



## DOWNING COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

---

### **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 92<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Held in the Howard Theatre at 17.15 on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

1. Mr Barrie Hunt, President of the Association, chaired the meeting and welcomed the 30 attendees.
2. The Minutes of the 91<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting were accepted.
3. There were no matters arising other than those covered on the agenda for the present meeting.
4. **President's Review**

Last year, Neville Tait reported the sad death of John Hopkins shortly before the Alumni weekend. On 4 May this year a memorial service for John's remarkable life was held in Great St Mary's Church, attended by almost 500 people. The service was led by the Downing Chaplain and alumnus Rev Dr Keith Eyeons (2004). Tributes were read by George Pulman (1967) and Graham Virgo (1984) and these are reproduced in the Annual *Newsletter*. The Alumni Association were invited to provide stewards and we were grateful to Lionel Judd (1965), Simon Walker (1975), Rebecca Attree (1982) and Jessica Manse (1997) for taking on this rôle.

The Alumni Student Fund was set up by the Association in 2005 to help students at Downing to meet some of their day-to-day financial pressures. This year 43 students have been helped with grants totalling £7,600. We are indebted to Peter Whittington who as Assistant Secretary (Merchandise) operates both the online sales and organises the Association stall at around a dozen events each year. This year we have been fortunate to have received two valuable pieces of artwork from Sir Quentin Blake (1953) and some very special cufflinks designed by the Master's wife, Vicki Ambery-Smith, an internationally renowned miniaturist.

The Association continues to seek means to improve the marketing of its merchandise and, following the introduction of the Wix website and the introduction of iZettle last year, we have created a new post of Communications Officer, which is currently shared by two of our younger members, Katherine Fish (2008) and Peter Marchment (2001). Katherine and Peter are currently analysing the data generated by our website hits and have introduced some experimental facebook advertising.

Throughout the year, Peter Whittington and Simon Walker have been working with the College to create an online document storage system for Association documents. Substantial progress has been made and the first tranche of documents have been successfully filed.

Each year the Association awards a prize of £300 to the graduating students who have performed best in their year-end exams. This year's award has been made to Tatiana Kurschner who read Law and who finished second in the entire University year in her final examinations.

The theme of this year's photographic competition was 'A Celebration of Downing'. There were 18 entries from six students. The winner was Harry Kettle with an evocative photograph entitled *Sunrise at Downing*. Neville Tait (1962) again did sterling work to organise the event and the judging.

The 2019 edition of the *Newsletter* is, yet again, a very professional-looking publication. Thanks must go especially to our Hon. Secretary Simon Walker and also to Assistant Secretary and College Fellow Zoe Barber for their hard work. Over the past few years, the *Newsletter* has continued to expand in size and the Development Office, in collaboration with the Association, has commissioned a review. The report was received earlier this month and is likely to have a significant impact on the 2020 edition.

Most of the hard work of the Association is carried out by the Executive Committee, with Simon Walker taking on the difficult and time-consuming role of Hon. Secretary. David Riddoch has just completed his first year as Treasurer. We are also hugely grateful to the members of the Development Office staff, Susan Esden, Claire Varley and Rachel Kirkley who do a vast amount of work behind the scenes on our behalf, including the organisation of this evening's dinner, when 140 people are booked to dine.

This year we have a single retirement from the Executive – our Past President Neville Tait, who has come to the end of his term of office. Neville has made a substantial contribution over many years and his wisdom will be greatly missed. He is nevertheless continuing as a member of the Merchandise Working Group.

Also retiring are our two auditors Dr Bob Richards and Dr Martin Mays, who has completed 42 years of service to the Association. I am delighted that the Executive has agreed to propose the election of Dr Mays to the position of Life Vice President later in this meeting.

Finally, a reminder that 2020 will see 40 years since the first admission of women to Downing and I am delighted that Kate Panter (1981) has agreed to be nominated as President in this important year.

## **5. Treasurer's Report**

Mr Riddoch presented his report as Treasurer. The Treasurer's report and accounts had been included with the agenda.

The Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2019 were accepted unanimously.

Mr Berger asked why the number of grants was down. Mr Riddoch stated that the allocation of the Fund is dealt with by the College. The College is to streamline the grant process for the forthcoming academic year by putting all grant forms online.

## **6. Sales of Merchandise**

Mrs Karen Storey reported that the Alumni Association sells Downing-related merchandise online and at events, with profits going to hardship grants for current students for books and other essentials.

In the last year, I'm pleased to report an increase in sales from around £10,300 to £11,600. 40% of sales were at events with the most successful this year being the Donors' Garden Party in June (£1,700)

Ties, prints and mugs remain popular and sales have been enhanced by the arrival of a number of new products, including our Downing Gin, aptly named *Metamorphosis* because, on adding tonic, it changes from blue to pink (or magenta if you squint!)

We've also had two new prints, one of the griffin statue in the College grounds by Stephen Bennett and the other, a sketch kindly drawn for us by alumnus, Sir Quentin Blake, entitled 'The Photograph'.

Sir Quentin has also most generously given the Association 50 limited edition signed prints of a painting he produced when creating the wall hangings you can see in here. These will be introduced in the coming months. In the meantime, no. 1 of the run is to

be auctioned during Alumni Day tomorrow with a reserve of £250 and we hope this will make a significant contribution to our hardship fund.

Tomorrow we're also launching beautiful bespoke silver cufflinks by renowned jewellery maker, Vicki Ambery-Smith, whose work is in collections worldwide, including the V&A and Houston University, Texas. Vicki takes inspiration from buildings and when she arrived at Downing with her husband, the Master, she realised that our architecture would lend itself ideally to her designs. She therefore very generously offered to create a range of items for the Association of which these cufflinks are the first. They are hand-finished by Vicki in small batches and there are currently only 5 pairs in existence retailing at £290 each. Two have already been reserved so I hope that bodes well for sales tomorrow.

We are also currently working with Vicki on a long silk scarf to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the admission of women in 2020 and on a new tie, both reflecting the College's distinctive architecture.

As always, we would be very interested in any comments you may have about our current stock or any ideas you have for future products, so please do come and have a chat at the end of the meeting.

## **7. Address by the Senior Bursar**

The Senior Bursar, Dr Susan Lintott, provided a review of the College. She referred to the Downing Difference with the alumni base extending far and wide globally. As an example, Dr Lintott had recently met Gabrielle Bennett, the previous Development Director, in California where they had visited the Peanuts Museum in Santa Rosa and met Jean Schultz whose father was an alumnus. The Chinese artist Ai Weiwei had just relocated from Berlin to Cambridge, possibly inspired by his connection to Downing. Two Downing alumni had recently been in the news in connection with the Supreme Court's ruling on the prorogation of Parliament: the Attorney General, Geoffrey Cox and Lord David Lloyd Jones, who supervised Mr Cox.

The College's income in 2018/19 was £14 million, conference income was up 11 per cent to £2.8 million, the Development Office raised £3 million and the endowment is £50 million. In 2019/20 there will be 857 undergraduates and postgraduates, including non-fee payers. The College will be able to accommodate 554.

The College is devising a 20-year plan, the first element of which is building a Student Centre on the site of the Butterfield Bar. Students have more visible stress nowadays and therefore the College needs to provide facilities to help them. The new centre will include such facilities, together with co-working space and a café/bar. In considering how best to think about the design of the Student Centre, the College held a workshop on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals; 17 Goals to Transform Our World.

The Heong Gallery is currently being funded by 1717 Patrons, who have each committed up to £10,000 for each of five years. In the meantime, the College is seeking to establish an endowment fund to cover the Gallery's running costs. Future exhibitions include, "We are Here", celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> year of the admission of women, and a David Hockney exhibition, curated by Martin Kemp, an alumnus and Honorary Fellow, assisted by Colin Blackmore, a former Fellow and a current Honorary Fellow.

Dr Lintott noted that this would be the last time that she addressed the AGM due to her retirement. Mr Hunt thanked her for all she has done for the College and wished her all the very best for her retirement.

**8. Election of Officers**

President

From President Elect: Professor Richard Bowring (1965)

President Elect

Proposed by the Executive Committee: Miss Kate Panter (1981)

The proposal was seconded and elected.

The appointment of Dr JSL McCombie and Mr RK Taplin as Hon. Auditors was seconded and approved.

It was proposed that one of the retiring Auditors, Martin Mays, be elected to the role of Vice President. Rule 16 of the Association states that "The Annual General Meeting may elect persons who have served the Association with distinction to the position of life Vice President". The current Vice Presidents are Peter Thompson, John Hicks, Frank Weiss and Norman Berger.

Martin became Treasurer in 1977, a position he held for 26 years until 2003, when he became President. He remained on the Committee until 2005 and, in 2006, he became an Auditor. This all amounts to 42 years of dedicated service which, it is believed, is the longest period that any individual has held office. The Association is truly indebted to him. The proposal was seconded and Dr Mays was elected as a Vice President.

**9. The Annual Dinner**

This would take place in Hall following a Reception in the Grace Howard Room. After dinner, drinks would be served in the Howard Building.

**10. Any Other Business**

None

The meeting closed at 17.45.

**11. Date of the Next AGM**

Saturday 26 September 2020