums on stage before the week of actual performances arrived. They claimed that they intended to borrow and then return the drums' with a view to asking the site foreman on Monday if they could have them for the play.

When asked on Monday' he said that they could' though first the tops would have to be cut off and the insides cleaned with petrol. However' by then the offer was irrelevant' as the actors' having not been able to borrow the drums' had tried out and settled for cardboard boxes. No harm had been done' and the story didn't quite hang together' but after I had related it to the other Clare Tutors we declared the case closed.

Just as the public rooms can be booked by clubs and societies' groups of students' or even individuals' so can the lawns

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<sup>5</sup>Given the French Society's support, the play may have been *Waiting for Godot*, which was originally written in French.



As might be expected, bookings for the Gardens were largely confined to the Easter Term and Summer Vacation period, though it has to be said, the weather did not always come up to expectations. Nevertheless, in the Easter Term, students could if they wished take their lunches onto the lawn of the Scholars' Garden, and other bookings for it between noon and two o'clock had to be avoided. But, again, even this licence had to be withdrawn if there were examinations being held in the rooms which overlooked the Garden. As explained in another chapter,<sup>7</sup> taking an examination in a candidate's own College is the normal proce

had hardly started before he regretted having done so many times more students turned up than he had been led to believe would and were soon damaging the surrounding shrubbery and harassing passing punters from the Bridge and river bank. For the rest of my time as Senior Tutor and perhaps ever since the University Law Society members were present and if any of our Law Fellows was approached by them about a booking both the Head Gardener and I would remind that Fellow of what had happened on that earlier occasion.

What do matter much more so far as the Senior Tutor is concerned are requests to book the College lawns other than those on which the May Ball takes place. The two groups are separated by a busy road and a strip of land owned by another College and across which there are a number of rustic footpaths.<sup>9</sup> This road and grass barrier are a sufficient deterrent that the College Courts and lawns that lie beyond them are





the University's Mathematical Society' the Archimedean. They had booked the Lawns following the approved procedure' and because the Society had not caused any problems in previous years' I was not expecting to be called in my capacity as Duty Tutor on that day.

However' I was called from my office in Old Court by the Memorial Court Porter who said that a student whom he did not



ticket only admissions procedure' and proper stewarding of the event

As a result of these omissions' there were many more people there than was safe the Duty Tutor' when called' estimated the number as about one thousand<sup>14</sup> and clearly included hundreds of people who had nothing at all to do with the College' let alone with the Boat Club' the Crabs' or the Lobsters. The damage and general mess that resulted was never fully catalogued' but included broken glass in a staircase door and a room window' broken shrubbery' and rubbish strewn all over the Lawns. It has to be said' in their defence' that the members of the Crabs did all they could to assist the Porters in keeping control of the situation' they also made a good job of clearing up afterwards.

However' not just on this occasion' but also in the previous few years' it had become clear that a culture was growing amongst Cambridge undergraduates in which it was considered 'cool' to invade any outdoor gathering where food or drink was being provided' and to do so in large enough numbers that the invasion could not be controlled. The day had thus come to be known as Suicide Sunday' and when the matter was later considered by the College Council' it decided to adopt the Tutors' proposal that no bookings for the Memorial Court Lawns should be allowed on that particular Sunday' a decision that also meant that there would be no potential conflict with the preparations for the May Ball and the May Week Play.

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<sup>14</sup>Probably an overestimate, but at even half this figure it would still be three times the nominal capacity.



## Chapter 7

# To Build or Not to Build

During the last hundred years the size of Clare' as measured both by student numbers and buildings constructed' has grown enormously. Until the nineteen twenties' some six hundred years after its original foundation' the College still had only one Court' about twenty Fellows and not more than about one hundred all male undergraduates. In the ninety years since then it has grown to 've courts' about a hundred Fellows and some four hundred and 'fty undergraduates' nearly half of whom are women. During that same period it has also developed the so called Clare Colony Site' which hosts several Hostels and converted Houses'

and added a body of about one hundred and fifty research students

Whilst being both academically desirable and in line with the wishes of our Foundress 'Elizabeth de Burgh' Lady of Clare'<sup>1</sup> all of these developments have come at a price. And that price is not measured purely in monetary terms' but also in the disruption that all major changes' however beneficial they may be in the long run' inevitably cause.

Some major changes call for relatively little money and only minor changes to the physical structure of an establishment' but require a lot of detailed planning' negotiation with other parties' and fine tuning after the changes have been made. In Clare' this was very much the case when in the late nineteen sixties it decided' as did two other previously all male Colleges' to become co educational. It is worth noting that' with these three Colleges leading the way' within a few years all the remaining men only Colleges in Cambridge had opened their doors to women. Of the previously all female Colleges' only one changed its statutes to permit the admission of men. Consequently' though it is often still not recognised' especially by the media' there are in fact more Cambridge undergraduate places open to women than there are to men.

So far as the disruption caused by 'going mixed' is concerned' it was sometimes jokingly said that' as our main res

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<sup>1</sup>Part of the Preamble to the Statutes (see page 42) she gave to the College in 1359 forms the most quotable part of its current 'Mission Statement'. . . they should discover and acquire the precious pearl of learning, so that it does not stay hidden under a bushel but . . .

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it doesn't matter whether it is their study or their sleep' or even time when they are doing neither' that is interrupted' they will' perhaps not surprisingly' register a complaint either directly with the Bursar or' more often' through their Tutor. And I have to say that usually they have a good case. I would doubt less feel the same if there were an active building site just outside my window for several weeks.

Having been either a student or a Fellow at Clare for nearly sixty years' I have seen quite a number of these positive step changes' but by good fortune have never had to suffer any of their downsides' except for the complaints received in my role as Tutor or Senior Tutor.

When I came up to Clare as an undergraduate in the mid '60s' Thirkill Court' which is a southern 'side court' to Memorial Court' and dedicated to alumni who lost their lives in the Second World War' had just been completed and the builders had left. By the time the next major building project came along' a new College Library sited near the centre of the Memorial Building' and effectively dividing it into two'<sup>4</sup> my appointment as Senior Tutor had meant a move to an office in Old Court. The 22 (t 3 3 22 (e 2 (c 2 (e 2 2 3 (r 22 (a (i 3 2 (d ( (

Courget cpsatcagh trida stu ha' c'anh trn complaintcarerirsay witiaecoa su' ct 'ar 2iyi t



Making decisions that are clearly going to be unwelcome to a significant part of a community is one of the most difficult tasks facing those who have the ultimate responsibility for the future of that community. Whether it is closing down some

dents were just weeks away from their end of year' and in some cases 'final' exams. From the students' point of view they might get lower class degrees as a result of not being able to revise effectively. From the College authorities' point of view calling a temporary halt to the building procedure would greatly increase both the overall cost of the new building and the risk that the building would not be completed in time for its scheduled occupation. With the Government funding authority requiring tightly controlled student numbers and offers of places having to be made nearly a year in advance' this was a very serious consideration.

During my twenty years as Senior Tutor' there were two building projects that gave rise to a significant number of complaints from the students with rooms close to the building site. The first of these has already been mentioned' and was the new undergraduate Library' a stand alone building to be sited more or less in the centre of Memorial Court.

Whilst the College's Governing Body had voted decisively to replace the inadequate library in Old Court with a larger more efficient one on the Memorial Court site' there was less agreement about where on the site it should be positioned. In the end' the unsurprising view of the Architect' a Clare Alumnus and shortly to become the President of the Royal Academy of Arts' no less' that it should be in the middle of the Court' and not to one side of it' won the day. The obvious difficulty arising from that decision was that *any* living in the Court would have to put up with the noise and disruption. In the event' though complaints about it were made' it was found possible to





Ignoring the errors of fact and the threat in this `nal paragraph' Dr Partridge arranged a meeting with seven representatives of the thirty or so students' mostly second years' who lived



*CHAPTER 4 TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD*

discovered that the contractors intended to bring in a compressor to do outdoor percussion drilling for ten days' the Rooms Tutor gave the request his support' adding that in his view the new Hostel would still be finished early enough for it to be ready for occupation in October

As can be imagined' this precipitated a flurry of consulta



By now, the reader will probably have made up their own mind about how this episode should have been resolved, but to follow what actually happened, I reproduce below the circular that was sent out.

**Noise on the New Hostel Site**

£110,000) was considered by the College Officers, and by a number of students who commented, to be too high a penalty to incur. A complete stoppage would also put in jeopardy the availability of the hostel for next Michaelmas Term.

It has therefore been decided with the builders' cooperation, that work will continue but with two further changes in working practice.

- Additional insulation material will be installed
- There will be no Saturday or Sunday working until after the examinations (except possibly for virtually silent operations such as plastering or painting).

In addition the Bursar has agreed that no rent will be charged for the Easter Term to students whose rooms in 14-20 Castle Street overlook the site.

I hope that with all these measures and the Castle End reading room in operation the main objectives will be achieved, i.e. that students can prepare for their examinations in a relatively undisturbed environment, and the builders can complete the building by the expected completion date. Although there is clearly not enough spare room in College to accommodate more than one or two students, if next week you still find it impossible to work in your Castle Street room, please see your Tutor who will see what further can be done.

K.F.Riley

On the Monday following the distribution of this circular I



and the other College Officers involved: The Bursar, The Build



CHAPTER 7. TO BE ILL OR NOT TO BE ILL

Master wrote to all students who might be affected an extract from the letter read

**... prepared to remit this term's rent to any resident of Castle Street who feels that he or she can in good conscience claim this remission in the light of disturbance he or she personally has experienced.**

**For the the rest,<sup>7</sup> may I most earnestly repeat to all of**

its opening sentence was "I am writing to you on legal advice concerning [redacted]". It went on to say he was aiming for a middle to high 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in his final examination in Social Anthropology with a view to taking a non academic break of a few years and



CHAPTER 4 TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD

Dear Edward,

On behalf of the College, I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 18th May and received on 21st May. However, the College does not accept responsibility, financial or otherwise, of the kind indicated in the fifth paragraph of your letter, nor of any other kind.

Yours sincerely,

Ken Riley

cc. The Master, Dr Robinson, The Bursar, UCS President, Dr Partridge.

A second student also asked the College to take some responsibility in the matter of his examination results' should they fall below what he was hoping for. But this time' the letter was written without implicit threats' and in terms of something that could be contemplated.

The student in question' John Barnard' a second year undergraduate was aiming to obtain qualifications in both Computer Science and Psychology. The University's Ordinances do not allow any student to be a candidate for Honours in two different Tripos examinations at the same time' but do not preclude taking a Preliminary Examination' or being a Candidate not for Honours' in one Tripos subject whilst being a Candidate for Honours in another. John was preparing for both the second year Computer Science Tripos examination and the Preliminary Examination in Psychology. He hoped to take the final

examination papers in both subjects in the following year' one for Honours (and the B A Degree) and the other as a Candidate not for Honours. This was an ambitious undertaking.

In order to demonstrate his ability to cope with such a load' he had been set the target of reaching the 2<sup>nd</sup> standard in both of his second year courses. He claimed that his Supervisors predicted that he would manage this' but understandably' with such a double load' he was worried that his disturbed studies might cause him to fall short. In particular' he asked that if he did fall short' the College would explain to the Psychology Department what had happened. The essence of my reply was the sentence



CHAPTER 4 TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD

is *n* the way it is. We are always trying to improve on what has gone before to find new theories or ideas that make for a more complete understanding of the way the Universe and any creatures that inhabit it work to find students that have the potential to go further than we have gone ourselves and when it comes to an environment in which to do all this

To build or not to build it's not really a question  
It's clear 'tis nobler to take the long term view  
And suffer the moans and anger of the short term few







. .

twenty years' and I have to admit that' due to one particular generation of undergraduates'<sup>3</sup> I was more often than not the one apologising on behalf of the College. Sometimes it was possible to have the apologies come only and directly from the students whose behaviour had caused the problem in the 'rst place

This was the case with the two aspiring thespians who were advertising both the auditions and the intended performances of a play they hoped to put on. The problem was their method of advertising' which was to stick up a poster wherever they thought somebody 'd read it. 'nd 'stick up' might more aptly have been described as 'stick on' as the glue they used was especially tenacious. The Bursar and I were soon 'elding a steady stream of complaints. Under a Cambridge City bye law 'y posting was illegal' and even for authorised locations<sup>4</sup> speci'c permission was often needed. They had to be told to immediately remove the posters from all except those authorised sites for which they had speci'c permission'<sup>5</sup> and apologise in person to the Bursar of a particular College' one Court of which had been festooned with posters.

However' there are also two episodes that come to mind' involving nearby Colleges and their pupils' that illustrate how' at the Senior Tutor level' things did or didn't work out in practice. The 'rst of these is brief' and was initiated by somebody who

was a Lay Dean' rather than a Senior Tutor. What was written was couched in rather more terse and distant terms than would usually be the case. The Porters at his College had discovered a number of students on the roof of its Chapel and following questioning had recorded the names of four of them. I presume that the Porters knew the names of the others. Three of the four' all women' had given their College as Clare' and he asked whether

the Blind Date couples had decided to make their way onto the famous Chapel Roof when they discovered that they could do so simply by climbing ladders they were never going to get the chance to do so in the normal course of events

That the ladders were there and available was down to the workmen who were in the process of making repairs to the roof. Scaffolding had been erected and access ladders installed but they had failed to remove the one reaching to the ground when they had finished work for the day. They had also failed to lock the entrance to the boarded off area at the base of the ladder. This information and that about the names was relayed to the Lay Dean. I don't know but I expect that he then turned his

Dr W Jamison  
Harvey College  
Cambridge

1st March 19xx

Dear William

**Events of Friday 24 February 19xx**

As you will know Harvey students, particularly those living in Downs Court, have been passing through Clare on their way to the Harvey main building for many years, and, with a few exceptions, there have been no problems.

However, last Friday evening a group of students, some wearing Harvey scarves, passed through Clare at about midnight and damaged one of the 'chicane' barriers that had been erected at either end of Old Court to discourage cyclists from riding through the Court (reportedly as dares or for bets). The barrier was chained to a wrought iron gate, and damaged to such an extent that the chain and padlock were still attached to the gate whilst the broken barrier was carried towards the river. Clare's Porters just prevented two of the students from throwing the barrier into the river from Clare bridge.

Our Porters reported that several of the students, of whom there were perhaps ten in all, were the worse for drink. Two in particular were remembered by the Porters, who independently picked them out from the Freshers' photograph in the Harvey Porters Lodge. They were identified as Mr A. and Mr P., the former being distinctive in a black turban, and the latter from his height and hair. Mr P. was wearing a Harvey scarf, and was

the river.

The barrier was a substantial one, some five feet long and three feet high, and could not have been accidentally damaged. Our Domestic Bursar estimates the cost of repair at £60.

I hope that, if your investigations confirm the events as reported to me, you will feel it appropriate to impose some penalty and to warn other students of the possible consequences of drunken and unacceptable behaviour.

There is already some pressure in Clare to restrict access after dark to those members of Clare issued with keys, and any further incident could only add to that pressure.

Sorry to have to bother you with this.

Yours,

Ken

Two days after I had written I received an appropriate letter from Mr P in which he regretted his inexcusable behaviour' apologised for wasting so many people's time' and expressed the hope that Clare would not restrict the passage of others as a result of his foolish actions. This was followed a few days later by a letter from Dr Jamison. It read

Dr K.F.Riley  
Clare College

6 March 19xx

Dear Ken

Thank you for your letter. I am sorry that you have been troubled by our students. It cannot be easy for Clare to

• *CHAPTER GETTING ON WITH THE NEIGHBO RS*

put up with the constant coming and going through the main court, and I can quite believe that Harvey students contribute more than a little to the noise on occasion.

I have spoken to both A. and P. about the incident on 24 February. Both admitted having been present. A.

when I wrote to William to acknowledge his letter' I included a paragraph to let him know what was going to happen' but also to reassure him that any inconvenience that this might cause for his stay out late pupils was not the direct result of the recent episode

However' the early part of the letter read as follows

**Dear William**

**Many thanks for your letter. I had a letter of apology from Leonard P. on 3rd March.**

**As you may know, there was a further incident involving Harvey students about a week ago; one was injured whilst climbing over the gates at the Queens' Road end of the garden Avenue, and the other fell into the ditch whilst trying to climb round the same gates. As this**

## Chapter 9

# A Law Unto Himself

There are only a few of my ex pupils whose activities whilst at Cambridge would take more than a few lines of print to record' although there are quite a number whose subsequent career achievements would. However' there was one student' let us call him Mark Johnson' whose exploits during his six plus years at Clare will hardly be forgotten by any of the then current Tutors or College Staff' particularly the Porters and those who looked after the Halls where communal meals were eaten. I have included some account of them here so that the reader may get an idea of the extra work entailed by disruptive activities' such as those indulged in by Mark. Not everything is described at length' but some of the correspondence passing between the various parties is included in full to show that due process' as

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CHAPTER 9 A LA NTO HIMSELF

the danger with Mark when he had had too much to drink that he would turn to irresponsible acts or even vandalism

Although most episodes will only be mentioned in passing there were two particularly memorable incidents and I will give more complete accounts of them. One records an episode that some will think was a cautionary tale in which the 'villain' got his just desserts the other had more of the flavour of an Agatha Christie detective story

Although I believe that Mark had previously attracted the attention of our College Porters who with their genuinely student friendly approach had dealt with his minor misdemeanours without reporting them to the College authorities the first time his exploits came to my attention was when the Senior Tutor of another College contacted me to say that he 'Mark' not the Senior Tutor had been caught on the roof of that College by one of their Porters

There was some suspicion that he and his fellow climber had been drinking but they cannot have been too drunk as they had climbed up onto the roof against all the rules but without mishap. It was also alleged that Mark had assaulted the Porter when he was challenged it was accepted by both sides that the confrontation became heated but perhaps not surprisingly there was a difference of opinion as to who was the first to become aggressive

Some three months later a similar incident took place in yet another College. It was reported to me by their Senior Tutor that three students not from that College had been drinking

. .

in its bar' had become rowdy' broken a glass' and ignored the barman's requests to behave themselves. When the bar closed one of them left directly but the other two went into the adjoining men's toilet. When they emerged one of them was carrying something hidden under a loose coat: this later turned out to be a hand dryer from the toilet wall. It appears that' once outside the bar' the two had also been shouting obscene remarks about that College' directing them at the windows of a room in which its football club was holding a dinner.

The College's Porters had been called and' despite several attempts to run away by both students' they had been able to detain one of the miscreants. He eventually volunteered his name' Harry Trentham' and his college' Clare. Other students who had been in the bar were collectively able to provide their Senior Tutor with detailed descriptions of the other two troublemakers. From the details given and my own knowledge of who tended to associate with whom' it was not hard to identify the other two: Mark Johnson as the one who had escaped by scaling a wall and Lewis James who had taken only a minor part in the whole episode.

When summoned' the three did not deny what they had done' but claimed that the dryer had already been taken off the wall' and that they were not responsible for that. Needless to say' they were required to go to the other College<sup>3</sup> and apolo

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<sup>3</sup>Somewhat ironically, I was asked some years later to serve as an external Assessor to the Student Dis

gise individually to their Porters' Senior Tutor and football club captain' and to pay for the damage and additional work they had caused they were also 'ned and given warnings as to their future conduct' in Mark's case for the second time

Like most College sports clubs and societies' the RATS held an annual dinner. And like most club dinners attended by young adults' RATS's dinners' though monitored by the College's Catering Sta' tended to become rather noisy' with rather too much alcohol being consumed. However' they very seldom got out of hand' and neither did the particular one I have reason to recall. But two of the people attending it did' as in the previous incident' Mark Johnson and Lewis James. Both became seriously the worse for drink and damaged the top of one of the dining tables by banging vigorously on it with the ends of their knives. Mark went even further' and for no reason that he could give afterwards' vandalised a university network phone located outside the room where the dinner was held.

After an investigation carried out with the help of the Catering Sta' and discussion at a meeting of the Tutors' the matter was referred to the College Council' who' after hearing representations from the two students' decided that they should both be banned from attending any function catered by the College for the rest of the academic year. This was hardly a harsh punishment' but I was informed indirectly that Mark and Lewis were upset about it' as it precluded them from several events

College events may have been on the menu' but that did not stop Mark indulging' elsewhere in Cambridge' his passion for climbing and drinking. I can't offer any explanation as to why he was there (and afterwards' neither could he' but he was present at the Veterinary School's end of year outdoor evening party' and from all reports' much the worse for drink.

The complaint that I received the next day from the School stated' amongst other things' that relatively early in the evening' he had had to be stopped from climbing on the building containing the contagious diseases unit. Not deterred' and' perhaps surprisingly' not recognised as a gatecrasher at that point' he later attempted a second climb' this time on the wall of the Veterinary School itself. The letter of complaint also claimed that between the two climbing incidents' he had helped himself to a bottle of wine from the drinks table' there is no evidence I know of' other than the letter itself' to support this allegation. What can't be doubted was that shortly after midnight he fell off the wall sustaining serious injuries' and had to be taken to the Accident and Emergency department of Addenbrookes Hospital. There he was diagnosed as having sustained a compound fracture of one of his legs' he was also described by the duty nurse as being 'very drunk'.

This particular episode did not end there. The University's Safety Officer was informed of what had happened and' although I never received a (b) (r) 22-3 (a) (i) TJ2

Td2 (v ndhd 2asctus p



*CHAPTER 9 A LA NTO HIMSELF*

most serious he had to deal with' but' on re flection' I now think that Health and Safety regulations required the recording of the accident' and this set in train an inevitable series of actions leading to the report

Be that as it may' Mark's determination to do his own thing' had certainly caused a great deal of trouble for many people I have to admit that' when he was laid up in Adden brookes with his plastered leg held in the air by a system of

.

also mean that any initially trivial undesirable behaviour tends to grow into something that can easily get out of hand. This is just what seems to have happened on one occasion during that Michaelmas (Autumn Term). As Senior Tutor I received a letter signed by the students living in the lower two floors of

• *CHAPTER 9 A LA NTO HIMSELF*



As is stated in my 'rst letter to Gina' there were clear indications that the customary 'bonding' dinner of the MBC' held shortly after its membership had been settled' was the root cause of the Master's main concerns. They were 'rstly that in the early hours of the morning somebody had been on the roof above the Master's Lodge' and secondly that vomit had been discovered on one of the windows of the Lodge. Consequently' prior to my writing the 'rst of the letters' Gina' Harvey and Mark' as members of the MBC were asked to come to a meeting with the Tutors to explain what had happened.

Following that meeting' it was agreed that I should write to Gina to set out the position. My letter of the 3rd of February read as follows:

**Gina Palmerston**  
**President, May Ball Committee**  
**Clare College**

Dear Gina

**B44r eey**  
**31210054075014481447895005407305uO**

h

, 1P3441418403520350034494100

CHAPTER 9 A LA NTO HIMSELF

The damage to the windows in D11 is acknowledged by Harvey, and I believe you all agreed that some members of the May Ball Committee went onto the roof above D and E staircases; however you all denied being on any other part of the roof, and in particular on the West Range. One member of your Committee does acknowledge being on the West Range roof, as a result of what appear to be legitimate concerns, and that student's account is confirmed by members of the College Sta .

What remains unexplained is how somebody, clearly on the West Range parapet, was sick over the windows and garden steps of the Master's Lodge, and how the Master and his family were disturbed in the middle of the night. I have convincing evidence that the person who was sick (and on the roof) was at the May Ball Committee Dinner,<sup>5</sup> and no doubt, with some additional effort, could narrow further the range of those who might be responsible. It will be clear to you and your Committee that if



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day and as a result of the ensuing discussion I wrote to Mark as follows

**Mark Johnson  
Clare College**

**Dear Mark**

membership in future years.

It will be apparent from the above that the only basis on which a significant part of the College Council is prepared to consider your remaining in residence, is for you to devote yourself to your research studies and refrain from any action that has the potential to lead you into even a single instance of irresponsible or anti-social behaviour.

I am writing to Victor Radley and Gina Palmerston to let them know the tutorial view on your membership of the MCR Committee and the May Ball Committee, respectively.

Please let me have a written reply to acknowledge receipt of this letter and to indicate your intentions. I would appreciate, but do not insist on, copies of any letters you may write to Victor or Gina.

Yours sincerely,

**Ken Riley**

As indicated I would in my letter to Mark' I also wrote to Victor and Gina Below is a copy of the letter to Victor in respect of the MCR that to Gina about the MBC was essentially the same

**Victor Radley  
MCR President  
Clare College**

Dear Victor

I am writing to inform you, as President of the MCR, of the actions of the College's Tutors insofar as they concern the MCR Committee.

Having considered a number of relevant factors, both current and past, the Tutors, through me, have asked Mark Johnson to resign from the MCR Committee and not to seek re-election. The reasons for this decision have been set out more completely in a letter I have written to Mark.

I regret the disturbance and inconvenience that will be caused by any such mid-term resignation, but hope that you will accept that it is likely to be less disruptive in the long run than any reasonable alternative course of action.

Yours sincerely,

Ken Riley

There was no particular reason for Victor to reply' and he didn't Gina had more reason to' and her (admirable reply was as follows

Dr K Riley  
Senior Tutor

February 14th 19xx

Dear Dr Riley

Many thanks for your letter of February 10th informing me of the decisions of the Tutors. This places me in the unfortunate position of having to request the Tutors to reconsider their decision.

Should Mark Johnson be forced to resign, the Committee would face the loss of a very experienced Treasurer at a crucial time in the proceedings; tickets are now starting to come in, and contracts are being signed. His expertise is essential, and I do feel that asking him to resign will

hind55.121(t)-13.67((w)-355.148(s)3.89803(81178(h)8.88247(e)2.376(h)8.88247(i)-8.94292(m)-374.786)3.89992(7-8.94373(d)8.882



On the same day as Gina's letter arrived' so did one from Mark. It read as follows

Dear Dr Riley

I am writing in reply to your letter of 10 February after giving the matters mentioned careful consideration.

After my previous problems several years ago, I have taken great care to ensure that my behaviour was more than acceptable, and until this one incident I felt that I had succeeded. I deeply regret what occurred the night of 21/22 January and sincerely wish I had not been so foolish. I will make sure that no other incidents occur for the rest of my time at Clare.

During my time here I have held many positions of responsibility: president of the Rats, construction for the May Ball, trips officer for the Rats, leader of the Cambridge Himalayan Expedition 19xx, vice-president for the May Ball, undergraduate punt secretary, and presently treasurer for the May Ball, and MCR secretary. Though my personal behaviour has at times been reprehensible, I think that I have always discharged my duties in a responsible manner; and kept them separate from my private affairs.

I have spoken to Dr Radley and Ms Palmerston, both of them think that I am (an) effective member of their committees, and would like me to continue in my positions. I do not think that this incident affects (sic) my ability to continue to operate effectively and responsibly in my roles on these committees, and whilst I appreciate





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**K.F.Riley  
Clare College**

**Dear Dr Riley**

**Thank you for your letter of 21 February 19xx.**

**I agree to resign permanently from the MCR Committee and the May Ball Committee. I am sorry for the trouble I have caused, and I shall ensure that my remaining time at the College is as uneventfull (sic) as possible.**

**Yours sincerely**

**Mark Johnson**

As I draw this protracted saga to an end' may I take the chance to remind the reader that a major reason for quoting the relevant correspondence at such (possibly tedious length is to show that for those Junior Members who violate College or University Statutes or Regulations' summary justice' administered by a College Dean or Master' or by a University Proctor' is no longer the order of the day. Due process has to be observed' and any punishment has to be 'proportionate'' to use a term very much in vogue at the time that I write. One additional factor' not present in a criminal or civil court' is that' despite the exchange of arguments and counterarguments' one of the sides is trying' so far as is consistent with the established facts' to arrive at an outcome that is in the longterm interests of the other

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CHAPTER 9 A LA NTO HIMSELF

For all the problems that Mark Johnson brought for those whose job it was to act *n c p n* ' in spirit if not in law' he was still a very 'ne student in academic terms' a very positive contributor to many aspects of College life' and' for better or worse' a role model for many of his contemporaries. Even for those of us charged with trying to keep his undergraduate and postgraduate career path on the reasonably straight and narrow and by and large not having too much success there were still enough attractive elements to his character for us to want him to succeed.

And in the end' succeed he did. So as not to reveal too much of his true identity' suffice it to say that he is now a very successful researcher' working in a distinguished department at a world class university. There he combines two of his passions' mountaineering and his academic subject' investigating amongst other things' the nature of avalanches. As to any possible further studies of alcohol and its derivatives he might have undertaken' I have no information.

## Chapter 10

# All Work and No Play Makes Jack . . .

It will come as no surprise to the reader to learn that non-academic activities play a significant part in a Cambridge education. Too significant a part some might think, particularly when they read in a later chapter of how, in the past, examinations were not infrequently 'tied round sporting events' rather than the other way round. However, over the years the work-leisure balance for a typical undergraduate has moved somewhat

• CHAPTER 4 ALL OR AND NO PLAYMA ES AC

To give one simple example that reflects this change when I was an undergraduate all the lectures and practical classes for the Engineering Tripos were arranged so as to leave the afternoons free for those outdoor activities that needed daylight such as rugby, rowing, tennis and cricket. By the time I became a Tutor this had changed. Although, as noted elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> the Engineering and Physical Science Departments still supported the idea of afternoon sport, in practice some afternoon teaching was scheduled.

However, by a judicious choice of which of several duplicated practical sessions to attend, for most students it is still possible to engineer a regular free afternoon on any particular day of the week.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly important for those students who play in teams that are members of a league. Having inter-college sport organised on a league basis, complete with promotion and relegation, is something that has been introduced since my undergraduate days, when all matches were one-off fixtures as agreed. ~~leettng lfKl~~

. .

tunately' the same cannot be said for most University sports' particularly for those that are run on a professional basis elsewhere<sup>3</sup> In the mid 'fties the University's rugby side used to take on the leading clubs in the country' and in most cases beat them' if the undergraduates' skill alone was not enough to prevail<sup>4</sup> then running their opponents into the ground nearly always was All of that has now changed' with the ending of National Service and the advent of professional rugby' genuinely undergraduate sides have become younger and weaker' whilst their club opponents have become stronger and 'tter

This total sea change has been implicitly recognised in several ways' matches against clubs are no longer against their 'rst team' but against their second XV or youth development squad' there is an essentially undergraduate under 21 squad that meets





to have increased who 'fifty years ago' would have imagined that there would be Ultimate Frisbee' Korfball and Darts leagues flourishing as part of the Cambridge curriculum'

This drift from mainly outdoor team games to a much wider range of interests' some of them pursued as individuals' has been reflected in the way such activities have been supported' both financially and in terms of facilities. In my own College the change was also recognised by what would nowa days be described as a 'rebranding' exercise. The following slightly abridged extracts from an article I contributed to a book published to mark the turn of the century' and entitled 'Clare College in the 21st Century' reflect the changing preferences (both sporting and political

... the cost of some subscriptions, particularly to the Boat Club, were high, and, with typically Clare egalitarian spirit, it was decided in 1886 that a single uniform subscription should allow a man to take part in any form of sport at which the College was represented. Thus the Amalgamated Clubs came into existence and took over the running of all .....

... Clare College Amalgamated Clubs remained under that name until the early 1970s when a change was made to reflect the fact that other non-sporting interest groups, such as the Music Society, the Christian Union, the Chess Club and the Darts Team, had come under its wing. At that point, the CCAC became the Clare College Stu-

**dents' Association.<sup>6</sup> Later still, when students started to acquire 'rights', as a result of both the general climate of opinion and parliamentary legislation, the name became its current one, the Union of Clare Students, a change that not everybody thought was for the better.**

If I were looking for sporting College members whose exploits it was a pleasure to record' I might have gone outside my time as a Tutor' far outside it in fact' and noted the (real names of cricketers A P Lucas' who often partnered W G Grace at the start of an England innings'<sup>7</sup> and K S Duleepsinhji who was rated by Mr P F (Plum Warner as a better player at his age' than his illustrious cricketing uncle Ranjitsinhji' the Jam of Nawanagar

For team performances it would hard to better that of the Clare Lacrosse side at the start of the twentieth century' every member of which played for one of the two University sides or of the College squash team of the mid 'fties which included half of the University 'rst VI Despite the undoubted ability of the Clare undergraduate squash players' it is said that none of them ever beat the College's then Senior Tutor and it wasn't down to deference' but had more to do with the fact that he had been

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<sup>6</sup>With a constitution drafted by a committee consisting of the present [when the article was written] Master (then Mr B.A., but later Prof. Sir Bob, Hepple), Matthew Parris (then President of the JCR and later an MP, columnist of *The Times*, and Grumpy Old Man) and myself (then Senior Treasurer of the CCAC).

<sup>7</sup>And was said to be an attractive batsman even when he was scoring slowly, or not at all!

the runner up in the Australian Open and played exhibition matches with the World Champion

That purple patch in squash occurred whilst I was an undergraduate' but to be more in keeping with this book's title' and also to illustrate the broad range of activities 'sport' had grown to encompass' I should recall the achievements of a few of the students from my time as a Tutor



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in this book not always to their credit and their name de

• *CHAPTER 4 ALL OR AND NO PLAYMA ES AC*

Clare College Amalgamated Clubs had to offer. There are several others' some of which are mentioned in the extract quoted earlier' but it would be tedious to list them all' and these two will have to suffice.

From the outdoor green fields to the indoor green baize

really work on them until the Admissions Interview period was over' and I like to think that the Students were concentrating so hard on their studies that they too could not give the challenges their attention until the Vacation. I also like to think that they

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## **The Tutorial Bursar's Christmas Give-away, 2003**

Continuing to support the Government's aim of improving  
number work' spelling and IT proficiency in UK educational

• 2CHAPTER 1 ALL OR AND NO PLAYMA ES AC

4 A plane network consists of straight lines exactly three of which meet at every vertex and there are no loose ends. Show by producing a counter example that it is  $n$  always possible using only three colours to colour the lines in such a way that no two lines of the same colour meet at a vertex

5 Show how to obtain at the same time  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{3}$  pints of beer in ungraduated containers A, B and C (not necessarily respectively) given an unlimited supply of beer in large casks. The capacities of A, B and C are respectively  $\frac{1}{2}$  pints,  $\frac{1}{3}$  pints and  $\frac{1}{6}$  pints. The Wine Steward can manage this in twelve moves. You should aim to at least match him.

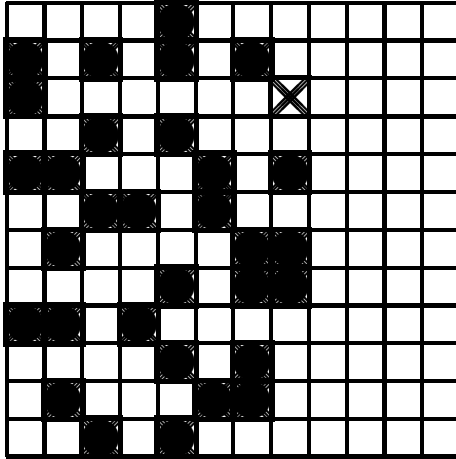
### Literacy

6 Fit all 2 letters of the alphabet (plus whatever repeats are needed) into a rectangular block of cells (with at least two rows and at least two columns) following the normal rules for crosswords (all interlocked with blanks or frame edges as terminators). All words so made must appear in the Tutorial Burw

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### The CLARE Economy Crossword

As will be well known, the College has, in these difficult times, to make every reasonable economy. With this in mind, the Senior Tutor offers the following minimalist crossword for members of the College to try.



and time again. In fact they each appear in every answer' but' again in the interests of economy' one appearance of each has been subsequently removed. So that they can be more aesthetically packed' the remaining letters of each answer have been rearranged to spell a proper (Chambers English Dictionary) word before being entered in the grid.

As a second major economy' all grid clue numbers have been dispensed with' as has any indication of the lengths of the correct answers. The numbering given in the clues bears no relation to positions in the grid. However' taking the usual sympathetic Tutorial view' the Senior Tutor has provided one letter of the answer' just to get you started' and will also provide a bottle of Clare CLARE' to the College member submitting the first correct entry to

Unfortunately' there was an unforgivable error in one of the clues' and when I discovered it I felt obliged to issue an apology. So that any reader who wishes to try the Economy Crossword for themselves (no knowledge of Clare or Cambridge needed) does not waste their time trying to solve that particular clue' the apology is printed here' before the clues.

It is with the greatest regret that the Senior Tutor has to  
announce that

## The Clare Economy Crossword

was born severely handicapped' with a near fatal malformation

Clue number 2' the solution to which is 'theatrical' was  
intended to produce the word 'tithe' for insertion in the grid  
But it does not

The Senior Tutor sincerely apologises for all the time wasted by  
mystified puzzlers' but is sure that' with this solution provided'  
there will now be a flood of completed grids

He also offers his resignation as Purveyor of Crosswords to  
The Master' Fellows' and Scholars of Clare College

- Forward note about the drink' and make another
- 2 The one caught in a Test with dramatic effect (see above)
- 3 Sticky part of course no loose woman allowed
- 4 Girl upset free underwater spectacle



• CHAPTER 1 ALL OR AND NO PLAYMA ES AC

2• Elegant old king one begins to satisfy

22 Have connection changed alter in the middle

23 An indefinite type

2¶ Infallible guides for boats that have lost their leader

2 Sweet offering for High Table when the elite have gone away

2 Sizes up the East European next to the confused layman

2 See Tom presented to the Queen as a discoverer

2 ' ' and τ Not so elementary' my dear Watson

2 Holy Grai! Sounds like it

3 Muddled precis about •¶ o ochHrys e'

3a¶(d •¶ 2 (K 23¶ ud p

3



- 3 Worker who makes it so
- 3 Turn on church warden's organ (descriptively
- 3 Declare student unstable but reinstated
- 👤 Touchy about revealing leader' but could be drawn out
- 👤 Constellation visible from part of Cornwall
- 👤2 Initially' choose everybody one clear soup vegetable' of course

## Tutorial Bursar's Geography Test, Christmas 2006

Identify as many as you can of these cryptically named towns, cities and districts (not villages or hamlets) in the British Isles and provide a clue of the same type (including as much misleading punctuation as you wish) for a named town, city or district not included in your list. In the event of a tie in the number of correct answers, the best (cleverest, original clue) as judged by the Tutorial Bursar will be used to determine the winner of the modest prize offered. The intended answers and the winners name will be published on the Clare website towards the end of January 2.

[The original Test proved to be a little too difficult, with a top score of 68%. That was obtained by an Admissions Tutor, who, perhaps because of his connections with so many schools throughout the country, appeared to be familiar with more places than all other contestants (Students, Staff and Fellows). To make it somewhat easier, the letter 'e' has now been pre-entered wherever it appears in a solution; if no 'e' appears in an answer space, there isn't one in the required place name. A few of the clues have been slightly amended so as to make them more tightly defined.]

- 1 About an overturned vessel (5)  
\_ \_ e \_ e
- 2 All of Aberdeenshire initially (5)  
\_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- 3 Animal mentioned in the note is included in total (9)  
\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ e \_ e \_

- 4 A pen to draw the arrangement (10)  
-----e
- 5 Article dropped by hunger-striker (6)  
E \_ e \_ e \_
- 6 Association president (9)  
-----
- 7 Australian Food includes final article by father (10,3)  
- e -----
- 8 Back a long way (6)  
-----
- 9 Be from Tallinn – not a Scotsman (7)  
- e e -----
- 10 Bungle an arrest and run inside (9)  
-----e -
- 11 Calling Eire on the phone (7,6)  
-----
- 12 Cardinal on outstanding horse (6-5-4)  
- e ----- e - - - - e
- 13 Carry on decorating! That's what we are told.(8)  
-----
- 14 Clear working (8)  
-----
- 15 Cut in Calendar Girls? No, just the opposite (6)  
-----
- 16 Decline, with a farewell (4,4)  
E ---- - - - e
- 17 Do not dust cell if it would damage it (6,9)  
----- e - -
- 18 Do very well to finish early (5)  
---- e -
- 19 Drug supply (5)  
E \_ e - -

- 20 East's friend and foe thrown out, but not North (10)  
-----
- 21 End of the line for a Peruvian import (10)  
-----
- 22 Four times fifty, i.e. an anagram (8)  
-----e-----
- 23 Frequently the most depressed (9)  
-----e-----
- 24 Girl caught garland; rather the reverse. Not hard. (9)  
\_e\_\_e\_\_e\_\_e\_\_
- 25 He has your old reference mixed-up (5)  
-----e-----
- 26 Hence, Latin student figures in the solution (8)  
-----e\_\_
- 27 Hiding some little wish amongst big ones is the answer (8)  
\_e-----
- 28 Home of number eight and three-quarters (10)  
-----e-----
- 29 Home of refined bottlers? (6,4)  
-----e\_\_
- 30 Its important partners initially have a method (8)  
\_e-----
- 31 In a ship, with a sci-fi author aboard (9)  
-----e\_\_e\_\_

36 Landlord (7)

-----

37 Left the Flock (5)

- e \_ e -

38 Local dispute (6)

-----



- 68 Ships sirens have this effect? (7)  
 --e----
- 69 Shows character if, and only if, its there (7)  
 -----
- 70 Show the head bringing up the rear, say (10)  
 -----
- 71 Sir Frank loses his wicket (6)  
 ----e--
- 72 Snooker (7,3)  
 -----e--
- 73 Spider that lost sense of direction (6)  
 -----e-
- 74 Spooner by mantle light (7)  
 -----
- 75 Spot a knot, either simply at first, or in a branch later (13)  
 -----e-----
- 76 Stand for musical segregation (10)  
 -----

84 The Kop? (7)

- e - - - - -



No. of correct answers claimed

Alternative clue

Solution

Name and email address

Return to the Tutorial Bursar's tray in the Tutorial Office by 4 pm on Monday 22 January 2013 to be eligible for the competition for which a modest prize is offered

## Chapter 11

# The Tripos Stakes

The aspect of a Cambridge education that probably generates more correspondence between a College's Tutorial Office on the one hand and the

nately' it didn't happen often' and the person that we all had to thank for that was' during virtually the whole of my time as Senior Tutor' the Secretary to the Board of Examinations

Being Secretary to the Board was not the only' nor even the main' job that fell within the remit of the University's Deputy Registrar<sup>1</sup> His principal duties were to 'oil the wheels' of the University and serve as the Secretary to many of the University's most important Committees He was also the person to be consulted whenever clarification of the correct procedure to be followed or a summary of the *pro* *et* *con* implications of a university statute or ordinance was needed typically a phone call would produce the required information either immediately or' in more complicated cases' within a few minutes However' my concern here is Cambridge University examinations' or' as they are almost always called' Tripos examinations Because of his major role in the organisation of them' and hence his frequent appearances in this chapter' I will usually refer to him simply as 'the Secretary'' rather than give him his full title on each occasion

The three or four year course associated with each subject of study is called the corresponding Tripos and each is divided into two' three or four parts' each part lasting one or two years Although most students continue their studies to all the parts of some particular Tripos in order to qualify for a Bachelor's or Master's degree' the University's regulations allow a wide variety of mixed Tripos courses to qualify for the B A degree





a single area of mathematics for examination' since that would meet the regulations. However, he had to be advised that to show his mathematical competence he should offer at least four out of the fifty or so available' with each area examined in a separate paper.<sup>2</sup>

However, with a few exceptions, the Tripos is a three-year course. The first year is spent on the subjects of Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry. The second year is spent on the subjects of Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry. The third year is spent on the subjects of Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry. The Tripos is a three-year course.

not f

on set texts' included one' and' depending on interpretation' possibly two' questions on texts that had in fact not been set well' they may have been set in the minds and minutes of the relevant committee' but they hadn't been announced as such in any public document

I don't know whether or not the regulations governing one particular paper in the Modern Languages Tripos<sup>4</sup> had just been altered' but one MML Examiner for the ' ' examination wanted to show the candidates a sample rubric for the paper they were due to sit' so that they would be prepared for its particular format. Unfortunately' he circulated photocopies' not just of a rubric' but of a whole paper. Even more unfortunately' the paper was the one that had just been 'nalised for the ' ' examination. Back to the drawing board

Although being entered for the wrong examination or for the wrong selection of papers in the right examination is relatively rare' seeking to sit the examination under conditions that are notnmi thon u322 (i ' amhit' th p'ripi in (o

' (t (n i 3 2 (f 22 (p ' 2 (i ' 2pfarurleuding t

To give an obvious example, even though every effort is made to keep Saturday examinations to a minimum, each year about twenty or three Orthodox Jews scheduled to sit examinations on a Saturday are unable to do so, and they have to be incarcerated and invigilated in the house of a Jewish family until their rescheduled session on Sunday is over. For well over twenty years, this arrangement was meticulously organised each year by one particular Jewish member of the University's staff, and for two of those years his own wife, a student at my own college, was amongst his charges.

In *Annals*, the Secretary reports that on one isolated occasion his Sunday breakfast was interrupted by a phone call saying that one of the examination papers needed for the Sunday session was missing. This resulted in one member of the Old Schools staff, leaping from his bath, getting hurriedly dressed (though this is not specifically reported), dashing to the Examinations Office, locating a copy of the missing paper, and delivering it in time for the candidate to sit the examination within the scheduled session.

In some years the Jewish Festival of Weeks (Shavuoth)<sup>6</sup> causes additional difficulties, especially when it falls in mid-week. Some Jewish sects are required to keep only one of the two days and so arrangements similar to those for Saturday

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<sup>6</sup>A two-day festival, also known as Pentecost, it is celebrated precisely fifty days after the second day of Passover and can therefore start on almost any day of the week. The Christian equivalent is Whit Sunday and so causes no clashes with a general examination timetable that is specifically designed to avoid Sundays!



examinations are feasible. However, mid week examinations are far more numerous than those held on Saturdays and the overall effect of the Festival is significant in terms of the number of ad hoc arrangements that have to be made.

Other requests for concessions based on religious grounds are more numerous but from amongst them can be noted the case of three Christian Sabbatarians who happened to belong to a sect that had opted for Saturday as its sabbath. No problem, you might think, handle it as if they were Orthodox Jews. But no, this particular sect also had an annual Sabbath on the first Sunday in June. So their Saturday examinations had to be held on the following Monday. With no well oiled machinery in place to deal with the situation, it fell to their individual Tutors to make sure that each of the students had no contact with the outside world for two whole days. Being a Tutor occasionally has some unexpected downsides.

In the early 1970's a new problem appeared. It arose from the need for members of some Muslim sects to attend the Mosque for prayer on Fridays. And so, with the normal starting time for afternoon sessions of Tripos examinations being 3 p.m., some new arrangement was needed. When this difficulty was raised for the first time, the student's Tutor said initially that his pupil could not be available to sit his examination until half past three or even four o'clock.

However, as it happened, this claim was almost immediately undermined by a similar one on behalf of a student from a different College. He could be back from the Mosque and ready

to start by 2.3 p.m. and the College would provide an armed guard to make sure that he could not make contact with any body else. So an armed guard to and from the Mosque followed by a 2.3 start in college was to be the order of the day. A third request was later dealt with using this by now long established procedure. By the following year it was all totally routine and caused the Secretary to remark that it was 'No problem' as they probably say in Arabic.

As noted earlier the other main reasons for seeking exemption from taking Tripos examinations in the normal way are the difficulties experienced by students with medical problems, both temporary and long standing. Of course one can only sympathise with students who have to contend with any such difficulties and to a large extent the University's regulations having been devised by committees that include many past and present Tutors are relatively humane.

However there are quiet rightly procedures that must be followed and they include starting the process early enough that the circumstances including the medical evidence provided by a student's doctor or a College Nurse can be properly considered.

(1) ... 3 ... 2Td ... (1) ... 3 ... 2Td i ... (w 23 ... 2 ... (a ... (e TJ2 ... (r 22 ... (a ... T ... 3 ... (p 22 ... (h 2 3 ... (u ... p ... (s ... l ... 22 ... (r 3 ... 23(i ... (r 22 ... (i ... 3 ... (t 3 ... (g ... 2 ... (r ... 3(m ... (a ... em ... (e 22 ... (e 32 ... 3 ... (e 22 ... 3 2 (l ... 3 2 (o ... 2 33 ... 23 Td (r 22 ... (e ... (g ... 23(i ... (o 2 ...

backs' deformed hips' and even the very unfortunate undergraduate who suffered from haemorrhoids and had to take all his examinations standing up at a lectern' were dealt with in a seemly and controlled manner

Others' such as those caused by accidents' can arise just before or even during the examination period and snap decisions have to be made. Damaged shoulders' wrists' fingers and thumbs are the market leaders in this sector and last minute arrangements to deal with them' such as taking the examination in college and extra time allowances' have to be implemented. One such candidate almost seemed to be positively trying to test how far the safety net stretched despite having broken the thumb of his left hand shortly before

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Most of the problematic applications involved Oxford in some way or other' and' although getting individual students to the Other Place in time for a croquet match or for the annual Women's Cricket Match was managed without too much difficulty' when it came to an athletics match involving a men's 'rst team' a men's second team and a women's team' the operation moved to a whole new level

Naturally' the 'rst question to be asked was why a date during the period in which it was likely that several members of the squads would be required for examinations' had been chosen in the 'rst place Well' it had been arranged by the Achilles Club<sup>10</sup> training for a year match on a knife edge not practicable to postpone it umpires of distinguished athletic pedigree were involved Besides' there was the post match dinner The dinner' Well yes' and nobody could possibly sacrifice that' least of all the distinguished umpires When the dust had settled' there were six would be 'rst team competit



C / n n 11

The problem arose when the combined Oxford and Cambridge cricket team having reached the quarter-finals of the Benson and Hedges Cup were due to play Somerset on the same day as one of the papers in the Tripos taught and examined by that Department was scheduled. One of the combined team's leading players was a student in that Department and required to take the paper not only to count towards his expected Associated degree but also towards a professional qualification for his intended career.

On the one hand the Department wanted there to be no doubt about the seriousness and validity of its examinations for professional purposes and was requiring two other rather poorly candidates to take the same examination for this reason. On the other the candidate's Tutor, the Department itself and a one time Vice Chancellor were all hoping that some timetable





position that 'consistent with the truth' they must always make the best case they can on behalf of their pupil - rather like a duty solicitor who is appointed to act for a would be burglar - even one who has been arrested and charged whilst still stuck in a window frame. This applies whether the 'court' is a University Committee or its delegated Officers - the Council of the student's College - the Police Station - or - on rare occasions - a real criminal court. As can be imagined - there are sometimes cases or applications to be put that are so far from being realistic that the sensible thing would be to not put them at all.

Nevertheless - one Tutor felt obliged to forward a request from one of his pupils for permission to write their examination answers on their own special paper - on the grounds that the script paper provided by the University was 'too rough'. Not surprisingly - this proposal was turned down - at by the Secretary - officially on security grounds - but also because - in his view - the paper provided by the University - far from being rough - was of a quite superior quality.

Also rejected was an application for an *in* *in* made on behalf of a candidate for the Certificate of Competent Knowledge (CCK) in a Modern Language. This is a course and examination taken by students who are *in* reading MML<sup>12</sup> - but wish to acquire a good working knowledge of a particular modern language - without any need to study the corresponding literature - it involves a significant workload - as it requires both written work for supervisions and language classes. Most - but

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<sup>12</sup>Or, if they are, the CCK language is not one they are studying in the MML Tripos.

not all of the students studying for a CCK are students in Arts

particularly amongst Arts students' to stay up late' but then' having got into bed' to remain there for as long as possible <sup>13</sup>

But returning to the 'student hunt' as often as not after a frantic but fruitless search it can be called off as the examination room officials have phoned back to say that the student has put in an appearance or that he or she had been there all the time but had been sitting in the wrong seat.

It may be wondered how a student could be in the wrong seat given that each desk displays a desk ticket stating the name and college of the intended candidate and that that same intended candidate should in theory have challenged the right of any usurper to occupy the seat before the examination had even begun. However for any given examination session<sup>14</sup> there are almost always a few examinees who are not present at the scheduled time, a few examinees with the same surname and a few examinees who are unaware they have assigned desks and think that they can sit anywhere. Given this mix the chance that there will be somebody sitting unchallenged in the wrong seat at a moment and consequently that there is an empty one elsewhere in the room is not altogether negligible. The net result of this is likely to be that the Tutor of a missing candidate remains unaware of the fact whilst that of one who is present but wrongly located is sent on a wild goose chase a lose lose situation.

Not all missing candidates can be or in some cases want to be found in time. Certainly the student who relocated to his home in Jersey for reasons which remain unclear but had some thing to do with his student grant did not give his Tutor any

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<sup>14</sup>Which might include students from different Triposes if the examination room is a large one.

chance to rescue the situation. Similarly stymied was another Tutor' whose pupil wrote him a note the day before the exam to say that he was going on an anti war demonstration' hoping not to be arrested but was

Another curious going on' reported to the Board of Examinations in connection with certain examinations in the Architecture Tripos' was that the candidates would arrive somewhat late and furthermore' instead of going into the examination room' would sit around outside reading text books' only going into the room when they appeared to have completed their revision. I was not aware of this until long after it happened' but it reinforced my view that the written examinations in Architecture were not taken too seriously and that' in fact' it was almost impossible to get an overall class that was different from that awarded to a student's design portfolio. One of my own Architecture students was awarded an overall first class despite









Another piece of absent material was the data sheet that was supposed to accompany the *M* *n* *s* *c* paper in the Architecture Tripos. The Examiner who should have been present and might have provided at least one of the data sheets was also absent and it took a quarter of an hour to locate him and resolve the problem somewhat cynically. I am inclined to think that it would not have mattered much if the Examiner and his data sheets could not have been found as a candidate's ultimate class seems to have at most minimal dependence on their performance in this paper <sup>18</sup>

A further serious error by the Examiners one that resulted in questions being raised by both candidates and their Tutors was a mistake that appeared in a Pathology Practical exam for

In one particular year ( ) the di culties associated with

unbalanced. The Chairman of Examiners at first denied that the number of questions had been reduced, but after a recount (or two, using the proof copy signed off by that same Chairman and passed to the Press for final production) he accepted that there had indeed been a reduction.

Now, a reduction from nineteen to fourteen, however it had happened, is not really all that bad, but suggestions of imbalance could hardly be ignored. However, even worse was to come, as another paper in the same examination, *Latin*, was accused, not only of being badly balanced, but also of exhibiting some dilettantism. This did not go down well, and the Chairman said that he and his colleagues were angered by the criticism, which they regarded as *unfair*, a word that does not even exist in my dictionary. I'm no historian, but feel that there were certainly some grounds for the criticism, not least because one of the questions whimsically asked 'Was Romanticism masculine, feminine or neuter?'

Unsatisfactory question papers are not the only things that can produce problems during an exam. The candidates themselves, and even events outside the examination room, are quite capable of causing untoward things to happen. In one incident, a student collapsed during a paper that formed part of the Medical Sciences Tripos and it was eventually established that it was four days since he had last eaten anything, clearly there was something lacking in his understanding of the basics of his subject.

In the same year, during an examination for the Master of

Laws degree' one candidate felt obliged to call an invigilator and whisper to him that he had seen the candidate sitting in front of him take a piece of paper from his pocket' consult it' and then put it back into his pocket' and that this had happened several times. The invigilator summoned one of the Proctors and when the alleged cheat left the examination hall he was confronted and challenged about the illicit paper in his pocket. Well' yes' he did have some notes and he had consulted them. they were ones that he had made to remind himself how long to spend on each question. No case to answer' Your Honour.

Also disturbed by the actions of another candidate seated close by was a final year Modern Languages student. After about thirty minutes he complained to an Invigilator that his neighbour's pen was too noisy' and asked whether he could be moved to another desk. This request was granted. he then asked further that the inconvenience that this had caused him

nation which might include answering questions about some of the museum's specimens was scheduled for that day' this led to quite unjustified fears that some kind of demonstration' aimed at disrupting the examination' might be planned. Of course' nothing happened.

Much more serious was the disruption to the ' exami nations caused by a telephone message warning of a bomb that was due to explode at noon on the University's Downing Site' a site that includes the Department of Physiology. It was sent to the Cambridge Police at about ' a m and assumed by them to be sent by animal rights activists. The police concluded that the Physiology building and the adjacent Geography Department' which that morning had three of its rooms full of examination candidates'<sup>21</sup> should be evacuated from '' a m until ' p m.

However' before this evacuation could be organised' the Po lice called back to say that re examination of the recorded tele phone message had shown that it referred' not to the Downing Site' but to the New Museum Site' which is situated in Downing Street <sup>22</sup>. On this site there were even more Tripos examinations

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<sup>21</sup>Who had started their three-hour examinations at 9.00 a.m.

<sup>22</sup>This Downing Street is nominally associated with Downing College, itself named after the third Baronet, Sir George Downing Bt, who left a legacy to found a Cambridge College if ever the legitimate Downing line should die out; this it did, but it took 36 years of legal wrangling before the widow of the fourth Baronet and her family were forced by the courts to give up any claim to the legacy money. The Downing Street in London (and those in Manhattan and Brooklyn in New York) is named after the first Baronet, also Sir George Downing, who played a large part in securing New York (formerly New Amsterdam) from the Dutch.





number of examinees who were taking their papers in a College close to the new starting point they had to be allowed extra time as some compensation

Though it might well give the impression that echoes of its feudal past still ring round the University today despite all of its contributions to cutting edge Science the Social Sciences and the Arts over the last hundred years the rather amusing incident of the 'noisy moss' is worth recalling Well actually





statute member and nearly all are submitted on time<sup>26</sup> and in the required format. Long essays, this time largely confined to the Arts and Social Sciences, are similarly overseen by the DoS, either directly or through the supervision system. They too give relatively little trouble.

It is with *the* *statute* that the problems really arise but, in order to appreciate how they come about, the reader needs to have at least some familiarity with the general procedures involved. In most Arts and some Social Science Triposes provi-

a realistic (or unrealistic) schedule for meeting his or her target submission date: the student meets (or doesn't meet) the submission date. Tutors and Directors of Studies feel greatly relieved (or have to start thinking of plausible excuses and/or simply plead for extra time on behalf of their charges) the dissertation finally arrives (or the student gives up the struggle and sits a written paper for which they are usually ill prepared).

Although there have been changes since<sup>27</sup> in the period during which I was a Tutor, some dissertation submission dates were really quite early in the academic year. For example, in 1960 that for Part II of the Geography Tripos was set for the middle of the Lent Term (the day before St Valentine's Day).<sup>27</sup> In one of his reports to the Board of Examinations, their Secretary recorded that a particular final year Geography student had an uncomfortably close call with the set timetable. She was preparing a dissertation on Irish pilgrimage, in particular as it might affect the future development of Knock Airport.<sup>28</sup>

An Irish M.P. had agreed to lend her some of his personal papers, ones that were highly relevant to her investigation. However, the papers had become stuck in the postal system as a result of a January strike by Customs workers in the Irish Republic. Clearly the candidate could hardly be faulted, and with the

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<sup>27</sup>The submission and approval of proposed titles took place correspondingly early — early enough that candidates could, if they so wished, spend part of the previous Long Vacation undertaking fieldwork or surveys to provide material for their intended dissertations.

<sup>28</sup>In addition to pilgrimages visiting the shrine of Our Lady of Knock,

deadline less than a month away' an extension to mid March was readily agreed by the Examiners' fortunately this proved sufficient as the papers were released shortly afterwards. I think that this incident shows that there is something to be said for an early timetable for dissertations' because if this incident had happened in May' by which time there is no slack in the system' it would have been very difficult to have the candidate's inevitably almost minimal submission assessed fairly.

For Geography' and for most other subjects' late submissions' with or without an approved extension time' are relatively uncommon' at most a few percent of the total number of candidates. But that's not so for Part II of the English Tripos' the undisputed king of the late submission. There are usually about two hundred students taking this examination' and it should be remembered in mitigation that they have to submit a dissertation' but in the mid seventies the number of late submissions was averaging fifty per year. By the end of that decade and for most of the next' closer control by the English Department and College Directors of Studies had brought thi

submission deadline had been set as early as 9 p.m. on the third day of the Easter Full Term, a full month before the Part II written papers began, no post deadline dissertation should be accepted, even if it was only a few minutes late (unless there was an overwhelming case for a small extension).

Given the subject's previous record with regard to late submissions, it was hardly surprising that this was queried. Bearing in mind that one dissertation was compulsory, did the Faculty Board really want a significant fraction of its potential graduates to fail? Could the deadline be moved, at least as far as the Monday after the first weekend of Term, rather than be on the Friday before it? Could those students struggling to submit (start) a second (optional) dissertation have the option to take an additional written paper instead, as they could in Part I?

Well, 'No'. The Faculty Board Chairman explained that his Board was 'hawkish' and wanted its undergraduates to be well organised and multi skilled, so that they would be more employable when they did graduate. This response must have put the Secretary into something of a quandary: normally he was challenging Tutors, good naturedly of course, asking them why their pupils had not complied with perfectly clear regulations, but here he was challenging the Chairman of a Faculty Board, asking him why the regulations were so draconian. Hardly believable, but he was behaving just as if he were a Tutor. What ever next?

In the end, faced with the prospect of nearly thirty of its annual year students failing to graduate, the Faculty Board ac

cepted that perhaps a few days grace would be acceptable after all. This episode should have acted as at least some sort of check on the re-emerging problem' but it seems not to have done so and two years later the following rather amusing scenario unfolded.

The official submission date for dissertations in Part II Economics was a little earlier than that for Part II English' and when the first of these dates arrived the Secretary had granted four extensions to candidates in Economics' whilst the English score stood at the paltry total of one' yes' only one.

Judging by subsequent events' news of this must have leaked out and been seen as a challenge to their status as late submission's perennial Champions by all those involved in the teaching of English. As the Secretary told me over the phone<sup>29</sup> 'he didn't know what their Manager had said to them at half time' but the usual Tutors suddenly began shooting from all angles' and he had no

successful application for an extension to a submission deadline could be made. Most are made on the straightforward basis of the student's studies having been interrupted by accident or illness, a major family crisis, or the failure of a third party to provide promised facilities or material at the agreed time.

On rather shakier grounds was an application made on behalf of a Part II Economics candidate writing an optional dissertation. It was based on the fact that, although she was reading Economics, she was not very good with numbers. Because the relevant literature circulated by the Department of Economics contained some ambiguities, an extension was in fact granted, but to no avail, as the numbers were still too much for her and she had to revert to an examination consisting entirely of written papers.

Somebody else who was not very good with numbers was the History candidate who, despite the published Faculty limit of 32,000 words for all dissertations, produced one of 32,000 words. He requested and was given a few days to try to cut it

Part II English of course – and was described by his Tutor as ‘a strange man who could not be expected to understand things like closing dates and University regulations’ – citing as evidence that the student in question had tried to become a monk – but (unfortunately for his College) had been rejected by the Abbot. So – could he be given more time? Is there any limit to a Tutor’s sense of duty to his or her pupils?

It may appear that I have some particular axe to grind with regard to the subject of English. Far from it: the ‘nal year English students in my own College regularly produce some of its best Tripos results – as measured by the percentage of them that graduate with ‘rst class honours or receive University prizes.<sup>30</sup> Several of them are now established authors or journalists – recognised by the public at large. Nevertheless – when it comes to generating dissertation difficulties – the subject wins hands down – though it’s not always entirely the student’s fault.

As noted earlier – the title of a proposed English dissertation is submitted through the student’s Director of Studies – and the dissertation itself – when completed – has to be certified as the student’s work by their Tutor – who may or may not glance through it. These are the two stools between which a dissertation can fall – as is illustrated by the case in which a Part II student submitted two dissertations – neither of which corresponded to the titles approved for them – rather – they appeared to be about



mathematics – a discrepancy that did not escape the notice of the English examiners for long. In the same year, the offering from another candidate was more musical than literary.

The first of the two ‘mathematical’ English dissertations was accompanied by a letter from the student’s Director of Studies pleading *non*. This was not, as might be thought, a notification that the dissertation had some curiosity value, but an admission that the DoS had been guilty to some degree of negligence.

A plea of *incuria* is effectively a request to the University to allow an anomalous situation to be treated as if it were legal within the Universities rules. Such pleas are usually made by Tutors when, for some reason, a violation of the University Ordinances or Regulations involving one of their pupils has taken place, and they have not noticed it in time to correct the situation. In the context of the Tripos, this most often comes about when a student is inadvertently allowed to prepare for a combination of examination papers that is either not permitted in general, or not permitted for a student with their particular past examination record.

If it is not realistic to require the student to switch to an allowed combination of papers in the time still available, then a plea of *incuria* is made by the student’s Tutor, in practice asking that an exception to the Regulations be made in this particular case. As the application involves a violation of the University’s rules, if the plea is accepted a notice is published in the *Chronicle* so that the Senior Members of the University have been properly informed. A typical notice





them down' and' as we have seen' others lodged official protests

## **Chapter 12**

# **The Stewards' Enquiry**

Once a written paper or practical examination is over' and al

generally much to the annoyance of everybody else involved or not involved' as the case may be

Some comments made in this way are directly concerned with the papers themselves' such as the round robin sent by forty four candidates for Part II of the Mathematical Tripos in 1822 to the effect that the paper contained several misprints' did not properly reflect the lectured course' and asked questions that were much too difficult'

Others were more concerned with the answers that a candidate had submitted. Not' as might be expected' to offer an excuse for why they might be judged substandard' rather' because they were of superior quality' perhaps better than the Examiners might manage. In 1823 a 'final year candidate' supported by his DoS' pressed hard for the return of his examination scripts on the grounds that they might contain publishable material' the rules forbid the return of scripts to candidates and the request was denied

Eight years later a candidate for Part II of the English Tripos wrote' through her Tutor' to ask that her script for the 'Constitution' paper be kept in a safe place after it had been marked. In it she had advanced certain theories that she wished to publish and wanted to protect against the possibility that an Examiner might' perhaps subconsciously' plagiarise her work. The Secretary did procure the relevant script' but when he came to file it away he remembered that he still held three Part II English scripts from several years earlier. They had been retained at the request of a Tutor and contained a num

ber of poems as well as a declaration by their author that she held copyright for them. Enquiries as to whether they should be retained any longer had received no reply by the time the Secretary reported to the Board. So far as I know, one of his successors is still waiting.

An equally unusual, but milder, complaint was received from a candidate for the Mathematical Tripos. His examinations were being held in the Arts School, where the pew-like seating has only relatively narrow shelves on which to rest writing materials. The candidates were therefore seated in alternate rows and provided with drawing boards on which to work. His claim was that his concentration was adversely affected by the words 'so boring' that somebody had written on his board. Could the words be removed before his next exam? Enclosed with his letter was a sheet of sandpaper for the purpose.

Rather more routine communications with the Secretary at this stage of the examination process are from Tutors seeking to explain the particular circumstances that have, or may have, affected the performances of one or more of their pupils. In one unusual example, in that it affected a very large number of students from a single College, its Senior Tutor reported to the Secretary that during the previous night a violent thunder storm had triggered their newly installed fire detection system and sounded alarms throughout the College. The night porter, when he realised what had happened, had switched the system off, but had put it back on again when he thought the storm had passed. Unfortunately, the storm returned and the whole episode was repeated, and then re-repeated. Three times in

one night' to say nothing of a burglar alarm in a nearby house that had rung' very loudly' for four hours the night before. A lot of students had lost a lot of sleep. The Senior Tutor didn't know what the Secretary could do about it' but had thought that he ought to be informed.

A Tutor in a different College' doing the best he could for an errant pupil' reported that the student in question' a candidate for Part I of the Historical Tripos' had misunderstood a question and written on the crisis of 1291<sup>1</sup> rather than on one of a century later. The Tutor suggested that it might be important for the Examiners to know this. Too true.

Whilst the Secretary is receiving the kind of correspondence just described' the Examiners are receiving the candidates' scripts. Well' most of them are. Completed scripts' once available' are usually delivered to internal examiners at their Departments or Colleges in Cambridge without too much difficulty. Some examiners even turn up at the examination room to collect their allocation.

But for External Examiners' this is not always the case. There are some who' despite having agreed to act as an Examiner' seem almost reluctant to have the scripts catch up with them. A rather extreme example was an External Examiner in Veterinary Anatomy who had asked for some two dozen scripts to be sent to her in Bristol on the Saturday of a Bank Holiday.

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<sup>1</sup>Concerned with the ruling of Scotland, involving Edward I, William Wallace and Robert Bruce.



weekend<sup>2</sup> She later gave a new address in Wales and arrangements were made to get the scripts to her there Her next move

pity' as she demonstrated high ability in other papers' and even the rhetorical questions showed evidence of wide reading. When it ultimately came to drawing up the class list' the relatively low marks awarded to these two papers were to reduce her aggregate mark to lower than that needed for a First Class.

Turning to the more normal difficulties with problem scripts' it can be said that those that appear to be incomplete' usually are. But all the obvious solutions have to be tried before drawing the statistically likely conclusion. Students' accidentally take their answers out of the examination room' returning them almost immediately' or later through their Tutor' or even by leaving them' without any explanation' on a table by the entrance to the examination room a day later.

Copious waste paper baskets' nominally for deliberately discarded work or jottings' are placed at the exit of each examination room and Invigilators are on guard there to make sure that no script paper is taken out of the room at the end of an examination. The first places to look when whole questions or individual pages seem to be missing are the contents of these baskets. Accordingly they are carefully bagged up at the end of each session and stored for a few weeks.

Missing questions are usually detected by Invigilators when they collect up the scripts. They check what has been left on a desk against a cover sheet showing' amongst other things' which questions the candidate claims to have attempted. This is most easily done if individual questions are tied up separately. That pages are missing normally only comes to light when the

Examiners begin their task

Essays and calculations that terminate 'unfinished' in the middle of a page can usually be put down to time having run out the real nightmare is the essay that finishes mid sentence in the bottom right hand corner of the page Did time really run out just there? Over the years the Secretary reported quite a number of cases in which the student subsequently confirmed that that was exactly what had happened

When a complete script appears to be missing getting to the bottom of the matter is generally somewhat easier than when a part script goes AWOL Very occasionally a candidate does absent mindedly walk out of the examination room carrying his or her script and is not noticed by an Invigilator But if the script actually exists it is usually to be found with one of the Examiners though perhaps not with the one designated to be the 'first' or only person to mark it A few telephone calls (or these days emails) are normally sufficient to sort out such situations

More common explanations are that the candidate did not sit the examination paper in question had been withdrawn from the examination had changed to a different optional paper or had been ill on the day It needs only one weak link in the information chain to result in a particular Examiner not receiving a script that he or she is expecting To take one particular example from the 'MML examination' the Chairman of Examiners telephoned the Secretary shortly before the annual meeting of the Examiners to say that a second year candidate

in Polish and Serbo-Croat seemed to have no script for one of his Polish papers. There were, apparently, a number of reasons for supposing that either the candidate had not sat the paper or that he had but it had not been marked:

- The usual Director of Studies in his College was ill
- The supervisor in Polish had no idea that the candidate was offering the paper concerned
- The intended Examiner of the paper had died and his replacement was a lady in a fairly late stage of pregnancy
- The candidate was admitted (by his Tutor, I suppose) to

transcribing of scripts' or for dictation to an amanuensis in the

tory and Philosophy of Science Tripos also produced scripts initially declared to be illegible. By then a working rule had been introduced that normally<sup>5</sup> only three out of the five could be transcribed with the 'assistance' of the candidate — after all, candidates were always instructed in a paper's rubric to write

papers worth' the candidate just scraped a third

Whilst most complaints about the conduct of examinations originate with the candidates and their Tutors' the Examiners themselves are not entirely blameless. To start with a rather lightweight example' the Examiners in Part I of the MML Tripos had a triple pronged complaint: they couldn't work out where to enter their assessments in the oral mark book<sup>6</sup>; the building where they had held the orals was cold; and' worst of all' they had been unable to obtain any coffee. The Secretary repulsed this attack comfortably enough by noting that heating and coffee fell outside his job description' and that the form of the mark book was that agreed with last year's Examiners.

Another Examiner' this time the Chairman of those charged with the task of examining Part I of the Archaeological and Anthropological Tripos' was outraged by a time delay that occurred in the posting of the corresponding class list. One of the candidates for this examination was a certain Royal Personage. As with all such A-listers' there were always a number of news hounds in fairly close attendance' each hoping to register yet another exclusive scoop.

The candidate in question managed to avoid them' and attend and complete his papers without too much fuss. The class list was drawn up. It had been agreed that the candidate's Director of Studies should be given early warning of his

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<sup>6</sup>Though this is not as bad as the Examiner, in a different examination and year, who thought he did know, but entered the candidates' desk numbers instead of their marks.

student's result' so that The Palace could be made aware of it before it was made public. This was done and the class list was then forwarded to the Old Schools. However, because unrelated problems at the Examinations Office intervened, the list was not given its routine pre-release check until the following morning, thus delaying its publication. The Chairman seemed to think that the delay in posting the list was scandalous, and somehow saw it as an indefensible advantage to one candidate. I can't work out why.

Finally, I recall a complaint from an Examiner that had nothing to do with the scripts or marks as such, but was occasioned by his being an External Examiner in Veterinary Anatomy. He was being put up overnight at one of the Cambridge Colleges, but did not inform the College that he would be coming by car rather than by train and taxi. Consequently when he parked his car in the private college car park, still without informing anybody, it attracted several warning stickers.

Even worse, scratches had appeared on the car, scratches that the Examiner knew were not there when he had initially parked. He claimed some £2 (this over thirty years ago in repairs, either from the University or from the College, saying that from his point of view there was no difference between them. But there was, the College said that so far as they were concerned he was guilty of unauthorised parking and they could accept no responsibility. The University maintained that the expenditure had been incurred not by an Examiner acting in the line of duty, but by an errant car driver, and it could accept no responsibility. Unfortunately for him, the External Examiner



had no Tutor to plead his case

After the papers have been marked' the marks have been collated by their Chairman' and the Examiners have had their 'nal meeting at which they looked at the big picture' signed class lists showing in which class each of the candidates has been placed are posted on the boards. The boards' are glass fronted display cabinets that are' for a period of about four weeks' positioned against the southern outside wall of the Senate House. For most students' it is by consulting the appropriate list that they 'rst 'nd out how well or badly they have done. Once posted' a class list normally remains on display for several days' but it does not take that long for the queries and complaints to begin to 'ow.

Some of the queries' particularly in Science subjects' are easily answered' as was that from a second year Natural Scientist about his Mathematics papers. His own view about his efforts was much rosier than that of his Examiners. 'Have all my questions been marked?' to which the answer was 'Indeed they have' and only one of the twelve was substantially correct'. Equally easy to give was the answer to a litigious candidate for the Master of Laws degree who had failed in two out of four papers' and believed she had a right to have her failed scripts re marked by an independent external Examiner. 'Certainly not'. In fact' the scripts' being at the failure level' had already been re marked and inspected by the official External Examiner' who confirmed the original assessment.

The ' 2 examination for Part II of the Theological and



fragments' is not appreciated by a significant fraction of the students taking the course. To implement this consideration, each answer, as well as receiving a mark, is given an  $\alpha$  if it is, or is close to being, completely correct, or a  $\beta$  if about half of it is beyond reproach, otherwise it is ungraded, but still contributes its mark toward the candidate's total. To achieve any particular class, certain minimum numbers of  $\alpha$  questions, together with a sufficient total, are needed. At the boundary between the first and second class, the  $\alpha$  count assumes great significance.<sup>8</sup>

One candidate in Part II of that Tripos queried being placed in the second, rather than the first, class and wondered why his computer project had not been well received. The Examiners had to tell him that his notion of what constituted a half, or nearly complete answer was not the same as theirs. Further, his computing project had not been marked down for being carried out on his own machine, as he had rather tendentiously suggested, but because of his own inadequate mathematics.

In the same year, a candidate with a third in Part II of the English Tripos had complained about his result. Well, as the Secretary to the Board of Examinations commented, anyone would, because it is pretty rare to get a third in Part II Engli

was able to contact first. No doubt rather sadly, he was able to confirm that, although they had all been discussed at great length, the performances of all six were much of a muchness, and that muchness was below the second class borderline.

Three years later a candidate actually failed part II English and consequently also failed to graduate, causing his father, a Professor at another University, to question and complain to anybody he could get hold of. Little sympathy was forthcoming, not even from the student's College. I can only conclude that he must have driven his Tutor and Director of Studies mad during his three years of residence.

These days, third classes and failures in final year Arts subjects and Biological Sciences are almost unheard of, and lower

ber of candidates for the LL M law degree complained that the appearance of their names in a class list infringed their privacy. Unfortunately, no reply could be sent to them, as they had maintained their right to privacy by not including their names in the letter of complaint.

What about the class lists themselves? Not surprisingly, with so many people involved in producing any one year's crop, they contain quite a number of errors. The vast majority of these are noticed and corrected by the staff of the Examinations Office before the lists are actually posted on the Senate House boards. Very occasionally a notice, formally from the Vice-Chancellor, has to be issued, authorising a retrospective change to a published list.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the errors should have been picked up before the lists reached the Old Schools. For example, one submitted list for Part II Mathematics had one particular candidate in three different categories: having failed, having been absent from the examination, and having been placed in the first class. Happily the last of these was the correct one.

In one particularly careless year the following episodes were associated with lists that required amendment: the results for the Qualifying Examination in Education listed as successful two students who had not taken the examination. One of them was not even a candidate for it; in the similarly non-compulsory

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<sup>10</sup>Such changes can also result from decisions made by the Applications Committee, a committee that considers appeals, on behalf of their pupils, made by Tutors after the relevant class list has been published.

Preliminary Examination to Part II Economics' there were two candidates with the same surname and they had been muddled up - one MML candidate who was placed in the 'first class also appeared in the 'Deserved Honours' category<sup>11</sup> - a candidate who had gained a lower second was completely missing from the same list - in Part II of the Archaeological and Anthropological Tripos a candidate who had missed some of the examination was mistakenly given an upper second' rather than being declared to have Deserved Honours - and 'nally' a Part II History student' who had not even been a candidate for Honours' was also placed in the upper second class

As always' Tutors did what they could for those whose re

overall class originally awarded to the candidate

man of Examiners for the Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic Tripos who was obviously very cross. He said that two of his candidates were taking (borrowing) papers from Part I of the English Tripos and four (were taking papers) from Part II of the Historical Tripos. He needed marks from the Examiners for those two examinations; of the eight sets of marks (expected) from History he had only seven, and of the four sets of marks from English he had none. This meant that his Examiners would be unable to meet on the following morning as arranged, and if they did not meet then they would not be able to meet until October(!). There would thus be a most tiresome delay and everybody would suffer from it, but it would not be the fault of the Examiners for the ASNC Tripos.

He asked the Secretary to prepare a note, (both) acknowledging that he had received this grave report and noted the consequences, and exonerating the Chairman from the consequences of his apparently contemplated action. He would then call round in ten minutes to collect it. The Secretary said that actually he had one or two other things to do and wasn't able to comply. The Chairman said that he would ring the Vice-Chancellor and the Secretary said why didn't he. He did ring the Vice-Chancellor and apparently retailed the same story and asked for his advice. The Vice-Chancellor did not give any advice but merely expressed the hope that the Examiners would be able to hold their meeting in the rea-



per seconds, one a lower second, and six had been given thirds; there were two allowances towards the Ordinary B.A. Degree and two complete failures. The Secretary received a great many representations about this, including four letters of complaint from Senior Tutors and was rung up by the THES<sup>12</sup>.....

I think that this was the only time that I ever complained (on behalf of the College directly to a University official about examination results' or about anything else' and unfortunately for the Secretary it had to be through him' as this was the procedure laid down in Regulations. I have no reason to suppose that the candidates as am(

(w (nh (o 2 (l 3 2 3 w 23 2(a 2(r 22 (e 2

The ASNC and English students were not the only ones who suffered 'cruel and unusual' treatment in 1976. A significant number of 'first year medical students also fared badly at the hands of the Examiners. In addition to being a course leading to the B.A. Degree in its own right, the Medical Sciences Tripos is recognised by the national medical authorities as an approved way of gaining exemption from the Second M.B. examination, itself a necessary step on the way to becoming medically qualified. This applies on a subject by subject basis over two years, and in each of six or so subjects the standard of a lower second is needed to gain the corresponding exemption. In a normal year the fraction that fail to reach that level in any one subject is well below ten percent, and, not surprisingly, most of these failures are down to the same few candidates.

In this particular year 1976

So although the injustice upset some students' plans for Long Vacation<sup>14</sup> activities, the setback was not fatal for any of the would be doctors

On a much lighter note, a rogue class list of a different kind caused a certain amount of extra work and perhaps unnecessary extra expense. In his incident packed report for the Secretary recorded that one board carrying three class lists disappeared overnight. Suspecting some kind of prank but unable to do anything about it, the Examinations Office posted duplicate class lists on another board and even went to the expense of buying some padlocks to fasten all boards together in pairs.

This attempt to make them more difficult to steal was an abject failure, and shortly afterwards the board carrying the duplicate class lists had also disappeared, only to be replaced by the original board with its three lists. Two of these were originals but one for Part IA of the Mathematical Tripos was definitely not. It showed that, amazingly, all of the students placed in the first class were members of the same College<sup>15</sup> and, equally amazingly, that all of those who obtained thirds or an allowance towards an Ordinary Degree were concentrated in just two Colleges. So far as I know, the Senior Tutor of Trinity is still keeping an eye open for the missing board.

The spotlight now swings away from the publicly posted class lists for each part of every Tripos and focuses instead on the rather more privately compiled lists of results for each College.

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<sup>14</sup>The mid-June to early October break between academic years.

<sup>15</sup>A mark of special distinction was awarded one of these, Newton I.

## Chapter 13

# Back at the Stables

When all the class lists had been posted' occasionally amended with the Vice Chancellor's authorisation' and the results of any appeals had been received' it was the duty of the Senior Tutor to draw up consolidated lists showing how our own students had fared. These lists would ultimately be presented to the College Council' so that it could formally declare who were the good' the bad' and the ugly. The good would get prizes and' in most cases' the formal title of Scholar' the bad would get much of the Council's time and' in a few cases' notice to leave' and the ugly would get a warning that they were expected to apply themselves better next year and halt the downward slide.

But before the lists got as far as the Council' the Tutors'

meeting as a body' would spend at least a day going through

iners need to decide whether it 'nevertheless' meets the standard required for an Ordinary' i.e. non Honours' degree. If it does' then the candidate is granted an allowance towards the Ordinary degree' and this is published at the foot of the class list. If it doesn't' the student fails and his or her name does not appear on the class list at all.

Except in very special' and somewhat anomalous circumstances' a student cannot recover from either of these situations and get back on track for an Honours degree. If allowed to by their College' a student with an allowance towards the Ordinary degree may continue with their course' taking the same papers

cases. For example, a Clare prize known as an Owst Prize was originally to be awarded to any student who was placed in the 'rst six (in the University) in the Mathematical or Classics Triposes. The ratio of student numbers taking the two Triposes stands nowadays at about 've to two and, to recognise this, the current qualification for a mathematics student to receive an Owst Prize is being placed in the top third, rather than the 'rst six, of the Wranglers.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the prizes are straightforwardly allocated to the Clare student with the highest marks in the relevant examination, but others, such as for the best performance by a medical student, call for some judgement as the full medical course, including the post graduate clinical work, is six years in all, with different examinations in each year. Also calling for some subjective assessment are those prizes that are not Tripos based, but are to be awarded to the students who are judged to have contributed the most to college life in areas such as music, drama, and the visual arts. In consultation with the College Dean, the Clare Tutors also make recommendations to the Council about the so called Greene Cups.

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<sup>3</sup>**Part II of the Mathematical Tripos is unique in having special names for those placed in the various classes: first class, Wranglers; second class, Senior Optimes; third class, Junior Optimes. Until just over a hundred years ago, all candidates were placed in order: Senior Wrangler, 2nd Wrangler, 3rd Wrangler, ... all the way down to the last person in the Junior Optime class, who was awarded the Wooden Spoon. The Mathematical**

A fund left in the will of Dr Greene<sup>4</sup> an early eighteenth century Clare Fellow provided for silver plates or tankards to be awarded annually to two graduands one for 'General Learning' and the other to quote the Latin prescription 'ad c', Dr Greene was for a time the Dean of Clare and in defining how piety was to be measured he stipulated that regularity of attendance at Chapel was to be given particular consideration nowadays being a Warden in the Chapel does carry some weight but doing 'good works' in the outside world is at least as important

The cup for general learning was sometimes difficult to award and I can remember occasions on which no 'incepting Bachelor' was considered sufficiently generally learned to qualify Taking two distinctly different Triposes and doing well in both was usually the hallmark of a serious contender but sometimes the breadth of a student's learning became apparent from his or her contributions to serious but non Tripos driven activities

Just as important as the examination performances of the individual students from the Council's point of view was some measure of how well the College as a whole had fared At the time that I took over as Senior Tutor tables produced each year by the Board of Examinations showed for each separate Tripos examination the percentages of all candidates placed in each class or failing to reach the Honours standard It also showed the same data variously aggregated according to Trip





formance' as the corresponding University wide indices for Arts and Sciences were equal. By contrast' an index based on' say' the percentage of 'firsts' would automatically favour those Colleges with a preponderance of students reading the science based subjects specifically mentioned in the previous paragraph.

For this reason' the simple 'firsts plus upper seconds index was the one adopted internally at Clare for drawing up a retrospective league table each year. I also kept a cumulative table that was added to annually' with each College being given a score equal to its position in the league table that year. Clearly' the long term objective was to have as low a cumulative score as possible.<sup>7</sup>

However' from about the end of the nineteen eighties' the foundations on which Clare's internal index was based started to shift. The percentages of candidates awarded 'firsts and upper seconds began to move upwards' but at very different rates in the different subjects. I have no doubt that the shift reflected a university level response to the grade inflation that had undoubtedly taken place at school and sixth form level.

Many more students' in both absolute and percentage terms' now move on from school to university with top A level grades' together with expectations' both their own and those of the educational establishment' that this should lead to improved degree

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<sup>7</sup>Although the cumulative table was never published, or even formally reported to the College Council, I was personally very pleased with the fact that over my period as Senior Tutor, Clare's total was significantly less than that of any other College.

classes. Like many – and perhaps all – other Universities, Cambridge has felt obliged to respond. Given that its undergraduate population has an average UCAS points score higher than that of virtually – (and probably actually – all other UK undergraduate populations, its degree classes when placed in a national context should reflect this.

My reasons for thinking that grade inflation has taken place at A level come from my cumulative experience as schoolboy, undergraduate, undergraduate supervisor, A level examiner, chairman of the Physics examiners for both the Cambridge Scholarship and STEP<sup>8</sup> examinations, university lecturer and examiner, and as the author of academic textbooks at the undergraduate and advanced sixth form level. Whilst clearly my views on A level grades are subjective and can be challenged, they are supported by the fact that thirty years ago, although they constituted only about one tenth of an annual intake, it was not uncommon for the winners of Cambridge Open Scholarships to have no more than A'A'B at A level. Today, Cambridge alone has to turn away every year, some seven or eight thousand applicants who are predicted by their schools to obtain results of A'A'A or better.

Whether or not it came about in the way I suggest, it is a matter of established fact that the change in class distribution has taken place. This is particularly evident in final year examinations. In many subjects the middle of the class list

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<sup>8</sup>Sixth Term Examination Papers, a public examination with questions based on A-level core syllabuses, but demanding thought and reasoning beyond that expected for A-level. See page 14.



The first publicly available

analyse the available data in many different ways including by

**'No person in statu pupillari shall be permitted to remain**

But all this was only a warm up for the the most difficult part of the meeting. What to do about the students who in some way had failed their examinations' but for whom total or partial redemption was still a theoretical possibility. Roughly speaking they fell into one of three categories: those whose examination had been a Preliminary' rather than a Tripos' Examination; those who had been made an Allowance towards an Ordinary Degree; and a special category of certain Medical and Veterinary students.

To deal with the last one 'rst' this category consisted of those undergraduates who' although they had been classed in



'ned to Arts subjects' and only then to those subjects in which some part of its Tripos is a two year course' e.g. Part I of the History Tripos. In some Faculties there are not enough potential examiners available to set and mark both Tripos and Preliminary examinations' and the latter are not available. For many

Preliminary Examination failures. In both cases, there is always the argument that, on the one hand, if they were required to leave, then an additional Fresher could be admitted next year. But on the other, if they are failing despite having tried hard, it was an error of judgement by the College to have admitted them in the first place and we should do all we can to get them some qualification.<sup>17</sup> During my time as Senior Tutor, and I don't think that it is any different now, the Council as a whole was more of a pussy cat than a tiger and, to mix one's metaphors, the doves nearly always won out over the hawks. Provided the relevant Director of Studies and Tutor were prepared to organise it, the Council would require work of a minimum specified standard, usually a lower second, to be undertaken by the student over the summer as a condition for being allowed to return for the following year.

With the difficult decisions made, or at least postponed until the end of the Long Vacation,<sup>18</sup> the Council and the rest of the Fellowship can turn to the more uniformly enjoyable job of giving the new graduates an appropriate send-off.

The principal participants on Graduation Day itself are the

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<sup>17</sup>This might, in some circumstances, mean trying to secure a transfer to a different University. I understand that the interests of the student are

<sup>18</sup>The most amusing of some, including myself, were in August, A September from Log Vaio to Reac Peiod. Whether it was to give the impression that more research should be undertaken, or, contrariwise, that it should be done, with October to be ruled out, I have never figured out.

Master of the College and its Praelector. The latter is one of the Fellows who has 'volunteered' to undertake the task of formally presenting members of the College who are qualified to receive a Bachelor's, a Master's or a Doctoral degree. The candidate is presented to the Vice Chancellor or his deputy, and, after the Praelector has vouched in Latin for the worthiness of the student, the VC formally bestows the degree using a prescribed formula, also in Latin.

However, preparations for Graduation Day, known in Cambridge as General Admission, have to start well before the day itself arrives. A lot of this work falls on the College Staff under the general supervision of the Senior Tutor. Lists of those who intend to graduate in person have to be submitted to the Old Schools, noting anybody who for religious (or non religious) reasons does not wish to be admitted to the degree in the name of the Holy Trinity. It has to be established how many of each student's family would like to attend the degree ceremony, it is almost always far more than could possibly be allocated tickets, and whether they would just be coming to Cambridge for the day, or hoping or needing to stay overnight.

two rooms. After that, the distance and difficulty of travel determined where the line had to be drawn – the further away your family lived, the more likely you were to get College accommodation.<sup>20</sup> Even with these guidelines to work from, the annual arranging of family accommodation was a major operation for the Housekeeper and her staff, dealing as they did, without too much complaint, with last minute changes in numbers and arrival times. Last minute changes in numbers? Well, yes, her other grandfather has just had his operation postponed – wants to be there – first in the family to go to university – may not see another

The organisational problems the Housekeeper faced over rooms were mirrored by those presented to the Head of the Tutorial Office (the Tutors' Clerk as she used to be known) over family access to the Senate House, where the degrees are actually conferred. At one time the two sets of graduands from Peterhouse and Clare were processed one immediately after the other, with no break to allow one lot of parents to leave and be replaced by another. Consequently, each graduate could be issued with only two tickets for places in the Senate House, much to the disappointment of most of his or her family. Very recently, I'm pleased to say, a wholesale change has been made and Clare's graduates are now presented in two cohorts with a chance to change the observing families in between. clearly

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many more members of any particular student's family can be present when the VC intones the magic formula

The reason that Clare use to be paired with Peterhouse was that the Colleges are presented to the VC in their order of foundation. Peterhouse is the oldest existing College in Cambridge and Clare is the second oldest though it has twice changed its name<sup>21</sup>. On this basis Clare ought to be the second College to have its graduands presented at General Admission but this isn't so. At some point somebody and I suspect Henry VIII but have no concrete evidence for doing so ordained that the so called Royal Colleges King's, Trinity and St John's in that order should be placed at the head of the queue. Since Trinity and St John's are the two largest undergraduate Colleges in Cambridge the Clare graduands do not get to the Senate House until some three to four hours after proceedings first get under way.

With total undergraduate numbers at Cambridge having increased over the last forty years and a much larger fraction of them wishing to take their degree in person what started as a two day ceremony commencing each day in mid morning and with a significant lunch break has become a three day event working once hours with barely time for lunch.

Even in its earlier format conferring thousands of degrees over two days each one involving caressing the palm to palm

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emphasised how important it was to know your left from your right' as the exit door for new graduates is the one on the right' leading out to the top of the Doctor's Steps in Senate House Passage. Don't try to exit through the door on the left' that is for parents.

Finally' as one last check' he would ask all to raise their right hands. This done' it was time to advise the families who had been watching the proceedings that they should make their way to the Senate House' they had to be there with their tickets some time before the session involving Clare was due to start.

At the appointed time the Praelector would lead his 'cock into the Senate House via the East Door' whilst the Tutors' wearing the gowns of the highest degree to which they were entitled' positioned themselves at the foot of the Doctor's Steps. The Senior Tutor stood closest to the Steps so that he could shake the hand of every new graduate' as he or she came down them. The other Tutors made a particular point of congratulating all of their own pupils' and as many of the others as they could. A 'nal round of applause greeted the Master' as he followed the last of the veterinary graduands down the steps and so bring to an end Clare's part in that year's General Admission.

## Chapter 14

# Having a Ball

Of all the events for which rooms and gardens in Clare have to be reserved' the most comprehensive' taking over the whole of Old Court and three of the College's Gardens' is the May Ball. Ironically' of all the things that happen in the College' it is the one event that' in almost every respect' might seem to be out of keeping with the primary purposes of a Cambridge College — often quoted as 'learning' religion' and research' but stated in the University's mission statement to be 'education' learning' and research'. What can be said in its defence is that it gives a group of about a dozen Junior Members' the May Ball Committee' a chance to exploit any managerial skills they may have' or in many cases to acquire them in a hurry. The College appoints two or three of the Fellows to keep a general

eye on things<sup>1</sup> but they only get seriously involved if something dangerous or unacceptable is being proposed

Nowadays' with typically some nine hundred people attending the Ball and a double ticket costing somewhere in the region of one hundred and fifty pounds<sup>2</sup> the budget for a May Ball approaches a six figure sum. The management of the purely financial side' the organisational ability required' and the hundreds of hours of direct labour that are needed to make the Ball the success it invariably seems to be' all add up to an enormous challenge. Of course' the Committee do not undertake all of this themselves and up to about one hundred Junior Members are involved in one way or another

Typically an undergraduate who gets involved with the organisation of the May Ball does so for only one or two years. But the College Staff are fully involved every year and some may see some twenty or thirty Balls come and go. During the period

serving its own limited range of 'portable' or 'potable' delicacies. Some idea of what is on offer can be gauged from the comparison given later.

Amongst the other departments that are particularly hard worked in the run up to a Ball are the Maintenance Department and the Porters. Anywhere up to about a dozen outside contractors provide, amongst other things, both large and small marquees, tables and chairs, 'booring' PA systems, extensive outdoor lighting, food and drink, 'owers', 'reworks' and the necessary, but distinctly less glamorous, rubbish collection facilities and portable toilets: all of these have to be carefully marshalled by the Porters and their activities overseen and guided by the Maintenance Staff. Traditionally at Clare the Ball is held on the Monday of May Week: the 'rst contractors start to arrive on the previous Friday and that is the start of a truly hectic weekend for these two departments and dozens of student helpers and organisers.

Since roughly 1970 it has been the standard practice to choose a theme for the Ball and to decorate the various sites within the College accordingly, rather than simply make them all look attractive with similar mixes of 'owers', foliage, and fairy lights. During the weekend in question, the buildings and riverside gardens undergo a transformation aimed at producing an atmosphere appropriate to the theme chosen for that particular Ball.

Given that the College has a riverside setting, the theme almost invariably has a romantic element to it. And here, the

Bridge' which has a character unique amongst those spanning the Cam' really comes into its own. It is the oldest bridge on the river<sup>3</sup> and when illuminated from the side' whether or not decorated with natural flowers and foliage' it has a charm that is hard to resist.

As already noted' the Bridge is not the only thing to receive a makeover at this time of year. All of the rooms in Old Court that are used at the Ball are decorated to a greater or lesser extent. Even rooms not being used sometimes contribute to the general effect' and on several occasions I was asked whether banners could be hung from the windows of the room that was my office.

Perhaps not with the best of timing' such requests were accompanied by another request - more of an instruction' actually - telling me that I was expected to be out of my room by 7 pm on the day of the Ball. The nightwatch would be around then to make sure that all's well. For this particular event' I was quite happy to do as requested' and once my allotted banner was in position and helping to transform Old Court into the

However, this is not always so, and I remember one attempt at embellishment that did nothing to increase the charm, and certainly had totally the opposite effect on the then Bursar of the College. Some members of that year's Committee had thought that painting the ceiling of the JCR (Crypt) dark red would add atmosphere, and without even consulting the Clerk of Works, the Head of the Maintenance Department, they just went ahead and did it. Even worse was their choice of materials, which resulted in the naturally exposed brickwork of a Grade I listed building being coated with gloss paint. The Bursar was not pleased, and neither were English Heritage, who made it very





ˆngers crossed that I walked through the Gardens from the College car park to my office each May Week Tuesday. On the odd occasion, the Head Gardener was even waiting on the Bridge to make sure that I was shown the damage, both at first hand and immediately. However, the annoyance and complaints were usually short lived, the experienced gardening and maintenance teams got on with their well practiced repairs, and only rarely was there any need to report adversely to the College Council.

I have to admit that, especially after I had ceased to have any direct connection with it, I did sometimes wonder on arriving in College on the day after a Ball whether it was really worth all the effort. This was not really about the cost, though I know from my later job as Financial Tutor that some students who pleaded continuing poverty throughout the year, still found the money to buy a ticket at the end of it, but rather about the amount of time and effort so many people had put in for something that was over in just nine hours. But, on further reflection, the fact that the students were doing it for the experience, rather than to make money, invariably won the day and made me view the enterprise in a favourable light. In fact, if the Ball does make a profit, once a small ˆat to get next year's event under way has been set aside, the rest is usually given to charity.

Though they do not have any direct bearing on the duties of a Tutor, the history and changing nature of Cambridge May Balls in general, and of those held in Clare in particular, offer some interesting facets. The Archivist at Clare has recently done some research on these topics and some of what follows is based

on his findings in particular, all the information relating to May Balls held before I started at Cambridge as an undergraduate in the mid 1950s.

May Balls seem to have first taken place at some time in the 1700s though the earliest existing photograph taken at one held in Clare is from some thirty years later. The ornate heading on its mount shows that the Ball took place in May, confirming that originally the Balls were held in May rather than in June as has been the case for about one hundred years. The photograph shows about 150 formally dressed men, presumably undergraduates, and, rather surprisingly, a somewhat larger number of women, definitely not undergraduates, unless some of them were from the relatively recently established institutions known as Girton and Newnham. Closer examination reveals that about one third of the women present were both middle aged and severe of countenance. This rather unexpected discovery is almost certainly explained by the likelihood that, at that time, young women at a Ball held in an all male College had to be chaperoned.

It was at about the time of that photograph that May Balls started to offer more than just food and dancing, adding punting for riverside colleges and other more general entertainments. Nevertheless, for well over half a century, the main emphasis was on food and dancing. Indeed, the programme for the Clare College Ball was to all intents and purposes a dance card, listing the dance tunes to be played by Tommy Kinsman and His Orchestra and providing spaces for noting down one's intended partner for each. There were to be 30 tunes, nearly all of them

Fox Trots' the only minor concessions being that numbers 2 and 32 (to the tune 5 were to be Slow Fox Trots. The dancing was scheduled to end with *Allyn* and *Allyn* shortly before 11 a.m. when the Ball photograph would be taken.

The notes in the programme make only a passing reference to food refreshments will be served at the Buffet from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. and rolls and coffee will be available at 1 a.m. This is perhaps not too surprising given that the effects

Jambon de Yorke  
Quartier d'Agneau  
Sauce Menthe  
Canetons d'Aylesbury  
Bœuf Salé en Gelée  
Langue à l'Écarlate  
Bœuf froid roti  
Salades à la Française  
Crème aux Fraises

M E N U

**Pinot Noir, Chardonnay & Kir Royale at the**

needed to put on all of these programmes at the same time (as well as some other activities mentioned later ' I have included nearly all of them' often ungrammatically Set out as a (much

## A C T I V I T I E S

**Swing Boats in the Fellows' Garden**

**Casino in the Small Hall**

**Punting on the River**

**Massage, Makeover and Fortune Teller in the Buttery**

**Shisha Pipes in the Sunken Garden**

Not included in the above menus is the 'reworks display that could once be watched from almost anywhere outdoors' and during my time as a Tutor this was when the Bridge was subjected to its greatest annual load <sup>6</sup>

Although it used to be put on much later' for roughly the last twenty years it has taken place at about half past ten. The change of time has' quite rightly' been made so that those resi

The final event of the night marking the official end of the Ball is the so called Survivors' Photo. This calls for all those still standing at a quarter to six to assemble in Old Court and rustle up one last big smile. Well, actually a few big smiles as the photographer wants to be sure about it that those in the picture will want to buy it that is. For some this is not quite the end and in keeping with alleged tradition a few hardy souls punt or pay to be punted up the river to Grantchester for breakfast at one of its public houses or at the Orchard Tea Garden. But even for them that really is the end.

And so to bed or should that be retirement? That's what it's called when academics in Cambridge are no longer paid for doing the things they continue to do.



# Appendix A

## Letter from Nigeria

PLEASE REPLY TO  
POSTAL ADDRESS

Bxx OXXXXXX  
P O Box 2 \*\*  
Festival Road  
Garki Main Post Office  
ABUJA Nigeria W A

OFFICE ADDRESS

Bxx OXXXXXX  
FM Trade  
Finance and Supplies Dept  
Budget Div Rm 33  
ABUJA

---

2 April \*

My dear Sir

3\*\*

REQUEST FOR OFFER OF ADMISSION  
INTO YOUR COLLEGE

The Chancellor of Cambridge University His Royal Highness Prince Charles speaking through the Vice Chancellor Geoffrey Skelley in his letter to me advised me to address a letter to you in respect of admission into your College

I have almost concluded necessary arrangements on payment of school fees You may therefore enunciate further any unexplored strategy that will facilitate the realization of my desire to study at your College

I am a civil servant My ambition to study at Cambridge has actually cost me a lot of denial of pleasure in life in order to achieve this singular objective I only hope my life dreams will touch your heart compassionately with a view to making my dream come true

The only light we in Africa is having TODAY is due to British magnanimity and mercy for human beings I hope I will be opportuned Sir to have a piece of the action of your benevolence to mankind

I look forward to hearing from you about methods procedure of admission Please Sir do not disappoint me You will learn a lot from my wealth of experience in Government and other aspect of African life if and when my humble application attracts your favourable consideration for admission please

Please reply by Airmail to avoid delay or loss in transit

A copy of this letter is addressed to His Royal Highness  
Prince Charles' and the Vice Chancellor SKELSEY for their  
information only

Sincerely yours

*n c p* *n*

Bxx OXXXXXX

## Appendix B

# Am I All Right, Jack?

### Twenty Questions – The Senior Tutor's TV Challenge

- |   |                    |    |                    |
|---|--------------------|----|--------------------|
| • | Match of the Day 2 | •• | Top Gear           |
| 2 | Friends            | •2 | The X Factor       |
| 3 | Deal or no Deal    | •3 | Crimewatch         |
| 1 | Weather            | •1 | Newsnight          |
|   | Cheers             | •  | A Place in The Sun |
|   | Dragons' Den       | •  | Coast              |



- (a)  $(2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7 \times 8 \times 9 \times 10) \times 11 = 362880 \times 11 = 3991680$
- (b)  $2 - 3 = -1$
- (c)  $2 \times 2^{3+4+5}$  or  $2 \times ((2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5) \times 2^5) = 32$
- (d)  $(2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7 \times 8 \times 9 \times 10) \times 11 = 3991680$
- (e)  $(2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7 \times 8 \times 9 \times 10) \times 11 = 3991680$  (3 s.f.)
- (f)  $(2^3 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7 \times 8 \times 9 \times 10) \times 11 = 3991680$
- (g)  $12 \times (3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7 \times 8 \times 9 \times 10) \times 11 = 3991680$
- (h)  $(2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7 \times 8 \times 9 \times 10) \times 11 = 3991680$
- (i)  $(2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7 \times 8 \times 9 \times 10) \times 11 = 3991680$
- (j)  $(2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7 \times 8 \times 9 \times 10) \times 11 = 3991680$  (3 s.f.)

**3** With

3.

4.

7 Below are the crosswords submitted by Oliver Grendale and Barry March James' the one to be commended for coming closest to the goal set and the other for its elegant simplicity

Z	E	N	I	T	H	S
E	X	O	D	E		Q
P		V		G		U
H		A	M		F	A
Y				J		W
R		B	L	O	C	K

$\times = \uparrow 2$

B	R	O	N	Z	E	D		J	U	M	P	I	N	G
		V				A	X	E						
Q	U	A	L	I	F	Y		T	H	W	A	C	K	S

$3 \times \cdot = \uparrow$

However' the Senior Tutor' rather smugly' cannot resist giving his own  $\times = \uparrow$  solution' which is even more compact

B	L	O	W		Z	E	D
Y		F	A	R		V	
	J		T	A	X	E	S
Q	U	I	C	K		N	O
	G		H	E	M		P



## The CLARE Economy Crossword

Congratulations to MARTINA CORAL who completed the grid despite the fact that one of the clues was wrong. Nevertheless she is awarded the bottle of CLARE 'Professor Titley' by sticking to the rules' managed to  $\rho$  that no solution was possible' and is therefore awarded a consolation prize' and' of course' free entry to the next competition.



The answers to the initial clues' and the 'nal contracted solutions obtained from them are given below. Other 'nal words are possible' and these have been given in lower case'.

but can be eliminated when the constraints of the self consistency of the grid are imposed

The notation used to explain the solutions is

UPPER CASE letters retained lower case letters ignored  
 $\Rightarrow$  = reduces to (ABCD = anagram of ABCD  $\mathbb{R}$  = in reverse order  $\supset$  = contains  $^+$  = sounds like  $\cdot$  = notes of clarification

1. PER(COLA)T-E = PERCOLATE  $\Rightarrow$  POET, tope [see 15]
2. THE-A-TRI(C)AL = THEATRICAL  $\Rightarrow$  TITHE (but see note in the original)
3. TREACLE tart = TREACLE  $\Rightarrow$  TE
4. CORAL(FREE)\* = CORAL REEF  $\Rightarrow$  FORE, orfe
5. ESCALATOR  $\Rightarrow$  OAST, oats, stoa
6. (CHORAL)\*-TE = CHLORATE  $\Rightarrow$  HOT
7. RE(MALIC)\*ED = RECLAIMED  $\Rightarrow$  IDEM, dime, demi
8. CAR(A-MB)OLE=CARAMBOLE  $\Rightarrow$  AMBO, boma
9. RE-TRACK-TABLE = RETRACTABLE  $\Rightarrow$  BATTER
10. C(EL-EB [Encyclopedia Britannica])RATE = CELEBRATE  $\Rightarrow$  BEET
11. LACE-RAT-E = LACERATE  $\Rightarrow$  EAT, ate, tea, eta
12. (THEIR CALL)\* = CLEITHRAL  $\Rightarrow$  HILT
13. (CLEAR PASTE)\* = PARACLETES  $\Rightarrow$  PATES, paste, tapes, spate
14. FLAT-RACE  $\Rightarrow$  AFT, fat

15. (REP)<sup>R</sup>-CO-LATE = PERCOLATE ⇒ TOPE, poet [see 1]
16. CARMELITE ⇒ EMIT, mite
17. ARCH-ANGEL = ARCHANGEL ⇒ HANG
18. CHE(VAlIdity)ERS = CHEVALIERS ⇒ HIVES
19. (REAL-N)\* ⊃(CAST) = LAN(CAST)ER = LANCASTER  
⇒ ANTS, tans
20. PRAE-LECTOR = PRAELECTOR ⇒ TOPER, repot
21. GR-ACE-FULfil = GRACEFUL ⇒ FUG
22. COR(ALTER)\*E = CORRELATE ⇒ ROTE, tore
23. ARTICLE ⇒ IT, ti
24. cORACLES = ORACLES ⇒ SO
25. creme CARMEL = CARMEL ⇒ AM, ma
26. (LAIC)\*

37. CLEANER ⇒ EN

The only place where FUG will  $\rightarrow$ t is as shown NU similarly  
ICE

No ExS' and so IS will only  $\rightarrow$ t as shown

Consider  $\rightarrow$ eat'  $\rightarrow$ fat' and  $\rightarrow$ aft' for xxT No EEx' no EFx' hence  
it must be AFT EAT END DAN DON IT TE

All done

## **Tutorial Bursar's Geography Test, Christmas 2006**

1. Crewe, Alloa, Uttoxeter, Pontardawe, Exeter, Guildford,  
Leamington Spa, Forfar, Beeston, Stranraer,
11. Hayling Island, Weston-super-Mare, Paignton, Brighton,  
Hawick, Ebbw Vale, Sutton Coldfield, Dover, Ewell, Wandsworth
21. Paddington, Llanelli, Lowestoft, Leicester, Hythe, Hinckley,  
Lewisham, Twickenham, Camden Town, Keynsham,
31. Inverness, Thame, Oadby, Llantwit Major, Stockton-on-Tees,  
Barking, Lewes, Barrow, Swanage, Cowes,
41. Finchley, Maesteg, Bearsden, Oxford, Welwyn Garden City,  
Sawbridgeworth, Leigh, Glenrothes, Workington, Loughton,
51. Luton, Littlehampton, Bargoed, Otley, Omagh, Prestwic.88247(,)-356.903(J1.i809(t)-82,)-356.90188084(e)2.14

## Appendix C

# First Class Scrawl

On the next page is a sample from a script that was awarded a first class in the Law Tripos in 1998 (see page 2)

