Events Programme 2015/16

Thursday 10th December 2015
Rugby Varsity Match, Twickenham

Friday 5th February 2016
Engineering Dinner

Saturday 12th March 2016
Law Dinner

Saturday 19th March 2016
College Gaudy
For those who matriculated in 1999, 2000 and 2001

Saturday 27th March 2016
Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race

Friday 8th – Saturday 9th April 2016
Alumni Weekend in North America, Washington, DC

Saturday 9th April 2016
Worcester Event in DC
Andrew Cockburn (1966) in conversation with the Provost. Location and times to be confirmed

Saturday 16th April 2016
College Gaudy
For those who matriculated in 2002, 2003 and 2004

Wednesday 23rd – Saturday 28th May 2016
Eights Week

Saturday 11th June 2016
Benefactors’ Garden Party

Saturday 2nd July 2016
Gardens Day
The Head of the Gardens and Grounds gives a tour of the College gardens

Sunday 10th July 2016
Exhibition and Talk on the Treasures of the College Library
To be followed by lunch in Hall

Thursday 15th September 2016
50th Reunion
For those who matriculated in 1966

Friday 16th – Sunday 18th September 2016
Oxford University Alumni Weekend
A programme of lectures and presentations to be held over the weekend. Accommodation is available in College

Saturday 17th September 2016
Boat Club Dinner

Saturday 1st October 2016
College Gaudy
For those who matriculated in 2005, 2006, and 1959 and earlier

The events programme is constantly being updated – keep checking our website, www.worc.ox.ac.uk/alumni, for further details.

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twitter.com/WorcesterAlumni

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http://www.linkedin.com/groups/2311057

Events information and booking
Please visit www.worc.ox.ac.uk/alumni or contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office:
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Where are we in the Tercentenary Campaign?

Coleen Day Director of Development and Alumni Relations

I have been asked on a number of occasions – how much did we raise during the Tercentenary Campaign? This is an interesting question and has more than one answer. The Tercentenary Campaign is not just a one year campaign; it started four years ago and continues. Major campaigns run for a number of years and we expect this Campaign will last for up to 10 years, or until we have reached our ambitious target of £100 million. Once that target is reached we will continue to fundraise to ensure that we become one of the higher endowed Colleges in Oxford.

A £100 million target does sound rather daunting and initially I thought almost impossible, but broken down it becomes far more viable and is made up of £40 million in new endowment for Fellowships and student support, and £20 million spendable benefits for infrastructure. Looking to the future, a legacy element of the campaign constitutes a further £40 million.

We have been extremely fortunate with the munificent support we have already received. We have donations and firm pledges of £14 million to fully fund fellowships in economics, law, modern languages, in history, humanities, philosophy, statistics and most recently engineering. In addition we have received matched funding from the University Clarendon scheme amounting to £4 million – in total we have raised £18 million towards fellowships.

On the infrastructure we have raised £1.3 million which includes gifts to refurbish the College Kitchens (see page 6) and funding for a magnificent new building which will include a lecture theatre, seminar rooms, and a social space for students and visitors (see page 4). We also now have a further five Fellows’ rooms endowed. We desperately needed a new lecture theatre, not just for academic use during term time, but also needed a new lecture theatre, not just for academic use during term time, but also to

build on our highly successful conference business to enable us to compete with other colleges and venues in Oxford. Conferences generate vital annual income which not only covers operational costs during the vacation but also generates a significant profit which goes a long way towards covering costs during the year.

We have raised £13 million in unrestricted endowment and of the Legacy element we have firm commitments of £27 million. So the answer to the question of how much have we raised is: £70 million in donations and firm pledges, and while we are now well on our way to reaching our £100 million target we are moving into the second and more intensive phase of the campaign. The reason for this is that we have received a high number of donations and pledges from our major benefactors and we will now be reaching out to many more Old Members to help us reach our target. Alongside the campaign we seek support for the Annual Fund which, like the conference income, is a vital source of funding that can be used on an annual basis to support student bursaries, maintain the buildings, gardens and grounds and generally be used where it is most needed. In 2014 we decided to hold two telethons raising £446,760 together with a generous march from Barrie and Deedee Wigmore – for every £1 given they gave £1 towards the endowment – the total amount raised was approximately £800,000, so at this point thank our student callers who did a wonderful job. The next question we are often asked is, will my £20 a month really make a difference? Yes absolutely – the Annual Fund enables us to cover the costs of student bursaries, and in the last financial year £212,000 was given to some 102 Worcester students. If you think that for every £1 million of endowment the drawdown is 4% then that squares to £5.3 million in endowment which is huge. It is also important to remember that major donors regularly ask what percentage of Old Members support their College; they do not like to think that we rely solely on them nor do we wish to. Every donation counts and all support is hugely appreciated by the Fellows, students and all who work at Worcester. We are indeed a very fortunate College; what we do not have in wealth we have in the goodwill and loyalty of our Old Members. We have benefitted from such goodwill and loyalty for some 300 years and I have no doubt we will continue to benefit for a further 300 years. We will be producing a Donors Report in the New Year. In that report we will include a list of all those who have supported the campaign.

Our aim is to fully endow Worcester for the next three hundred years

Worcester Elects...
Seven Honorary Fellows

Dr Joanna Parker retired College Librarian

The Old Library
De Jeanne Parker retired College Librarian

Tercentenary Events
Celebrating in 2014
20–21

Student News
Worcester’s rowing and football successes
22–23

Events programme
Worcester College events 2016
back cover

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As any recent visitors to the College will have seen when taking a walk through the gardens, work on the Sultan Nazrin Shah Building is well underway. The project has been funded through a generous gift from HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah of Perak (1976), and designed by award-winning architect Niall McLaughlin. The building will contain a magnificent auditorium with seating for 200, two seminar rooms, an e-hub for online learning, a foyer for hosting drinks receptions and events, and a dance studio which will overlook the lake, providing a beautiful view of the water through floor-to-ceiling windows.

Construction has come a long way since the initial ‘breaking of the ground’ and our contractors Beard are working hard to ensure that everything runs smoothly and on schedule, with minimal disruption to College life. If any readers would like to see how the work is progressing, there is a live webcam which can be viewed at: www.beard-construction.co.uk/nazrin-shah-webcam. It is anticipated that work will be completed for the beginning of Michaelmas Term 2016, and we greatly look forward to the opportunities the new building will provide for the whole College – staff, students, academics, and visitors alike.
Kitchens receive 5* rating

Generously funded by the Headley Trust, Sir Timothy Sainsbury and Lady Sainsbury opened our newly refurbished kitchens on 20th October 2014.

The new kitchens have now been in operation for a full academic year and had an extremely busy summer catering for summer schools and conference guests. Head Chef Rob Dennis and his team are thrilled they have much more space to work in, which has been well thought out and arranged around food preparation from start to finish, giving them the ability to improve quality and, when needed, increase capacity to the extent that in the height of the conference season they served just over 1,100 covers in a single day! The whole area behind the kitchens and the Nuffield building has been transformed; food deliveries now come in via the Wolfson gate straight in to the back of the kitchens and are stored in newly created cold and dry storage rooms. Previously deliveries came via the Porter’s Lodge, down the steps past the Buttery into the front of the kitchens where food was being prepared. We now have finished food coming out of the kitchens through one entrance whilst dirty dishes enter via a newly created second entrance. New equipment has been installed including induction cookers, combination ovens, fridges under stainless steel counters, a vacuum packer in the food prep area, which I’m told is a fantastic piece of kit and much more…

The kitchens are now light and airy, easy to keep clean and an environment in which the staff enjoy working. In addition new changing facilities and a staff room have been created along with a new office for the Head Chef.

The new kitchens are truly impressive and were much needed. The local Environment Health Officer who had previously scored the College 2 made a return visit earlier in the summer to inspect the new facilities. The process is rigorous and involves a detailed assessment of management arrangements, kitchen facilities, food hygiene and safety procedures. This time we received top marks 5*, a fantastic endorsement of the high standards we are achieving.

Rob’s Recipe

Seared Salmon with Sumac Green Bean Salad and Salsa Verde

Serves 4

300g of fresh salmon
30g of Sumac
Olive oil
Seasoning to taste

200g fine green beans
1 orange segmented
5g Red Amaranth micro leaf (for garnish)

Salsa Verde

1 bunch of soft fresh herbs flat parsley, coriander and mint
1 clove of garlic
1 tablespoon of capers
2 cornichons
2 anchovy fillets
1 tablespoon of French mustard
3 tablespoons of olive oil
1 tablespoon of red wine vinegar
Seasoning to taste

Lightly cook beans in boiling water, remove and refresh in cold iced water, to keep good colour, cut into three.

Pick wash and chop the herb leaves, garlic, capers, cornichons and anchovies until fine.

Place into a mixing bowl and add mustard, olive oil, red wine vinegar and season to taste.

Portion salmon into 75g pieces coat in small amount of olive oil, season with salt pepper and ground sumac.

Heat a non-stick, ovenproof frying pan, then add a splash of olive oil and cook the salmon for two minutes, without turning. Place the pan in oven to cook for 3–4 minutes at 150 degrees.

Assemble beans and orange segments on plates, place salmon alongside salad and drizzle around Salsa Verde, garnish with red amaranth.
On 25th April 2015 a Magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck the Gorkha region of central Nepal. The quake initiated at 15 km depth on the main detachment along which the Indian plate is under thrusting the Himalaya and Tibet. It ruptured the Main Himalayan thrust fault a distance of 150 km eastward resulting in the rocks beneath Kathmandu moving over five meters. Unusually, the earthquake did not rupture to the surface, suggesting that the immense stress build up remains buried beneath the Himalaya. The most worrying fact is that these build up stresses could rupture again and the region to the south of Kathmandu and the west of Gorkha continue to be in danger.

Aftershocks continued after the main earthquake with the main damage from the Gorkha region east to Ganesh, Langtang, Jugal Himal and the Kathmandu valley. The largest aftershock was the Magnitude 7.2 earthquake that occurred on 12th May, 120 km east of the Gorkha earthquake epicenter, south of Mount Everest. This earthquake resulted in much more intense shaking, and triggered many huge rock and ice avalanches, the most devastating of which occurred in the Langtang valley north of Kathmandu (Fig. 1). A massive rock fall down the south face of Langtang Lirung completely destroyed the village of Langtang where three storey houses were totally buried, and the entire population killed. Twenty-five years ago, I was part of an expedition to climb the south face of Langtang Lirung and our route was the exact path of the avalanche. On Everest, climbers were stranded above the icefall when huge avalanches crashed down from the Lho-la pass on the Tibet border, wiping out the route through the Khumbu icefall to Base camp.

Over 9000 people were killed in the Gorkha earthquake disaster, and more than 500,000 houses were destroyed. Despite this, the devastation could have been much worse; the earthquake struck in the afternoon on a Saturday when schools were empty and many people were outside working in the fields. More than three million people were made homeless, and trails to remote villages and fields have been badly affected by landslides and rock fall. The monsoon rains lasting three months from July to September have been severe with major flooding reported from Kathmandu, Pokhara and all over Nepal. Several World Heritage sites in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan, including the ancient temples of Durbar square, were destroyed during the earthquake (Fig. 2). The World Bank estimates that over $6.66 billion is needed to rebuild the country.

For over 10 years we at Oxford Earth Sciences have been working on the geology of the Nepal Himalaya and have employed porters and sirdars from two villages, Kashigaon and Yarsa in the Gorkha Himalaya. They were always hard-working, happy and proud and became good friends. Kashigaon and Yarsa villages, like many hundreds or thousands of hill villages in rural Nepal was badly affected by the earthquake, and located right above the epicentre (Fig. 3). Over 50 houses collapsed completely, killing many people inside, and the remaining houses are all badly cracked and unsafe. Many of their buffalos and other animals were killed, and several of their fields slid into the Buri Ghandaki valley. Across the valley, villages like Laprek and Bupak were totally flattened with every house destroyed and hundreds of people killed (Fig. 4).

I was due to fly to Kathmandu one week after the earthquake to trek to the Annapurna Base camp with a group of Oxford and Cambridge alumni. Of course we had to cancel, but when I found out about the level of destruction throughout central Nepal I was horrified. We immediately set up a fund in the Department of Earth Sciences, Worcester College and our local Himalayan Heritage. The last major earthquake was the 1934 Magnitude M-8.4 Bihar-Nepal earthquake, which destroyed much of eastern Nepal as far west as Kathmandu. Western Nepal has not suffered a major earthquake (>M-8.0) since 1505.

Mr Mike Searle, Professor of Earth Sciences, talks about the level of destruction throughout central Nepal:

### Fig. 1
Langtang Lirung, south face part of which collapsed causing a devastating landslide. (Right) View up the Langtang valley from high on Langtang Lirung.

### Fig. 2
Before and after earthquake views of Durbar square in Kathmandu, a World Heritage site (courtesy of National Geographic).

### Fig. 3
Wreckage of Kashigaon village in Gorkha district, Nepal following the earthquake.

### Fig. 4
Local villagers carrying up relief supplies to Laprak village directly above the epicentre of the Gorkha earthquake (photo courtesy of Suka Ghale).
The Davidia Involucrata Tree

Two thin white bracts... are the source of its elegance and beauty.

D avid Arthur (1926-2013) matriculated in 1948 and read English, after being called up to serve his country as a Bevin Boy in 1944, as far as we know he is Worcester’s one and only Bevin Boy. He had a love of travelling, photography, reading, and gardening, and frequently returned to the College with his family to visit the gardens.

David passed away after a brief illness on 8th January 2013, leaving a hugely generous legacy of £200,000 to the College to be split equally between the gardens and student bursaries. In his memory the family requested that a tree be planted, and after some discussion with David’s nephew Matthew Biggs and Simon Bagnall, the Head of Gardens and Grounds, a Davidia Involucrata was chosen. A tree planting ceremony was arranged, which David’s two sons, Mark and Rob, their wives Sue and Lorna, and David’s nephew Matthew attended. The ceremony was followed by a light lunch and much talk of David’s memories of his time at Worcester.

The genus Davidia, native to Western Szechwan and Western Huchip, was first described by French naturalist and missionary Port David in 1869 (he also discovered the giant panda); David sent seeds back to France, they were not planted but preserved in formaldehyde! It was not until 1897 that another 37 seeds were sent to a Parisian plant nursery, but they were embarrassingly awful. I drifted away, if he was blocked from writing about the real thing. Some of the Laureate poems of the 80s were embarrassingly awful. I drifted away, agreed with the consensus that he had been overtaken by his failing Senescence. Then suddenly, wholly unexpectedly, in the mid-90s his genius flowered again — I sent a review copy of a selection of O’Donoghue’s poems translated from contemporary poets and his contributions were a revelation. He continued the project in Take from O’Donoghue, which reversed its reputation. It was time for him to publish his version of the story of his life with Sylvia and the tragedy of her suicide. The result was a life of intense poetry and meditation in the history of English poetry. Then, within months, he was dead. The book moved into a new wave had come too late — too late, the sudden words in the English language.

The purpose of a literary biography is to send readers back to the original writings of the subject, to give the work a new lease of life.

Amusingly, though, there were astonishing politics still to come. The publication of his selected letters a decade after his death revealed him as the greatest literary correspondent since John Keats. And then in 2010 his archive was made available to the British Library. Half a million pages of O’Donoghue’s money had been well spent: anyone and everyone could now read, study and quote from his intimate journals, his poetic drafts, his prose meditations. As the Chieftain’s literary executor, I took it as my duty to consult with and by moonlight, they gave it the tree’s common names, the ‘Dove’ or ‘Handkerchief’ Tree.

Thirty five years after its introduction to France, a slightly different form was introduced to Britain by the great plant collector Ernest Wilson, who was born in Clipping Campden (close to Wiltshire, where David Arthur was born and where his sister, Marion, went to school — a town David visited regularly). With only a hand-drawn map and a few scribbled instructions as guidance, Wilson was sent to the remote Yunnan region of China to search for a single known specimen. On the way, he escaped devastation by moonlight; they gave the tree its common names, the ‘Dove’ or ‘Handkerchief’ Tree.

In 1926, David Arthur, later to be a literary executor to his favourite poet, was born in Worcestershire. After being called up to serve in the Second World War, he returned to the University of Cambridge to read English. He then spent several years in the United States, where he started a significant career in academia. In the 1950s, he returned to Cambridge as a fellow and tutor, and continued to teach and write until his death in 2013. Throughout his career, he was known for his contributions to the fields of literature and history, as well as his keen interest in the arts and the natural world. He was a much-loved figure at the College, and his legacy continues to be celebrated today.
Worcester Elects...

On 28th January 2015 the Governing Body elected seven new Honorary Fellows, five of whom attended a formal Induction Ceremony which took place on Saturday 13th June in the College Chapel. The Ceremony was followed by drinks hosted by the Provost and his wife in the Lodgings. Lunch in Hall was a wonderful occasion for all those attending who included Honorary Fellows, members of the Governing Body and their guests. Once again the College Chefs produced a magnificent lunch enjoyed by all.

Russell T Davies (1981) a BAFTA award winning television producer and screenwriter, who was appointed OBE in 2008.

Sir Simon Donaldson (1980) a Professor of Mathematics at Imperial College, London, and a permanent member of the Simons Center for Geometry and Physics at Stony Brook University, New York.

Wing Commander Andy Green (1980) the current holder of the world land speed record, who was appointed OBE in 1997.

The Right Reverend Dr Helen-Ann Hartley (1998) the first woman ordained in the Church of England to become a bishop; she is currently Bishop of Waikato in New Zealand.


David Loevner (1976) a long-standing benefactor of the College and CEO of Harding Loevner Management LLP.

Rachel Portman (1979) an Academy Award-winning composer, who was appointed OBE in 2010.

Unfortunately Dr Helen-Ann Hartley and Rachel Portman were unable to join us. Both were thrilled to be elected Honorary Fellows and plan to attend an Induction Ceremony at a later date.
Dramatising Tudor History

Peter Kosminsky

Peter Kosminsky read Chemistry at Worcester, matriculating in 1976, and was an active member of the Oxford University Dramatic Society. After graduating he joined the BBC and became a script editor, before moving on to producing and directing. Peter set up his own production company, Stonehenge Films, in 1995, and since then has produced multiple award-winning shows. Wolf Hall, his adaption of the Booker Prize-winning novels Wolf Hall and Bring Up the Bodies by Hilary Mantel, began airing on the BBC in January 2015 to critical acclaim.

On 16th April Peter joined the Provost, Sir Jonathan Bate, in conversation on the subject of dramatising Tudor history. The event took place at the British Academy and to give readers a flavour of the conversation see below a selection of the questions and answers.

PROVOST: So where did it begin for you – a call from your agent? How do you get cast as the director of a big BBC costume drama?

PETER: Well, it was a call from my agent!

But that in itself is unusual, because mostly I write my own stuff and develop it, sometimes over many, many years, so to be rung up… I actually thought somebody was taking the…!

PROVOST: So, had you read the books?

PETER: I had, yes, though not with the attention that one would normally lavish if one knew one was going to do an adaptation.

PROVOST: Now as well as your cast of 124 actors, you also had a quite amazing cast of about 124 locations, many of them historic buildings, sometimes the actual building in which a historic event took place. Tell us a bit about that process of finding locations, and then indeed filming in those locations, how did that work?

PETER: Well, it was a nightmare, but I’ll come to that in a minute! When I joined the production it was all set to be shot in Bruges, so never having been to Bruges I thought I’d better go and have a look.

PROVOST: You found a lot of canals, I would imagine, of which there aren’t many in Britain!

PETER: It wasn’t immediately redolent of Tudor England! So the first thing I did was bringing the production home, and luckily this coincided with the decision to extend the tax rebates being offered by the government, from feature films to high-end drama, so I was able to make a pretty compelling financial case for shooting in England and Wales, which previously wouldn’t have been possible. So it wasn’t just my powers of persuasion, there were some money reasons as well. Then it was a question of working with the National Trust and English Heritage, finding out where these buildings are – many of them still in private ownership – and I think we shot in something like 45 different locations, extending as far east as Dover Castle, as far west as Atlantic College on the Atlantic coast of Wales, so we were peripatetic, travelling minstrels really, strolling up and down the M4!

If you take the case of Penshurst Place, where we shot scenes with Henry and Anne Boleyn, we know that they both stood in that room, not on the location or the site, but actually on those floorsboards in that room, which added a huge extra frisson for the cast. Then we made the decision, we had a look at the room and thought “what would this have looked like back then?” so Pat Campbell, my regular designer, went to work and created a wonderful set. Then we thought about the lighting, as of course that gallery at Penshurst was built to be lit at night by candlelight and fistlight, so I asked the question of our director of photography – would it be possible to shoot this by candlelight? We tested five different cameras with five different lens sets in combination, and eventually came up with a combination that would allow us to shoot entirely by candlelight at night. What’s interesting about the camera we were using is that it’s so sensitive it sees a great deal more than the human eye, so we were blundering around in the dark, but you looked through the camera and it looked over-lit, we had to turn a few candles off. So imagine the situation, it’s 85 degrees in the middle of last summer, everyone’s wearing fur because England was in the middle of a mini Ice Age, we’re all blundering around in fairly opaque candlelight so we can’t really see where we’re going and every twenty minutes a bell rings, and we all have to stay rooted to the spot, a bit like the windmill theatre, and a tour party would come through, with someone from the house with a little torch saying “this way!” We would all stand there and thirty or forty people would pass, and this would happen every twenty minutes – this was the price of shooting in these real locations!

PROVOST: You tantalisingly referred earlier to the unforgettable experience of showing the fine cut of the first and second episodes to Hilary Mantel, and I don’t want to let you get away without telling us what did she think?

PETER: It was tense, because first of all Hilary was so closely associated with the stage production, and she wanted to be a stage playwright and she’d been so frustrated, so it was like she’d been given this wonderful new present. So for us, we wondered how her other child would be received. She hadn’t seen a frame cut, and also what we were showing her was in a very rough form, undubbed, no computer generated effects, ungraded, so the light all over the place, picture quality rubbish, and temp music. They were probably two of the most uncomfortable hours of my life. She was sitting two rows in front of me with her husband; we were in a viewing theatre, the lights went up, it was one of those silences you could cut. All the producers were there, and her agent and her book agent, and we were just waiting, and the silence just seemed to go on and on. This was the end of episode two, and then all she did was this [raises thumb into the air], so I was behind, and she couldn’t speak, she was choked – the end of episode two is sad, and that translated from one of the worst two hours of my life to one of the best moments of my life, because she was thrilled.

PROVOST: And once she saw the finished product, all in colour-graded and everything, what did she say then?

PETER: She didn’t have to be kinder, and has been the most fantastic public supporter of the films right from the moment she saw them, so we have been very lucky. I can’t imagine it would have been like to try to get Wolf Hall out to the world with Hilary Mantel not approving of it.
It was on the morning of 5th September, 2012, that I first heard about the death of ‘junk’ DNA. Normally I run a research lab in the Department of Pharmacology at Oxford, and tutor medical students at Worcester College, but in the summer of 2012, while athletes from across the world competed in the Olympics, I was working as a science journalist at The Times as a British Science Association Media Fellow. On this particular morning, it was clear that something odd was afoot.

Over a dozen different press releases had appeared on my computer screen, all mentioning ENCODE — an acronym for Encyclopedia of DNA Elements — the culmination of a decade’s research involving 442 scientists from 32 institutions and costing $288 million. While the original Human Genome Project provided the sequence of letters that make up the DNA code, ENCODE appeared to have gone substantially further and told us what all these different letters actually do. Perhaps most exciting was its claim to have solved a major conundrum in biology: namely that our genes make up only two percent of our DNA, with the other 98 percent written off as ‘junk’.

By scanning through the whole genome rather than just the genes, ENCODE researchers had come to the startling conclusion that far from being junk, as much as 80 percent of these disregarded parts of the genome were biochemically active. Perhaps most excitingly, the findings were claimed to cast important new light on the underlying basis of common diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, auto-immune conditions, and mental disorders like schizophrenia. Clearly this seemed like big science at its best, appearing to have gone substantially further and told us what all these different letters actually do. Perhaps most exciting was its claim to have solved a major conundrum in biology: namely that our genes make up only two percent of our DNA, with the other 98 percent written off as ‘junk’.

Not everyone was enamoured with the findings however. Dan Graur of Houston University, claimed that ENCODE researchers had confused activity with functionality, saying that ‘just because a piece of DNA has biological activity does not mean it has an important function in a cell.’ In contrast John Mattick of the Garvan Institute in Sydney, argued that the ENCODE claims were if anything too conservative, and that the findings showed ‘we have misunderstood the nature of genetic programming for the past 50 years.’

The controversy about just exactly how much of our genomes are functional, and what proportion really is junk, inspired me to write a popular science book on this subject, The Deeper Genome, which has just been published by Oxford University Press. But while I consider both sides of the argument in my book, a more fundamental issue that I take up is what I believe is a more general shift taking place in our perception of the genome and how it regulates cellular and bodily processes. Importantly, this shift is based on new technologies that mean that, rather than studying single genes in isolation, we can now observe changes in the activity of the genome as a whole. This analysis can extend both to a whole organ like the human brain, but also allows us to study how genes are switched on and off in a living cell, something undreamed of only a few years ago. This is leading to some important new developments in the way we view the genome and its role in the life process.

So, there is increasing recognition that far from simply being a linear DNA code, the genome only really makes sense as a 3D entity that dynamically changes in response to signals originating both from within, and outside the cell. Another new development is the recognition that RNA, DNA’s chemical cousin, is far more important than previously thought. In addition, new evidence shows that far from being a fixed DNA ‘blueprint’, the genome is exquisitely sensitive to signals from the environment, challenging the idea that life is merely a one-way flow of information from DNA to organism. Perhaps most surprising are findings showing that certain genomic elements can move about, sometimes to the detriment of normal cellular processes, but also acting as a new source of function in the genome.

Excitingly, there is increasing evidence that these newly recognised features of the genome may have played a fundamental role in the emergence of Homo sapiens as a unique species with self-conscious awareness and the power to transform its environment in a way that sets us apart from all other life-forms on the planet. At the same time, the very speed with which the human genome has changed since our evolution from the apes may make us particularly vulnerable to mental disorders such as autism and schizophrenia. Importantly, this shift is based on new technologies that mean that, rather than studying single genes in isolation, we can now observe changes in the activity of the genome as a whole.
M any Worcester students have enjoyed working in our beautiful Lower Library. But some may have wondered whether the leather-bound volumes ranged around the walls are ever used. The answer is a resounding yes. We have three or four visitors a week consulting our collections. I tend to get the books out early in the morning so as not to disturb readers!

Some parts of the collection are, of course, consulted more often than others: the small number of medieval manuscripts; the collection of books and manuscripts given to Gloucester Hall by John Aubrey; the Clarke papers on the Civil War and the associated collection of seventeenth-century pamphlets and newsbooks made by William Clarke; the collection of over 1,000 plays printed before 1700; the collection of architectural drawings by Inigo Jones, Nicholas Hawksmoor and others made by George Clarke, together with his print collection; the large collection of nineteenth-century pamphlets assembled by the eccentric Worcester don H.A. Pottinger; the collection of papers and privately printed books of Provost Daniel. But many other items are requested, often that we have never fetched before, as the nature of research is to investigate new things. Some visitors just make one visit; others, like Dr Frances Henderson, the specialist in seventeenth-century shorthand and the Clarke papers, have been coming to the Library regularly for thirty years. Some visitors look at one item and others, like our recent Scott Opler Fellow Eleonora Pistis, look at a wide range of items and try to work out relations between them: Dr Pistis was attempting to reconstruct George Clarke’s working methods and library organisation. Another part of our work is to provide scholars with photographs of items for publication in books and articles. We also reach out to a wider audience: Worcester items have featured in several recent television programmes, and during my time as Librarian we have contributed to some twenty exhibitions in England and abroad.

One of the great discoveries in the Library was that of the Clarke papers, including William Clarke’s longhand transcript of the Putney debates, made from his original shorthand notes. These debates of the General Council of the Parliamentary army held in 1647 were not reported in detail in contemporary printed newsbooks. Part of the bequest of William’s son George in 1736, the Clarke papers sat on the shelves in the Library probably unread until H.A. Pottinger brought them to the attention of Sir Charles Firth at the end of the nineteenth century. S.R. Gardiner wrote in his History of the Great Civil War (1891): ‘Mr Firth’s discovery of the Clarke Papers throws every other accession of material into the shade’, and more recently in the preface to the reprint of Firth’s edition of selections from the Clarke papers, Austin Woolrych writes:

One may well wonder whether there has ever in modern times been a more exciting archival discovery in any field of British history. Its fascination has spread far beyond the ranks of professional historians; surely no other seventeenth-century source is more widely read by history-lovers at large than the debates of the General Council of the Army. The glory of the collection lies in William Clarke’s verbatim record of the impromptu speeches uttered in the heat of debate by both officers and common soldiers, not only at Putney, but earlier at Saffron Walden and Reading, and later (without the soldiers) at Whitehall.

The story of the Clarke papers has continued more recently. In 1973 Eric Sams identified the shorthand parts as using Thomas Shelton’s ‘Tachygraphy’, the same system that was used by Pepys; subsequently Dr Frances Henderson has made a complete transcript of all the shorthand parts of the papers (about 4,000,000 words), some of which has been published by the Camden Society.

I am certain that many other intellectual discoveries will be made in our wonderful Library in the future.

Dr Jo Parker retired at the end of August after 23 years of service at Worcester. We are delighted that she has agreed to continue in her role as Editor of the College Record.

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2014 was a tremendously celebratory year for the College. As well as our usual Gaudies, lunches, garden parties and subject of study events, we organised special Tercentenary events to mark our 300th anniversary. Highlights included:

A Reception to launch Worcester’s Tercentenary Celebrations and to celebrate the launch of Worcester: Portrait of an Oxford College, which thanks to Lord John and Sir Timothy Sainsbury was held in the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery on Monday 17th February 2014.

A Reception in Hong Kong, hosted by Stuart Gulliver, Group Chief Executive of HSBC Holdings plc and Chairman of The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited.

The Tercentenary Concert held at St John’s Smith Square, London. Worcester alumnus Nicholas Cleobury (1968) conducted two great large-scale choral masterpieces by Handel and Haydn, with Organ Scholar Nicholas Freestone (2011) conducting the chapel choir in music by Robert Saxton. Deborah Pritchard (2004), another Worcester alumna and one of the most exciting young composers in Britain today, premiered a new commission for the choir.

The Tercentenary Ball was a huge success at which some 2000 current students, Old Members and College staff attended. Generously sponsored by the Ministry of Sound.

To launch the UK Tercentenary Campaign a drinks reception was held at the British Academy.

In celebration of Law at Worcester, a reception and dinner was held at the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple, hosted by Sir Stephen Tomlinson.

The Viscount Chandos hosted an evening reception to celebrate at the House of Lords.

Finally the College’s Tercentenary Dinner in the Asia-Pacific Region, hosted by HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah of Perak on Friday 12th December 2014 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Worcester vs. St Catz

Organised by Jake Langmead-Jones (2013), Worcester took on St Catharine’s in a sporting battle of the Blues, with both colleges fighting to be crowned champions.

On 28th February Worcester hosted her sister college, St Catharine’s College, for the inaugural Worcester-St Catharine’s sports day. The two colleges clashed in men and women’s football, men’s rugby, mixed lacrosse, mixed and women’s netball, mixed hockey and mixed tennis.

There was slight apprehension preceding the first event of the day, men’s football, which saw division 1 leaders Worcester clash with a Catz team yet to win a game in division 3. The referee took mercy on Catz and blew the final whistle after 20 minutes, with the final score 11-0 to Worcester. Luckily the Women’s XI showed the crowd a competitive game was possible, and the spoils were shared at one goal apiece.

Elsewhere the rugby was just kicking off, and a normally confident Worcester were no doubt quaking in their boots at the thought of playing a match without their best player (and writer of this article) who sat out with a broken leg. Nevertheless, after a competitive and good natured match Worcester were victorious, winning 28-12.

Meanwhile the netball was well underway, and the mixed netball saw Catz defeat Worcester 12-6. In an apparent theme of the day, the women’s team redeemed the poor performance of the men, triumphing 10-8 over the visitors. The netballers were quickly ushered from the court and tennis nets erected for one of the most highly anticipated events of the day. Both the colleges had won tennis cuppers at their respective universities earlier in the academic year and were keen to be self-appointed Oxbridge champions. Unfortunately for Worcester, after a fiercely contested match St Catharine’s won in straight sets.

The final two events of the day were mixed lacrosse and hockey, a slight juxtaposition considering at the time Worcester were reigning league champions in hockey, but were yet to have a single training session for lacrosse. So it came as somewhat of a surprise when Worcester triumphed 2-0 in the lacrosse but were defeated 2-1 in the hockey.

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The overall standings at the end of the day were three wins to Worcester, three wins to St Catharine’s, and two draws, so the contest was declared a draw. The event was a huge success, with both colleges agreeing that the event be run the following year and hopefully for many years to come.

Update from the Isis

Will Clarke (2008), Captain of Boats, reflects on Worcester’s Torpids campaign

After last year’s washout and with many new faces in the boats since the successful 2013 season, Worcester’s rowers faced their first Torpids campaign in March. Luckily the sun prevailed this year, with supporters packing the banks and Boatshouse Island, much more reminiscent of Saturday of Summer VIIIs than Torpids.

Worcester fielded four boats, with W3 making a valiant if ill-fated qualifying attempt. The stage was therefore set with M1 and W1 sitting at the lower end of the respective 1st divisions, and M2 and W2 both sitting mid-table in the 4th divisions.

The first day saw W2 gain a quick bump, M2 crash down six places, M1 be bumped but bump back on St John’s outside the boathouse and W1 be bumped out of Division 1. A mixed day.

Thursday saw more of the same for M2, who took up a less pressured position at the top of the Division 5; a place they held the next day, avoiding “spoons”. W2, who had looked on for “Blades” after their fantastic row on Wednesday, took an unorthodox line through the Gut and hit a tree, resulting in an inevitable drop. M1 were bumped back by St John’s to start a rivalry which would endure the rest of racing. W1 were bumped back out of Division 1!

Friday saw W2 resume their climb but from a lower position, resulting in them ending the week down one place but with 4 bumps. M1, looking for revenge on St John’s, dispatched them with a short row before Donny Bridge. W1 were bumped back out of Division 1!

The last day of racing saw M1 chase St Catz up the whole river; never more than ¼ length off, they left their rivals for the week, St John’s, six lengths down. Certainly the toughest rowing the Author has ever done. W1, not content with bumping up into the 1st Division once, did so again. Overall both 1st Boats held their positions in the first divisions.

Worcester’s future progress can be followed on our Twitter account @wcbc_oxford.