

# St Clare's Newsletter



No 4

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## *A link with the past . . .*



*"The finest lavatory in all England."*

From Spring 1997 St Clare's students have been enjoying "living in history" in our latest property acquisition. Hampden Manor is a centuries old manor house in Old Kidlington, a few miles north of the college. Recently converted into flats, the listed building will, after some minor modifications, house about 20 of our older students. Each flat provides full modern amenities, but retains original features—a stone fireplace or beams. Although the present manor house is probably 17th century, during building work remains of buildings from the 13th and 14th centuries were uncovered. One of the most appealing features of the property is the small stone tower in the grounds. Designed by Vanburgh (architect of Blenheim Palace) as what has been described as "the finest lavatory in England", it provided the lord of the manor with an excellent view of all his land. It is now an elegant summer house. Current residents are very enthusiastic about Hampden Manor and are enjoying the village atmosphere of Old Kidlington—all only a few minutes by bus from St Clare's.

## *and the future*

**Our Internet website, will have:**

- **Information on new courses**
- **Pictures of new facilities**
- **News of alumni events**

**Try it now!**



# Courses for all the family

This summer we are broadening our programme of summer courses in Oxford, launching several exciting new ventures for all ages. We hope that you may be enticed to return to Oxford to join us—perhaps with family or friends—or that you may know others who would find the programme interesting. Do spread the word! The admissions office will be pleased to provide further information on any of these courses.

## For adults

**Oxford Dreaming Spires** is a cultural course focusing on history, literature, art and architecture of Oxford. Each one week unit concentrates on a particular period. This is designed for adults (over 18) who are fluent in English and who will enjoy a stimulating mixture of talks, cultural visits and social events. Based at St Clare's (early summer) or Wadham College, one of the university colleges (July and August).

Our other new course for adults (over 18), **Language and Culture**, combines some of the cultural programme of Dreaming Spires with opportunity to work on English Language. It runs in parallel with Dreaming Spires courses at St Clare's and Wadham College, mixing native speakers and those wishing to practise English.

## For Children (under 16)

For many years we have had requests to provide summer courses for younger students. This year we launch our English language courses for 10-12 and 13-16 year olds. These will be held at Rye St Antony School on a lovely leafy site in Headington. Accommodation, classes and many activities (swimming, tennis, music, drama etc) will take place at the school. A full programme of visits and excursions is also included.

## And for those over 16

We continue to offer our usual full range of summer English courses at St Clare's site. They include General and Intensive courses (two to three weeks), longer courses and more specialist courses.

This year we are adding IB Subject courses—one week on one subject. We are also expanding Teacher Training Courses for English teachers who are non-native speakers. You can work at methodology alone, or combine methodology with language work.

Courses for all ages start on the same dates. So while Mum and Dad enjoy the civilised delights of Wadham or a teachers' course, children can take their own course at St Clare's (if over 16) or Rye St Antony (10-16).

## Book Early

It is always disappointing for us to turn people away because we are full—particularly our alumni and their friends. But last year's summer programme was full and this year is on course to be busier still, so if you want to find out more about any of these courses, get in touch with Alison McLachlan, Admissions Director, soon. You can enquire via our new web site, [www.stclares.ac.uk](http://www.stclares.ac.uk), or e-mail Alison at [admissions@stclares.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@stclares.ac.uk). See last page for address, phone and fax numbers.



*Wadham College, venue for 'Dreaming Spires'*

# Opening of Logan House

On July 29th our newest residential house for older students was given an official opening by the Right Honourable Douglas Hurd, former UK Foreign Secretary. It was an occasion to bring together various local and international friends of St Clare's to celebrate the flourishing state of the college. The house is named after Sir Donald Logan, who was Chairman of our Governors for 10 years and who is still very active on the Governing Body.



*Above Sir Donald Logan with guests at the opening.  
Left Margaret Skarland and Rt Hon Douglas Hurd*

Since January our new computerised catering system has been up and running. This allows students to spend their meal allowance either in the dining room as before or in the Sugar House, which now serves a range of sandwiches and hot snacks. Students and staff like the greater choice and flexibility, and queues at the dining hall are much reduced.



## A New Division

Over the last few months, St Clare's has begun the process of setting up a new division to run alongside, and in cooperation with, the International College. The new division is called Educational Services, and will work on new projects and courses in areas where it is not as easy for the College to work at the moment. Some of these are in areas which don't really fit with the rest of our College courses—things like teacher training and language testing. Some are completely new ventures—like courses for older people based at Wadham College and younger students at Rye St Antony. Educational Services will also be able to work on research projects and the development of new ideas and courses.

Educational Services will, of course, benefit from the reputation of the College, and also from the expertise and skills of the staff—both teaching and administrative. At the same time, we hope that the work in the new division will have positive repercussions on the College as well. With all the work on research and development we hope to be able to maintain the high quality of all St Clare's courses and projects.

# Art at St Clare's and

Since 1987 the art department at St Clare's has had a new home at 121 Banbury Road known as "Springfield". We converted the chapel in this building to accommodate a spacious studio, with offices and an art history room attached.

In this new space students are able to work on large scale pieces in both two and three dimensions. Art History students have their own room with slide, video and CD Rom facilities. In addition to the regular studio work directly associated with the IB and Liberal Arts students, we have been able to organise a series of special weekends with visiting specialists and professionals in areas such as Art Craft Technology, Graphics and Fine Art. Some visiting specialists are local while others have been invited from various schools and organisations, both in the UK and other countries including Russia and Norway.



*Château de la Floceillière, site of this year's summer programme in France. Drawing by Paul Saville.*



*Paul teaching a drawing class in the art studio*

One of the most successful of these visiting artists is Jenny Saville, my niece, who was Young Artist of the Year in 1993 when she had her own show at the Saatchi Collection in London. Jenny has also made an invaluable contribution to our Summer Arts Programmes.

There have been many new developments in the Art and Theory courses and the department has been active in the introduction of new opportunities for students on all courses. Classes in English Garden Design, Women Artists, Indian Art, the History of Photography and Art Gallery Studies have proved successful. Our relationship with museums and galleries in the city of Oxford has grown closer and each term selected students on the Liberal Arts Programme have the opportunity of working in these galleries.

# Abroad

as interns. In addition we take full advantage of shows in London and abroad. There are regular trips to Paris, Amsterdam, Normandy and Italy.

We are very pleased that the high pass rate for students in IB Art/Design has been maintained over the last ten years and it gives us particular pleasure that students have continued to win places at competitive art schools in Britain, Europe and America as well as university places to read art history.

Our Summer Arts Programme is still as popular as ever. The Cortona Summer course ran until 1987 when we relocated to Venice where we ran a successful course for five years. Since that time we have held courses in France. Until last year they were situated at the beautiful 16th century Château de Clerbise at Belluire, near Saintes. This year we have decided to move to the very elegant Château de la Floceillière. This will be a spectacular location with the 16th century château picturesquely built in the ruins of a 12th century castle (see picture). As always, students will have the chance to study drawing and painting, French and art history with an extended weekend in Paris. We are being welcomed to the château by its owners, the Vicomte and Vicomtesse Patrice Vignial, both of whom are very active in the preservation of great art collections. The course is open to non-St Clare's students too, and alumni would be welcome.

John Rolfe, Monica Horn and I look forward to continuing developments within the department and to enjoying the inspiration which comes from the international community of teachers and students at St Clare's. If any past students are in Oxford we would be pleased to welcome them back for a visit. In the meantime, let us know your news.

**Paul Saville, Head of Art**



*Sketching in Venice on the summer programme*

## Any one for Tae Kwon-Do?

Tom Beran, Marketing Assistant, and staff resident at 222 Banbury Road, is seen here teaching Tae Kwon-Do, a Korean martial art of self-defence. The classes run once a week and are popular with male and female students. Tom is highly experienced and proficient. He has a third degree black belt and is a member of the British and English squads.



## Sunday Blues

Since September, we have started a new initiative of regular Sunday evening events. Students often spend Sunday working, and by evening are ready for some diversion. Some students go away, but come back in time for a sociable, stimulating, but not work-related evening. Sunday nights used to be film nights, but now that students have video recorders in their houses, they are able to see films of their choice when they like, so we decided to bring people together in some other way. Tim Fish and others have arranged a variety of events ranging from a short story competition, an Oxfam fashion show to an exhibition of students' art work. Some events were more successful than others. Karaoke was a hit, especially with the South Americans, whereas the wine tasting found students' palates lacked sophistication: quantity rather than quality was what they were after. However, the poetry competition and music recital by students were of an impressively high standard. Sunday blues of the best sort.

# Gone to Africa

After 16 years at St Clare's, Kelvin and Anne Moon and their daughter Bongiwe left to take up a post at the International School of Moshi, in Tanzania. At St Clare's Kelvin taught Biology, Theory of Knowledge and Environmental Systems (an IB course which he helped to design and for which he is Deputy Chief Examiner). As a teacher, Kelvin was unsurpassed. His memorable analogies and humour brought difficult topics to life. Having trained as an EFL as well as a Biology teacher, he appreciated the difficulties of non-native speakers and tried to explain things visually and kinaesthetically whenever he could—charging round the room to demonstrate the movement of an electron was characteristic.

However, Kelvin's most outstanding quality was the interest he showed in students outside the classroom. He was year coordinator several times. As wardens, first of 143 and then of 14 Lathbury Road, Kelvin and Anne gave up their time and their privacy to be a friend and confidante of hundreds of students over the years. Kelvin was always ready with a shoulder to cry on or a joke to cheer people up.



*Kelvin on the orientation walk last year*

Though we were sorry to lose the Moons, the job in Tanzania seems ideally suited for them. The school teaches the whole age range, so Bongi (now 6) is enrolled there, and Kelvin has a chance to teach younger secondary children, which he very much enjoys. It is in a beautiful area with a view of Mount Kilimanjaro and great opportunities for birdwatching (for Kelvin) and horse riding (for Bongi). Anne is taking a course in Montessori teaching by correspondence. Social life revolves mainly around the school community: bridge playing and snooker are important activities and videos are the currency of social exchange! Next year they will become house parents so will no doubt be absorbed again into the life of students. But they miss St Clare's and Oxford so much that they

were back to spend Christmas with David Gomm. There are some great anecdotes in circulation about their life in Africa. Could that one about the marabou stork flying away with the board duster really be true?

## Coming Home to Russia

I start feeling a sense of home as soon as I get my return ticket. Then I cross out each day in my desk calendar to approach visually the time of my departure. By the morning when the express Oxford-Heathrow coach takes me to the airport, my soul has already landed safely in Moscow and this experience of split personality makes me believe in Einstein's principles of relativity.

Three hours between heaven and earth pass in three minutes. At last the engine of my aircraft slows down and I press myself to the window. First I see the ocean of dense fir trees, then a group of matchbox like multi-storey buildings which mark the outskirts of Moscow. For a few minutes we are whirling above the gilded domes of Orthodox churches waiting for permission to land in Sheremetievo, then I thank my smiling air hostess for the good flight and rush to the passport control desk. The concentrated faces look more serious due to the khaki uniforms. "Won't you smile to me or say 'Welcome home'?" One can easily read in my longing eyes, "I haven't been here since

August." But they won't. They are on duty and, understanding the responsibility they are bound to take, I excuse them.

A few minutes later I find myself in a waiting room. A row of excited faces passes before me. They are not strangers any more, I am glad to see them all, my dear open-hearted Russians! And they seem to be glad to see their young countrywoman too as their warm welcoming looks follow me when I rush into my mother's arms. We drive along the suburban streets to another airport where I take a plane to fly to my native city, Krasnodar, near the Black Sea. Familiar images shoot past and I hardly notice that the road with bright billboards leaves much to be desired and the drivers overtaking seem never to have attended driving lessons. Moscow is, as always, too large, too noisy and crowded. But all this is mine: these people, tired of endless reforms, yet enthusiastic, the polluted but sweet air, this huge country with all its problems . . . it's home.

Julia Bagri, *First Year IB student*

# Staff News

**Julia (Everard) MacLeod**, seen below in her old position in the IB office, has gone to Australia with her husband and is working in an IB school in Melbourne.



**Sheelah & Jan Hart-Schnupp** stopped being wardens in March and moved into a house of their own with their one year old child.

**Richard MacAndrew** (English Course Director) has left to work freelance. He retains his connection with St Clare's in a consultancy capacity. He has been replaced by another Richard (Walton).

**Ted May**, who taught on the English Course for 19 years, took early retirement in March. He felt it was time he made a break while he has energy to start something else. He will be remembered fondly by the thousands of alumni he taught over the years, especially the elementary students who found his calm manner and mischievous humour eminently reassuring.

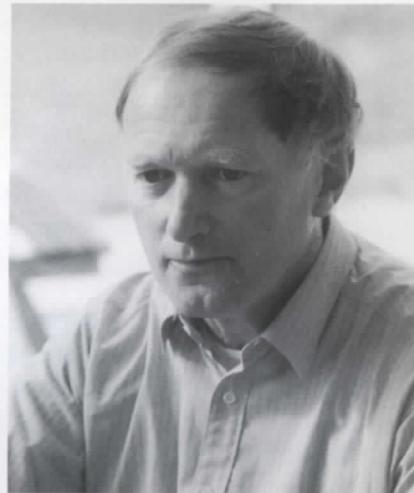


*Ted with his wife and Elsa Morgan at his leaving party*

**Claire Simons**, ex-warden and SAO, left us in June and moved to Yorkshire, where her husband has a job as a teacher. She is expecting a second child.

**Joy Wilson** retired in June. She is doing some teaching and proof reading and enjoying having more time to herself.

**Tony Lurcock** was given leave of absence in February to enable him to take part in a cricket tour to South Africa. Cricket has been the addiction of a lifetime; in more recent years he has taken up intermittent journalism, beginning with a series of articles, (mostly satirical, his former students will not be surprised to learn), in *The Guardian*. He has recently expanded his range with longer pieces in *The Times* (an account of walking through Hardy's Dorset with American students) and *Guardian Society* (a memoir of his father). His magnum opus on British travellers in Finland is still looking for a publisher. In addition he has for many years set competitions for *The Times Literary Supplement* and reviewed books for specialist periodicals.



**Caroline Crook** has taken a year's leave to go to Eritrea where her husband has been posted as a hydrologist.

**Jadwiga & Kazimierz Wanelik**, now wardens of 14 Lathbury Road, had a baby girl in December called Magda. Jadwiga returned to teaching Polish in April.

**Rosa Wroth** recently took the starring role in a production of *Carmen* produced by Opera Exchange.

**Rory Kelly** completed his MEd from Sheffield University. He is planning to start a PhD.

**Susan Mayhew** has completed her MA in women's studies from Ruskin College and is starting a PhD.

**Kiki Lurcock** completed her MA in literature from Oxford Brookes University.

Ex-French teacher **Andrée MacCallum** spends her time commuting between Oxford, to be with her new grandchild, and Glasgow, where she and her husband now live. She has taken a course in computers, and learnt how to design a web site. We are impressed!

# Life as a College Porter

What is it like being a porter at St Clare's? It's hard to say; none of us sprang fully portered from the womb, so we haven't the yardstick of a career in the field with which to assess the novelty of the St. Clare's experience.

In the same way that most people, especially the students, find it difficult to imagine Neville with teeth or me with hair, so they cannot see us in any other role. However, the head porter Neville was a self-employed market trader and for seven years an Oxford city councillor. John was a self-employed roofer before joining the school's maintenance team and I was managing editor of a corporate publishing company—and all of us were once young and beautiful.

We were all victims of recession, and all underwent some serious adjustment pangs as porters, though Neville has been at the College so long he has forgotten how he felt in the beginning. I have only recently stopped wearing dark glasses and a turned-up collar so my former colleagues would not recognise me sweeping the path in front of 139.

Portering is like peacetime soldiering where you whitewash anything stationary or hurry up and wait. The military parallel goes farther: as the lowest ranking member in the army one takes orders from everyone which is a humbling experience that my wife insists has been good for my soul and, she adds sotto voce, my character.

**A**nother facet of portering is the daily routine which is an enemy of promise I think Cyril Connolly rather overlooked. Doing the same things every day—it's a toss up which I dislike most, furniture moving or emptying dustbins—is no joke, particularly for someone accustomed to great variety.

Portering is also a very public activity. Caged behind glass or wandering the grounds with a broom, one does not have to be paranoid to feel watched. Noise, too, is a norm, and right up to 10pm and beyond, porters are asked for information, keys, post or to change money, so towards closing time my yearning for privacy becomes quite pronounced.



Accepting my fate was difficult, but the turning point was provided by the class of 1995—the most charming, interesting and friendly group of young people I had met at the College at that stage. They, and each class since have been wonderfully egalitarian. Neville and John agree that the best part of the job is the students, and that is because they are the antithesis of the stereotype one has of those privileged to enjoy the benefits of an expensive, superior education.

W hichever way they may strike wardens and tutors, each of whom has a different experience and therefore a different perception of the students, the porters' view is that for the most part they are courteous, friendly, talented, responsible, amazingly motivated and often tremendous fun.

I have the impression that porters at university colleges do rather less work than we do, but are considerably less engaged, not only with students, but with the staff as well. This may have something to do with the class system which is certainly alive and well in the university, but probably has more to do with the cosmopolitan character of St Clare's where the dignity of the individual is accorded genuine approval.

**Tim Muil**  
- who retires in May after five years