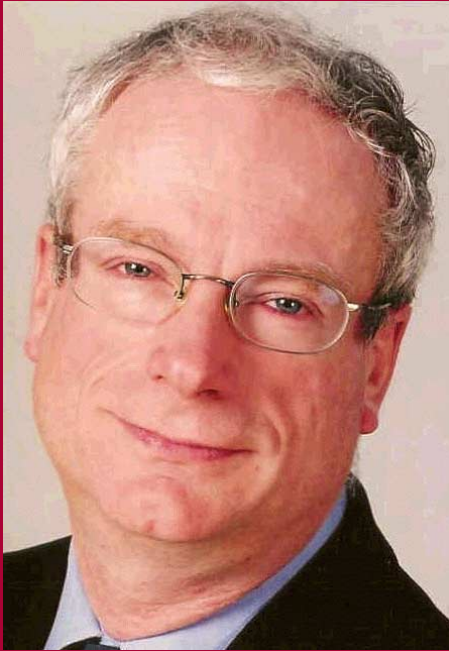


## Memories of Cambridge English



*The Rt Hon Chris Smith, who took his seat in the Lords as Lord Smith of Finsbury in July this year, was Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport from 1997 to 2001. He is currently Director of the Clore Leadership Programme. In addition to the Wordsworth Trust, he currently chairs the Donmar Warehouse, Classic FM's Consumer Panel, and the London Cultural Consortium, and is Visiting Professor in Culture and the Creative Industries at the University of the Arts London. He is an Honorary Fellow of Pembroke College.*

The Right Honourable Chris Smith (Pembroke 69-74) recalls his time as a student and research student

I will remember forever the impact that one particular piece of English teaching at Cambridge had on me. It was the start of my second year at Pembroke, and four of us were due to have a supervision from Roy Park, newly back from his sabbatical in America, and recently lauded for his book on Hazlitt. The subject was Wordsworth and Coleridge, and we had each produced an essay – probably competent but certainly pedestrian – which we proceeded to discuss for the first half hour or so. 'Now let me tell you what Wordsworth and Coleridge and Romanticism were *really* about,' said Roy; and for the next two and a half hours he talked us passionately and fiercely through the Romantic revolution. He crouched on his armchair. He pulled books from the shelves to find quotations. He conjured a new world of the power of the human imagination for us, the ability to discover the transcendent in the ordinary. He bubbled with enthusiasm. And we came out of his room walking on air.

Those two and a half hours are as vivid to me now as they were then. They are the reason I went on to write my PhD on Wordsworth and Coleridge. They are the reason I have ended up, now, as Chairman of the Wordsworth Trust. We were taught, enthused, uplifted, and enlightened. This was teaching – the passionate transfer of enthusiasm from teacher to student – at its very best. Would that all teachers were able to do the same.

There were many moments, though, to savour during my three rich and rolling years of Cambridge English. My tutor in Medieval Romance who began his first supervision by saying 'No-one can understand the medieval world until they have heard *this*' and putting Guillaume de Machaut's Notre Dame Mass on the record player. George Steiner, filling the

Lady Mitchell Hall for his lectures, and prompting us to run sweepstakes on when the first mentions would be made of Wittgenstein, Marx and Nietzsche. One lecturer's earnest comparison between the Gawain poet and Star Trek. The sudden discovery of the depths of Vaughan's and Traherne's poetry. Keats making sense of a broken world in letter after letter. The thrill of close reading and analysis in the best I A Richards Cambridge tradition. Hugh Sykes Davies reducing an entire lecture hall to rapt silence as he read 'There was a Boy' from the 1805 Prelude – it remains my favourite piece of poetry to this day.

This was a thrilling, liberating intellectual ride through the thought and writing of the great minds of English literature through the centuries. We didn't appreciate it enough at the time, but what a privilege to be able to read and think and be captivated by so much. Yes, there were boring lectures and lecturers. Yes, there were humdrum essays to be written at the last minute. Yes, there were moments when it was difficult to keep awake over a commentary. Yes, there were diversionary pressures of every conceivable kind. But looking back I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

When I applied for a Kennedy Scholarship at Harvard at the end of my time in Cambridge, the interviewing panel asked me 'You seem to be keen on making a career for yourself in public life. What on earth is the relevance of English literature to that?' I swallowed hard and boldly said that I thought there was no better preparation for a career in public life than the study of English literature through the ages. It taught you more about human nature, thought, passion, sensibility, society and relationships than anything else could. In retrospect, I don't think I could have put it better. It was true then; it remains true today.



# A Speaking Part: the new role for

One year on from its launch, Di Haigh of Allies and Morrison reviews the new building which she helped design

Having for years performed a minor role in the unfolding architectural story of the Sidgwick Site, always present but hard to pin down, the English Faculty has finally been given a major part. Reflecting on the key ideas that shaped the project, it is heartening to note how many have been realised within the first year of operation.

Allies and Morrison were asked in 2000 to develop an overall framework for the Sidgwick Site and to identify the remaining sites where new buildings might be located. The Victorian villas on West Road presented clear opportunities and it was decided that English should retain its central location by redeveloping No 9

West Road. The route from the University Library through to Sidgwick Avenue was identified as a key axis through the Sidgwick Site, a campus High Street, newly landscaped and lit. The front door to English is placed right on this route at the west entrance to the Site.

This new generation of buildings were seen as place makers, defining spaces and bringing together the very disparate architecture of the existing buildings. English has architecturally distinguished neighbours such as the History Faculty by James Stirling, Divinity by Ted Cullinan, and the Law Faculty by Norman Foster. The terracotta cladding for English responds to the brittle detailing of these

highly glazed buildings. At the same time the Music Faculty by Leslie Martin is a mellow sandy brick building, so the pale terracotta colour for English mediates between this and the loud red tiling of History. The facades are based on the unit of the single office window, reflecting the nature of this building. The window unit with ventilation shutter is then elaborated in different ways to respond to orientation and outlook: with solar shading on the south windows and French doors for the offices overlooking the courtyard, and much larger openings for the seminar rooms. These variations result in elevations of subtle richness.

The new English building is articulated to form key external spaces by the entrance doors, where the mature holm oak has been retained, and on the boundary with West Road where new beech hedges are flourishing. Most importantly, at the heart of the building, and uniting the several parts, is the courtyard garden. Initially seen as one of a number of more intimate garden spaces across the whole Sidgwick Site, we imagined it in daily use for coffee breaks between classes, outdoor seminar groups under the tree, and special celebrations and performances. During its first summer of flowering this garden seems to have been greatly enjoyed.

The courtyard is also a focus for the internal planning of the building. At ground level the large opening doors of the social space, the library and the seminar room ambulatory define permeable edges almost like a cloister. At the upper levels the Faculty Board Room, seminar rooms, the library and many offices look out over the courtyard, as do external terraces for ASNC and RCEAL. Perhaps most importantly, the courtyard and the adjacent social area were seen as a space where Faculty members and students could overlap and establish the connections, social and intellectual, that bind this distinguished community together. These spaces work as a social focus for the Faculty on a daily basis, and they have also provided the setting



# English on the Sidgwick Site



for the great events of the building's first year: the launch by Griff Rhys Jones in September 2004 and the official opening by Her Majesty the Queen in June this year.

It was always clear that the new building for English would give a focus to the Cambridge Faculty. It has been interesting to see how physical proximity in one building has enabled all parts of the Faculty to come together, even within the first year. In architectural terms, the building expresses the unity of the Faculty whilst giving the separate elements of the organisation their own identity and territory. This seems to have worked well, with both ASNC and RCEAL enjoying their own distinct status whilst finding greater recognition and integration within the whole.

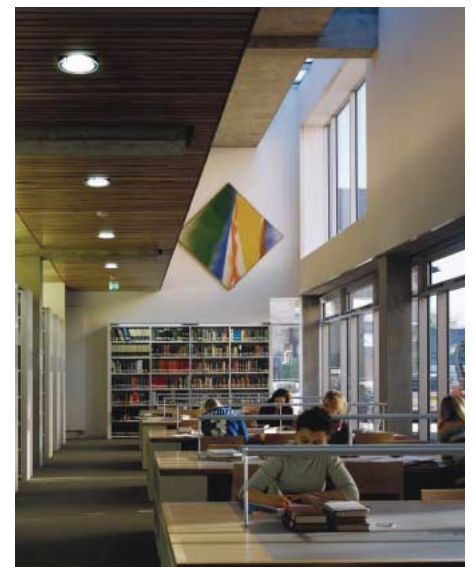
Much of the accommodation in the new building provides flexible spaces in a way that is new for the University, but mirrors current office design. All the rooms enjoy excellent standards of acoustic privacy, flexibility of furniture layout, full access to power and computer connections from the raised floors, and excellent environmental control through energy-conscious systems and opening shutters. Even sceptics have been persuaded to use the building so that now, as envisaged, the entire Faculty has access to teaching and research facilities in the same centre.

The decision to include the English library in the building was a landmark in the development of the design. This north-facing space is filled with gentle light reflected down through rooflights and has

proved a popular base for undergraduate study. The graduate students have a separate study area, and have benefited from the new classrooms, which give space for specialist graduate seminars. The Judith E Wilson Studio is now fully operational, after some teething troubles with the lighting, and following the recent appointments of a Drama Fellow and a Poetry Fellow, exciting new programmes are being developed.

All this burgeoning activity is heartening evidence to us, as architects, of the liberating benefits that new buildings can bring. Having worked long and hard with the User Representatives for English, and with the Faculty Building Committee, to understand the aspirations of the Faculty, it is so exciting to see this flowering of new initiatives after only one year of occupation. Of course there are still some details of the building in use that we must work to refine and the landscaping is yet to mature.

There are a few more steps in the Sidgwick Site development plan, including the redevelopment of the old villa next to English with a new glass-clad building, which will set the more solid form of English in its right context. Allies and Morrison are thrilled to have participated in the creation of a new stage in the continuing drama of the English Faculty.



# Alumnæ/i News

The report below come from last year's call for news - a call renewed for next year's issue.

John Harvey, Editor

**Revd D Anderson** (Selwyn 38-40, 46-47) has retired. He published *The Tragic Protest: A Christian Study of some Modern Literature* with the SCM Press in 1969.

**Martin Arnold** (Trinity 48-51) was awarded an MBE for services to youth in Leeds in 2002.

**Professor Roderick Beaton** (Peterhouse 70-76) teaches in the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies at King's College London. His biography *George Seferis: Waiting for the Angel*, from Yale University Press, won the 2004 Runciman Award. His novel *Ariadne's Children* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995) has been translated into Danish and Modern Greek.

**Dr Susan D Cook** (Queens' 88-92) has just published her first novel, *The Book of Galahad*, with Paul Mould Publishing.

**A A Duncan** (Trinity Hall 68-71) founded Duncan Petersen Publishing Ltd, the leading independent travel publisher, and is keen for Faculty members to know that he offers graduate traineeships.

**Will Eaves** (Kings 86-89) is Arts Editor of the TLS. His novel *The Oversight* (Picador 2001) was shortlisted for the Whitbread Best First Novel Prize, and a further novel *Nothing to be Afraid Of* was published by Picador this year.

**Dr Damian Flanagan** (Magdalene 87-92), who took a PhD in Japanese Literature, has published a book in Japanese about the great author Natsume Soseki, *Nihonjin ga shirana Natsume Soseki* (2003), and an English translation of Natsume Soseki's stories about Victorian London, *The Tower of London* (Peter Owen 2005).

**A P Hilton** (Churchill 67-71) is Founder and Artistic Director of 'Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory'. Their productions of *Macbeth* and *The Changeling* transferred to the Barbican in September 2004.

**Dr A J Hasler** (Caius 81-84, Girton 86-94) has published *Georg Heym, Poems* with London Libris (2004).

**Mary Hoffman** (Newnham 64-67) now has over 80 titles to her credit, while her *Stravaganza* trilogy (Bloomsbury 2002-05) has been translated into 23 languages. She edits the on-line magazine *Armadillo* at [www.armadillomagazine.com](http://www.armadillomagazine.com).

**David Hughes** (Trinity 46-49) published *Homespun Homilies for Lent* in 2003 and *Homespun Homilies for Advent* in 2004.

**D A E Hunt** (Christ's 55-59) lectures in poetry and has given piano and poetry recitals in the UK and Europe, and in India and the USA.

**John Dixon Hunt** (Kings 54-57), Professor of the History and Theory of Landscape at the University of Pennsylvania, has been created Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture. He edits *Word and Image* and is the author (recently) of *Great Perfections: the Practice of Garden Theory* and *The Afterlife of Gardens*.

**Christopher Hunting** (Downing 56-59) was Head of English at St George's, Weybridge from 1963-77 and Headmaster until 1987. He still teaches Upper 6th R E English and A and AS level revision.

**R J Jones** (Pembroke 59-62) published *Sustainable Communities – Agenda 21 or Catch 22* with Resource Publishing Ltd in 2004.

**Dr T E Keymer** (Caius 81-87, Emmanuel 87-89) published *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature from 1740 to 1830* in 2004.

**A C Lykiard** (Kings 59-62) has published, most recently, *Jean Rhys Revisited* (2000); a volume of poetry, *Skeleton Keys* (2003); and the translation *Heliogabalus, or The Anarchist Crowned by Anton Artaud* (2003).

**Anthony A Marcoff** (St John's 75-78) is in charge of Creative Writing as a Therapy at Horton Hospital (having worked in Mental Health since 1988). Most recently he has published *Haiku Dawn: Tanka Morning* (2004) and *The Milieu of Mist* (2004).

**Stephen Moss** (Caius 79-82) has published *A Bird in the Bush: A Social History of Birdwatching* (Arum Press, 2004).

**Dr J P Poster** (Pembroke 68-71) was appointed to the Chair of Creative Writing at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth in 2003.

**R H Ramsbotham** (Corpus 80-83) published *Who Wrote Bacon? William Shakespeare, Francis Bacon and James I: A Mystery for the Twenty-First Century* with Temple Lodge (2004).

**Kerrin A J Roberts** (Trinity 84-88) is Vice-President of Ketchum Public Relations, New York City.

**Dr Anna Robinson-Pant** (Newnham 80-83), currently Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Applied Research in Education at UEA, has published *Women, Literacy and Development: Alternative Perspectives* (Routledge 2001).

**Richard Rusbridger** (Magdalene 69-73) has since 2003 been Training and Supervising Analyst for the British Psycho-Analytical Society, London.

**L Smith** (née **Gabitass**, Magdalene and Hughes Hall 89-92) has just retired as Head of English at Alleyn's Secondary Independent Day School.

**Michael Standen** (Queens 58-61), now retired as District Secretary of the WEA Northern District, is Managing Editor of *Other Poetry*. His most recent collection of verse is *Gifts of Egypt* (Shoestring 2002).

**Jonathan Steffen** (King's 78-81) has launched the literary website [www.falconeditions.com](http://www.falconeditions.com). He has himself published over 70 original works, as well as translating novels and academic books from both German and French.

**James Stredder** (Emmanuel 63-66) has published *The North Face of Shakespeare: Activities for Teaching the Plays* (2004), described by Rex Gibson in *The Teacher* as 'a necessary book for all English and drama teachers'.

**Revd G C Taylor** (Christ's 34-37) retired in 1999 after being Rector of St Giles-in-the-Fields, London, for 50 years. He published *The Sea Chaplains* with Oxford Illustrated Press in 1978 and *London's Navy* with Quiller Press in 1983.

**Mozzy Whittington-Egan** (Newnham 56-59) has published *Such White Lilies: Frank Miles and Oscar Wilde* with the Eighteen Nineties Society, and is working on *The Music Maker: A Life of Arthur O'Shaughnessy*.

# Shakespeare in Indiana

Peter Holland, who between 1969 and 1997 studied, researched and lectured in the Faculty, reports from his new location.

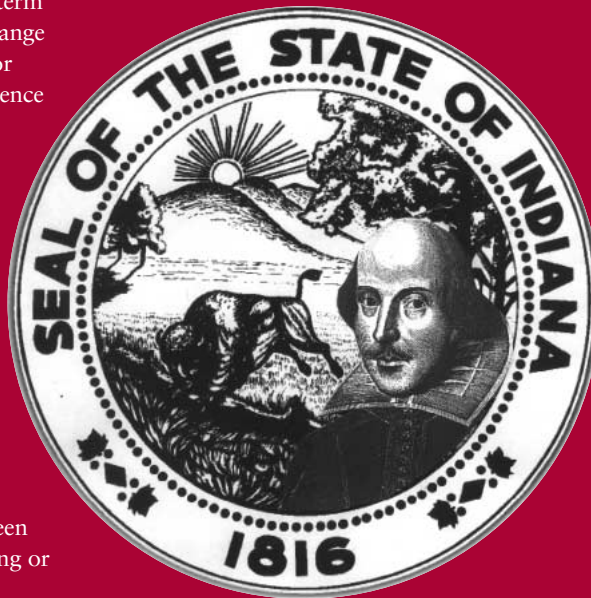
It is different here. It is not just that, when the temperature in the American mid-west on a winter's day drops below zero Fahrenheit (even before you factor in wind-chill), it still seems warmer than a cold spring day in Cambridge as the wind cuts across the backs, direct, as the old cliché has it, from the Urals. Nor is it just that, as I write this in late September, my erstwhile colleagues in Cambridge are just beginning to remember that term is around the corner, while I am in the sixth week of a semester that stretches in all to fifteen teaching weeks, with a week off in the middle for Fall Break. And it is not even the fact that audiences for lectures do not drop off alarmingly by about week four of term or that students do not endlessly rearrange supervisions or plead for extensions for every conceivable deadline. One difference might be that the (to me) still strange sight of a crucifix in every classroom acts as a constant reminder that the University of Notre Dame, proud of its Catholic identity, is definitely not Cambridge.

But most important of all is that a Department of Film, Television, and Theatre is really nothing like a Faculty of English. My students are film majors and theatre majors; they come to a class on 'Shakespeare and Film' in between editing their undergraduate film projects in the fifteen editing suites in the department building or to a class on 'Shakespeare and Performance' on their way to rehearsal. Actually, the latter sounds uncannily like my experiences in Cambridge – but these are not student productions at the ADC or Trinity Hall Lecture Theatre but ones with professional set, lighting and costume designers and a faculty director, all of whom are my colleagues in the department, teaching design and directing, acting and playwriting, while the shows have budgets far beyond even those of the Marlowe Society in its most extravagant years.

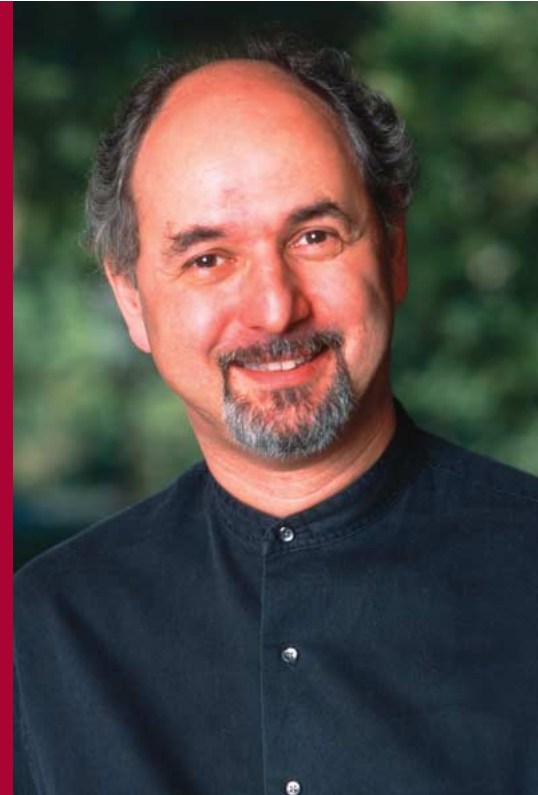
Perhaps fewer of my students here will go on to successful careers in the theatre than the stars of the ADC, Mummings and Marlowe Society I supervised (some of whom managed to do a surprising amount of academic work in the last weeks before Part II, while also rehearsing a May Week

show), but many of them will go on to brilliant careers in film and television, as actors and directors, editors and lighting designers, news anchors and producers – or even as owners of strings of television stations, to judge from the alumni/ae I met at a department reunion last week.

Cambridge prides itself on the intensity of attention in supervisions but I know the ways of thought and writing, the details of reading and the analytic skills of the nineteen students in my 'Shakespeare and Film' course (my only teaching requirement this semester – try that in Cambridge!) far better than I ever did for the Cambridge



students I saw for a few supervisions for a Tripos paper. They will have spent a total of forty classroom hours with me, working in detail on the sixteen films that are the backbone of the course as well as the dozen or so others they will watch as part of their research for papers. I remember showing films in the Little Hall at the Sidgwick site in the days before video and dvd, renting 16mm reels and noisily projecting them. Here every clip or full-length film I show is on the cinema-size screen in the 200-seat THX-certified cinema which is my classroom with the front rows of seats equipped with tablet-arms for convenient note-taking. And our cinema programming here is quite the equal of the best days of



the Arts Cinema (of blessed memory!).

Of course it's a long way from here to see regular, outstanding professional theatre. Chicago, described by Michael Billington as the greatest theatre city in the world, is a hundred miles away and the peculiarities of Indiana (where the clocks do not change for summer-time while Chicago's do) can lead to arriving an hour early (or late). I miss the Arts Theatre, and the possibility of seeing a play in London and being home before midnight (Cambridge friends will recall that I do not drive slowly).

The Cambridge English Faculty probably now has a stronger link with Notre Dame than with any other university in the US: Jill Mann and Michael Lapidge were still here when I arrived in 2002 and Maud Ellmann made the move last January. This now feels rather like Cambridge, Indiana, and, since we both head back to homes in Cambridge in the vacations, Cambridge is now, for us, South Bend on the Cam. Cambridge never quite relinquishes its hold on us and the pleasures of the University Library remain unequalled by anything here. But as I continue, apparently without an end quite in sight, to edit Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* for the Arden Shakespeare third series, I offer the thought that, though the people here are not a bit like the Volscians and I have no plan of leading an army back to camp outside Cambridge, 'There is a world elsewhere'.

*Peter Holland is now McMeel Family Professor in Shakespeare Studies and Department Chair in the Department of Film, Television, and Theatre at the University of Notre Dame.*

# Beyond Boundaries

University Lecturer Priyamvada Gopal reviews the Faculty's endeavour to consider English in a global frame

As I write this, champagne-drenched cheers from England's Ashes triumph still echo in the distance. For a cricket supporter with multiple team loyalties (to England, India and Sri Lanka!) that reflect my own itinerant upbringing, applauding a young cricketer from South Africa whose 158 runs sealed England's victory is not an unfamiliar gesture. It also has particular resonances for me as a literary critic teaching within another post-imperial and multi-national field, known variously as Commonwealth Literature, Postcolonial Literary Studies and Global English.

Not long ago, a prominent critic described the tendency of the Booker longlist to become 'a celebration of unknown writers with unpronounceable names'. By contrast, the 2001 shortlist was, he said, 'notable for its profound, and rather remarkable, Englishness'. He had a point. It is a fact widely acknowledged that for the last quarter century or so, writers with connections to former British colonies – India, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Caribbean, Pakistan, South Africa, Australia and Canada – have dominated the global bookcases of literary fiction in English. If poetry had a Booker, then it too would have its post-imperial whizzkids: Derek Walcott (honoured with a Nobel Prize), Wole Soyinka, Sujata Bhatt, Niyi Osundare, Kamau Brathwaite, Judith Wright, A K Ramanujan and others.

Like the game of cricket, the English language also went overseas, intended to serve, in West Country parson James Pycroft's description of the game, as a 'standing panegyric on the English character'. Like cricket, English literature was studied, appropriated and played back by colonial subjects in distinctive ways with zest and panache. English jostled for literary space alongside the laden traditions of languages such as Urdu, Gikuyu, Arabic, Yoruba, Bengali and Sinhala; the inevitable osmosis enriched them all. (The subcontinental bowler's Urdu phrase 'doosra' is guaranteed to make the OED in the near future). In both cricket and literature,

what once epitomised a singular national identity has now become an arena of rich global engagement.

Cambridge English acknowledged this phenomenon in the mid-eighties when it identified both 'Commonwealth' and American literatures as growth areas. After dedicated canvassing and fundraising, a special Part II option, 'Commonwealth and International Literatures in English' (CILE), was floated in 1995 and has enjoyed consistently high student interest since then. This interest is also manifested in Part II dissertations on writers such as Salman Rushdie, R K Narayan, J M Coetzee, Ben Okri, Athol Fugard, V S Naipaul, and Bessie Head. The profile of CILE as a graduate field is high, eliciting dozens of high-quality applications each year.

Meanwhile, the new MPhil in Culture and Criticism also enables postgraduates to relate their work in the field to developments in the study of visual culture, psychoanalysis, and literary theory. Recent PhDs have been on topics such as cultural identity in Sri Lankan literature, magical realism, African cinema, Canadian and Australian modernism, and East African fiction. As students draw on their work with Shakespeare or Greek tragedy to think fruitfully about African drama or Caribbean verse, so we hope that work in these newer fields will, in turn, illuminate and reframe their readings of the literatures of the British Isles.

While it shares with other areas of Cambridge English an emphasis on careful close reading and attention to historical context, CILE does not subscribe to any methodological orthodoxies. Indeed, those of us teaching in the field have divergent views even on the use of the term 'Commonwealth' – some regarding it as a useful strategic umbrella while others prefer 'postcolonial studies'. Still others prefer Global English, sharing writer Amitav Ghosh's view that the political term 'Commonwealth' memorializes Empire and glosses over its contradictions; equally, 'postcolonial' seems to fixate somewhat on colonialism.



Priyamvada Gopal

'Global English' itself, some would argue, should be studied not in isolation but in a comparative frame with some awareness – at least in translation – of the other languages and literatures of the 'Commonwealth', whether Urdu, Gikuyu or Arabic. Rather than evade these questions, we incorporate them into our teaching, inviting students to participate in the debate and to think about themselves and their reading practices within a complex global framework. This seems particularly important in times defined on the one hand by a pernicious claim about the 'clash of civilisations' and, on the other, by a rather brittle official multiculturalism.

With only two university positions currently in place to cover this vast literary arena, the field is, however, significantly understaffed. CILE has been hugely fortunate in being able to draw on the goodwill and commitment of faculty members who are already extending themselves in other areas of faculty teaching. Though this may have the salutary effect of keeping CILE in necessary and vibrant dialogue with other areas of English studies, it does mean that two people end up being primarily responsible for covering the literatures of some four continents and fifteen countries. With its international profile and historical connections to Canada, Australia, and several nations in Africa, the Caribbean and Asia, Cambridge is in an excellent position to field a high-quality team. But we'll need help finding the resources to build it and keep this vibrant subject in a healthy state of play.

*Priyamvada Gopal's book **Literary Radicalism in India: Gender, Nation and the Transition to Independence** was published earlier this year by Routledge*

# Experiencing Verse

Lecturer Simon Jarvis teaches and writes on the aesthetics of verse. The following is an extract from his forthcoming book *Wordsworth's Philosophic Song* (Cambridge University Press, summer 2006).

'There was a time' in any given literary critic's life at which he or she was not a literary critic. When such a person comes to face, say, Wordsworth's *Ode* ('There was a time'), perhaps with the intention of writing about it, they may stumble across a sense that their own activity, literary criticism, represents an instance of just the kind of loss which the poem is talking about. The tremblings or nausea with which such a person may turn to face the task of writing about this poem arise from an awareness of how much energy of repression is about to be called upon, to shut down the 'purely subjective' features of the concrete history of the individual's experience of this poem in favour, perhaps, of the notional 'experience' of it supposedly had, and which would now in fact first be constructed, by the individual's paid persona, the critic. Just as, for the child, there may be certain pages of particular books which it dreads to open because of the monsters illustrated there, so there can be certain pages of collections of poetry which the critic finds that he or she hesitates to open, and in this case too because of the fear of what may be found there. The panic is over bliss.

Whenever I think about the *Ode* ('There was a time') I cannot not think about my first experience of it. What I do when I suppress that first experience in favour of a more hermeneutically proper account is, from one point of view, to put away childish things, to subject my interpretations to the scrutiny of peers which is alone supposed to determine their truth; from another, it is to imply as

the basis of my writing, willingly or not, a more proper set of experiences of the poem which are, none the less, only a simulacrum of the experiences which I have in the event had.

If I force myself to recall to the extent that this is possible the real contours of my first experience of reading this poem, it is at once clear that much of what makes up the particular bliss of it is not properly speaking what may count as part of literary criticism. If the copy in which this poem was first read were printed on paper not quite of India fineness, yet thin enough to remind me of a Bible, and if the mock-gilding on its edges confirmed this reminiscence; if the printer had pushed the *Ode* into pages of double-column, with the usual effect of squashing its more expansive lines up against the column and thus forcing their endings into a smaller or larger overspill on the next line, often competing for space with the next 'line' properly so called; all this would be irrelevant.

Then what I remember as the absolutely critical fact, that the line 'Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy shepherd boy' not only was crammed into a line and a coda of this double-columned space, but also, the type being smaller, the characters in a smaller point, and the ink less thickly applied than in any other edition of the type which I have seen, defects in the printing had further resulted in the words of these lines being just barely legible, and in much of their punctuation disappearing entirely, will say nothing about this poem at all, but will merely be an 'arbitrary' point in the contingent experience of a single individual; and it was of course with just the chastening knowledge of the insignificance of my own experience that the elation which I

had experienced at reading this line, at the sense of a destruction of an apparently absolute, yet really arbitrary, obstacle to bliss, to which this line appeared to me to give utterance, and which had caused me to leap up from the ground and walk out of the door, faded (over months and years) into dejection as I became aware of how much of this bliss depended precisely upon what it was not supposed to depend upon: upon the defective printing; upon the colour of the cover, the feel of the paper; upon the fact that I had bought the book with my 'own' money; upon the comfortable interior, so close to the hills, which had been provided for my reading.

Much of my work now concerns how literary criticism can stop being about dummy experiences had by 'the reader', and start being about experiences of reading which have actually been had by some reader in particular. The truth-content of a poem cannot be arrived at simply by deleting everything singular about our experience of it, but, instead, only through and beyond such singularities. To own up to the actual texture of an experience of poetry is not an easy option. It has nothing to do with validating a personal opinion. It demands, instead, a concentrated form of attention which almost everything else in our collective life wishes to destroy. The aim of my writing and teaching is to build shapes of thought and feeling which can trap attention into its own necessary freedoms.

*Simon Jarvis is Gorley Putt Senior Lecturer in English Literary History in the Faculty of English and a Fellow of Robinson College, Cambridge.*

**Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts,  
thou happy Shepherd-boy!**

# The Other Day

John Mole (Magdalene 61-64) returns to Cambridge this year as Director of the Literature Festival at Magdalene College. In the intervening years he has not only been Poet-in-Residence at Magdalene, but also, in 1998, was the first Poet-in-Residence of the City of London. In 2004 he became an Honorary Doctor of Letters of the University of Hertfordshire. His most recent collection is *Counting the Chimes: New and Selected Poems 1975-2003*. *9 West Road* is glad to be the first publisher of his poem 'The Other Day':

## Summer 1959

Things like this happen, I suppose,  
if you're young and lucky  
and a reader. Also it helps perhaps  
to be idolatrous. I was seventeen,  
devouring all things USA in paperback  
and dreaming of being Steinbeck  
when the man himself arrived  
at cycling distance from my school.  
He and his wife had hired a cottage  
for its local colour (this was the Vale  
of Avalon) and he was here to work on  
Malory's tales of Merlin and King Arthur.  
Soon my own research came up  
with an address. I wrote, and the reply  
was friendliness, directions and a number.  
Come over, he said, when I rang  
from the dayroom payphone, telling him  
how much I admired etc., breathless  
at the drop of Button A, and mentioning  
two fellow-fans. *Why not bring them too  
if your school will let you out. Say  
Sunday afternoon if the weather holds  
and we'll drink beer in the garden.*

What do I remember? More than anything  
that he wouldn't talk books. Through a cloud  
of Capstan Navy Cut (*I guess you boys  
don't smoke*) and we pretended pusillanimously  
to agree) he turned aside our tentative  
interrogation, our admiring guff. *Bob Hope  
and Sergeant Bilko, how I love those guys.  
I see they're on your network over here.  
Who do you watch?* And praise for Henry Fonda  
was the nearest he came to mentioning  
*The Grapes of Wrath*. His wife brought out  
four bottles on a tray with secateurs  
and gardening gloves, and everything  
was all so obviously how they wanted it,  
a rural idyll blessed by summertime  
with old-world English schoolboys. Only, I recall,  
one shadow when we touched on politics  
and with a phrase which even now  
brings back his living voice: *John Foster Dulles  
got your Suez business wrong, that man's  
a mean hard-bitten Presbyterian.*  
I think I half-knew what he meant  
and made a note of it to work in  
somehow to a school debate, dropped casually,  
*As Steinbeck said to me the other day. . .*

Why do I write this now? Because  
(the other day) I was reading his biography\*  
and looked up Somerset for old time's sake.  
So this had been a time when my hero's  
work was going badly, and afterwards  
it never picked up much. The Arthur book  
got poor reviews, although announcement  
of the Nobel had the happy couple  
dancing round the room. But then

\*Jay Parini, *John Steinbeck: a biography*  
(Heinemann, 1994)

there was the story of his last hours  
with his wife beside him. *What would you say  
was the best time we had in our  
twenty years together?* he asked. *You first*  
she told him. *No, I'm dying and you  
would just agree with me.* So what she did  
was write down one word on a notepad,  
tear the paper out and put it in his hand.  
*Now what was the best time we had?*  
and she didn't have to wait. *Somerset*, he said,  
then opening up read SOMERSET in bold  
and instant capitals, and so they lay together  
reminiscing. .

Sentimental? Yes. But allow me this,  
the illusion of a possibility, that somewhere  
in the images which returned for them  
and now for me, three bicycles are leaning  
by a cottage gate, the beer is carried out  
across an English lawn, and an admiring  
tongue-tied local schoolboy's politesse  
turns down the offer of a cigarette.

## Cambridge 800th Anniversary Campaign

As Faculty members and alumni  
may have seen in the media, the  
University has just launched the  
Cambridge 800th Anniversary Campaign  
with the aim of raising £1 billion by  
2012. The aims of the Campaign  
include substantial increases in needs-  
based support for undergraduates and  
also graduates. They include the  
endowment of key University posts and  
support for College small-group  
teaching, as well as the creation of more  
Junior Research Fellowships in Colleges  
and more Post-Doctoral Fellowships in  
the University. The Appeal will be of  
benefit to the English Faculty, as to other  
Faculties and Colleges, and has the large  
ambition of securing the excellence and  
international stature of Cambridge  
through the coming years.

www.cambridgeprinting.org

## Events 2004-2005

Distinguished lectures given in Cambridge  
in the past year have included the Clark  
Lectures in the Lent Term, given by the  
Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan  
Williams, on 'Grace, Necessity and  
Imagination: Catholic Philosophy and the  
Twentieth-Century Artist'. In January  
2005 the poet Geoffrey Hill delivered the  
Empson Lectures on 'F. H. Bradley and  
Eros: A Postscript on Modernist Poetics',

and Geoffrey Hill's ensuing poetry reading  
was necessarily transferred from rooms in  
the Faculty building to Lady Mitchell Hall.  
The poet Kamau Brathwaite and critic  
Rebecca Solnit gave lectures sponsored by  
the Judith E Wilson Fund

*For information on forthcoming events in  
2005-2006, please contact the Faculty  
Office on 01223 335070 (email: english-  
events@lists.cam.ac.uk)*

## Goings and Comings

Dr Maud Ellmann has been appointed to  
an endowed Professorship in the Keogh  
Institute for Irish Studies in the University  
of Notre Dame, Indiana. Dr Penny Wilson  
has been appointed Principal of Ustinov  
College in the University of Durham.  
Dr Ato Quayson has been appointed to a  
Chair in the University of Toronto. His  
temporary replacement in the Faculty is  
Dr Chris Warnes, currently on leave from  
the University of Stellenbosch.  
Dr Phil Connell has been appointed to a  
University Lectureship in the Faculty, replacing  
Dr Nigel Leask who now occupies the  
Regius Chair in English Literature at  
Glasgow University.

Ms Fiona Edmonds has been appointed to  
a University Lectureship in Celtic History,  
in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse,  
and Celtic, replacing Professor David  
Dumville who has been appointed to a  
Chair in the University of Aberdeen.  
Dr Claire Preston has been awarded the  
British Academy's Rose Mary Crawshay  
Prize for her book *Thomas Browne and  
the Writing of Early Modern Science*  
(Cambridge University Press 2005).  
Dr Robert Macfarlane has won the  
Guardian First Book Award with  
*Mountains of the Mind* (Granta 2003).

We have just heard, while in proof, that Graham Storey died peacefully in the early hours of Sunday 6 November 2005. Many will mourn a most painstaking, and most generous, teacher and scholar.

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